



8 November 2022

Tēnā koe

On 11 October 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1) *What were the total amount of family harm incidents reported in the Upper Clutha (Wanaka, Lake Hawea, Cardrona, Luggate, Hawea Flat) this past year (Jan 2022-current), Jan - Dec 2021, Jan - Dec 2020, Jan - Dec 2019?*
- 2) *How many family harm incidents were reported between December 22 2021 - January 3 2022 from the Upper Clutha (Wanaka, Lake Hawea, Cardrona, Luggate, Hawea Flat)? How does this compare with the same period of time in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?*
- 3) *What is the MSD process for victims who experience family violence, and return to the perpetrator? What support are they eligible for and what services are available within the Upper Clutha are?*
- 4) *From your perspective and nothings gathered through data collection, what contributing factors are commonly associated with incidents of family harm or violence?*

On 11 October 2022, the Ministry contacted you to discuss your request and have clarified the information that the Ministry is able to provide which would be more helpful to you. Your request was refined to also include:

- *An overview of how many of the Ministry's clients are registered or have indicated that they are victims of family violence, for the wider region, rather than just for Upper Clutha.*
- *For the periods Jan to Dec, yearly 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.*

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will respond to each part of your request in turn.

1. *What were the total amount of family harm incidents reported in the Upper Clutha (Wanaka, Lake Hawea, Cardrona, Luggate, Hawea Flat) this past year (Jan 2022-current), Jan - Dec 2021, Jan - Dec 2020, Jan - Dec 2019?*
2. *How many family harm incidents were reported between December 22 2021 - January 3 2022 from the Upper Clutha (Wanaka, Lake Hawea, Cardrona, Luggate, Hawea Flat)? How does this compare with the same period of time in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?*
  - *An overview of how many of the Ministry's clients are registered or have indicated that they are victims of family violence, for the wider region, rather than just for Upper Clutha.*
  - *For the periods Jan to Dec, yearly 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.*

The first port of call for complaints of family violence is typically Police. They also hold data on this. However discussion of family harm incidents may also arise in the course of the Ministry client conversations.

As discussed, if the Ministry held this information for these geographical areas, it would be held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

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.

3. *What is the MSD process for victims who experience family violence, and return to the perpetrator? What support are they eligible for and what services are available within the Upper Clutha are?*

The Ministry's Family Violence Response Coordinators and Case Managers provide support and work with clients experiencing family violence, to help and/or allow victims to leave harmful family situations without losing financial support. The role of the Family Response Coordinators and Case Managers is:

- Provide advice and support to case managers on family violence cases
- Provide up to date information on local family violence services
- Provide up to date resources for case managers
- Ensuring continuous improvement and learning through development and delivery of the Family Violence Intervention Programme (FVIP)
- Build relationships with other agencies to better support our case managers and clients

- Be a liaison and referral point between agencies and Work and Income
- Co-ordinate and monitor FVIP at a site and regional level
- Review complex Unsupported Child Benefit (UCB) applications.

Each client is assessed by the Ministry based on their needs and entitlements. There is no difference in process when a person returns to a perpetrator.

There is assistance the Ministry can offer clients who are victims of family violence. You may find the links below to the Work and Income website helpful:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/family-violence-sole-parents.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/family-violence-sole-parents.html)
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/client-qualifies-for-and-is-getting-the-special-needs-grant-family-violence-programme.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/client-qualifies-for-and-is-getting-the-special-needs-grant-family-violence-programme.html).

There are also websites the Ministry's Family Violence Response Coordinators and Case Managers utilise when assessing if there is any further wrap around services available. These are publicly available and hold information on family violence, including data and drivers of harm:

- [www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/)
- The [www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/](http://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/nzcvs/) which is undertaken by third parties on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.
- [nzfvc.org.nz/family-violence-statistics](http://nzfvc.org.nz/family-violence-statistics)
- [www.tepunaonui.govt.nz/](http://www.tepunaonui.govt.nz/) website
- [Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention \(ageconcern.org.nz\)](http://ElderAbuseandNeglectPrevention.ageconcern.org.nz)
- The Ministry's [www.areyouok.org.nz/](http://www.areyouok.org.nz/) website.

4. *From your perspective and nothings gathered through data collection, what contributing factors are commonly associated with incidents of family harm or violence?*

There is a wealth of knowledge and research on this website on causes of family violence which may be helpful: [www.tepunaonui.govt.nz/](http://www.tepunaonui.govt.nz/).

However, for the Official Information Act 1982 to apply, the information must already be held by the agency concerned. With the exception of providing a response to a request for a statement of reasons about a specific decision that has affected the requester, there is no obligation on the Ministry to form an opinion or create information to answer a request in the form of question. In accordance with this advice from the Office of the Ombudsman, the Ministry is not required to answer this part of your request, as it does not specifically qualify as a request for official information.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Family Violence in the Upper Clutha area, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

*Bridget Saunders*

Bridget Saunders  
**Manager**  
**Issue Resolution**