



3 August 2021

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 9 June 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

*For each of the core learning support services (i.e. Behaviour, Communication, Early Intervention and Ongoing Resourcing Scheme) please advise as at 30 June for each of the following years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020:*

1. *total number of students per region waiting for an initial assessment*
2. *total number of students per region waiting for a specialist service/intervention,*
3. *total number of applications/referrals received per region,*
4. *target and average wait times per region,*
5. *actual and target numbers of students receiving a specialist service/intervention per region, and*
6. *total cost of each of the core learning support services per region.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

### Question One

Whenever a request is made to Ministry to support a child with their learning needs, it is done so in the form of a Request for Support.

Each Request for Support is reviewed, and a decision is made for the Ministry to accept, close, or cancel the Request for Support. To support this decision, whānau or the requestor may be contacted to clarify the needs expressed in the Request for Support, to ensure that the right support is provided for the child.

When a Request for Support is accepted, it is accepted for a specific service provided by the Ministry. This includes the four core services as well as all other services such as the support to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

We have a performance target of 10 working days for a decision to be made on each request for support. Once a Request for Support decision is made, we can record how many children and young people are waiting for a specific service.

Therefore, **Table One** in the attached **Appendix One** shows the total number of children and young people in each region waiting for a decision to be made.

We are unable to break this information down by core service, because until a decision is made, the Request for Support is not yet allocated to a service.

### Question Two

Waiting times for core services are in calendar days. The waiting time is the number of calendar days from when a Request for Support is received by the Ministry until the actual service start date. We have performance targets for each core service. These are reviewed annually by the Minister of Education and have changed over time to reflect Government priorities.

**Table Two** in the attached **Appendix One** outlines the total number of students per region who are waiting for a specialist service or intervention.

### Question Three

Where a student's need is identified, whānau, educators or agency partners make a Request for Support. This typically contains a description of the identified need. Requests are not made for a specific core service, except the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS).

ORS is not a service that is accessed using the same Request for Support. An application is made to a national panel of verifiers and successful applications are referred to the regional teams to provide support.

**Table Three** in the attached **Appendix One** outlines the total number of requests for support per region. As mentioned, we are unable to break this information down by all services.

Further data related to the ORS service can be found on the Education Counts website <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/ongoing-resourcing-scheme>.

### Question Four

Reducing the length of time that children, young people, whānau, and educators wait for learning support is a priority for the Ministry of Education. The Government has made a significant investment through recent Budgets to respond to demand for learning support.

Budget 2019 provided an extra \$24.8 million over four years, in addition to the \$21.5 million over four years provided as part of Budget 2018.

In addition to this, further investment in specialist staff and other resources, ongoing practice and process improvements have focussed on more modern and flexible service delivery and reducing wait times.

We have performance measures for the number of days a child or young person waits to receive each core service. Indicators are set annually by the Minister of Education. The indicators have had changes made over the period that you have requested data from.

As such we have provided the targets for each year in the table below. **Table Four** in the attached **Appendix One** outlines the average wait time for each service type by region.

Financial Year	Performance Measure	Target
2016 / 2017	Average number of days eligible children wait to receive a Ministry provided special education core service after referral.	75 calendar days
2017 / 2018	Average number of days eligible children wait to receive a Ministry provided specialist learning support core service after the request for support.	70 calendar days
2018 / 2019	Average number of days eligible children wait to receive a Ministry provided specialist learning support service after the request for support.	70 calendar days
2019 / 2020	Behaviour service	50 calendar days
	Communication Service	75 calendar days
	Ongoing Resourcing Support	22 calendar days
	Early Intervention Service	90 calendar days

### Question Five

We have provided the actual and funded delivery by region for each of the four core services. We also report externally on the number of children who have received a specialist service annually. This total includes the four core services and other services provided by the Ministry of Education.

We have included all ORS students, those in specialist school provision and those supported by Ministry of Education attending their local school. There is no service target for the number of ORS students we support. We provide support to the number of students who are verified through the ORS application process.

**Table Five** in the attached **Appendix One** outlines the number of students receiving a specialist service by region and by service category. In the below table, I am providing you with the funded delivery target for each of the years as this has changed over time.

