



25 June 2026

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 5 May 2026 requesting information about serious misconduct requests.

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

Please see the attached **Appendix** for the following documents:

- Complaints Overview and Management
- Formal Disciplinary Process
- Formal Disciplinary Procedure
- Disciplinary Action
- Breaches of the Code
- Disciplinary Process Guidelines
- PSC Code of Conduct
- MSD Code of Conduct 2026
- Internal Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Handling Complaints

You can find information about how to make a complaint on our website:

- <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/feedback-and-complaints/making-a-complaint.html>

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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Graham', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anna Graham

**General Manager**

**Ministerial and Executive Services**

## 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://doogie/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/core-procedures/complaints/complaint-types-definitions-and-examples.html) [<http://doogie/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://doogie/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/strategy-and-change/client-commitments/client-commitment-overview.html) [<http://doogie/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.   | <p>Initial assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the complaint need to be escalated immediately (e.g. threat of harm to self or others)?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ If yes, go to step 2.</li><li>◦ If no, continue.</li></ul></li><li>• Do we need more information?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ If yes, email the submitter to request more information.</li><li>◦ If no, continue to step 3.</li></ul></li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                             |
| 2.   | <p>Ensure you complete the following to escalate the complaint appropriately.</p> <p>Threats of self-harm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact the manager(s) of the local Service Centre for a welfare check to be arranged (by Police) immediately.</li><li>• Ensure the complaint is lodged in HIYA and assigned to the appropriate manager.</li></ul> <p>Threats to staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email the following people/teams immediately:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Manager(s) for the Service Centre, or Unit</li><li>◦ Regional Director - or Senior Manager (Manager Contact Centre Services/Manager Centralised Services)</li><li>◦ Health, Safety and Security and IT Security teams at National Office</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Threat to contact media outlets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email the following people/teams immediately<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <a href="https://dooglessi.govt.nz/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/teams/dce-office.html">DCE Office Service Delivery [https://dooglessi.govt.nz/business-groups/helping-clients/service-delivery/teams/dce-office.html]</a></li><li>◦ <a href="https://dooglessi.govt.nz/business-groups/organisational-assurance-and-communications/comms-and-engagement/media-team.html">Media [https://dooglessi.govt.nz/business-groups/organisational-assurance-and-communications/comms-and-engagement/media-team.html]</a></li><li>◦ Manager(s) for the local office(s)</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Next, continue to step 3 regarding the complaint itself.</p> | Recording incidents in STAR |
| 3.   | <p>For complaints about our Contact Centre or Processing Units, is the staff member been identified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If yes, continue to step 4.</li><li>• If no, refer to <a href="https://dooglessi.govt.nz/community/display/HIYA/Contact+Centre+laison+guide">Contact Centre Services [https://dooglessi.govt.nz/community/display/HIYA/Contact+Centre+laison+guide]</a> to confirm staff member details (or, speak with your Manager) and continue to step 4.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                             |
| 4.   | <p>Lodge details in HIYA. An email will be sent to the gatekeeper of the assigned site.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                             |



## 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.

# Formal Disciplinary Process

Published 21/11/2025

## Introduction

If there is a performance problem that has not been resolved through the normal process for managing performance, or if there is an issue of alleged misconduct, it will be necessary to commence the formal disciplinary procedures.

---

## Summary of Staff Member's Rights [↔](#)

The following is a summary of the principles that apply when dealing with any disciplinary issue. These principles are also contained in the Ministry's collective and individual employment agreements.

- The staff member is to be advised of their right to representation and/or support person of their choice
- The staff member is to be informed of the issue in question and be given a reasonable opportunity to provide an explanation
- Any corrective action required together with a reasonable period of time to improve performance or change the conduct will be advised.

Where this is a performance issue consideration should be given to appropriate alternative work, coaching and counselling.

- An appropriate investigation will be undertaken before any substantive action is taken
- Depending on the seriousness of the issue, a verbal warning will normally precede a written warning
- Any disciplinary action is to be recorded in writing, signed by the staff member and placed on their personal file

- A written warning will specify the duration of the warning and will be removed from the staff member's personal file on its expiry date
- In cases of alleged serious misconduct the staff member may be suspended on pay while an investigation is undertaken
- Where an staff member feels that they have been aggrieved by the Ministry of Social Development, they are to be advised of their right to pursue a personal grievance.

## Preliminary Investigation

When an issue of possible misconduct is brought to a manager's attention, the manager will make initial enquiries to establish that there is/may be some substance to the issue.

Once this has been done the manager will decide whether the issue requires further investigation. Where appropriate it may be that the matter can be resolved before it becomes a disciplinary matter.

## Investigation

At all stages of an investigation a manager will keep written records that will be used to reach a decision if this is necessary at some later stage.

A full and fair investigation of the situation must be carried out to determine the facts and circumstances associated with the disciplinary matter.

An employment relationship is based on trust and confidence and there is a duty on a manager carrying out an enquiry preceding disciplinary action, to do so in a fair and reasonable manner, considering both sides of the issue.

During the investigation

- A manager may find that the problem can be resolved before it becomes a disciplinary issue

- It should be determined if there is sufficient evidence for the investigation to continue
- Where there is sufficient evidence, the staff member will be advised that the investigation is being done and what it is about
- A manager should interview the staff member as early as possible in the investigation process
- A manager should provide the staff member with a real opportunity to explain their point of view
- A manager should not allow bias to affect the investigation or predetermine the issues or outcomes
- A manager should consider the problem from the staff member's perspective and determine the extent of the problem and possible causes of it
- A manager should use only information that is relevant to the case, and
- A manager should base decisions on fact alone.

## Staff Member Interviews

An staff member should be given reasonable advance notice of an interview. However, in cases of a serious nature there may be a need to take quick action, e.g. where there is a security risk.

In all cases the staff member should be told in advance why they are being interviewed and what the interview will be about.

