



17 SEP 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 10 July 2018, the Office of Hon Carmel Sepuloni transferred to the Ministry part of your request, under the Official Information Act 1982, for information regarding security guards at Work and Income offices.

Every week Work and Income sees 38,000 clients face-to-face. The vast majority of these interactions do not pose a threat to staff and clients are able to be seen and assisted without any issues. However, as part of day-to-day work, staff see people who are vulnerable, frustrated, and who are managing complex personal situations. Occasionally these issues manifest in intimidating, threatening or inappropriate behaviour towards Ministry staff. The Ministry has zero tolerance for this type of behaviour and security guards help to make sure that the Ministry is able to manage anyone who might represent a risk to the safety of other clients or Ministry staff.

Your questions are addressed in turn below.

- *the year in which uniform security guards were first rolled out for all WINZ offices*

Security guards were introduced to all Work and Income offices in 2005.

- *the impact on the presence of uniformed security guards on incidents of disorderly, unruly, violent and other types of threatening behaviour towards staff.*

No formal research, study or report has been completed regarding the impact of the presence of uniformed security guards on incidents of disorderly, unruly, violent and other types of threatening behaviour towards Work and Income staff. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

- *The year in which uniform security guards first started asking for identification details before admitting people to WINZ offices.*

Security enhancements were introduced to the Ministry of Social Development Service Centres in 2017. This enhanced process is referred to as Fully Controlled Access.

Fully Controlled Access was trialled successfully in the Canterbury region prior to its nationwide rollout.

The Fully Controlled Access process is not hugely different from what was happening before these new security measures were introduced. The introduction of Fully Controlled Access helped create consistency across sites. This saw security guards checking lists of appointments and asking people for proof of identification. In 2018 this was changed and security guards now have a conversation with people as they are entering a Work and Income site. While security guards will no longer be checking people's names off a list and asking everyone for their identification, the conversation is an opportunity to check if a person has a business reason to enter the site, that they have not been trespassed, and helps to identify any people who may be agitated or intoxicated. The process enables site security staff to recognise potential security incidents earlier.

- *the impact of this screening of identities at the door on disorderly, unruly, violent and other types of threatening behaviour towards staff.*

It is difficult to isolate the impact of the identity screening in terms of actual incidents, and we have not committed our limited resources to a formal research study of that. How security guards are used at the entrance always has to be balanced against other considerations, and we have now reviewed the policy as outlined earlier in this response. As such, your request for information regarding the impact of the screening of identities at the door on disorderly, unruly, violent and other types of threatening behaviour towards staff is refused under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as this information is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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 this response regarding security guards at Work and Income offices, 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.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Crombie

Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Solutions