



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Dear

On 30 July 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. I would like to know if the Ministry of Social Development is using any form of software that prohibits a person from sending them an email. I very often get "error", "not available". When you submit something you get a case number with 20 digits. Example: 17361140530883582813. Upon calling and enquiring if they have received your email and giving your case number, the person hasn't a clue what you are on about. I find this activity very suspicious. They have the freedom to make your life extremely difficult but if you catch them out denying your rights they hide behind an Internet security system.*
- 2. I want to know why it is so difficult to email, we don't all have hours to spend on hold waiting for a real person to talk to.*

In response to your first question, I can advise that the Ministry does not generally use technology to prohibit people from sending emails. However, in some circumstances, inbound emails are blocked or filtered:

- Inbound emails are filtered for spam, active code (executables), malicious code (viruses), or phishing emails. These emails will be quarantined.
- Inbound emails that are classified at a security level higher than 'Sensitive' are blocked.
- Inbound emails that exceed the Ministry's size limits may be rejected.

An initial investigation suggests that the interactions with the Ministry you are referring to were not by email, but by submitting an online form from the Work and Income website. From the information provided, it seems a request was rejected by our system with a support ID: 17361140530883582813, perhaps due to incorrect or incomplete data submitted in the form. We currently do not have enough information to investigate why you have received messages like "error" or "not available". To investigate this further, we would need details such as the date or time of error, the sender email addresses, or screenshots of the error message. Please let us know if further investigation is required.

In response to your second question, I can advise that clients under active case management will be able to contact their case manager through a range of channels (including email). Clients can speak to the Service Centre about alternative options to send documents through. Some areas of the Ministry have email addresses that clients or third parties can use, but these are usually for a specific service.

Communication that is not phone-based or face-to-face will run the risk of details being lost or requiring several emails or messages to collate the detail required. This can cause unnecessary delays, or frustration for clients. The Ministry trialled communicating more extensively via email with clients in the past. However, it has been assessed that this did not bring the desired results in terms of effectiveness for clients and staff. Phone or face-to-face case management allows the Ministry to have first-contact resolution. This means that all necessary actions can be completed at once.

The Ministry offers a range of communication channels – and is exploring if these can be expanded. However, the Ministry needs to ensure that these channels are secure enough to ensure that clients' privacy and security of information is guaranteed. The Ministry is still working through these requirements.

There are other options to enhance communication between the clients and the Ministry. The Ministry offers call-back options on some contact centre lines. In addition, clients can communicate electronically via MyMSD, for example, to report change of circumstances.

The principles and purposes of the Act 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
- 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. 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 regarding client communication with the Ministry, 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

*Bridget Saunders*

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**Issues Resolution Manager**