



24 OCT 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 9 September 2018, you emailed the Department of Internal Affairs requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- 1. Can you please tell me when the onus for collecting a liable parent contribution changed from being the Ministry's responsibility; to that of the IRD through the application for child support, with regard to Sole parent beneficiaries.*
- 2. And also how many male sole parent support recipients that are subject to section 70A sanctions are Male?*

On 12 September 2018, your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) as the information you have requested is more closely related to the functions of the Ministry.

It became the responsibility of Inland Revenue to collect Child Support payments after the commencement of the Child Support Act 1991 on 18 December 1991. A copy of the Child Support Act 1991 can be found here: www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1991/0142/latest/whole.html. If a carer receives a sole parent or Unsupported Child's Benefit from Work and Income, they will need to complete a Child Support application as part of the benefit application process. Inland Revenue will assess and collect any Child Support payable from the liable parent and pass it on to:

- the government, if the receiving carer is receiving a sole parent benefit, and
- the receiving carer, to help with the costs of looking after the child, if the child support collected is more than the benefit entitlement.

The table below outlines the number of working age clients with one or more current section 70A reduction(s) as at the quarter ending 30 June 2018, broken down by gender and the number of clients and reductions.

Gender	Number of clients	Number of reductions
Female	11,995	15,495
Male	393	469
Total	12,388	15,964

Notes:

- The table includes working age only (18 to 64 years).
- A benefit must be reduced if a client fails or refuses to apply for Child Support for each dependent child, fails or refuses to identify the paying parent(s) in law of each dependent child or fails or refuses to attend a departure or appeal hearing and give evidence against paying parent(s) in accordance with section 122 Child Support Act 1991. They may qualify for an exemption to the reduction.
- A client may have one or more section 70A reductions and/or exemptions in place at the same time relating to different children in their care.

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The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Social Security Act 1964 Section 70A reductions, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Cassandra Wise
Team Manager, Issue Resolution