



9 July 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 15 May 2026, requesting information about for the formal complaints process, the number of sanctions for missed appointments, and benefit exits to full-time employment.

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

Question 1: What is the formal complaints process?

Please refer to **Appendix One** which provides the following resources available on the Ministry's intranet:

- Complaints Overview and Management
- Managing and resolving a complaint.

Question 2: What is the process for requesting a branch Official Information Act information on the phone

Requests can be made verbally, including over the phone, as long as the requester is seeking official information held by the Ministry. The branch staff will forward the request to OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz who will acknowledge and log your request. Your request will then be assessed and responded to by the Ministry's Ministerial and Executive Service Team.

More information about making a request under the Act is publicly available on the Ministry website, we are providing the relevant link here:

- Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/official-information-responses/index.html.

Question 3: MSD's process in contacting someone for rescheduling an appointment?

Ministry staff will attempt to contact the client by phone to reschedule an appointment, followed by an email where appropriate. If this is unsuccessful, a new appointment will be booked and the client will be sent a letter, which they can view in MyMSD.

Question 4: The number of jobseekers that have had a sanction imposed for missing one appointment.

Question 5: Over the last six months, the percentage of people that have moved off the jobseeker support as a result of obtaining full-time employment

Please refer to **Appendix Two** which provides the following tables:

- **Table One:** Sanctions Imposed for "Failed to Attend Appointment" reason for working age Jobseeker Support clients between 1 December 2025 to 31 May 2026
- **Table Two:** Benefit cancellations for "Obtained Work" Reason for working age Jobseeker Support clients between 1 December 2025 to 31 May 2026.

Please note for Table One, the Ministry can only report where a sanction has applied due to failure to attend an appointment – not whether this was the first appointment missed by a client. For the Ministry to provide you with the number of jobseekers that had a sanction imposed for missing one appointment, this would require the creation of new information. The Ministry is not obligated under the Act to create information to answer a request.

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

Home » Resources & Tools » Helping Clients » Procedures and Manuals » Work and Income » Core Procedures » **Complaints Overview and Management**

Complaints Overview and Management

This provides you with information about receiving, recording and managing complaints.

On this Page:

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, usually about service, staff, behaviour or the environment. Complaints that relate to specific service received should not be dealt with by the person concerned, although the person concerned should be given an opportunity to provide an explanation.

A complaint can be made verbally, through the online complaint form on our website, or in writing. Complaints can be lodged with contact centres, service centres, regional offices or national office and should always be recorded in the [old HIYA system](http://hiya/Default.jsp) [<http://hiya/Default.jsp>].

Note a complaint is not a review of decision; these have their own guidelines and processes.

The link below provides you with definitions and examples of the types of complaints you may receive. These are also available via a link directly on the lodging a complaint form in the HIYA Complaints Management System.

[Complaint types, definitions and examples](http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/complaint-types-definitions-and-examples.html) [<http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/complaint-types-definitions-and-examples.html>]

Where are complaints recorded?

While complaints can be received through multiple channels, they should all be recorded in the HIYA Complaints system. This allows recording and managing of a complaint from receipt to resolution.

Standards about how to manage a complaint have also been developed.

Complaints should be recorded even if they can be resolved immediately.

Providing a central and standard complaint process supports Service Excellence. Service Excellence is an agreed set of standard practices and processes used to deliver service to Work and Income clients, resulting in a professional and consistent service.

[Our Client Commitments](http://doogle/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/strategy-and-change/client-commitments/client-commitment-overview.html) [<http://doogle/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/strategy-and-change/client-commitments/client-commitment-overview.html>]

Timeliness Standards

A complaint **must** be:

acknowledged within 24 hours (unless it is resolved within that time).

fully investigated and resolved within 5 working days, unless there is a good and sufficient reason for the delay.

Where there is a delay, the client must be kept informed of progress.

Who manages complaints?

