



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

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- 4 SEP 2012

Ms Jenny Graves
Fyi-request-475-88248895@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Graves

Thank you for your email of 5 August 2012 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following:

information provided to employees that sets out role, operating framework, what they can and cannot do, expectations when working in a Ministers' offices in the position as a Private Secretary (or like position). This may include – among information – a guide, a manual.

Please provide a list of positions located in Ministers' offices occupied by Ministry employees. Please also provide the documents provided to the employees who currently occupy these positions.

The Ministry of Social Development second private secretaries to Ministerial offices when requested. The role of the private secretary can vary from office to office depending on differing Ministerial needs. The Ministry's private secretary positions are managed centrally within the Ministry and report to the Ministerial and Executive Services team, with the roles overseen by the Private Secretary Management Group.

All new private secretaries meet with the General Manager of Ministerial and Executive Services and/or the Manager of Executive Services to discuss the role, what is expected of them as well as the support they can receive from the Ministry. They all receive a letter of expectation which sets out the role and expectations of the Ministry, the Private Secretary Management Group, and the Executive Services team in supporting the private secretary, as well as the accountabilities, reporting lines and human resource arrangements. I have attached a copy of this letter for your information.

A private secretary's everyday task instructions are directed by the Senior Private Secretary and they are subject to the Code of Conduct set by Ministerial Services (Department of Internal Affairs).

Each new private secretary will receive different information and/or training from the Ministry before and during their first few months in the role depending on their skills and background, and the role they are undertaking as a private secretary. For example, an individual may spend time working in a different part of the Ministry from their substantive role for a short period prior to undertaking a private secretary role, or receive on-on-one training on the legislative process.

They are also encouraged to use the information available to them on the Parliamentary intranet and training offered by Ministerial Services, as this provides the practical day-to-day information they require in the role.

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Private secretaries have at least a quarterly meeting with the General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services or Manager Executive Services to provide an opportunity to discuss any areas of development, resolve issues, or identify improvements.

Every two to three months, the Ministry's private secretaries all meet together for development opportunities, to discuss concerns, or to identify ways of working better.

I can advise that the Ministry currently has ten staff seconded to Ministers' offices, six in the Minister for Social Development's office (Hon Paula Bennett), two in the Associate Social Development Minister and Minister for Disability Issues office (Hon Tariana Turia), one in the Minister for Senior Citizen's office (Hon Jo Goodhew) and one in the office of the Associate Minister for Social Development (Hon Chester Borrows).

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



PT

David Shanks
Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate and Governance

13 August 2012

Name
Private Secretary (Social Development)
Office of the Minister for Social Development
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Name

Appointment to role of Private Secretary – Social Development

Congratulations on your secondment to the new role of Private Secretary – Social Development. This is a challenging and rewarding role and provides unique opportunities for career development.

The purpose of this letter is to set out the role and expectations of the Ministry, the Private Secretaries Management Group, and the Executive Services team in supporting you in your new position, as well as your accountabilities, reporting lines and human resource arrangements.

Reporting Lines

As a private secretary you will take your everyday task instructions from the Minister, through the Minister's Senior Private Secretary, who is your day to day manager, or any other person delegated by the Minister to exercise a similar role. While under secondment you remain an employee of MSD, and for this purpose you will be responsible to me and the Manager, Executive Services.

You will also have important relationships with the Chief Executive and Leadership Team at the Ministry, together with other senior managers.

Support and Assistance

A key role of Ministerial and Executive Services, especially the Executive Services team, is to provide support, advice and assistance to private secretaries seconded to Ministerial offices.

The team is supported by me as General Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services and the private Secretaries Management Group. This group has been set up to provide governance and guidance on issues relating to private secretary recruitment, coordination, performance and professional development.

The Manager, Executive Services will provide support and assistance to you in fulfilling your responsibilities in your seconded role and will look after your pay, leave, performance and some other arrangements.

The Manager, Executive Services and I are always available to provide discreet advice or pastoral care when you need it. Any matter can be discussed with us in the strictest of confidence.

Nature of Role

You, as a private secretary, will play a crucial role as a broker and a conduit between the Minister, the Minister's office and the Ministry. It is vital that these relationships and the processes that underpin them are managed with the utmost skill and care.

In your position it is important that you keep in close contact with the Ministry, especially Ministerial and Executive Services and any other part of the Ministry with which you have a close working relationship depending on the nature of the portfolio.

The Ministerial and Executive Services team is focused on providing expert, accurate and timely information and responses to you, and to assist you support the Minister.

Career Support

A secondment to a Ministerial Office can provide considerable scope for career development. You will return to the Ministry with new skills including a significantly enhanced knowledge of central government and parliamentary processes, as well as the operations of Ministerial offices.

The Ministry will provide career support for you, and where appropriate, options that recognise the development that has taken place. We, together with the Private Secretaries Management Group, will work with you, your home team manager and other relevant senior managers.

Training and Development

Executive Services is committed to ensuring you continue to have access to training and development during your secondment. We will arrange a training and seminar programme to supplement the training provided by Ministerial Services (Department of Internal Affairs). We can also arrange external training if appropriate. If you identify any training needs, please let the Manager, Executive Services know.

Performance Appraisal

During your secondment you will have an annual performance appraisal as part of the normal performance appraisal cycle. This will be conducted by the Manager, Executive Services and myself, with input from the Senior Private Secretary, Private Secretaries Management Group and stakeholders, who will be selected in consultation with you.

Leave

Your leave, pay and other arrangements are maintained at the Ministry while you are on secondment.

Leave must only be taken when convenient in consultation with the Senior Private Secretary, the Minister and Ministerial and Executive Services. We will assist in assessing whether a temporary replacement is necessary and will provide cover for you during your absence.

It is expected that you will complete the necessary leave form well in advance of taking any leave and provide this to Ministerial and Executive Services so that your leave allocation and related entitlements are kept up to date.

As a private secretary you are entitled to an additional week's leave for every year for which you are a private secretary as set out in your secondment agreement.

Accountabilities

As a private secretary you remain an employee of the Ministry of Social Development, notwithstanding your secondment to a Ministerial office. This means that you are bound by the Ministry's Code of Conduct and the State Sector Code of Conduct, as well as the provisions of your employment and secondment agreements.

You must act in accordance with the expectations and obligations placed on us as public servants, in particular the requirement to be politically neutral. Working in a Ministerial environment can present challenges from time to time. It is expected that you escalate issues of on doubt about how to proceed, through seeking appropriate advice or guidance.

If you need any assistance or have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact either Manager Executive Services or myself at any time.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services