



3 July 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 10 June, requesting information about the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry's) security and access management and retention policies.

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

Security and access management

The management of requests for access to shared inboxes is a manual process in which a Ministry employee applies for access. The request is approved by a manager prior to being actioned by a nominated team. The same process applies for the removal of access.

Microsoft Outlook/Exchange has been internally certified and accredited. Certification and accreditation provide the Ministry with confidence that the delivery of applications and systems are well-managed, and risks are properly identified and mitigated.

There are currently no technical access management policies regarding the mailbox management. This is purely a manual process and the responsibility of the business group who uses the mailbox.

It is up to managers of the team to request removal of staff names from shared email inboxes.

The Code of Conduct ensures that staff only access people's information for business purposes. The Ministry regularly conducts audits of staff's footprints to ensure the right people are accessing people's personal information.

Storing and working with personal information in shared inboxes

The Ministry provides guidance to staff that information should not be stored on our corporate email platform (including shared mailboxes) long term. The guidance recommends that once the email has been processed, a record must be created in the approved business location, and the email should be deleted. Practice on this may vary from team to team.

The Ministry supports our staff with guidance reinforced by an annually repeated training refresher course around privacy of personal information, including the access, use, and storage of information. The Ministry also provides guidance on practical steps for keeping information secure.

If any breach of privacy or IT security does occur, employees are required to submit a reporting form to ensure that the breach is managed appropriately to prevent harm to individuals.

The Ministry's retention of emails

The Ministry has a technical solution in place that automatically moves emails to an online archive within Microsoft Outlook/Exchange after two years.

We do not automatically dispose of emails from individual staff members' mailboxes. Our policy requires that staff identify any information of value, including emails, and move them into the appropriate record-keeping systems. Once this is done, staff members are then able to delete emails as required.

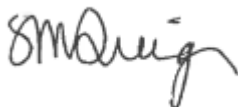
For shared mailboxes, where business workflows have been established to capture information elsewhere, automatic deletion may be in place, with retention periods set based on the specific processes involved. In cases where such workflows are not in place, shared mailboxes are treated in the same manner as individual mailboxes.

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
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Ministerial and Executive Services