



Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

On 10 September 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many Ministry of Social Development clients have had benefit reductions, when a sole parent supported by benefit does not name the other parent in accordance with section 192 (formerly section 70a) of the Social Security Act 2018, in the last ten years?*

Section 192 (formerly Section 70A) requires the Ministry to reduce the payment of a main benefit in respect of a dependent child where beneficiary fails to fulfil obligations relating to child support, like naming the other parent and applying for child support when required. Section 193 of the Social Security Act 2018 provides a number of exemptions to these reductions where there is a good reason not to identify the other parent, such as where this would result in a risk of violence.

From 1 April 2020, the sanction which reduces a client's benefit if they do not name the other parent of their child and apply for child support will be removed. This will reduce the additional financial pressure on these parents as a result of the reduction.

The table below shows the number of working age clients with section 192 reductions applied, as at the end of June from 2010 to 2019.

As at the end of June	Number of Caregivers
2010	14,835
2011	14,664
2012	14,807
2013	14,632
2014	14,721
2015	14,564
2016	14,350
2017	13,653
2018	12,508
2019	11,590

Notes:

- The table includes working age caregivers only (18 to 64 years)
- A caregiver may have one or more section 192 deductions and/or exemptions in place at the same time relating to different children in their care.
- The caregivers may not be a sole parent.

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 and any attached documents 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 with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding benefit reductions in accordance with Section 192 of the Social Security Act, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bridget Saunders', with a stylized, flowing script.

Bridget Saunders

Manager Issue Resolution Service Delivery