A complaint can be received and recorded by any person (or through the online complaint form on the [Work and Income website](https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/index.html) [<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/index.html>]). The webform will route the complaint to a person within the clients region. They will ensure it is sent to the correct place. Generally this person will lodge the complaint to HIYA for the appropriate unit. Exceptions to this will be where the complaint:

If the complaint is in relation to the Contact Centre service or staff, please lodge in HIYA to the relevant Contact Centre and assign to the region's Contact Centre liaison manager.

Sensitive matters that may need to be escalated to HR or a Senior Manager

Non-complaints (i.e., requests for Hardship assistance; questions) - which can be booked to Q-Manager as an appointment.

Once it is recorded it will automatically be assigned to a gatekeeper or designated person. The gatekeeper or designated person will be responsible for managing the complaint from the time it is received until the time it is resolved.

Gatekeepers or designated people are generally:

Service Centre - Manager Client Service Delivery or Manager Client Service Operations

Regional Office - Executive Assistant to the Regional Director

Contact Centres and Processing Units - Service Manager Client Service Support or specifically assigned gatekeepers

National Office - will vary depending on department

Gatekeepers and designated persons may assign the complaint to a more appropriate person to resolve, however they are still responsible for the complaint until it is resolved.

Assessing and logging a client complaint

If a complaint is received, then the following steps should be taken:

Step	Action	Links
1.	Initial assessment: - Does the complaint need to be escalated immediately (e.g. threat of harm to self or others)? - If yes, go to step 2. - If no, continue. - Do we need more information? - If yes, email the submitter to request more information. - If no, continue to step 3.	
2.	Ensure you complete the following to escalate the complaint appropriately. Threats of self-harm: - Contact the manager(s) of the local Service Centre for a welfare check to be arranged (by Police) immediately. - Ensure the complaint is lodged in HIYA and assigned to the appropriate manager. Threats to staff: - Email the following people/teams immediately: - Manager(s) for the Service Centre, or Unit - Regional Director - or Senior Manager (Manager Contact Centre Services/Manager Centralised Services) - Health, Safety and Security and IT Security teams at National Office Threat to contact media outlets: - Email the following people/teams immediately DCE Office Service Delivery [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/teams/dce-office.html] Media [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/business-groups/organisational-assurance-and-communications/comms-and-engagement/media-team.html] - Manager(s) for the local office(s) Next, continue to step 3 regarding the complaint itself.	Recording incidents in STAR
3.	For complaints about our Contact Centre or Processing Units, is the staff member been identified? - If yes, continue to step 4. - If no, refer to Contact Centre Services [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/community/display/HIYA/Contact+Centre+laison+guide] to confirm staff member details (or, speak with your Manager) and continue to step 4.	
4.	Lodge details in HIYA. An email will be sent to the gatekeeper of the assigned site.	

[Process on how to log a complaint in HIYA \[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/hiya-instructions-for-complaints.html\]](http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/hiya-instructions-for-complaints.html)

Managing and resolving a complaint

Complaints will be reviewed and resolved by a manager or gatekeeper. The process is detailed on a separate page on Doogle.

[Process to manage, resolve and sign-off complaints \[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/resolving-and-signing-off-a-complaint.html\]](http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/resolving-and-signing-off-a-complaint.html)

Complaints from Emergency Housing Occupants or Suppliers

Complaints about EH suppliers and/or EH occupants are managed by Regional Managers or a delegated person.

For more information see:

[EH Supplier \(Complainant\) Complaint Process \[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/eh-suppliers-complainant-complaints.html\]](http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/eh-suppliers-complainant-complaints.html)

[EH Occupant Complaint Process \[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/eh-occupant-complaints-process.html\]](http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/eh-occupant-complaints-process.html)

Complaints for Youth Service (Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment)

Youth Service complaints are generally managed by one of the following:

Youth Services Support Unit (YSSU)

Service Provider

Regional Contracts Manager

Service Centre Manager

For more information see:

[Complaints process for Youth Service \[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/complaints-process-for-youth-service.html\]](http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/complaints-process-for-youth-service.html)

Complaints about Preferred Suppliers (Whiteware; Glasses)

The complaints process about a preferred supplier for Hardship Assistance will depend on what the issue is. For more information see:

[Complaints process involving whiteware suppliers \[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/complaints-process-involving-preferred-whiteware-suppliers.html\]](http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/complaints-process-involving-preferred-whiteware-suppliers.html)

Reporting and monitoring

Monitoring

Complaints must be regularly monitored by gatekeepers and designated staff to ensure that standards are met, with an emphasis on quality, accuracy and timeliness.

