



13 March 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 12 December 2025, requesting information about the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) clients with attachment orders from court fines or reparations.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

- *The number of beneficiaries with current attachment orders from Court fines or reparations*
- *The total amount of money paid to Court fines or reparations from benefits for the last 5 years broken down by year.*
- *The number of beneficiaries with current attachment orders from Court fines as well as voluntary repayment plan on their benefit*

Please refer to the attached **Appendix** which provides the number of court fines, number of clients and total weekly amount as at end of December 2021, December 2022, December 2023, December 2024 and December 2025 court fine type.

- *The number of beneficiaries who are currently receiving less than the protected earnings amount of 60% of their earnings*
- *The number of beneficiaries in the last 10 years who have been put below the protected earnings amount of 60% of their income and how long they received less than the protected earnings level*
- *The number of beneficiaries in the last 10 years who have been put below the protected earnings amount of 60% of their income due to Court attachment orders, voluntary repayment redirections, civil attachment orders or automated decision-making processes. Broken down by year*

No client is receiving less than the protected earnings amount of 60% of their earnings. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this document does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

- *Information about what the automatic processes associated with attachment orders, Court ordered repayments of fines and reparations and voluntary redirections are. How do these processes align with MSD's*

automated decision-making standard? How do these processes align with MSD's automated decision-making standard?

I have identified two documents which address your above question. Please see enclosed a copy of the Ministry's *Business Process – Automation of Court Fines*. The *Memorandum of Understanding* between the Ministry and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) on the electronic file transfer and processing of Attachment Orders and Allotments to Benefit can be found online at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/2020/december/03122020-request-for-a-copy-of-all-memorandum-of-understanding-signed-in-the-last-five-years-related-to-the-sharing-of-data-to-organisation-outside-your-organisation-p14.pdf.

These documents describe the automation processing between the Ministry and MOJ, including where exceptions apply for manual review by Ministry staff.

As the process of applying court fines attachment orders do not involve automated decision-making (as you will note in the documents above), they have not been reviewed against the automated decision-making standard. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, on the basis that the information does not exist.

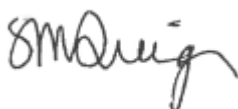
If you have any further queries after reviewing these documents, please feel free to contact Diane Anderson, Manager, Client Advocacy and Review who would be happy to address any questions you may have or arrange a further meeting with you and relevant Ministry staff.

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.

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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services



Appendix

The number of court fines, number of clients and total weekly amount as at end of December 2021, December 2022, December 2023, December 2024 and December 2025 by court fine type.

As at month ending / Court fine type		Number of clients	Number of court fines	Total weekly amount
December 2021	Civil Attachment	19,404	22,860	\$554,331
	Fines Attachment	38,346	38,346	\$828,598
	Voluntary Allotment	10,497	10,497	\$170,210
	Total	68,244	71,706	\$1,553,140
December 2022	Civil Attachment	19,659	23,520	\$577,014
	Fines Attachment	32,844	32,844	\$712,456
	Voluntary Allotment	10,920	10,920	\$192,603
	Total	63,426	67,281	\$1,482,073
December 2023	Civil Attachment	21,651	26,205	\$642,038
	Fines Attachment	43,335	43,335	\$987,043
	Voluntary Allotment	10,041	10,041	\$177,209
	Total	75,027	79,584	\$1,806,290
December 2024	Civil Attachment	26,028	31,836	\$782,282
	Fines Attachment	60,714	60,714	\$1,397,873
	Voluntary Allotment	11,718	11,715	\$211,900
	Total	98,457	104,268	\$2,392,054
December 2025	Civil Attachment	25,635	31,380	\$750,467
	Fines Attachment	56,571	56,568	\$1,293,897
	Voluntary Allotment	11,907	11,907	\$218,922
	Total	94,113	99,855	\$2,263,286

Table Notes:

- A client may have more than one court fine at a point in time.
- Current benefits include all Main Benefits, NZ Superannuation, Veteran's Pension and Non-Beneficiary assistance.
- This data includes clients of all ages.
- Court fines include:
 - Attachment Orders refer to when MoJ requests MSD to make payments to MoJ from the client's benefit.
 - Allotments refer to when a client voluntarily agrees to make payments to MoJ.
 - Civil Attachments refer to when MoJ requests MSD to make payments to a private individual or organisation that is owed money. Occasionally a District Court will act as a collection agent for civil debts.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- Random Rounding does not round 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.