



24 January 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 5 December 2024, requesting information on voluntary stand-down periods, including correspondence from or between the Ministry of Social Development's senior leadership team regarding the letter of expectations from the Minister of Social Development and Employment around applying sanctions.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision set out below.

Any new or updated policy, guidance, or direction to MSD staff about the application of voluntary unemployment stand-downs since September 2023

I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

I can confirm there has been no new or updated policy and/or guidance to Ministry staff on voluntary unemployment stand-downs since September 2023 to the current date.

The number of voluntary stand-down periods imposed on working age main benefit clients in each month since January 2023

Please find data on the number of voluntary unemployment stand-downs imposed between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2024 in the **Appendix** attached to this letter.

Any correspondence between or from the senior leadership of MSD regarding the application of sanctions and stand-down periods in response to the Minister of Social Development's letter of expectations dated 16 February 2024, and any guidance or direction to MSD staff relating to implementing practice changes arising from the Minister's letter of expectations.

Your request for this information is very broad, and substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all documents within scope of your request. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The

greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

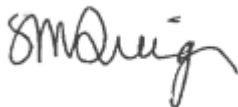
I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services