



31 March 2026

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 10 February 2026, requesting information about warrant to arrest sanctions.

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

Warrants to arrest are initiated and resolved by the Ministry of Justice and actioned by the New Zealand Police when possible. The Ministry's Warrant to arrest policy applies to warrants to arrest for defendants issued in criminal proceedings and does not apply to warrants to arrest for a witness.

A data matching agreement allows the Ministry of Justice to supply the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) with information about people with unresolved warrants. The Ministry then takes appropriate action as set out under the Social Security Act 2018.

More information about the Ministry's Warrants to Arrest Policy is available at the following links:

- <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/warrant-to-arrest/index.html>
- <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/arrest-warrants.html>

Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

*How many people have had the warrant to arrest sanction applied for each financial (or calendar) year since the institution of the sanction in 2013?*

1. *In each financial (or calendar) year since 2013, of those who have had the warrant to arrest sanction applied (and subsequent benefit suspension), how many were Māori? Expressed as a numerical value and percentage if possible please.*

Please see attached **Appendix One** detailing the number of Warrant to Arrest Sanctions imposed on working-age main benefit clients between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2025, broken down by financial year, sanction action and Māori/non-Māori.

2. *In each financial (or calendar) year since 2013 how many General Warrant Requests were fulfilled by MSD to provide the New Zealand Police with further information to locate an offender to execute a warrant to arrest?*

*Expressed as a numerical value and percentage of total people who have had the warrant to arrest sanction applied in each year, if possible please.*

In the 2025 calendar year, the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) received 19,843 requests for information from the New Zealand Police, which includes General Warrant requests. These requests are not categorised into request type beyond 'NZ Police request for information'.

As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information. This information would be held in the requests, which would each require the Ministry to manually review thousands of NZ Police requests to respond to your request. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

3. *If different from the above question, in each financial (or calendar) year since 2013, how many notifications for warrants to arrest through the data match occurred?*

Please see the below **Appendix Two**, detailing the number of Warrants to Arrest notifications issued through the data matching programme since 2013, broken down by financial year.

4. *Since the institution of the sanction in 2013, how many cases is MSD aware of where there has been "sound operational reasons why police want an offender to continue to receive the benefit (e.g. if there is a plan in place to apprehend the offender on their arrival at the bank to withdraw benefit payment)" (p. 25 - [arrest-and-detention-redacted-010822.pdf](#)).*

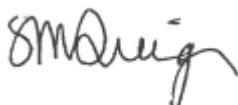
The Ministry is not aware of any case related to your question. Your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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

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Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**

**Appendix Two:** Number of Warrant to Arrest (WTA) notifications issued through the Ministry's data matching programme since 2013, broken down by financial year.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number of WTA notifications</b>
FY2013/2014	4,553
FY2014/2015	4,398
FY2015/2016	5,812
FY2016/2017	6,418
FY2017/2018	6,577
FY2018/2019	7,679
FY2019/2020	8,753
FY2020/2021	9,513
FY2021/2022	9,373
FY2022/2023	9,450
FY2023/2024	9,272
FY2024/2025	8,209
FY2025/2026 (up to 5 March 2026)	4,126
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,133</b>