Reporting

A report can be obtained from HIYA at any time and can provide information about complaint types, outstanding complaints and/or signed off complaints.

You can also monitor trends and other information by exporting the standard HIYA complaint report to 'csv' format. From this you can report on all data that is captured when a report is lodged.

Managers should regularly monitor for trends so that improvements can be made.

Automated reporting from HIYA is currently being developed and will be available from this page in 2008.

Released under the Official Information Act (1982)

Home » Resources & Tools » Helping Clients » Procedures and Manuals » Work and Income » Core Procedures » Complaints Overview and Management » **Resolving and Signing off a complaint**

Managing and resolving a complaint

This page provides you with information on how to resolve and sign off a complaint in the HIYA complaints management tool along with a list of outcomes you will need to select.

On this Page:

Acknowledging the complaint

A complaint must be acknowledged in writing if it can not be resolved within 24 hours of receipt. When a complaint is acknowledged the letter must explain the next step of the process and advise when a reply can be expected, particularly if the resolution may take more than five days.

The following can be used as a template to acknowledge the complaint:

Thank you for your (letter/phone call/email) of (date) about (summarise complaint details).

Work and Income or [Name of Youth Service Provider] (delete one) is currently investigating the issue you have raised. You will receive a response as soon as possible.

If you have any questions regarding this you can phone (name of staff investigating complaint) on (enter phone number).

Investigating a complaint

The person to who the complaint is assigned will obtain all relevant information and investigate the complaint fully. If the complaint involves a staff member, the staff member may need to provide a written explanation.

If the investigation reveals that staff actions were inappropriate, staff training or performance management may be appropriate.

The complaint record in HIYA should be updated as progress is made. Keep the person who made the complaint informed if the resolution is likely to take more than five days.

Contacting the complainant

MSD should attempt to contact the complainant, where necessary (for example, anonymous complaints will not be able to be contacted), to resolve the complaint. MSD should attempt contact several times to provide opportunity for resolution.

Contact should be made through the complainants preferred contact method (which is noted on HIYA). A general guideline should be that MSD should make contact at least three times, at different times of the day.

Where the complainant is unable to be contacted, then correspondence must be sent to the complainant. This should be sent to the complainant to their preferred contact method (i.e., email or letter, dependent on their preference, or in voice mail if no other contact details are known).

ECS Letter to be sent to complainant:

The letter can be found in CMS (ECS) Letters. Ideally this should be sent from a client's record so that it can be retained on their record if follow-up is made. To access the letter, from the client's record:

select, '...' on the top-right hand corner.

select, 'New Letter'

in the filed, 'Letter Template name' find, 'Complaint No Contact letter'

select, 'Next' and ensure the address is correct and select 'Save'

select, 'Launch ECS Letter'

enter relevant information about the complaint and your contact details in the fields

If client prefers e-mail, use the template below:

Kia ora [name],

We received your complaint on [date] for [reason].

We attempted to contact you on [date], [date] and [date] by [phone, email or phone and email] to discuss this further.

[if we have made action - Since receiving your complaint, we have ...]

As we have not been able to contact you, we have closed the complaint.

If you wish to discuss this complaint with us, please contact me directly on [phone or email - do not use contact centre number].

Nāku iti noa, nā
[manager name]
[manager title]

Escalations

If a complaint is not resolved within five working days it automatically escalates to the immediate manager of the person assigned to the complaint. This will not occur if a good and sufficient reason for the delay has been recorded as an *update* in HIYA, prior to the expiry date.

While a complaint is unresolved, *update* HIYA to reflect any progress.

Note in the case of absence or if a complaint is made against a designated person or gatekeeper, the complaint should be assigned to that person's immediate manager.

Recording a resolution

When a complaint is lodged in HIYA it is important to resolve the complaint as soon as possible.