The manager must remind the staff member of their right to representation and all reasonable attempts must be made to ensure that the staff member has the opportunity to have their representative present. Managers should also have support present.

Managers must keep a detailed record of the meeting. If any agreement is reached, or any admissions/concessions made it is important that these are recorded for later reference.

In the meeting, the manager must clearly state the allegation and the Ministry's position on it. The staff member must be given every opportunity to respond and

put their case forward. This may involve another meeting.

Possible courses of action, suggestions and alternatives may be discussed.

## On this page

- Introduction
- Summary of Staff Member's Rights
- Preliminary Investigation
- Investigation
- Staff Member Interviews

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

# Formal Disciplinary Procedure

Published 21/11/2025

This procedure is for Managers to use where there is a performance problem that has not been resolved through the normal process for managing performance, or if there is an issue of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct. Before taking any action discuss the situation with your HR Consultant as they will be able to recommend the best approach.

| Stage                           | Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Tools & Forms                               |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Summary of staff members rights | <div>1. Where this is a performance issue, consideration should be given to appropriate alternative work, coaching and counselling.</div> <div>2. Ensure the following principles are applied when dealing with any disciplinary issue. These principles are contained in the Ministry's collective and individual employment agreements:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The staff member is to be advised of their right to representation and/or support person of their choice</li><li>• The staff member is to be informed of the issue in question and be given a reasonable opportunity to</li></ul></div> | <a href="#">Managing Performance Policy</a> |

| Stage | Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Tools & Forms |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|       | <p>provide an explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any corrective action required together with a reasonable period of time to improve performance or change the conduct will be advised.</li> </ul> <p>3. In relation to a staff members rights, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An appropriate investigation will be undertaken before any substantive action is taken</li> <li>Any disciplinary action is to be recorded in writing, signed by the staff member and placed on their personal file</li> <li>A written warning will specify the duration of the warning and will be removed from the staff member's personal file on its expiry date</li> <li>In cases of alleged serious misconduct the staff member may be suspended on pay while an investigation is undertaken</li> <li>Where a staff member feels that they have been aggrieved by the</li> </ul> |               |

| Stage                                   | Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Tools & Forms |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|                                         | <p>Ministry, they are to be advised of their right to pursue a personal grievance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |
| <p><b>Preliminary investigation</b></p> | <p>4. When an issue of possible misconduct is brought to a manager's attention, the manager will make initial enquiries to establish that there is/may be some substance to the issue.</p> <p>5. Once done the manager will decide whether the issue requires further investigation. Where appropriate it may be that the matter can be resolved before it becomes a disciplinary matter.</p>                                                                                                                          |               |
| <p><b>Investigation</b></p>             | <p>6. At all stages of an investigation a manager will keep written records that will be used to reach a decision if necessary at some later stage.</p> <p>7. A full and fair investigation of the situation must be carried out to determine the facts and circumstances associated with the disciplinary matter.</p> <p>8. An employment relationship is based on trust and confidence and there is a duty on a manager carrying out an inquiry preceding disciplinary action, to do so in a fair and reasonable</p> |               |



| Stage | Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Tools & Forms |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|       | <p>manner, considering both sides of the issue.</p> <p>9. During the investigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A manager may find that the problem can be resolved before it becomes a disciplinary issue</li> <li>• It should be determined if there is sufficient evidence for the investigation to continue</li> <li>• Where there is sufficient evidence, the staff member will be advised that the investigation is being done and what it is about</li> <li>• A manager should interview the staff member as early as possible in the investigation process</li> <li>• A manager should provide the staff member with a real opportunity to explain their point of view</li> <li>• A manager should not allow bias to affect the investigation or predetermine the issues or outcomes</li> <li>• A manager should consider the problem from the staff member's</li> </ul> |               |

| Stage                         | Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Tools & Forms |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|                               | <p>perspective and determine the extent of the problem and possible causes of it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A manager should use only information that is relevant to the case</li> <li>• A manager should base decisions on fact alone.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |               |
| <b>Staff member interview</b> | <p><b>10.</b> A staff member should be given reasonable advance notice of an interview. However, in cases of a serious nature there may be a need to take quick action, e.g. where there is a security risk.</p> <p><b>11.</b> In all cases the staff member should be told in advance why they are being interviewed and what the interview will be about.</p> <p><b>12.</b> The manager must remind the staff member of their right to representation and all reasonable attempts must be made to ensure their is representative present. Managers should also have support present.</p> <p><b>13.</b> Managers must keep a detailed record of the meeting. If any agreement is reached, or any admissions/concessions made it is important that these are recorded for later reference.</p> |               |

| Stage | Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Tools & Forms |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|       | <p><b>14.</b> In the meeting, the manager must clearly state the allegation and the Ministry's position on it. The staff member must be given every opportunity to respond and put their case forward. This may involve another meeting.</p> <p><b>15.</b> Possible courses of action, suggestions and alternatives may be discussed with your HR Consultant.</p> |               |

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

# Disciplinary Action

Published 21/11/2025

This page explains the different types of warnings related to unresolved performance problems, misconduct, or serious misconduct.

## Definition

Disciplinary action is a process used when there are concerns about an employee's performance or behaviour, and action is needed. For guidance on the first steps in handling performance issues, refer to the Managing Performance Policy.

---

## The Process

The process gives clear reasons for decisions about disciplinary actions taken by the Ministry.

It includes several steps and may lead to a written warning, a transfer to other duties, or dismissal.

The steps are:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Final Written Warning

For cases of serious misconduct, a different process is usually followed. A separate checklist is available to help managers in these situations.

The guidelines and checklists in the following sections are designed to show processes that ensure all legal and contractual obligations are met. These are only guidelines, and managers must adjust the process to fit the specific details of each case.

The "**principles**" section outlines the minimum requirements for any disciplinary process. Managers should use these principles as a guide throughout the process.

---

# Mental Health Condition

If a mental health condition might be a factor, managers should read the Ministry's guidance on handling performance issues linked to mental health.

