



17 August 2022

Tēnā koe

On 25 July 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Under the Official Information Act 1982: Are beneficiaries legally required to provide a mobile or landline number in order to receive services and support through Work and Income? If so, please quote the Statute, Regulation or other document.*

There is no legislative requirement for a client to provide the Ministry with a phone number in order to receive Ministry support. The Ministry requires contact details, an email and/ or phone number, in case we need to contact you.

The following advice may assist:

- Clients must advise of any change in circumstances that affect their entitlement or rate of benefit payable, as well as meet work obligations if they are subject to these. It would be practical for clients to provide the Ministry with a current phone number in order to be contactable so they can meet their work obligations, or for clients to phone the Ministry to notify of any change in circumstances.
- The Ministry strongly encourages clients to provide us with a contact phone number to ensure we are able to provide the best support we can in terms of income, help with housing if required and support into employment or training in as timely a manner as possible. Not providing a current phone number limits how quickly we are able to respond to requests for help.
- If a client does not have access to a phone to contact the Ministry, alternative ways for a client can contact us are to come into a Service Centre in person, notify change of circumstances online via your MY MSD

- account, appoint an agent, send the Ministry a written letter via post, or submit an enquiry online via the Ministry's website.
- The Ministry will attempt to contact a client through the avenue they have requested. If the client does not respond, then their payments may be affected.
 - For clients on the Social Housing waitlist, not providing a phone number would mean that should a house become available we may not be able to contact clients in a timely manner and this could lead to the property being offered to another household who has a similar need.
 - Details about the range of ways to contact the Ministry, including COVID guidelines around visiting Service Centres are here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/index.html

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'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 about whether beneficiaries are legally required to provide a mobile or landline number to receive services, 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

Bridget Saunders

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**Manager Issues Resolution
Service Delivery**