



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

17 MAR 2017



On 19 December 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information relating to the care and protection of subsequent children under section 18 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (CYP&F Act).

For clarity, your questions will be addressed in turn.

- *How many children since the introduction of the s18 amendment to the CYP&tF Act 1989 amendment have been identified as a 'subsequent child'?*
- *Of these, how many were defined as such due to their parent having committed a crime as given in s18 (1)(a), and how many due to the range of criteria in s18(1)(b) and 18B(2)?*
- *How many children have been subject to a s67 application under the new 'subsequent child' amendment that they are in need of care and protection?*
- *How many children have been subject to an application under s18C for confirmation of a decision not to apply for a s67 declaration?*
- *What are the demographics of children identified as 'subsequent children' (ages and ethnic groups)?*
- *What is the gender split of parents who have been defined as 'subsequent parents' so far?*

The Ministry is unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with data relating to the subsequent children provision of the CYP&F Act and the resulting section 67 declaration applications, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such your request is refused 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.

To meet reporting requirements, the Ministry has implemented new IT systems to accurately and efficiently capture data relating to subsequent children. While Social Workers can record and access information relating to subsequent children, the system to enable reporting of this data is currently under development and is due for completion in 2017. Once this system is finalised the Ministry will endeavour to provide data regarding section 18 of the CYP&F Act.

- *What are the mechanisms by which these children have been identified?*

Prior to the new provisions of the CYP&F Act, Child, Youth and Family relied on the Ministry of Justice to provide information about adults who met the criteria under section 18B of the CYP&F Act. The changes in legislation have allowed the Ministry, with the help of the Police, to implement a system which can flag and record the details of these individuals.

A description of the procedure to identify subsequent children and assess cases involving subsequent children is available on the Ministry's website: www.practicecentre.cyf.govt.nz/documents/policy/assessment-and-decision-making/subsequent-children-step-by-step-guide-resource1.pdf

- *How many children have been removed from their parent's care due to a declaration being made that they are in need of care and protection?*

The Ministry is able to provide the below tables which show a snapshot of the number of distinct children and young people in the custody of the Chief Executive and in out of home care, as at the end of the financial quarter in comparison with the September 2016 quarter.

Table One: The distinct number of children and young people in the custody of the Chief Executive, as at end of last five financial years and comparison with end of the September 2016 quarter.

	June 2012	June 2013	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016	September 2016
Distinct children and young people	4,979	4,960	5,188	5,026	5,312	5,380

Table Two: The distinct number of children and young people in out of home placements, as at end of last five financial years and comparison with end of September 2016 quarter.

	June 2012	June 2013	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016	September 2016
Distinct children and young people	3,884	3,844	4,129	4,163	4,394	4,435

- *Is there anywhere this information is publically available?*

The Ministry publishes regularly produced key statistics of public interest on the Child, Youth and Family website: www.cyf.govt.nz/about-us/key-statistics/

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response regarding the care and protection of subsequent children, please feel free to contact us at OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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.

Yours sincerely



Murray Edridge
Deputy Chief Executive