Before taking any action, such as speaking to, meeting with, or writing to an employee, managers must get advice from the ER Consultancy team.

[Mental Health Guidelines \(PDF 331.84KB\)](#)

## Verbal Warnings

This is often the first step in disciplinary action. A verbal warning is given for minor breaches of standards or a first instance of misconduct.

Before giving a formal verbal warning, the manager must consult their own manager. Whenever possible, the employee should sign the record of the verbal warning to confirm it is accurate.

## Written Warnings

Written warnings can be given:

- After a verbal warning if there has been no significant improvement in performance or if there is another instance of misconduct.
- Without a prior verbal warning if the incident is more serious.
- As a final written warning if further misconduct or continued poor performance will lead to dismissal.
- As a final written warning in cases of serious misconduct, where special circumstances mean dismissal is not appropriate.

Before giving a written warning, the manager must consult their own manager.

Before giving a final written warning, the manager must consult both their own manager and an ER Consultant.

# Review of Warnings

The length of warnings can vary but is usually no longer than 12 months. All warnings must include an expiry date. Once a warning expires, it must be removed from the employee's file.

The only exception is if another warning is issued while the previous warning is still active.

## Applying Disciplinary Action

The need to take disciplinary action and the type of action that is suitable depend on the kind and nature of the employee's behaviour or actions.

Disciplinary action may be needed because of:

- Poor performance.
- Misconduct.
- Serious misconduct.

## Formal Process - Performance Issues

Ongoing performance concerns must be dealt with through the formal warning process. Performance problems are usually handled informally at first. Refer to the Managing Performance policy for guidance.

This process is similar to the one for general misconduct. However, the employee's performance will be reviewed regularly during the warning period and again at the end of the period to decide the next steps.

If, after a reasonable amount of time with proper monitoring and discussions (see the Managing Performance policy), the employee's performance still does not meet the expected standards, dismissal is likely.

## Misconduct

Misconduct happens when an employee does not meet the required standards of behaviour, performance, or conduct (refer to the Ministry's Code of Conduct). However, it is not serious enough to justify dismissal. The process should focus on identifying the problem, offering a solution to prevent further issues, and issuing a warning. This ensures the employee understands that repeated or continued misconduct may lead to dismissal.

A warning will last for a limited time (usually 12 months) and will be removed from the employee's personal file after it expires. Misconduct may result in either a verbal or written warning. If the employee does not improve or continues the misconduct, it may eventually lead to dismissal.

**Examples of misconduct include:**

- Unauthorised absence from work.
- Not following a lawful and reasonable instruction.
- Not performing work to the required standard.
- Lateness or absenteeism.
- Misusing sick leave.
- Failing to notify the manager of absence due to sickness or emergencies.
- Improper or unauthorised use of the Ministry's equipment or property.
- Using obscene or abusive language.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and other actions may also count as misconduct.

## **Serious Misconduct**

Serious misconduct refers to behaviour that damages the core of the employment relationship and destroys the Ministry's trust and confidence in the employee. It is behaviour that the Ministry cannot accept.

Serious misconduct may lead to suspension with pay during an investigation, followed by dismissal.

If, after a proper investigation, the Ministry finds the employee guilty of serious misconduct, possible outcomes include:

- A warning (only if there are exceptional circumstances).

- Dismissal (with or without notice).

#### **Examples of serious misconduct include:**

- Fraud.
- Being impaired by illegal drugs or alcohol at work or while driving a Ministry vehicle.
- Unauthorised removal or possession of the Ministry's property.
- Theft or dishonesty.
- Behaviour that causes or could cause harm to others.
- Not following a lawful and reasonable instruction.
- Sexual or other serious harassment.
- Assault, threats, or intimidating behaviour at work or during Ministry duties.
- Deliberately falsifying or destroying Ministry information or documents.
- Wilful negligence or gross incompetence.
- Actions that damage the Ministry's reputation.
- Inappropriate access to client records.
- Breaching Ministry or client confidentiality.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and other actions may also count as serious misconduct.

## **Serious Misconduct – Paid Leave Leading to Suspension**

An employee accused of serious misconduct may be placed on paid leave (and informed they will be suspended on full pay after 24 hours). This allows a full investigation to take place and ensures the employee's presence does not compromise the investigation or pose a risk to the Ministry.

The reason for the paid leave and possible suspension will be explained to the employee. They will have time to seek legal advice and respond to the manager (with delegated authority) about whether the suspension is justified.



After considering the employee's response (or if no response is given), the manager may decide to suspend the employee on full pay if justified. This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis, and the manager must consult the necessary parties before taking this step.

## Delegations

The authority to place an employee on paid leave, suspend them, or dismiss them lies with:

### Service Delivery:

- **In Regions:** The Regional Commissioner, after consulting Human Resources and the National Commissioner W&I.  
Note: The National Commissioner W&I must be informed to allow discussion before a decision is made.
- **In National Office:** The National Commissioner W&I or Director, after consulting Human Resources.  
Note: The Deputy Chief Executive Work and Income must be informed to allow discussion before a decision is made.

### Other Areas:

- The General Manager, after consulting Human Resources.

## Disciplinary Action Principles

The following principles apply to all disciplinary matters. These are based on the Ministry's Collective Employment Agreements:

1. The employee must be told about their right to have a representative or support person of their choice.
2. The employee must be informed of the issue and given a fair chance to explain.
3. A proper investigation must be done before any action is taken.
4. The employee must be told about any corrective action needed and given a reasonable time to improve or change their behaviour.

5. For performance issues, options like alternative work, coaching, extra training, or counselling should be considered.
6. Any disciplinary action must be recorded in writing, signed by the employee, and placed on their personal file. If the employee refuses to sign, the manager should note this on the record, date it, and file it.
7. A written warning must state how long it will last and will be removed from the employee's file after it expires.
8. In cases of serious misconduct, the employee may be placed on paid leave to seek advice and respond to the possibility of suspension. They may then be suspended on pay while the investigation continues.

