



19 FEB 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 13 January 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

- *I would like to know if an organisation is being awarded or having a contract renewed to provide therapeutic services, such as counselling, what requirements does Ministry of Social Development have in place as part of the contract that the staff providing therapeutic services must be registered with a professional body such as NZ Association of Counsellors or NZ Psychologists Board, and/or have relevant qualifications?*
- *To put it again very simply: Does MSD require staff providing therapeutic services to have relevant qualifications and/or registration with applicable professional bodies such as NZAC or NZ Psychologists Board, when the therapeutic services are funded by MSD?*

The Ministry of Social Development contracts a range of social services from providers. Where these services include therapeutic support providers are expected to comply with the contractual requirements set by the Ministry. These requirements are outlined in either the Outcome Agreement or service specifications, where appropriate, and contain specific references to the qualifications and experience required of both clinical staff and social support staff. The Ministry's specific contracts that include the provision of therapeutic services and the accompanying service specifications are outlined briefly below.

The Ministry contracts four specialist non-government organisations to provide services to non-mandated perpetrators, or those at risk of harmful sexual behaviour, or concerning sexual ideation, to address harmful sexual behaviour. The service guidelines published on the Ministry's website specify the requirement of clinical staff to have a recognised qualification and registration/membership with a relevant professional body. These guidelines are available from the Ministry's website here: [www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/service-guidelines/harmful-sexual-behaviour-services-for-non-mandated-adults-service-guidelines.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/service-guidelines/harmful-sexual-behaviour-services-for-non-mandated-adults-service-guidelines.pdf)

The Ministry also contracts Homecare Medical to deliver the national sexual harm helpline, Safe to talk – Kōrero mai ka ora which provides 24/7 access to free confidential information and support from trained professionals to people affected by or at risk of sexual harm. Staffing requirements for the helpline are referenced in the service specifications which are available from the Ministry's website here: [www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/service-guidelines/national-sexual-violence-helpline-service-specifications.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/service-guidelines/national-sexual-violence-helpline-service-specifications.pdf).

Homecare Medical are also contracted by the Ministry to deliver the Puāwaitanga prototype which provides confidential support, separate from Work and Income, for

people to improve their emotional wellbeing, which in turn may be impacting on their ability to find or keep a job. It is offered to clients who are in receipt of a main benefit or National Superannuation or participating in Mana in Mahi and receiving in-work support via Job Connect. Support through Puāwaitanga is provided by Homecare Medical's team of registered nurses, mental health nurses, psychologists, psychotherapists, paramedics, psychiatrists, counsellors, doctors, Health Advisors and Coordinators, sexual harm professionals and emergency triage nurses.

The Ministry's contract for Puāwaitanga states that the Provider (Homecare Medical) will be responsible for supplying professionals with qualifications in the relevant field (for instance counselling, nursing, or addiction), and fully registered with a professional body or Registered Health Board. Senior professionals must be qualified in a relevant field with additional training and qualifications in Mental Health Act related areas and fully registered with a professional body or Registered Health board.

If you have concerns or feedback about a service provided by the Ministry you can provide this information on the online form available from the Ministry's website here: <https://msd.govt.nz/form/msd/govt/nz/form.req2?requestType=msd-govt-nz-select-form-v1>.

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 in due course. 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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Mark Henderson  
**General Manager**  
**Safe Strong Families and Communities**