

21 December 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), received on 13 December 2023. You requested the following:

*(...) The IR child support domestic violence policy to understand how IR staff are trained to approach and react to situations where child support customers are impacted by domestic violence (...).*

Inland Revenue does not have a specific family violence policy; however we do have extensive training for our frontline people on dealing with situations where child support customers are impacted by domestic violence.

### **Protecting our vulnerable customers**

Inland Revenue's staff on the frontline have extensive experience in dealing with situations involving vulnerable customers. Staff are expected to approach each situation with empathy and understand that they are dealing with real people, who may often be experiencing complex and difficult situations in their lives. If a customer shares with Inland Revenue staff that they are suffering from abuse (in any form) by another party, it is noted in the system so that staff are aware of this for future interactions.

Inland Revenue contact centre staff receive training on how to support and guide vulnerable customers. Some examples of this training includes:

- unconscious bias training,
- demonstrating empathy,
- personalising customer interactions, and
- effective communication strategies

Additionally, under section 88(5) of the Child Support Act 1991 (CSA), the Commissioner of Inland Revenue (the Commissioner) may omit a parent's or carer's name from a notice of assessment or any related correspondence with the other party, if the Commissioner is satisfied that revealing the name would be prejudicial to the safety of any parent, carer, or child. The phrase "prejudicial to the safety" means there is a risk of harm to the care or wellbeing of someone and this may come in many forms, e.g., psychological, or physical violence or neglect.

Each case is considered individually, and a decision is made on the facts of each case. Inland Revenue can only omit the name of a parent or carer. A child's name cannot be omitted as a liable parent has the right to know which child they are liable to pay child support for.

### **Privacy of personal information**

Inland Revenue staff are required by section 18 of the Tax Administration Act 1994 to keep sensitive revenue information confidential. Sensitive revenue information is information that can likely identify an individual, or would likely be regarded as private or confidential, or the release of that information could cause harm or prejudice to the person whom it is about. Further, in accordance with section 22 of the Privacy Act 2020,

Information Privacy Principle 11, Inland Revenue is not permitted to share personal information to any other agency or person unless there are reasonable grounds to do so.

Section 240 of the CSA sets out specific secrecy rules relating to child support information, while sections 88 and 88A set out what details Inland Revenue must include in each party's child support notices.

For the purposes of administering child support, Inland Revenue is required to disclose the following information to the other party:

- Receiving carer or liable parents full legal name (unless omitted, or an alias is used)
- Children first name/s and date of birth
- Information of the care arrangement Inland Revenue holds or has been provided.
- A combined child support income amount (this is both parties child support income combined, minus any allowances each party receives)
- Information regarding collection of child support, limited to information that a collection source has been identified and/or set to collect from.

If you have any queries or require further explanation, you can contact Inland Revenue on 0800 221 221 to speak to one of our child support trained staff. Alternatively, you can send Inland Revenue a web message via *myIR*.

### **Publishing of OIA response**

Inland Revenue intends to publish our response to your request on Inland Revenue's website ([ird.govt.nz](http://ird.govt.nz)) as this information may be of interest to other members of the public. This letter, with your personal details removed, will be published in its entirety. Publishing responses increases the availability of information to the public and is consistent with the OIA's purpose of enabling more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies and promoting the accountability of Ministers and officials.

Thank you for your request. I trust that the information provided is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Sue Gillies  
**Customer Segment Leader, Families**