## Preliminary Review

When a manager learns of possible misconduct, they may need to make initial enquiries to check if the issue has substance. After this, the manager will decide if further investigation is needed.

If the issue is minor and unlikely to happen again, it may be resolved informally without becoming a disciplinary matter. If unsure, the manager must contact an HR Consultant before proceeding.

## Investigation

A full and fair investigation must be done to find out the facts and circumstances of the disciplinary issue.

- Managers must keep written records throughout the investigation. These records may be needed for decisions or if the process is challenged later.
- The investigation must be fair, reasonable, and done in good faith. Both sides of the issue must be considered.
- Managers should regularly check if there is enough evidence to continue the investigation.

- Information and evidence must be shared with the employee. If someone providing evidence wants to stay anonymous, the manager should consult an HR Consultant.

During the investigation, managers must:

- Interview the employee as soon as possible.
- Give the employee a real chance to explain their side.
- Avoid bias and consider the issue from the employee's perspective.
- Use only relevant information.
- Keep an open mind until all facts are known and base decisions only on facts

## Employee Interview

The employee must be given reasonable notice of the interview. In urgent cases (e.g., security risks), quicker action may be needed.

- The employee must be told why they are being interviewed, what it is about, the allegations, and the possible outcomes. This must be communicated verbally and in writing.
- The manager must remind the employee of their right to representation and ensure they have the chance to bring a representative. Managers should also have support present.
- A detailed record of the meeting must be kept. Any agreements or admissions must be recorded.

During the meeting:

- The manager must clearly state the allegation and the Ministry's position.
- The employee must be given every chance to respond.
- The employee's explanation must be properly considered before any decision is made. This may require a break to follow up on new information and reconvene later.

If the employee feels aggrieved by the Ministry's actions, they must be told about their right to raise a personal grievance.

If employment is terminated, the formal dismissal letter must explain the reasons for dismissal.

# Disciplinary Action Procedure

This procedure outlines the steps a manager should follow when dealing with unresolved performance issues or alleged misconduct/serious misconduct.

The procedure includes links to checklists to help managers with the process.

## HR Consultants

If a manager is unsure about any steps or issues, they must contact an EHR Consultant for advice.

[askhr@msd.govt.nz](mailto:askhr@msd.govt.nz)

## On this page

- > Definition
- > The Process
- > Mental Health Condition
- > Verbal Warnings
- > Written Warnings
- > Review of Warnings
- > Formal Process - Performance Issues
- > Misconduct

- Serious Misconduct
- Serious Misconduct – Paid Leave Leading to...
- Delegations

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

# Breaches of the Code

Published 23/03/2026

If you do not meet the standards in the Public Service Code of Conduct or the Ministry Code, you may be breaking one or both Codes.

Breaking the Public Service Code of Conduct or the [Ministry's Code of Conduct](#) is a serious issue. It could affect your future with the Ministry.

Behaviour that the Ministry considers unacceptable will likely lead to disciplinary action. The disciplinary process will always be fair, unbiased, quick, and consistent. Each case will be looked at individually. The reasons for the breach and the specific circumstances will be reviewed before deciding on the action to take.

You can also face disciplinary action if you break Ministry policies, procedures, standards, or guidelines.

---

## Mental Health Condition

If a mental health condition might be a factor, managers must read the Ministry's guidance on handling performance issues linked to mental health conditions.

Before taking any action, such as speaking to, meeting with, or writing to an employee, managers must get advice from the EHR Consultancy team.

[Mental Health Guidelines \(PDF 331.84KB\)](#)

---

## Misconduct and Serious Misconduct

### Misconduct

Actions usually treated as misconduct include:

- Being absent from work without permission.
- Not following a lawful and reasonable instruction.

- Not performing work to the required standard.
- Being late or absent without a valid reason.
- Misusing sick leave.
- Not telling your manager about an absence due to sickness or an emergency.
- Using the Ministry's equipment or property improperly or without permission.
- Using obscene or abusive language.

Note: This list is not complete, and other actions may also be considered misconduct.

## Serious Misconduct

Actions treated as serious misconduct include:

- Fraud.
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol at work or while driving a Ministry vehicle.
- Taking or possessing the Ministry's property without permission.
- Theft or dishonesty.
- Behaviour that causes or could cause harm to others.
- Not following a lawful and reasonable instruction.
- Sexual or other serious harassment.
- Assault, threats, or intimidating behaviour at work or during Ministry duties.
- Deliberately falsifying or destroying Ministry information or documents.
- Wilful negligence or gross incompetence.
- Behaviour that damages the Ministry's reputation.
- Inappropriately accessing client records.
- Breaking Ministry or client confidentiality.

Note: This list is not complete, and other actions may also be considered serious misconduct.

## Reporting Breaches

The MSD Code explains what to do if you think there has been a breach or possible breach of the Public Service Code or the Ministry Code.

You should:

- Think carefully about how to handle the situation responsibly.
- Talk to your manager as soon as possible. They may have extra information you don't know, so trust them to handle the situation in the best way.
- If you feel you can't talk to your manager, or the issue is not resolved, you can speak to another Ministry manager or the General Manager of Human Resources.

If you believe the Ministry has not met its responsibilities under the Code, follow the same steps as above.

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT



# Disciplinary Process Guidelines

Published 23/04/2026

This page is intended to support managers and staff through the disciplinary process which is used to investigate and potentially sanction staff for breaching the Ministry's standards of behaviour.

The disciplinary process is used to investigate and potentially sanction staff for breaching the standards of behaviour set out in the Public Service Commission Code of Conduct and the Ministry's Code of Conduct. It is important to remember that staff can also face disciplinary action for breaching any of the Ministry's policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines.

