



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

10 November 2023

Tēnā koe

On 12 October 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

"What year were all WINZ/MSD client records digitized? - What are the oldest client records in the (hard copy) archive? - How long does it take for a request for an archived client file to be retrieved?"

I have responded to each of your questions below.

1. What year were all WINZ/MSD client records digitized?

The Ministry has not digitized all historic client records. However, the Ministry initiated the process to move from gathering and holding active physical client files to digital client management and benefit payment systems in 1990. There have been some instances past this date where Ministry sites have held physical records for active clients. Currently where possible, client documents and records that are submitted as a physical copy are scanned and saved digitally. The Ministry has a digital first policy for managing client information.

2. What are the oldest client records in the (hard copy) archive?

Your request for the oldest hard copy client record in archives has been refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982, on the basis that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

To provide a response to this request would require diverting personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to gather this information. Due to the significantly large volume of physical client files in the archive, the search to find the oldest client file would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as 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 requests 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. *How long does it take for a request for an archived client file to be retrieved?*

The Ministry's offsite storage provider provides a 3-day standard level agreement (SLA) for deliveries to major cities (Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch). The Ministry is reliant on couriers for deliveries to the regions and the timeframe for delivery is dependent on the courier service utilised.

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

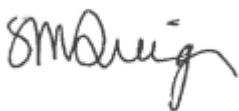
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 to your request regarding information around digitization of Ministry client records, 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



Sarah Quigan
Manager
Official Information