



20 December 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your request for information received 3 December 2024 requesting:

*How many applications for International Custody Dispute payments have been made each year and the number approved from 2018 to date and the grounds for each approval and decline.*

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The International Custody Disputes Payment is a weekly, non-recoverable payment, paid to a parent who is awaiting the outcome of an international custody dispute who has no other means of support and is facing financial hardship.

An applicant must meet all the qualifications and submit verification to be eligible for this payment. Applications are declined if the applicant fails to meet any part of the qualifications or provide the necessary verification.

The Ministry must ensure that the applicant has fully utilised all reasonably accessible financial resources and is actively seeking any additional financial support options available for the child, such as child support or employment opportunities.

Decline reasons may include one or several factors, such as (but not limited to);

- Does not meet the asset limit.
- The child has not been returned to New Zealand due to a Hague Convention order.
- The applicant is not the principal caregiver of a dependent child.
- Not in the country the child would normally live.

When an applicant meets all the qualifying criteria an application may be approved. The sole reason for granting this payment is the applicants eligibility.

Details regarding International Custody Disputes Payment and the eligibility requirements, can be accessed here:

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/international-custody-dispute-payment-01.html>

If an applicant does not agree with the decision that has been made, they can apply for a review of decision. Further information about Reviews and Appeals can be found here: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/reviews-and-appeals/reviews-and-appeals.html>

From 1 January 2018 to 31 October 2024 there has been a total of 27 applications for International Custody Disputes payments. 15 of these applications have been granted and 12 have been declined.<sup>1</sup>

For the 12 declined applications, I am refusing your request for the reason each individual application was declined under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.

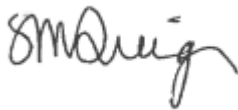
However, following on from the explanation above, and by way of a summary under section 16(1)(e) of the Act, I can advise this included situations where the applicant did not complete the full application, did not provide information that was requested by the Ministry to verify their application, was not the sole parent, or did not have a current Court Order.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**

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<sup>1</sup> Please note:

- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- This data has had random rounding to base three applied.
- Random rounding does not round down to zero, a value of one or two will be rounded to three.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.