This guidance is intended to support managers and staff through the disciplinary process and ensure that the process is impartial, fair, prompt, and consistent. It is important to note that these are guidelines only and the actual processes applied will need to take into account the individual circumstances of each case.

**Managers must consult with their ER Consultant prior to commencing a disciplinary process to ensure that the Ministry's contractual and legal obligations are met and that all the relevant delegations are understood and followed.**

[Contact your ER Consultant](#)

---

## Disciplinary principles

The following "principles" must be addressed as a minimum in any disciplinary process and should guide managers throughout the process.

- The employee is to be informed of the issue in question and be given a reasonable opportunity to provide an explanation.
- The employee is entitled to access confidential EAP counselling at any time.
- The employee is to be advised of their right to representation, and/or support person of their choice.

- In cases of alleged serious misconduct the employee may be placed on Leave of Absence/Suspension while an investigation is undertaken.
- An appropriate investigation will be undertaken before any decisions are made or actions taken.
- Depending on the seriousness of the issue a verbal warning will normally precede a written warning.
- A written warning will specify the duration of that warning and where specified by the relevant employment agreement will be removed from the employee's personnel file on its expiry date.
- Any disciplinary action is to be recorded in writing, signed by the employee, and placed on their personnel file.
- Any corrective action required together with a reasonable period of time to improve performance, or change the conduct, will also be advised. Where this is a performance issue consideration should be given to appropriate alternative work, remedial training, coaching, and counselling.
- Where an employee feels that they have been aggrieved by the Ministry, they are to be advised of the relevant employment relationship problem resolution process and their right to pursue a personal grievance.

## **Misconduct and serious misconduct - grounds for disciplinary action**

While it is not possible to set out all unacceptable forms of behaviour, the following provides examples of actions and behaviour which may be treated as grounds for disciplinary action.

### **Misconduct**

Misconduct covers situations where an employee's behaviour does not meet Ministry standards and where this misconduct (or a first incident of it) would not warrant dismissal. The process needs to focus on establishing what happened, clarifying future expectations, and if required, issuing a warning so the employee is aware that another instance of misconduct may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Actions which may be treated as misconduct (or where that action is a first instance) include:

- unauthorised absence from the workplace
- failure to follow a lawful and reasonable instruction
- failure to perform work to the required standard
- lateness and/or absenteeism
- abuse of sick leave
- failure to notify the manager of absence due to sickness or emergency
- improper or unauthorised use of the Ministry's equipment or other property (e.g. telephones, facsimile machines, photocopiers, computers, email and internet, cellphones, mail facilities, and vehicles)
- not keeping computer passwords secret, or using email or internet to access, solicit, store or send on any offensive material
- inappropriate workplace behaviours including the use of obscene or abusive language
- providing false information or failing to declare information that is requested when applying for, and during employment with the Ministry
- deliberately engaging in, and/or failing to disclose their involvement in an activity or commitment that constitutes a conflict of interest.

**Note:** the above list is not exhaustive and depending upon the circumstances any of these behaviours may be deemed "serious misconduct" by the Ministry.

## Serious misconduct

Serious misconduct is conduct that the Ministry cannot and will not condone which destroys the Ministry's trust and confidence in the employee to such an extent that the viability of ongoing employment must be called into question. Dismissal therefore becomes an option for the employer.

Actions which may be treated as serious misconduct include:

- possession and/or consumption of unlawful drugs
- being under the influence of alcohol, unlawful drugs or solvents, to the extent that duties cannot be performed to the required standard
- unauthorised removal or possession of Ministry property

- theft or other forms of dishonesty
- intentional damage to Ministry property, an employee's property, or the property of any other person
- conduct or behaviour that results in, or may have resulted in, personal injury to others
- repeated or deliberate refusal to follow a lawful and reasonable instruction
- physical or verbal violence, or harassment/bullying of any kind (including racial and sexual harassment) towards colleagues, clients, or members of the public
- assaulting, threatening, or intimidating another person in the workplace, or in the course of carrying out Ministry duties, or at any other time, when an employee of the Ministry
- deliberately misusing, falsifying, or destroying client, and/or Ministry records
- inappropriately accessing or browsing client records (including employee's accessing their own record or the record of a friend, relative, colleague, or acquaintance in any of the Ministry's systems such as CYRAS, UCVII, SWIFTT and SAL)
- acts of wilful negligence or gross incompetence
- conduct that brings the Ministry into disrepute (including behaviour by an employee in a private capacity that results in a criminal conviction)
- breaching Ministry or client confidentiality
- using information related to or contained in the Ministry's systems, or files, for unauthorised purposes (e.g. providing access to information to others who are not authorised to see it).

**Note:** The above list is not exhaustive and other actions may constitute serious misconduct.

## Zero tolerance

The Ministry takes a zero tolerance approach to the following conduct:

- Stealing from the benefit system or the Ministry.
- Interfering with, or in any way abusing a child or young person we are responsible for.
- Selling client information.

- Sharing client details or circumstances with someone outside of work without proper authority.

In every case where it is proven that a staff member has committed any of the above, the staff member will be dismissed and in every case, where appropriate, the matter will be referred to the Police.

**Note:** The Ministry applies the principles of good faith and fair process in each and every case irrespective of the alleged misconduct.

## Potential disciplinary outcomes

Depending on the nature of the breach a disciplinary process may result in a:

- verbal warning
- written warning
- final written warning
- dismissal.

**Managers must first consult with the ER Consultant and their own manager before taking any disciplinary action.**

### Verbal warning

A verbal warning is generally issued for relatively minor breaches of standards, or for a first minor incident of misconduct. A record of verbal warnings should be kept on the employee's personnel file. The verbal warning should be signed by the employee to record both their receipt and understanding. If the employee refuses to sign the record this should be noted by the manager on the record, dated, and filed.

### Written warning

A written warning may be issued:

- when the manager considers the conduct to be serious enough to warrant action greater than a verbal warning

- where a verbal warning has previously been issued and there is a further incident of the same or similar misconduct.

