



27 June 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 28 May 2025, requesting reports to the Public Services Commission (PSC) on the Ministry's compliance with the Plain Language Act 2022.

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

Please refer to the attached **Appendix** which provides the Ministry of Social Development Responses 2022/23 and 2023/24 Reporting as part of our *Agency responses – Plain Language Act compliance reporting* to PSC.

General information about plain language use in the Ministry

We are committed to providing clear and easy-to-understand information to New Zealanders about our services and products. Making our often complex information as accessible and understandable as possible is fundamental to how we develop all communications. Even before the introduction of the Plain Language Act 2022, we had processes and practices in place that supported plain language principles.

Since the Plain Language Act 2022 came into effect, we have continued to strengthen our focus on plain language. This includes evolving our style guide, developing resources to support employees creating written content, and sharing internal communications that highlight the importance of plain language. It remains a key principle in how we communicate, helping people make informed decisions and access the support they need.

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.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Anna Graham', written in a cursive style.

Anna Graham

General Manager

Ministerial and Executive Services

Ministry of Social Development Responses**2022/2023**

Question	Response
Has your agency appointed a plain language officer?	Yes
Is your agency's plain language officer an agency employee (as opposed to a contractor/ third party)?	Yes
Which of these options best describes the position of your plain language officer?	An existing role which has had plain language officer responsibilities added without any additional recruitment
What actions has your agency taken to notify all staff about the Act? (select all those that apply)	Published information on the intranet; Emailed all staff with information/resources;
Has your agency provided training to relevant staff on the use of plain language?	No
If yes, please tell us about the training provided.	We haven't provided new training
Has your agency sourced, produced or updated resources to assist staff to write in plain language?	Yes
Has your agency made arrangements to receive feedback from the public on its plain language responsibilities (e.g. general enquiries email address published on its website)?	No
Please provide here any other comments you would like to provide as context, e.g. changes to processes, plans for future changes.	Some of these questions are difficult to answer yes or no. They don't acknowledge current state, levels of expertise, variations across the ministry.

2023/2024 Reporting

Question	Response
What information has your agency provided to all staff about plain language? (select all those that apply)	Published information on the intranet; Writing training listed in training modules
What types of training has your agency provided to staff on the use of plain language? (select all those that apply)	Advice and drop-in support from in-house experts;
What resources has your agency sourced, produced or updated to assist staff to write in plain language? (select all those that apply)	Style guides; Note - both were already in place
Does your agency have an editing, peer review or sign-off process for public facing documents?	Yes
If yes, are plain language considerations built into this process?	Yes
Has your agency received feedback from the public on its plain language responsibilities?	No
If yes, what was the nature of that feedback?	-
Please provide here any other comments you would like to give as context, e.g. changes to processes, plans for future changes.	-