



11 MAY 2021

Tēnā koe

On 11 March 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *Answers to questions with a time spanning 2010 to the present day.*
 - a) *How many times has the Ministry of Social Development investigated an employee, volunteer, contractor, or consultant, for releasing or distributing information of a sensitive or confidential nature?*
 - b) *How many times has the Ministry referred an employee, volunteer, contractor or consultant, or volunteer to the police for releasing or distributing information of a sensitive or confidential nature?*
 - c) *How many times has the Ministry investigated a consultant, employee, contractor or volunteer for selling information? Inappropriately accepting a gift or reward or falsifying information.*

On 12 April 2021, the Ministry contacted you advising that more time was required to respond to your request, and that you will be provided with a decision on or before 11 May 2021. The extension was required due to consultations still taking place.

The Ministry will answer your questions in turn for the sake of clarity.

1. *Answers to questions with a time spanning 2010 to the present day.*

The Ministry cannot provide you with information that relates to contractors, consultants or volunteers, as any information would be held on individual files and on a different system to Ministry employees. To provide you with this information, Ministry staff would be required to review hundreds of files to determine if any information regarding contractors, consultants or volunteers falls in scope of this request. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The Ministry cannot provide you with the dates that you have requested, as information for the period 2010-2013 is not stored centrally. To locate and collate this information, Ministry staff would need to be taken off their core duties. As such, this part of your request has been refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry will be responding to your request from 2013 to March 2021.

- a. How many times has the Ministry of Social Development investigated an employee, volunteer, contractor or consultant, for releasing or distributing information of a sensitive or confidential nature?*

The Ministry considers all information that is related to clients to be sensitive and confidential, therefore there is no specific code that we use to centrally report and/record this information. Due to the limitations of our reporting system, the Ministry has conducted a high-level search to gather the information requested. The search that the Ministry used to answer part a of your request is "release of information" and "unauthorised accessing/releasing client information" categories. Under these categories, over the nine year period 140 cases were identified.

- b. How many times has the Ministry referred an employee, volunteer, contractor or consultant, or volunteer to the police for releasing or distributing information of a sensitive or confidential nature?*

The Ministry can confirm that it has not referred any of the 140 cases identified over the nine year period in part (a) to the New Zealand Police.

- c. How many times has the Ministry investigated a consultant, employee, contractor, or volunteer for selling information? Inappropriately accepting a gift or reward or falsifying information.*

Since 2013, the Ministry has conducted 25 employee investigations that fall within the scope of your request. Please see **Table One** below which shows the number of investigations, the reason the investigation took place and the calendar year that this investigation was started.

Please note that Child, Youth and Family results are included in the data from 2013 to April 2017. From April 2017, Child, Youth and Family become the Ministry for Children – Oranga Tamariki.

Table One: The number of investigations the Ministry has conducted, broken down by the reason for the investigation and the calendar year that the investigation was started.

Year investigation started	Selling information	Inappropriately accepting a gift or reward	Falsifying information
2013	-	-	1
2014	-	1	8
2015	-	-	4
2016	-	-	4
2017	-	-	4
2018	-	-	-
2019	-	-	-
2020	-	-	2
2021	-	-	1
Total	0	1	24

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

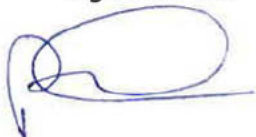
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. 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 in regard to the number of times Ministry staff have been investigated for misuse of confidential information, 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



Penny Rounthwaite
Group General Manager
People