Financial Year	Target KPI description	Number of Students
2016 / 2017 <sup>^</sup>	The number of children receiving a special education core service.	27,345 - 33,425
2017 / 2018 <sup>^</sup>	The number of children receiving a specialist learning support core service.	29,285 - 35,365
2018 / 2019 <sup>*</sup>	Number of children receiving a specialist learning support service.	33,860 - 41,390
2019 / 2020 <sup>*</sup>	Number of children receiving a specialist learning support service	34,225 - 41,755

<sup>^</sup> These targets include Early Intervention Specialist Service Providers (EISSPs).

<sup>\*</sup> These targets include Early Intervention Specialist Service Providers (EISSPs), School High Health Needs Funding (SHHNF), Physical disability services and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Moderate Needs in addition to the above core services.

### Question Six

The nature of what constitutes Learning Support has changed over the last few years with the transition from Special Education to Learning Support beginning in 2016. The way that information has been recorded over the period that has been requested has not been

consistently codified into service type or region as both service types and education regions have changed.

To go through and manually codify and verify the components of each historical Budget and spend for any activity that supports children and young people with learning needs would require a significant allocation of resource and have an unreasonable impact on the Ministry's ability to carry out its operations.

As such, I am refusing your request for the total cost of each learning support service by region for the years you have requested under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

I am, however, able to provide you with the below table which outlines the actual expenditure and actual number of students by each core service for the year 2020.

	Full year, to 30 June 2020		Year to 31 March 2021	
	Actual expenditure \$m	Actual number of students	Actual expenditure \$m	Actual number of students
<b>ORS</b>	149.7	10,069	136.8	10,266
<b>Communications service</b>	23.1	7,792	19.4	7,742
<b>Behaviour service</b>	46.8	4,883	38.9	4,618
<b>Early Intervention</b>	67.9	16,469	52.7	14,855
<b>Total</b>	<b>287.5</b>	<b>39,213</b>	<b>247.8</b>	<b>37,481</b>

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, na



Helen Hurst  
**Tumu Te Hāpai Ō Rāngai | Te Hāpai Ō Rāngai**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Sector Enablement & Support**

# Appendix One

Table One: Students waiting for decision to be made

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Region:	FY	FY	FY	FY
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Tai Tokerau	38	19	47	71
Auckland	181	69	68	111
Waikato	23	30	28	17
Bay of Plenty/Wairariki	120	14	21	21
Hawke's Bay/Tairāwhiti	41	11	7	13
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	44	13	17	31
Wellington	67	23	36	35
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	17	18	54	28
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	50	23	31	17
Otago/Southland	52	22	8	30
<b>National:</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>374</b>

# Appendix One

Table Two: Students waiting for service to start

Region:	Behaviour				Communication				Early Intervention				ORS			
	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Tai Tokerau	80	38	25	12	101	34	7	2	177	82	33	9	22	3	1	
Auckland	165	196	168	119	259	211	247	227	884	799	889	607	13	13	19	21
Waikato	48	62	36	20	105	104	92	52	177	210	169	67	8	10	9	6
Bay of Plenty/Waiariki	41	21	38	20	105	78	128	45	237	281	315	128	24	5		1
Hawke's Bay/ Tairāwhiti	43	31	32	23	53	57	49	31	166	92	136	83	9	4	7	
Taranaki/Whanganui/ Manawatu	27	28	53	11	118	85	141	64	204	196	358	102	28	10	6	1
Wellington	35	27	15	14	181	135	68	76	393	400	339	222	17	3	1	4
Nelson/Marlborough/ West Coast	23	6	10	8	35	9	14	18	60	30	29	49	5	3	1	2
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	54	72	40	41	117	92	85	85	379	339	300	204	26	8	6	2
Otago/Southland	31	29	30	32	81	50	51	52	172	123	146	96	7	7	2	5
<b>National:</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>2,849</b>	<b>2,552</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>1,567</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>42</b>

# Appendix One

Table Three: Number of referrals received per region

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Region:	FY	FY	FY	FY
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Tai Tokerau	893	897	1,104	1,025
Auckland	5,601	5,807	6,135	5,540
Waikato	1,503	1,524	1,691	1,490
Bay of Plenty/Wairiki	1,496	1,650	1,762	1,348
Hawke's Bay/Tairāwhiti	888	1,051	1,135	1,014
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	1,170	1,341	1,478	1,366
Wellington	1,543	1,635	1,729	1,708
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	693	650	651	661
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	1,954	2,079	2,301	2,156
Otago/Southland	1,338	1,283	1,356	1,411
<b>National:</b>	<b>17,079</b>	<b>17,917</b>	<b>19,342</b>	<b>17,719</b>

