



2 NOV 2018



Dear 

On 13 August 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding policy staff who attended external training and development courses.

The Ministry of Social Development has a broad mandate to support New Zealanders across a wide range of social outcomes. Policy staff provide both strategic and operational policy advice for a wide range of topics and issues including employment, income support, help for families, initiatives to support communities, supports for people with different abilities and positive ageing.

The Ministry is committed to building staff capability. The approach to learning and development is based on a range of formal and informal development opportunities, on-the-job training, online learning, in-house coaching, mentoring, and secondments. Staff may also attend a range of external training or study programmes related to their jobs where these programmes are not available or cost efficient to run in-house, as agreed with their managers as part of staff performance agreement and development plans. It is efficient and effective for the Ministry to provide in-house training for staff and the Ministry continues to reduce reliance on and the costs associated with external providers wherever possible.

Your questions are addressed in turn below.

- *The number of staff whose main role/functions was to develop policy analysis and advice in 2017/18 financial year.*
- *The number of staff whose main role/function was to develop operational policy advice/guidance in 2017/18.*

At the end of June 2018, a total of 82 people (equating to 79.7 full time employees (FTE)) were employed in roles primarily focused on policy analysis and development for the Ministry. This figure has been taken at a point in time and staff movement will have occurred in teams throughout the year. Please note, some people work part time hours so the number of people and FTE differ.

Of these, 9 people (9 FTE) were employed in an Operational Policy and Practice team. Their role is to provide operational input during policy design and development. The team also supports the Ministry's Service Delivery group with advice and guidance on the implementation and application of legislation and policy. Service Delivery includes Work and Income, StudyLink and Seniors Services.

- *The number of staff in questions 1) and 2) above who attended external training or development courses in 2017/18.*
- *An estimate of the number of days that staff in questions 1) and 2) spent in external training or development courses in 2017/18.*

The Ministry does not hold a central register of external training or development courses completed by employees. Details about external training that is undertaken is between an employee and their manager and substantial manual collation would be required to locate this information. As such, this part of 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.

You may be interested to know, the Ministry provides a wide range of internal training workshops and modules which can be reported on in more detail.

In the 2017/2018 financial year, 35 courses were made available to some or all of the 82 employees identified. These courses vary in their delivery, with some undertaken as facilitated workshops and others completed in online learning modules. Examples of the training undertaken include learning about the Ministry's Code of Conduct, Responding to Mental Health Leadership Development, Strengths Discovery Top 5, New Manager Induction Workshop and various Health and Safety modules.

Across the 35 courses, for this group we recorded 691 "completions":

- 38 completions were recorded for facilitated workshops
- 653 completions were recorded for online learning modules

Please note, some staff may have completed a learning module on more than one occasion during this period so may be counted as completing this multiple times.

In total, this group spent 300 hours training across the 35 courses:

- 192 hours were spent in facilitated workshops (averaging 6 hours per session)
- 108 hours were spent completing online learning modules (averaging 10 minutes per session).

- *An estimate of the amount spent on external training and development courses for the staff in question 1) and 2) above in 2017/18.*

While we are not able to provide you with the number of staff who attended external training or development courses for the employees identified in questions 1 and 2, we can provide information about the amount spent on external training activity. Our financial system is broken down into budget codes for each area/team and we use "nominal" codes to allocate the money spent across each budget. I can advise that, in the 2017/2018 financial year, \$159,000, GST exclusive, has been coded to the external training and development nominal code for Policy employees.

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 with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding policy staff training, 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 'S. Crombie', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Crombie
Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Solutions