



**24 JUN 2016**

Mr Jonathan King  
Auckland Action Against Poverty  
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Dear Mr King

On 17 May 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *For each year from 1990 to 2016, the number of sole parents who were subject to reductions in the rates of their benefit payments under Section 70a of the Social Security Act, broken down by total number and percentage according to:*
  - a) *Gender*
  - b) *Age*
  - c) *Ethnicity*
  - d) *How many reductions were applied to that sole parent's benefit payments under Section 70a*
  - e) *As a percentage of sole parents receiving benefit payments listed in 70a at the time*
  
- *The number of cases for each of the years listed above in which reductions under Section 70a were not applied, or reductions were stopped, as a result of reference to the clauses in 70A(3) or equivalent clauses in previous versions of the law. Please break these down by total number and percentage according to which reason in law the exemption was applied.*

As you are aware, from 15 July 2013, those in receipt of a Domestic Purposes Benefit Sole Parent moved to Sole Parent Support or, for those whose youngest child is aged between 14 and 18 years of age, to Jobseeker Support.

Under section 70A of the Social Security Act 1964, people who apply for a sole parent rate of benefit have a legal obligation to make a Child Support Application under the Child Support Act for each dependent child and identify the paying parents. However there are certain circumstances where a person does not have to apply for Child Support, for example, where the paying parent is deceased; where the parent caring for the child or children would be at risk of violence if they took steps to meet their Child Support obligations; where the paying partner is in prison; or the child was conceived as a result of sexual violation.

I have enclosed six tables that provide you with the breakdown of the working age sole parents on Jobseeker Support or Sole Parent Support with a section 70A Child Support deduction.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with the data prior to October 2004 as the Ministry's systems did not capture data on Child Support exemptions prior to this time. Since October 2004, this data was being captured while clients' records were gradually reviewed and updated, so you will note an increase in the numbers over the years.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10-152  
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Bound'.

Ruth Bound  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery**

**Table 1: Working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support with a section 70A Child Support deduction by gender as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016**

Gender	Mar-05		Mar-06		Mar-07		Mar-08		Mar-09		Mar-10		Mar-11		Mar-12	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
Female	10,353	98.3	13,286	98.6	12,357	98.4	11,830	98.6	12,955	98	13,552	97.4	13,795	97.5	13,646	97.4
Male	180	1.7	186	1.4	205	1.6	167	1.4	258	2	355	2.6	357	2.5	365	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,472</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,562</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,997</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,213</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,907</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,152</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,011</b>	<b>100</b>

Gender	Mar-13		Mar-14		Mar-15		Mar-16	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
Female	13,364	97.7	13,623	97.1	13,498	97.4	13,298	97.7
Male	321	2.3	405	2.9	364	2.6	318	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,685</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,028</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,862</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,616</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support with a Section 70A Child Support deduction by age as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016.**

Age group	Mar-05		Mar-06		Mar-07		Mar-08		Mar-09		Mar-10		Mar-11		Mar-12	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
18-19	509	4.8	511	3.8	517	4.1	468	3.9	620	4.7	582	4.2	539	3.8	460	3.3
20-24	2,431	23.1	2,968	22	2,749	21.9	2,674	22.3	3,018	22.8	3,061	22	3,171	22.4	3,189	22.8
25-29	2,582	24.5	3,339	24.8	3,054	24.3	2,861	23.8	3,078	23.3	3,213	23.1	3,330	23.5	3,337	23.8
30-34	2,082	19.8	2,692	20	2,481	19.8	2,302	19.2	2,477	18.7	2,635	18.9	2,655	18.8	2,542	18.1
35-39	1,489	14.1	2,048	15.2	1,894	15.1	1,853	15.4	1,982	15	2,072	14.9	2,020	14.3	1,944	13.9
40-44	935	8.9	1,176	8.7	1,085	8.6	1,053	8.8	1,152	8.7	1,316	9.5	1,354	9.6	1,412	10.1
45-49	356	3.4	533	4	560	4.5	559	4.7	635	4.8	713	5.1	716	5.1	730	5.2
50-54	113	1.1	163	1.2	176	1.4	179	1.5	191	1.4	237	1.7	288	2	298	2.1
55-59	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	53	0.4	66	0.5	66	0.5	80	0.6
60-64	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	7	0.1	12	0.1	13	0.1	19	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,472</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,562</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,997</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,213</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,907</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,152</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,011</b>	<b>100</b>

**Note:** 'S' represents a suppressed value to protect clients' privacy.

**Table 2: Working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support with a Section 70A Child Support deduction by age as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016.**

Age group	Mar-13		Mar-14		Mar-15		Mar-16	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
18-19	279	2	303	2.2	216	1.6	241	1.8
20-24	3,134	22.9	3,285	23.4	3,177	22.9	2,952	21.7
25-29	3,405	24.9	3,553	25.3	3,620	26.1	3,634	26.7
30-34	2,591	18.9	2,688	19.2	2,709	19.5	2,674	19.6
35-39	1,860	13.6	1,822	13	1,840	13.3	1,890	13.9
40-44	1,327	9.7	1,325	9.4	1,279	9.2	1,214	8.9
45-49	696	5.1	627	4.5	608	4.4	628	4.6
50-54	287	2.1	305	2.2	280	2	262	1.9
55-59	84	0.6	87	0.6	101	0.7	92	0.7
60-64	22	0.2	33	0.2	32	0.2	29	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,685</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,028</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,862</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,616</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support with a Section 70A Child Support deduction by prioritised ethnicity as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016**

Ethnic group	Mar-05		Mar-06		Mar-07		Mar-08		Mar-09		Mar-10		Mar-11		Mar-12	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
Maori	5,348	50.8	6,725	49.9	6,311	50.2	6,073	50.6	6,553	49.6	6,833	49.1	6,967	49.2	6,937	49.5
NZ European	3,120	29.6	3,850	28.6	3,559	28.3	3,371	28.1	3,894	29.5	4,125	29.7	4,226	29.9	4,172	29.8
Other	629	6	843	6.3	773	6.2	758	6.3	808	6.1	919	6.6	954	6.7	967	6.9
Pacific Island	1,334	12.7	1,904	14.1	1,778	14.2	1,648	13.7	1,749	13.2	1,808	13	1,777	12.6	1,720	12.3
Unspecified	102	1	150	1.1	141	1.1	147	1.2	209	1.6	222	1.6	228	1.6	215	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,472</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,562</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,997</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,213</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,907</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,152</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,011</b>	<b>100</b>

Ethnic group	Mar-13		Mar-14		Mar-15		Mar-16	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
Maori	6,842	50	7,196	51.3	7,211	52	7,195	52.8
NZ European	4,026	29.4	3,966	28.3	3,810	27.5	3,346	24.6
Other	969	7.1	960	6.8	946	6.8	987	7.2
Pacific Island	1,656	12.1	1,712	12.2	1,714	12.4	1,895	13.9
Unspecified	192	1.4	194	1.4	181	1.3	193	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,685</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,028</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,862</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,616</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4: Working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support with a Section 70A Child Support deduction by number of deductions as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016**

Deductions	Mar-05		Mar-06		Mar-07		Mar-08		Mar-09		Mar-10		Mar-11		Mar-12	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
1	8,578	81.4	10,887	80.8	10,232	81.5	9,817	81.8	10,849	82.1	11,318	81.4	11,567	81.7	11,458	81.8
2	1,589	15.1	2,112	15.7	1,920	15.3	1,809	15.1	1,965	14.9	2,138	15.4	2,145	15.2	2,082	14.9
3	299	2.8	392	2.9	344	2.7	318	2.7	342	2.6	378	2.7	363	2.6	386	2.8
4	51	0.5	62	0.5	57	0.5	46	0.4	50	0.4	64	0.5	66	0.5	75	0.5
5 or more	16	0.2	19	0.1	9	0.1	7	0.1	7	0.1	9	0.1	11	0.1	10	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,472</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,562</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11,997</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,213</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,907</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,152</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,011</b>	<b>100</b>

Deductions	Mar-13		Mar-14		Mar-15		Mar-16	
	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
1	11,097	81.1	11,407	81.3	11,183	80.7	10,848	79.7
2	2,091	15.3	2,116	15.1	2,151	15.5	2,189	16.1
3	407	3	409	2.9	445	3.2	476	3.5
4	82	0.6	87	0.6	72	0.5	82	0.6
5 or more	8	0.1	9	0.1	11	0.1	21	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,685</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,028</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,862</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,616</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5: The number of clients with a Section 70A Child Support deduction as a percentage of working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016**