# Appendix One

Table Four: Average wait times per region

Region	Behaviour				Communication				Early Intervention				ORS			
	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Tai Tokerau	31.63	39.63	59.56	29.76	48.97	100.32	71.11	28.60	61.85	87.40	61.16	34.35	33.88	19.71	17.92	2.85
Auckland	32.71	41.27	55.34	60.35	46.06	56.40	55.50	67.17	72.06	90.02	101.02	108.96	19.35	13.47	14.24	14.87
Waikato	41.06	63.45	65.15	56.82	61.83	97.55	101.80	72.09	62.17	91.71	100.88	82.25	26.23	21.41	15	11.57
Bay of Plenty/Wairariki	40.69	36.15	38.73	72.23	47.85	59.16	85.27	102.24	77.19	85.24	123.04	128.18	25.00	23.57	18.38	16.57
Hawke's Bay/ Tairāwhiti	21.91	27.45	38.43	32.97	65.56	60.45	80.40	72.66	84.80	98.28	97.79	95.40	22.31	22.15	40.25	30.31
Taranaki/Whanganui/ Manawatu	31.48	31.94	45.12	88.67	57.16	69.69	98.80	111.94	71.15	88.14	130.18	144.33	35.43	40.17	50.87	21.67
Wellington	40.72	67.60	75.55	59.38	124.86	167.52	118.70	83.14	130.90	195.73	170.70	118.10	28.75	18.8	16.72	20.29
Nelson/Marlborough/ West Coast	18.28	29.03	24.12	35.70	23.46	33.19	37.33	59.60	49.40	63.13	55.53	86.93	15.78	23.33	22.35	35.22
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	33.28	45.15	37.01	44.00	41.43	65.53	54.05	52.48	69.49	105.75	88.41	87.31	47.39	51.35	26.7	18.08
Otago/Southland	23.60	39.33	28.99	34.38	39.67	52.31	54.87	54.79	54.79	73.72	83.60	88.84	17.23	18.29	21.12	10.42
<b>National:</b>	<b>32.37</b>	<b>41.83</b>	<b>49.12</b>	<b>53.19</b>	<b>54.83</b>	<b>74.13</b>	<b>73.15</b>	<b>72.43</b>	<b>73.35</b>	<b>98.81</b>	<b>105.39</b>	<b>104.21</b>	<b>27.69</b>	<b>23.75</b>	<b>22.07</b>	<b>16.54</b>



# Appendix One

Table Five: Students receiving a specialist service per region

Region	Behaviour				Communication				Early Intervention				ORS*			
	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY	FY
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Tai Tokerau	301	320	356	433	344	347	405	427	648	662	728	721	390	414	433	458
Auckland	1,350	1,434	1,480	1,476	1,921	2,129	2,275	2,245	4,654	4,999	5,184	5,349	2,991	3,122	3,227	3,374
Waikato	402	408	407	386	705	652	656	682	1,177	1,180	1,267	1,234	840	860	898	967
Bay of Plenty/Wairariki	332	295	342	378	549	557	533	609	1,144	1,137	1,160	1,229	681	712	751	792
Hawke's Bay/ Tairāwhiti	306	343	362	331	413	397	429	420	680	782	784	786	477	490	494	510
Taranaki/Whanganui/ Manawatu	222	248	282	335	602	662	717	888	1,067	1,094	1,116	1,314	710	740	773	778
Wellington	311	291	325	361	748	739	808	800	1,277	1,266	1,444	1,674	1,024	1,057	1,074	1,118
Nelson/Marlborough/ West Coast	209	171	177	190	280	257	270	271	424	394	370	349	303	304	313	324
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	470	541	645	644	710	767	820	872	1,755	1,766	1,923	2,032	956	1,000	1,054	1,087
Otago/Southland	307	326	338	349	529	583	627	578	1,103	1,134	1,133	1,143	547	550	572	602
<b>National:</b>	<b>4,210</b>	<b>4,377</b>	<b>4,714</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>6,801</b>	<b>7,090</b>	<b>7,540</b>	<b>7,792</b>	<b>13,929</b>	<b>14,414</b>	<b>15,109</b>	<b>15,831</b>	<b>9,049</b>	<b>9,377</b>	<b>9,718</b>	<b>10,160</b>

\*ORS students in correspondence school and home education are not included in regional numbers, but are included in National total.