



30 May 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 2 May 2025, requesting information about Official Information Act requests (OIA's), Privacy Act requests (PA's) and staff training.

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

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) is responding to the question regarding caregiver abuse disclosures, in the context of Disability Support Services (DSS). The Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha will be responding directly to your questions about OIA's and PA's. You will hear from them in due course, if you have not heard from them already.

How staff are instructed to handle caregiver-abuse disclosures.

Disability Support Services (DSS) takes any disclosure of abuse and concerns regarding a persons' safety seriously. If DSS becomes aware of a situation involving caregiver abuse in a DSS contracted service, our immediate priority is the safety and wellbeing on the individual involved. It is the provider's responsibility to respond immediately to areas of risk and harm, and there is a need for critical incidents to be reported to DSS in accordance with certain regulations and contractual expectations.

DSS, via its Enabling Good Lives sites is directly responsible for the planning and delivery of disability support services for some disabled people in the Waikato and Canterbury regions, and all DSS eligible people in Mid Central. The sites have processes and protocols in place to identify, prevent, and manage issues of neglect and abuse.

If it were an emergency situation, the Police would be contacted in the first instance.

Please see the Quality and Safeguarding page on the DSS website, here: www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/providers/quality-and-safeguarding

If the person is funded by another agency, DSS will work with other appropriate agencies such as Oranga Tamariki, the Health and Disability Commissioner or the Ministry of Health to ensure that the matter is referred to those that can take appropriate actions.

The DSS Quality and Safeguarding framework outlines what DSS staff and providers are expected to do in response to quality or safeguarding concerns, including allegations and neglect. You can find this framework online, here: [How-](#)

[DSS-checks-the-quality-of-disability-supports-quality-and-safeguarding-framework.docx](#)

DSS also funds and contracts disability support service providers to deliver supports. There is a responsibility on each provider to ensure their staff are appropriately trained regarding how to identify and address issues of abuse and neglect. It is not the responsibility of DSS to provide safeguarding training directly to staff employed by its contracted service providers.

DSS has clear expectations of contracted disability providers to ensure their staff are appropriately trained to identify and respond to allegations of abuse and neglect, and processes for reporting and responding to incidents or concerns. As outlined below DSS does provide guidance for providers and is supporting the development of additional safeguarding initiatives and pathways to be accessed as necessary. These expectations are outlined in the contracts we have with Service Providers. You can find these contracts available online, here: www.disabilitysupport.govt.nz/providers/contracts-and-service-specifications

The Prevention and Management of Abuse guidelines also provide guidance to providers on safeguarding disabled people who receive support from them. These guidelines are publicly available, here: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2016-11/prevention-management-abuse-guide-services-funded-dss-nov16.pdf

DSS may also conduct audits or monitoring to ensure providers are meeting their contractual obligations.

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