



11 December 2024

Tēnā koe Nic Lane,

### **Official Information Act Request**

Thank you for your email of 13 November 2024, requesting information about the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry's) complaints process, and its accessibility.

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

#### ***Documentation of the Complaints Process***

*- An outline of the complaints process, including step-by-step details on how individuals can lodge a complaint and any flowcharts to understand this process.*

This information has previously been released in response to a request made under the Act, and is available on the Ministry's website:

[www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/2024/may/27052024-the-process-in-which-complaints-are-received.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/2024/may/27052024-the-process-in-which-complaints-are-received.pdf)

Please also see the following link which is available to clients when they are looking to contact the Ministry to make a complaint:

[www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/contact-us/complaints/index.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/contact-us/complaints/index.html).

#### ***Accessibility Design for Languages***

*- Information on the languages supported within the complaints process, including te Reo Māori, New Zealand Sign Language, and any other languages available.*

*- Details of any written, spoken, or digital resources available in these languages to assist complainants through the process.*

*- Any specific strategies or initiatives to support complainants whose first language is not English.*

The Ministry offers a range of supports for clients who face accessibility barriers to Work and Income information. Additional ways the Ministry can offer to support these clients can be found here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-this-site/accessibility.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-this-site/accessibility.html). This includes support for clients whose first language is not English.

For clients who require additional guidance, it is possible for them to choose to have a person act on their behalf. Further information regarding agents on can be found here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/your-rights-and-responsibilities/having-someone-act-on-your-behalf.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-a-benefit/your-rights-and-responsibilities/having-someone-act-on-your-behalf.html).

### **Alternative Format Availability**

- *Information on the availability of alternative formats (e.g., Easy Read, BRF, Oral) for complaints documentation and resources.*
- *Timelines around when these Alternative Formats if not provided will be.*

In regard to your request for information held by the Ministry regarding the availability of alternate formats specifically in relation to complaints, this is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist. There are currently no additional written, spoken or digital resources available to assist complainants through the process. However, as stated above, the Ministry offers a range of supports for clients who face accessibility barriers to Work and Income information. These supports can be provided when clients request support when making a complaint.

### **Approachability and Inclusivity Design**

- *Any documents, guidelines, or assessments outlining how the ministry has incorporated inclusivity and approachability into the complaints process, particularly to support individuals with disabilities or language barriers.*

In regard to your request for information held by the Ministry regarding approachability and inclusivity design, specifically in relation to complaints, this is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist.

However, the Work and Income website currently meets almost all government accessibility requirements, and the Ministry are working through remaining improvements to fully comply with the New Zealand Government Web Standards and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1).

[www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/design-and-ux/accessibility](http://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/design-and-ux/accessibility).

Further, as indicated above, the Ministry offers a range of ways in inclusivity and approachability has been incorporated into the complaints process.

The Ministry acknowledges that there are still additional actions that can be taken to improve this process and aims to make the Ministry's website content as easy to understand as possible, however this work currently does not have a timeline in place.

### **Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms**

- *Information on how the ministry evaluates the effectiveness of these accessibility measures, including any feedback mechanisms from the public to improve the process.*

In regard to your request for information held by the Ministry regarding the evaluations of any accessibility measures, specifically in relation to complaints, this is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist.

However, the Ministry's Principal Health and Disability Advisors meet regularly with a wide range of disabled people and disabled people's organisations

including the Disabled Person's Coalition who have opportunity to raise concerns. The Ministry also regularly meet with the National Beneficiary Advocate Consultative Group (NBACG) who provide feedback to the Ministry on processes or identified issues.

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 my decision on your request for information on how the Ministry implements accessibility into its complaints process, 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.

Ngā mihi



Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**