



19 June 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 30 April 2025, requesting information about the way hardship applications are processed by Ministry of Social Development staff.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out below.

1. When a case manager places a hardship application through, but the status is pending, how long before this changes to lapsed?

When an application is 'pending' it means that an application has been commenced, but no action is currently being taken on the application and no payment has been made to the client.

One situation in which an application will have the status 'pending' is when the Ministry is waiting to receive further information from the client.

The Ministry's computer system automatically converts an application's status to 'lapsed' after an application has been 'pending' for 30 calendar days and a decision to either approve or decline the application has not been made.

2. Once the application is lapsed, what is the next process?

Once an application has lapsed it is no longer a current application. It is not possible to resume a lapsed application – a new application would need to be commenced.

3. Will the case manager then decline or grant the application? Or will it remain lapsed?

The application will remain lapsed. A staff member would not be able to progress the application any further as it is incomplete. A record stating that the application has lapsed does not get deleted – it will remain on the client's file indefinitely.

4. Is this a process that all staff should know?

Ministry staff who process hardship applications are aware of the above information.

I would like to point out that it is the Ministry's computer system that automatically initiates a change in the status of an application (for example updating the status from "pending" to "lapsed"). This is not an action initiated by a case manager or staff member.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services