



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, Wellington 6011, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140 • Telephone: 0-4-916 3300 • Facsimile: 0-4-918 0099

13 SEP 2012

Mrs Heather Barker
fyi-request-489-860e7b87@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Barker

Thank you for your email of 12 August 2012 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

"The number of Work and Income clients who have been transferred to benefits from Accident Compensation in the period June 2009 - June 2012. I am specifically requesting information which relates to ex long term ACC claimants. Age, gender and type of benefit is irrelevant. Superannuation should be excluded from this data."

The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) administers New Zealand's accident compensation scheme, which provides personal injury cover and rehabilitation for all New Zealand citizens, residents and temporary visitors to New Zealand. In return people do not have the right to sue for personal injury, other than for exemplary damages.

As benefit entitlement is assessed on individual circumstances people do not automatically transfer to a benefit once their ACC payments cease. When an individual applies for assistance to Work and Income we work with them to assess their situation and identify the most appropriate form of assistance. A person who applies for support because they are no longer receiving ACC payments must meet the usual eligibility criteria for a main benefit. These include considerations such as age, income, and illness or incapacity as assessed by a person's general practitioner or medical specialist.

As people are granted a benefit for a range of circumstances, the Ministry electronically records the reasons for coming onto a benefit in broad categories that capture the primary reason. I have attached a table providing you with a break down of the number of working age clients who were granted a main benefit, for the recorded reason 'ACC finished' by month for the past four years.

Please note that clients can have a variety of reasons for moving onto a benefit once their ACC payments cease. There may be clients who have come onto a main benefit after receiving ACC payments but who are recorded under other grant reasons as ACC ceasing may not be the primary reason for them being eligible for a benefit. For example a person may have been on ACC for two years because of a back injury which is now rectified. Their ACC payments rightfully cease and they are available for work, but they have difficulty finding employment because of their lack of recent work experience and subsequently qualify for an Unemployment Benefit.

Further information on benefit statistics can be found on the Ministry's website at: www.msd.govt.nz.

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While the Ministry has provided data to ACC to assist with a research report on general trends in claimant movement from ACC to the benefit system, the Ministry does not hold any information in relation to the length of time a person was on ACC, before applying for and being granted a benefit. I am unable to provide a breakdown of numbers by short-term and long-term ACC claimants, as both a client's financial circumstances and their medical history may be held on individual files. Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act enables me to refuse requests where substantial collation or research would be required to answer the request. Compiling the large volume of information captured by your request would require staff to be removed from their business as usual duties. In doing so, the greater public interest of effective government would not be served.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsmen
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debbie Power', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Debbie Power
Deputy Chief Executive Work and Income

The number of working age (18- 64 years) clients granted a main benefit, for the recorded reason 'ACC finished' by month for the financial years 2008/2009 to 2011/2012.

Financial Year	Month	Total
2008/2009	July	89
	August	80
	September	101
	October	80
	November	75
	December	105
	January	109
	February	98
	March	173
	April	148
	May	182
	June	175
Total		1,415
2009/2010	July	177
	August	155
	September	185
	October	181
	November	179
	December	182
	January	134
	February	139
	March	167
	April	128
	May	160
	June	169
Total		1,956
2010/2011	July	139
	August	150
	September	132
	October	132
	November	115
	December	118
	January	91
	February	99
	March	131
	April	80
	May	155
	June	108
Total		1,450
2011/2012	July	97
	August	114
	September	107
	October	82
	November	100
	December	99
	January	71
	February	102
	March	92
	April	72
	May	118
	June	94
Total		1,148

Notes

The table includes working age only (18 to 64 years).

Main Benefits exclude NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension, Non-Beneficiary assistance, Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit