

## 29 JUN 2016

Ms Sarah Thompson Auckland Action Against Poverty <u>fyi-request-4103-8ae8fe73@requests.fyi.org.nz</u>

Dear Ms Thompson

On 4 June 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- 1. For the years 1980 to 2016, the numbers of sole parents (receiving any benefit covered by the Social Security Act) with children in their care who were required to provide identifying information to MSD of the non custodial parent.
- 2. For each year could we please have the above numbers broken down by age, gender and ethnicity
- 3. For the years 1980 to 2016, the numbers of sole parents (receiving any benefit covered by the Social Security Act) with children in their care who provided identifying information to MSD of the non custodial parent.
- 4. For each year could we please have the above numbers broken down by age, gender and ethnicity?
- 5. For the years 1980 to 2016, the number of sole parents (receiving any benefit covered by the Social Security Act) with children in their care who DID NOT provide identifying information to MSD of the non custodial parent.
- 6. For each year could we please have the above numbers broken down by age, gender and ethnicity?

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.

There are specific 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.

A client may also be exempt from this reduction if they are taking active steps to legally identify the paying parent or their Case Manager assesses that there is no real likelihood of Child Support being collected.

When a person has had a section 70A deduction imposed for at least 13 weeks they will have their benefit further reduced by an additional \$6 per week if they have not

met these obligations. This further \$6 reduction can only be applied once regardless of how many dependent children the person has. For more information, I have provided you with a link to the Work and Income website: <a href="http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/acts/social-security-act-1964/section-70a-rates-of-benefits-for-sole-parents-may.html">http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/legislation/acts/social-security-act-1964/section-70a-rates-of-benefits-for-sole-parents-may.html</a>

I have enclosed three tables that provide you with the number of working age sole parent beneficiaries broken down by gender, ethnicity and age group. Sole parents who are in receipt of a benefit are required to provide identifying information to the Ministry as per parts one and two of your request. The Ministry's reporting systems only capture this information back to 1997, as such I am unable to provide you with the data prior to 1997 backdated to 1980 as you have requested.

The Ministry is unable to break down the number of sole parents who received a benefit between 1980 and 2016 and whom either did or did not provide identifying information to the Ministry of the non-custodial parent as per parts three, four five and six of your request. This is due to the way the information is captured. Under Section 70A (2) the rate of benefit payable to any beneficiary to whom this section applies shall be reduced in respect of each dependent child in the care of the beneficiary:

- whose other parent has not been identified in law;
- whose other parent has not been named in an application for formula assessment of child support under the <u>Child Support Act 1991</u> as a liable parent from whom child support is sought;
- whose other parent the beneficiary has failed or refused to testify against as required under <u>section 122</u> of the Child Support Act 1991.

The Ministry's reporting system is unable to distinguish between the three reasons as mentioned above when a deduction is applied to their benefit. In order for the Ministry to determine the reason as to why the deduction was applied, Ministry staff would have to review the individual file of the client affected to determine if they did or did not provide identifying information to the Ministry.

As such, I am unable to provide you with as this information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. 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. I have also included a further six tables which provide you with a breakdown of the number of sole parents who are subject to a reduction in their rates of benefit under section 70A of the Social Security Act 1964 that you may find helpful. The tables provide you with the number of sole parents with a section 70A child support deduction broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, the number of deductions, the benefit they receive and the reasons a reduction has not been applied (exemption).

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

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

Table one: Working age sole parents in receipt of Unemployment Benefit, DBP-SP, JS or SPS as at the end of March 1997 - March 2016 broken down by gender.

Gender	Mar-97	Mar-98	Mar-99	Mar-00	Mar-01	Mar-02	Mar-03	Mar-04	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12
Female	99,287	101,201	98,434	97,286	96,328	95,236	95,087	93,707	90,499	87,506	80,863	78,419	82,642	87,798	90,010	89,279
Male	12,897	13,094	12,860	12,556	12,355	12,030	11,788	11,197	10,204	9,790	9,038	8,686	9,685	11,247	11,434	11,074
Total	112,184	114,295	111,294	109,842	108,683	107,266	106,875	104,904	100,703	97,296	89,901	87,105	92,327	99,045	101,444	100,353

Gender	Mar-13	Mar-14	Mar-15	Mar-16
Female	83,875	78,055	72,504	68,874
Male	10,063	9,423	8,736	8,151
Total	93,938	87,478	81,240	77,025

Table two: Working age sole parents in receipt of UB, DBP-SP, JS or SPS as at the end of March 1997 - March 2016 broken down by ethnicity.

Ethnic group	Mar-97	Mar-98	Mar-99	Mar-00	Mar-01	Mar-02	Mar-03	Mar-04	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12
Maori	34,367	37,986	38,031	38,311	38,505	42,813	43,072	42,438	41,221	40,104	37,596	37,060	39,154	42,069	43,537	43,750
NZ European	40,582	44,811	44,914	44,891	44,823	47,216	44,869	42,920	40,716	38,889	35,121	33,227	34,646	36,931	37,275	36,054
Pacific Island	7,918	8,792	8,749	8,924	9,001	8,967	9,419	9,450	9,151	8,912	8,467	8,304	9,064	9,794	10,032	9,980
Other	4,179	4,759	5,133	5,505	5,690	6,738	8,513	8,734	8,206	7,987	7,341	7,105	7,871	8,507	8,837	8,912
Unspecified	25,138	17,947	14,467	12,211	10,664	1,532	1,002	1,362	1,409	1,404	1,376	1,409	1,592	1,744	1,763	1,657
Total	112,184	114,295	111,294	109,842	108,683	107,266	106,875	104,904	100,703	97,296	89,901	87,105	92,327	99,045	101,444	100,353

Ethnic group	Mar-13	Mar-14	Mar-15	Mar-16
Maori	41,637	39,625	37,571	36,226
NZ European	33,301	29,947	26,813	23,350
Pacific				
Island	9,227	8,723	8,093	8,406
Other	8,361	7,974	7,673	7,966
Unspecified	1,412	1,209	1,090	1,077
Total	93,938	87,478	81,240	77,025

Note:

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

Age group	Mar-97	Mar-98	Mar-99	Mar-00	Mar-01	Mar-02	Mar-03	Mar-04	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12
18-19	3,149	3,125	2,795	2,784	2,728	2,591	2,715	2,744	2,741	2,702	2,763	2,923	3,253	3,343	3,047	2,715
20-24	18,767	18,221	16,995	16,681	16,609	16,466	16,252	15,847	15,098	14,807	14,129	14,212	15,818	17,242	18,324	18,329
25-29	24,551	24,446	22,863	21,908	21,035	20,085	19,465	18,876	17,990	17,569	16,089	15,379	15,932	17,115	17,808	18,001
30-34	24,082	23,987	23,144	22,707	22,491	22,067	21,801	20,870	19,417	17,956	15,919	14,827	15,048	15,884	16,314	16,067
35-39	20,930	22,100	21,924	21,515	20,733	20,295	20,042	19,504	18,686	17,845	16,196	15,391	15,969	16,449	16,095	15,433
40-44	12,321	13,389	13,939	14,255	14,649	14,898	15,374	15,334	14,873	14,233	12,906	12,271	13,015	14,120	14,278	14,099
45-49	5,499	5,931	6,325	6,516	6,806	7,080	7,339	7,674	7,806	7,947	7,748	7,735	8,360	9,236	9,450	9,349
50-54	1,919	2,089	2,258	2,383	2,506	2,547	2,638	2,811	2,924	3,057	3,009	3,113	3,456	3,981	4,275	4,438
55-59	770	808	823	821	800	854	853	887	851	898	866	949	1,125	1,276	1,423	1,451
60-64	196	199	228	272	326	383	396	357	317	282	276	305	351	399	430	471
Total	112,184	114,295	111,294	109,842	108,683	107,266	106,875	104,904	100,703	97,296	89,901	87,105	92,327	99,045	101,444	100,353

Table three: Working age sole parents in receipt of UB, DBP-SP, JS or SPS as at the end of March 1997 - March 2016 broken down by age group.