## **Final written warning**

A final written warning may be issued:

- following a previous warning in cases where any further incident of misconduct of the same or similar nature will result in the employee's dismissal
- without any previous warning (verbal or written) in cases of serious misconduct but where the circumstances do not warrant dismissal.

## **Duration of warnings**

The duration of warnings will vary depending on the circumstances but all warnings must contain an expiry date. Where specified by the relevant employment agreement a warning will be removed from the employee's personnel file once it has expired - except where a further warning has been issued in regards to the same, or similar, misconduct while the previous warning was still in effect.

## **Placing an employee on Leave of absence/suspension**

In cases of alleged serious misconduct an employee may be placed on Leave of Absence/Suspension while a full investigation is undertaken, and/or where the presence of the employee in the workplace could compromise the investigation or pose an ongoing risk to clients, and/or the Ministry. Leave of Absence/Suspension is usually paid unless special mitigating circumstances exist.

**Managers must consult their ER Consultant and have the appropriate delegations to place an employee on Leave of Absence/Suspension.**

Before an employee is placed on Leave of Absence/Suspension they must be offered an opportunity to make submissions which must be considered carefully before a final decision is made.



If after due consideration the manager decides that the employee will be placed on Leave of Absence/Suspension they must advise the employee in writing that they:

- are being placed on Leave of Absence/Suspension
- should not re-enter the workplace or contact any Ministry employee during the period of Leave of Absence/Suspension, unless authorised to do so
- they have a right to seek legal advice or other support/representation (i.e. union assistance).

Where appropriate the manager should also take any steps necessary to prevent the employee returning to the workplace or accessing Ministry systems. These steps may include shutting off the employees computer and building access, and disconnecting any other Ministry tools in the employees possession, i.e. laptop and mobile phone.

Leave of Absence/Suspension should not be prolonged and should continue only as long as it takes to complete a full and fair investigation. If there are unavoidable delays then the continuation of the Leave of Absence/Suspension should be revisited

## **Disciplinary process**

Managers must consult with their ER Consultant before proceeding with a disciplinary process. ER Consultants work with these issues across the Ministry so will be able to ensure the manager gets the right advice and that any response is consistent with current MSD practice.

When an issue of alleged misconduct is brought to a managers attention, the manager may need to make initial enquiries to determine if there is any substance to the issue and whether the issue should be taken into a formal disciplinary setting for further investigation.

Where appropriate it may be that the matter can be resolved informally without the need for escalation into the disciplinary process (e.g. a minor matter that is unlikely to reoccur).

Where initially there appears to be sufficient evidence for a full investigation the employee is to be advised in writing:

- that a full and fair investigation will be carried out

- of the nature of the issue and potential disciplinary outcomes
- of their right to representation, and/or support person of their choice
- of their right to access confidential EAP counselling at any time.

## Investigation

A full and fair investigation of the situation must be carried out to determine the facts. During the investigation there should be ongoing consideration as to whether or not there is sufficient evidence for the investigation to continue.

An employment relationship is based on trust and confidence, and there is a duty on the manager carrying out the investigation to do so in a fair and reasonable manner, carefully considering both sides of the issue, and ensuring that the employee has every opportunity to present as full an explanation as possible.

The manager should:

- conduct the investigation and interview the employee in a timely manner
- provide the employee with a real opportunity to explain their point of view
- never allow bias (e.g. personal likes or dislikes, relationships, or personality issues) to affect the investigation
- use only information that is relevant to the case
- keep an open mind until all facts are known and base decisions on fact alone, including any relevant extenuating or personal circumstances offered by the employee.

Relevant information and evidence collected should be copied to the employee so they can respond to the matter from an equally fully informed basis. At times a complainant/informant providing evidence may ask that their identity remains confidential. If this happens the manager should contact their ER Consultant to discuss options.

At all stages of the investigation the manager should keep written records to support their decisions. These records should also be kept in the event that there is a challenge through the Personal Grievance process.

## Disciplinary interview with the employee

An employee should be given reasonable advance notice of an interview. However, in cases of serious misconduct a quick decision may be required, e.g. where there



is a security risk or the potential of harm to another person.

In all cases the employee must be told in advance, and in writing what the interview will be about and the potential disciplinary outcomes. They must also be reminded of their right to representation and all reasonable attempts must be made to ensure that the employee has the opportunity to have their representative present at the interview. For example, if the employee's representative is unavailable the interview should be rescheduled as soon as possible to ensure that the representative can attend.

For evidence purposes managers should also have another person present at the interview with them. If the matter is serious misconduct then an ER Consultant should attend.

At the interview, the manager must clearly state the allegation and Ministry's position on it. The employee must be given every opportunity to respond, and/or explain. The employee's explanation must be properly considered before a decision is made. This may require an adjournment to follow up on any explanation provided, or reconvening the meeting at a later date if new information needs to be put to the employee and further explanation sought.

Managers must keep a record of the interview and provide the employee with a transcript, or the notes taken. If any agreement is reached, or any admissions/concessions made, it is important that these are recorded for later reference.

## **Referral documentation**

Where the matter is referred for a decision the manager must prepare a complete set of all relevant documentation including copies of the warnings issued and a referral memo for the decision maker. The referral documentation should be copied to the employee so that they can see exactly what is being sent to the decision maker and are then able to respond in full. Your ER Consultant can assist with the referral documentation.

## **Option for the employee to meet with or make a written submission to the decision maker**

Where the matter is referred for a decision the employee must be offered the opportunity to either meet with, or make a written submission to, the decision maker before a decision is made.

If the employee wants to meet with the decision maker, the manager and HR will arrange the meeting including allowing the employee to attend with representation, and/or support person of their choice.

**Note:** Representation, and/or support person costs to attend the meeting (i.e. travel costs) are the employee's responsibility.

