

20 MAY 2020

Daniel Farrell
fyi-request-12613-ba132b7d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Farrell

Official Information Act 1982 request

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 13 April 2020 regarding guilty pleas to criminal cases.

Your requests and my responses are set out below:

- 1. For each year from 2015-2019 inclusive, how many defendants pled guilty to charges brought against them, and what percentage of total cases does this equate to?*

In response to part 1 of your request, please see Tables 1-2 and explanatory notes attached.

- 2. Of those defendants, how many were self-represented?*

In response to part 2 of your request, the information you have requested is not recorded by the Ministry of Justice. The information may be held by the courts which are excluded from the operation of the OIA under section 2(6)(a). Therefore, I am refusing your request under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA as there are no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department, Minister of the Crown, organisation, or local authority.

- 3. Does the Ministry obtain socio-economic demographic information on defendants in criminal cases? If it does:
 - a) What was the breakdown by socio-economic group for those who self-represented?*
 - b) What was the breakdown by socio-economic group for those who pled guilty?*
 - c) What was the breakdown by socio-economic group for those who both self-represented and pled guilty?**

In response to part 3 of your request, the information you have requested is not recorded by the Ministry of Justice. Therefore, I am refusing your request under section 18(g)(i) of the OIA as there are no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department, Minister of the Crown, organisation, or local authority.

If you require any clarification of the information contained in this response please contact Jerram Watts, Team Leader, Media (Acting), by calling 027 291 3518; or emailing media@justice.govt.nz

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA. You can contact the Office of the Ombudsman by writing to PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143; calling 0800 802 602; or emailing info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

I trust that this information assists.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JS', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jacquelyn Shannon
Group Manager, Courts and Tribunals, Regional Service Delivery

Ref: 81414

Table 1: Number of people with finalised charges by plea, 2015 - 2019

Plea Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Guilty	64,619	65,502	65,418	61,821	58,595
Not Guilty	5,885	6,077	6,157	6,114	6,043
No Plea Recorded	6,240	6,181	6,232	5,680	6,341
Total	76,744	77,760	77,807	73,615	70,979

Table 1a: Number of people with finalised charges by plea and court, 2015 - 2019

Court	Plea Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
District Court	Guilty	64,242	65,086	64,930	61,334	58,219
	Not Guilty	5,666	5,833	5,921	5,918	5,871
	No Plea Recorded	6,227	6,167	6,222	5,672	6,331
High Court	Guilty	377	416	488	487	376
	Not Guilty	219	244	236	196	172
	No Plea Recorded	13	14	10	8	10
Total	Guilty	64,619	65,502	65,418	61,821	58,595
	Not Guilty	5,885	6,077	6,157	6,114	6,043
	No Plea Recorded	6,240	6,181	6,232	5,680	6,341

Table 2: Percentage of people with finalised charges by plea, 2015 - 2019

Plea Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Guilty	84%	84%	84%	84%	83%
Not Guilty	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%
No Plea Recorded	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Notes to Tables 1-2:

- This information is recorded by calendar year.
- Each person is counted once per year.
- The outcome court and charge detail related to their most serious offence is counted.
- These tables count the most serious charge per person and identified the latest plea for that charge only.
- This means that an individual may have pleaded guilty to a less serious charge in each year.
- In any instance where a charge is withdrawn or replaced, the charge is still captured but may not be subject to a plea being recorded.