



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

7 MAR 2016

Scout Barbour-Evans
fyi-request-3596-91200351@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Barbour-Evans

Thank you for your email of 3 February 2016 requesting a copy of the document outlining the Ministry of Social Development's policies on the treatment of transgender clients.

You would also like to know, if possible, how often Ministry of Social Development staff are informed of these policies, and whether they are a standard component of regular training sessions.

At present, the Ministry does not have service delivery policy guidelines relating to transgender or non-binary people. However, the Ministry of Social Development has been actively building a culture that accommodates and values diversity for both staff and clients. In addition, the Ministry is committed to providing an environment that is healthy and safe for both staff and clients.

Training in managing clients from all backgrounds is delivered to new front-line staff as part of their induction, and refresher training is usually provided on an 'as required' basis.

You might be interested to know that the Ministry has investigated the possibility of including an additional "X" gender in documents and systems. The Ministry's benefit payment system is currently only able to accept 'binary' genders. However, the costs associated with making enhancements to existing systems and documents to accept non-traditional gender identifiers and the legislative changes required, would be prohibitive. There are, therefore, no proposals for changes to legislation or policy to facilitate capturing a gender type other than male or female.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Sutherland
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services