## Meeting with the decision maker

The decision maker attends the meeting supported by the ER Consultant who has worked with the manager throughout the process. The employee should be given every opportunity to explain their view of the situation, including providing written submissions, and the decision maker can ask any questions as appropriate.

Generally the decision maker does not make a decision at the meeting but instead will carefully consider both the employee's explanation and any supporting documentation provided to them, and will advise the employee's manager of their decision once that decision has been made. If considered appropriate, the decision maker may also inform the employee directly about their decision.

## Decision to dismiss

If the decision is to dismiss, the employee's manager will meet with the employee and advise them of the decision. The manager should also provide the employee with a Letter of Termination clearly stating the reasons for dismissal (your ER Consultant can assist with the drafting of the letter).

All the documentation should be placed on the employee's personnel file and Payroll should be notified via the Termination Form that the employee's personnel file should be clearly noted "Dismissed - Not Suitable for Re-employment: contact your ER Consultant".

## On this page

- Disciplinary principles
- Misconduct and serious misconduct - grounds f...
- Potential disciplinary outcomes
- Placing an employee on Leave of...
- Disciplinary process

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT



# CODE OF CONDUCT



*Te Tauākī Whanonga mō te Rāngai Tūmatanui*  
**The Code of Conduct for the Public Sector**



**New Zealand Government**  
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa



**This Code is for all of us  
and sits at the heart of our  
work, guiding what we do  
and how we do it.  
We must know it and hold  
ourselves accountable to it,  
wherever we work.**

## **Kupu Whakataki | Foreword**

We live in an ever-changing world where the principles and values that underpin this Code are essential – they are the foundations for trust and confidence in the work we do and how we serve New Zealand and its people.

Integrity is not a one-off task – it is an ongoing obligation for us as public servants. Acting with integrity strengthens relationships, improves services, and makes a real difference in our communities. This defines the Public Sector and gives meaning and purpose to our work. It is important that we are all on the same page when it comes to what integrity means in a contemporary and evolving Public Sector.

The Code reinforces our responsibility to serve the government of the day professionally, while maintaining the trust of future governments and the public. It also sets clear expectations for leadership which includes fostering a positive, safe workplace culture that encourages speaking up and addressing integrity concerns appropriately.

Integrity is at the heart of being a public servant. Our Public Sector is internationally recognised for its professionalism and integrity – a reputation built on strong standards of conduct. Each of us plays a vital part in upholding these standards and serving New Zealanders with integrity and professionalism.



**Sir Brian Roche KNZM**  
Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Kawa Mataaho  
Public Service Commissioner | Head of Service

# Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

*Te Tauākī Whanonga mō te Rāngai Tūmatanui*  
The Code of Conduct for the Public Sector (the Code) sets the standards of integrity and conduct across the **Public Sector**.

It provides a shared foundation and commitment to integrity and conduct and reinforces that our work for the public is unique, meaningful and based on trust.

The Code is for all **public servants** and sits at the heart of our work. **We** must know it and hold ourselves accountable to it, wherever we work. The Code outlines standards that should be applied with judgement and with regard to the role of the Public Sector in:

- acting with integrity and a spirit of service to the community
- supporting parliamentary democracy
- maintaining the trust and confidence of the public in all that we do, and
- supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi, in the context of our work roles.

Note: **Bolded terms** are defined in the glossary.

## Ngā Mātāpono, Ngā Pou Our Values and Our Principles

The Public Service **values** and **principles** form the framework for the standards in this Code.

### Ngā Mātāpono | Our Values

Our values guide how we behave in every interaction. They are:

- **Trustworthy** – to act with integrity and be open and transparent
- **Respectful** – to treat all people with dignity and compassion and act with humility
- **Impartial** – to treat all people fairly, without personal favour or bias
- **Accountable** – to take responsibility and answer for our work, actions, and decisions
- **Responsive** – to understand and meet people's needs and aspirations.

### Ngā Pou | Our Principles

Our principles are foundational pillars that guide how the Public Sector works to achieve its purpose. They are:

- **Political neutrality** – to act in a politically neutral manner
- **Free and frank advice** – when giving advice to Ministers, to do so in a free and frank manner

- **Merit-based appointments** – to make merit-based appointments (unless an exception applies under the Act)
- **Open government** – to foster a culture of open government
- **Stewardship** – to proactively promote stewardship of the Public Sector.

## Te Hāngaitanga Scope and Application

The Code is issued by the Public Service Commissioner and sets **standards** of integrity and conduct under section 17(1) of the Public Service Act 2020 (the **Act**). It replaces the *Standards of Integrity and Conduct*, formerly issued under section 57 of the State Sector Act 1988.

The Code includes guidance that relates to the standards which is issued under section 19 of the Act. This guidance complements [He Aratohu | A guide for public servants on matters of integrity and conduct](#), in particular:

- *Guidance* on topics such as the Public Service principles, general elections, social media, and **sensitive expenditure**
- *Model standards* that set expectations for the Public Sector, including on **conflicts of interest**, speaking up, positive and safe workplaces and chief executive gifts, benefits, and expenses.

It is recognised that some of the standards may have limited relevance to parts of the Public Sector.

For example, some public servants have no direct interaction with Ministers or the public. Where that may be the case, we still need to consider how the standards may apply, given we all ultimately serve the Government and New Zealanders.

### Application

Under section 17(2) of the Act, the Code applies to the **Public Sector** and all **public servants** (see glossary for definitions).

Under section 18(1) of the Act, the Public Sector and public servants must comply with the standards of integrity and conduct outlined in this Code.

### Implementation

Public Sector organisations may apply additional or detailed standards to their organisation that are consistent with this Code – for example, through an organisation code of conduct adapted to their context. They are also expected to maintain policies and procedures in their organisations that support compliance with the Code.

### Effective date

The Code takes effect on **30 March 2026**.

### Intersection with legal requirements

If there is a conflict between this Code and legislation, the legislation will prevail. Public Sector organisations are subject to varying accountabilities as set out in legislation. The Code is not intended to undermine any of these legislative requirements.