Age group	Mar-13	Mar-14	Mar-15	Mar-16
18-19	1,620	1,309	1,119	981
20-24	17,419	15,992	14,479	13,141
25-29	17,586	17,014	16,600	16,496
30-34	15,331	14,108	13,419	12,916
35-39	13,978	12,544	11,591	10,977
40-44	13,134	11,868	10,486	9,565
45-49	8,634	8,053	7,355	6,933
50-54	4,293	4,281	3,955	3,791
55-59	1,459	1,633	1,563	1,571
60-64	484	676	673	654
Total	93,938	87,478	81,240	77,025

Note:

UB is Unemployment Benefit
DPB-SP is DPB-Sole Parent
JS is Jobseeker Support
SPS is Sole Parent Support
JS and SPS replaced UB and DPB-SP when the Welfare Reform changes came into place on 15th July 2013.

	Ma	ar-05	M	ar-06	M	ar-07	M	ar-08	м	ar-09	M	ar-10	M	ar-11	M	ar-12
Gender	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
Total	10,533	100	13,472	100	12,562	100	11,997	100	13,213	100	13,907	100	14,152	100	14,011	100

Table four: 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

	M	ar-13	Ma	ar-14	м	ar-15	М	ar-16
Gender	Number 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
Total	13,685	100	14,028	100	13,862	100	13,616	100

Table five: 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.

	Ma	ar-05	M	ar-06	М	ar-07	M	ar-08	М	ar-09	М	ar-10	М	ar-11	M	ar-12
Age group	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
Total	10,533	100	13,472	100	12,562	100	11,997	100	13,213	100	13,907	100	14,152	100	14,011	100

Note:

• 'S' represents a suppressed value to protect clients' privacy.

Age group	м	ar-13	м	ar-14	м	ar-15	м	ar-16
	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
Total	13,685	100	14,028	100	13,862	100	13,616	100

Table five: 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.

Table six: 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

	M	ar-05	M	ar-06	Mar-07		М	Mar-08		ar-09	М	ar-10	M	ar-11	M	ar-12
Ethnic group	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			,									00.7	4.000	20.0	4 1 7 0	
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		1	150	1.1	141	1.1	147	1.2	209	1.6	222	1.6	228	1.6	215	1.5
Total	10,533	100	13,472	100	12,562	100	11,997	100	13,213	100	13,907	100	14,152	100	14,011	100

	м	ar-13	м	ar-14	М	ar-15	M	ar-16
Ethnic group	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
Total	13,685	100	14,028	100	13,862	100	13,616	100

Table seven: 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

	M	ar-05	M	ar-06	М	ar-07	М	ar-08	М	ar-09	М	ar-10	M	ar- <b>11</b>	Mar-12	
Deductions	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
Total	10,533	100	13,472	100	12,562	100	11,997	100	13,213	100	13,907	100	14,152	100	14,011	100

	M	lar-13	М	ar-14	М	ar-15	М	ar-16
Deductions	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
Total	13,685	100	14,028	100	13,862	100	13,616	100

Table eight: 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

		Mar-05			Mar-06			Mar-07			Mar-08			Mar-09	
Benefit	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%
Total	10,533	100,703	10.5%	13,472	97,296	13.8%	12,562	89,901	14.0%	11,997	87,105	13.8%	13,213	92,327	14.3%

Table eight: 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

		Mar-10			Mar-11			Mar-12			Mar-13			Mar-14	
Benefit	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
Total	13,907	99,045	14.0%	14,152		14.0%	14,011	100,353	14.0%	13,685	93,938	14.6%	14,028	87,478	16.0%

		Mar-15			Mar-16	
Benefit DPB-SP	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
Total	13,862	81,240	17.1%	13,616	77,025	17.7%

Note:

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

# Table nine: 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

Examption reason		Number of clients											
Exemption reason	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	

Examption reason						Number o	of clients					
Exemption reason	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
Total	294	851	1,012	1,197	1,356	1,529	1,648	1,791	1,831	2,086	2,360	2,884

### 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 • the Ministry'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 ٠