Benefit	Mar-05			Mar-06			Mar-07			Mar-08			Mar-09		
	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction
DPB-SP	10,471	98,091	10.7%	13,420	95,303	14.1%	12,513	88,508	14.1%	11,983	86,333	13.9%	13,194	91,442	14.4%
JS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UB related	62	2,612	2.4%	52	1,993	2.6%	49	1,393	3.5%	14	772	1.8%	19	885	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,533</b>	<b>100,703</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>13,472</b>	<b>97,296</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>12,562</b>	<b>89,901</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>11,997</b>	<b>87,105</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>13,213</b>	<b>92,327</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

**Table 5: The number of clients with a Section 70A Child Support deduction as a percentage of working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016**

Benefit	Mar-10			Mar-11			Mar-12			Mar-13			Mar-14		
	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction
DPB-SP	13,861	97,661	14.2%	14,110	99,922	14.1%	13,972	98,989	14.1%	13,642	92,550	14.7%	0	0	0
JS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	834	11,634	7.2%
SPS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13,194	75,844	17.4%
UB related	46	1,384	3.3%	42	1,522	2.8%	39	1,364	2.9%	43	1,388	3.1%	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,907</b>	<b>99,045</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>14,152</b>	<b>101,444</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>14,011</b>	<b>100,353</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>13,685</b>	<b>93,938</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>14,028</b>	<b>87,478</b>	<b>16.0%</b>

Benefit	Mar-15			Mar-16		
	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction	Number of clients with a Section 70A deduction	Number of working age sole parents	Percentage of working age sole parents with a section 70A deduction
DPB-SP	0	0	0	0	0	0
JS	828	10,867	7.6%	852	10,638	8.0%
SPS	13,034	70,373	18.5%	12,764	66,387	19.2%
UB related	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,862</b>	<b>81,240</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>13,616</b>	<b>77,025</b>	<b>17.7%</b>

**Note:**

JS and SPS replaced UB and DPB-SP when the Welfare Reform changes came into place on 15th July 2013.

**Table 6: Working age sole parents on Jobseeker or Sole Parent Support with a Section 70A Child Support exemption by exemption reason as at the end of March 2005 to March 2016**

Exemption reason	Number of clients											
	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12	Mar-13	Mar-14	Mar-15	Mar-16
Compelling circumstances s70a (3)(bb)	0	22	25	37	70	86	104	112	118	203	275	364
Conception issues s70a (3)(c)	42	75	75	96	108	118	138	153	139	157	181	206
Insufficient evidence s70a (3)(a)	74	169	200	245	311	378	437	491	504	536	595	702
Taking active steps s70a (3)(b)	179	536	630	700	707	766	765	796	800	886	961	1,128

Exemption reason	Number of clients											
	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12	Mar-13	Mar-14	Mar-15	Mar-16
Violence s70a (3)(ba)	0	61	102	144	187	216	233	276	309	345	396	541
<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>1,529</b>	<b>1,648</b>	<b>1,791</b>	<b>1,831</b>	<b>2,086</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>2,884</b>

**Notes:**

Some clients can be counted twice in the table if they have more than one child with a section 70a exemption for different reasons, however they will only be counted in the total once.

The Ministry's systems did not capture data on Child Support exemptions prior to October 2004.

Since October 2004, this data was being captured while clients' records were gradually reviewed and updated, so we see an increase in the numbers over the series.

Working age clients is 18-64 year old clients.

Sole parents on JS includes single clients with children included in their benefit.

Clients can have multiples Section 70A deductions, if they have multiple children for which this is applicable. This report is a count of clients with one or more deduction.

Demographics are for the client, not the children to whom the deductions are applied.

It cannot be assumed that the ethnicity classification used to construct this table necessarily aligns neatly with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded in MSD's systems have been gathered under a variety of classification schemes as clients came into contact with the Ministry.

Other ethnicities includes Other Europeans, Asian peoples and Middle Eastern/Latin American/African people.

JS is Job Seeker.

SPS is Sole Parent Support.

UB related is Unemployment Benefit and Unemployment Benefit Hardship

DPB-SP is Domestic Purposes Benefit - Sole Parent