




5 APR 2019



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 7 March 2019 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding the number of sanctions applied and overturned under section 192 of the Social Security Act 2018.

In particular, you requested:

The total number of section 192/section 70A sanctions applied from June 2018 to now (partial financial year)

The total number of section 192/section 70A sanctions overturned or partially upheld from 2018 to now (partial financial year)

Please include separate breakdowns of the above time frame by year, gender and ethnicity.

From 26 November 2018, section 70A of the Social Security Act 1964 has been replaced by section 192 of the Social Security Act 2018. The section requires the Ministry to reduce the payment of a main benefit in respect of a dependent child where the recipient fails to identify the other parent of the child. Section 193 of the Social Security Act 2018 provides a number of exemptions to these reductions where there is a good reason not to identify the other parent, such as where this would result in a risk of violence.

As sanctions can be applied and then removed at any time, the Ministry does not report on the number "applied" over a period, rather how many are applied at a point in time. As at the end of June 2018, 12,508 caregivers had 16,118 deductions applied under section 70A.

When reporting on the number of sanctions overturned or partially upheld, the Ministry reports on those cases that went through the formal Review of Decision process. Reductions may end outside of this process however, the information is not held in a way that can be reported.

Please find attached three tables that show the total number of sanctions applied under section 192 or section 70A of the Social Security Act, and the number of Review of Decision cases related to these that were overturned or partially upheld between 1 July 2018 and 31 December 2018. Please note that all clients who have had a Review of Decision case in relation to a section 70A or section 192 reduction are recorded as women.

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 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 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



Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Table 1: The number of working age caregivers with one or more s 70A reduction as at June 2018 by gender.

Gender	June 2018	
	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions
Female	12,114	15,648
Male	394	470
Total	12,508	16,118

Note:

- Please note that this is a count of both clients and of reductions. A client may have more than one section 70A or section 192 reduction.

Table 2: The number of working age caregivers with one or more s 70A reduction as at June 2018 by ethnicity.

Ethnicity	June 2018	
	Number of Caregivers	Number of Deductions
Māori	6,511	8,434
NZ European	3,153	4,009
Pacific Island	1,628	2,164
Other	922	1,160
Unspecified	294	351
Total	12,508	16,118

Note:

- Please note that this is a count of both clients and of reductions. A client may have more than one section 70A or section 192 reduction.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept. Where multiple ethnicities are selected, a single ethnicity is selected for reporting purposes based on a specific process to ensure vulnerable groups are represented.

Table 3: The number of s 70A or s 192 related Review of Decision Cases in which the result is recorded as 'overturned' or 'partially upheld' between July and December 2018 broken down by ethnicity.

Ethnicity	2018/19 (to December)
New Zealand Māori	25
NZ European	11
American	1
Chinese	1
Cook Island Māori	1
Fijian	0
Samoaan	1
Tongan	0
Not stated	1
Total	41

Note:

- Data regarding the 2018/2019 financial year is taken as at 31 December 2018.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified. Where more than one ethnicity is provided, the first ethnicity recorded is used for the purposes of this data.