



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, Wellington 6011, PO Box 1556, Wellington 6140 • Telephone: 0-4-916 3300 • Facsimile: 0-4-918 0099

2-3 AUG 2012

Ms Alecia Bailey

Fyi-request-404-74232e1e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Bailey

Thank you for your email 26 July 2012 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

how many women have been found guilty of receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit under false pretences in the past five years?

how many of these women were convicted?

The Ministry of Social Development takes its responsibility in administering \$16 billion worth of income assistance to over one million New Zealanders each year very seriously. We work hard to protect the integrity of the system and to ensure it remains fair for all New Zealanders.

It is vital that the public has trust and confidence in the Ministry to ensure people receive their correct entitlement and do not take advantage of the welfare system. The Ministry does not tolerate benefit fraud and whenever we find evidence that a client has deliberately been involved in planned and premeditated benefit fraud they will be prosecuted and the money recovered. We are actively looking to prevent, detect and reduce incidences of benefit fraud and our systems are constantly improving to allow us to do this.

Case managers receive ongoing training to help them identify possible cases of fraud. The most effective way of preventing benefit fraud is at the frontline, before it occurs. Case managers also regularly remind clients of their obligations to tell Work and Income of any change to their personal circumstance which may affect their entitlement.

The vast majority of our clients are honest and receive their correct entitlement. However if people do attempt to take more than they should, there are a number of ways in which the Ministry detects benefit fraud, including through our Intelligence Unit, which identifies emerging trends and risks of fraud. This Unit works closely with other government agencies including the Police, Customs, Inland Revenue and ACC.

The Ministry runs nine data matching programmes with six government agencies: Housing New Zealand, ACC, Department of Corrections, Customs, two with Inland Revenue and three with the Department of Internal Affairs. Through sharing with these agencies we are able to check around 538 million records a year.

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To respond to your request for women who have been 'found guilty' and 'convicted', the Ministry is able to provide you with number of completed prosecutions over the last five financial years for women fraudulently claiming a Domestic Purposes Benefit. I can advise that in 2011/12, the Ministry was successful in 96 per cent of all benefit fraud prosecutions.

The below table has the number of completed prosecutions over the last five financial years for women clients who were fraudulently claiming a Domestic Purposes Benefit.

Year	Number prosecuted
2007/08	386
2008/09	314
2009/10	312
2010/11	254
2011/12	268

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 Ombudsmen
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Iona Holsted
Deputy Chief Executive Students, Seniors and Integrity Services