Complaints should be resolved within five working days, if it is not resolved within five working days it will be automatically escalated to your manager who will become the assigned person. If it is still not resolved within another five working days, it will escalate to the Regional Director and the following week to the Regional Commissioner.

All complaints received by National Office are assigned to the Service Centre in the region where the complaint was lodged.

To enter the Complaint Assign/Update screen to record a resolution select the '**A**' (Complaint Assign/Update) icon. This screen is used to record the progress towards resolution.

You can extend the expiry date by changing the date in the **Response Expected By** field.

You can reassign the complaint to another site or person by using the drop down arrows beside the 'Site' field or 'Assigned to' field.

When finished click on the **update** button at the bottom of the screen to save and enter your details.

Sign-Off a complaint

To record the outcome and prevent escalation of the complaint you must 'sign off' the complaint. To do this you need to select the 'Sign Off' icon (**S**).

Complete the following mandatory fields:

Is the complaint valid?

Determine whether the complaint lodged is valid. Do we have notes recorded in CMS? Did the complainant talk to staff or the EH supplier or the EH occupant? Was the complaint substantiated? Then in the HIYA Complaint tool, select from one of the following:

Yes
No
Unknown
Error

How did we advise the complainant?

In the HIYA Complaint tool, select from one of the following:

Telephone

Cellphone
Letter
Email
Face to face

Outcome (Select one of the following):

You need to ensure you select the most appropriate outcome when resolving the complaint. This is important for reporting purposes.

Outcome reason	Example
Resolved - complainant satisfied	The complainant is satisfied with the outcome and the complaint is closed
Resolved - complainant dissatisfied	The complaint has been investigated and closed off; however, the complainant is not satisfied with the response or outcome. Note: If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution and wishes to progress it further, then the complaint should be recorded in HIYA as a new complaint. This will then be managed by the immediate manager of the person who initially resolved the complaint. The complainant needs to be given details of where the complaint has been escalated to and who they can contact.
Resolved - complainant satisfied ROD	The complainant is satisfied with the response however, they still request a Review of Decision. An example could be a single male with no children applying for a Sole Parent Support Benefit. The complainant understands why we cannot grant a Sole Parent Support Benefit however, they wish to pursue the BRC process to challenge our policy/legislation.
Unresolved - complainant dissatisfied ROD	The complainant is not satisfied with the response and would like to submit a Review of Decision.
Error	Complaint closed – complaint was added in error and has been closed off.
Closed - Lack of representation	Complaint closed - lack of information. Have tried to contact the complainant to discuss the complaint but with no response.
Closed - Message Left	Complaint investigated and issue resolved. Closed off after trying to contact the complainant to advise them of the outcome. Left a message for the complainant to contact us.
EH complaints – No Further Action	The complaint required no further action as issue was resolved.
EH complaints – Client Relocated	The complaint was investigated, and the occupant has been relocated to another EH supplier or private accommodation.
EH complaints – Police Notified	The complaint was investigated, and the incident was referred to Police for further investigation. Note: In some circumstances due to safety concerns, the Police were called immediately.
EH complaints – Local Council Notified	This outcome reason should only be selected if you are resolving a complaint from an EH occupant about a EH supplier Example – The complaint was investigated, due to ongoing concerns with the condition of the property, the EH supplier was referred to the regional council for further investigation.
EH complaints - Withdrawn	The complainant has decided to withdraw the complaint. Complaint is closed.
EH complaints - Unsubstantiated	The complaint was investigated and the allegations were not substantiated therefore complaint is closed.

What action have you taken as a result of the complaint?

This section is a free text box field, you can outline your actions in this field. You will need to ensure the information you enter is appropriate and relevant.

Examples of an action taken to sign-off a complaint may include:

- talking to the complainant
- talking to the complainant's case manager
- talking to the EH supplier
- reviewing the complainants file/record
- paying arrears
- providing a Review of Decision form
- Notified Police and client relocated

Although a complaint may be signed-off, you can still update the complaint using the Update comment field at any time.

To end click the **'Sign Off'** button.

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