## Ngā Paerewa | Our Standards

### Ngā Mātāpono | Our Values



1. We are honest and professional.
2. We act lawfully and use public power fairly and reasonably.
3. We avoid work and non-work activities that may compromise our ability to do our job.



4. We recognise and uphold the dignity of every person.
5. We contribute to a positive and safe workplace culture.
6. We act with care and respect, and do not behave in ways that are inappropriate or could harm others.



7. We act objectively and do not allow our personal beliefs, interests, activities, or relationships to impact our work.
8. We disclose our relevant interests and manage all conflicts of interest appropriately.
9. We never misuse our position for personal gain or to benefit or disadvantage others.
10. We decline gifts or benefits that place us under any actual or perceived obligation or influence.



11. We are open to scrutiny and can account for what we do.
12. We treat our organisation's information and resources with care and use them only for proper purposes.
13. We aim to improve the performance and efficiency of our organisation.



14. We take the time to listen to and understand people's circumstances and needs.
15. We aim to collaborate and engage meaningfully with New Zealanders to design policies and deliver services that meet their needs and aspirations.

### Ngā Pou | Our Principles



16. We act in a politically neutral manner, which enables us to effectively serve current and future governments.
17. We respect the authority of the government of the day.



18. We support our organisation to provide Ministers with timely, robust, and unbiased advice.



19. We are fair and robust in our recruitment and selection processes and must give preference to the person who is best suited to the position.



20. We aim to make government information, decisions, and services transparent, accessible and available.



21. We manage and care for the Public Sector, so that it may continue to meet the needs of New Zealanders now and into the future.





## Ngākau Pono Trustworthy



*Being trustworthy means being dependable,  
acting responsibly and with the utmost integrity.*

### Ngā Paerewa | The Standards

1. We are honest and professional.
2. We act lawfully and use public power fairly and reasonably.
3. We avoid work and non-work activities that may compromise our ability to do our job.

### Being honest and professional

Being honest and professional means being open, telling the truth, and doing the right thing – even when it's hard. We take care in our work, are transparent about what we do and take responsibility for our actions and decisions. We are competent and professional and use skill and care in performing our roles and engaging with others. Being honest means we never engage in fraud, corruption or bribery.

### Acting lawfully

We earn trust by following the law and acting with integrity. This means meeting our legal obligations – including those outlined in laws, regulations and contracts – while also considering what is ethical and the right thing to do. We consider available options to ensure outcomes are fair, reasonable and lawful. Acting lawfully includes enforcing laws and regulations to protect the safety, rights and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

### Using public power fairly and reasonably

To be trustworthy, we must be both fair and reasonable when we exercise **public power**. This means our processes are fair, transparent and easy to understand, which can include:

- giving those who may be affected by our actions and decisions a reasonable opportunity to be heard, and providing reasons for our decisions

- making decisions without bias and predetermination, and
- acting reasonably by ensuring our decisions are justifiable and based on facts, evidence and clear reasoning.

### Avoiding activities that may compromise our ability to do our job

Our organisations can be concerned about what we do at work or outside work, if it:

- compromises our ability to do our job
- impacts our ability to protect and advance the interests of New Zealand and New Zealanders, or
- is unlawful or harmful, breaches trust or confidentiality or is offensive.

We must act responsibly so our behaviour doesn't compromise the credibility or integrity of our organisation or the Public Sector. This may include carefully considering our use of social media and other online platforms or engaging in secondary employment or other public activity.





## Whakarangatira Respectful



*Being respectful involves recognising the inherent dignity of every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances.*

### Ngā Paerewa | The Standards

4. We recognise and uphold the dignity of every person.
5. We contribute to a positive and safe workplace culture.
6. We act with care and respect, and do not behave in ways that are inappropriate or could harm others.

### Recognising and upholding dignity

We recognise and uphold the dignity of every person by treating them with respect and fairness. This means being considerate in our actions and words, regardless of someone's background, situation, beliefs, or role. We actively listen, value different perspectives and acknowledge the contributions of others. By doing so we serve the people of New Zealand in a way that is fair and respectful.

### Positive and safe workplace culture

A positive and safe workplace culture is where people feel valued, supported and motivated to do their best work. It's shaped by shared values, attitudes, standards and behaviours that promote wellbeing and productivity. In this environment, we feel comfortable sharing ideas and concerns without fear of judgement or retaliation, and we are receptive and respectful of others in return. We all have a role in creating a positive workplace culture where everyone feels they belong. This is particularly important for those of us in a leadership role.

### Inappropriate or harmful behaviours

We must be respectful when interacting with our colleagues and the public.

We never engage in bullying, harassment (including sexual and gender-based harassment), racism, unlawful discrimination, coercion, exploitation, or other forms of harmful or inappropriate behaviour. If we see anyone in the Public Sector acting in these ways we respond promptly and appropriately, unless it is unsafe to do so. We don't cover it up.

Any person affected by inappropriate or harmful behaviours has the right to choose whether to take action and their organisation should have regard to that choice before deciding what action it can or should take.





## Ngākau Tapatahi Impartial



*Being impartial means that our work, actions, and decisions are free from personal bias, or unjustified prejudice or preference.*

### Ngā Paerewa | The Standards

7. We act objectively and do not allow our personal beliefs, interests, activities, or relationships to impact our work.
8. We disclose our relevant interests and manage all conflicts of interest appropriately.
9. We never misuse our position for personal gain or to benefit or disadvantage others.
10. We decline gifts or benefits that place us under any actual or perceived obligation or influence.

### Acting objectively

We act objectively when making decisions. Our decisions are fair and based on available facts and evidence, rather than our own personal opinions or biases. Acting objectively means considering all available and relevant information before making a judgement or decision.

### Disclosing relevant interests and managing conflicts

We make sure our personal interests – like activities or relationships – don't interfere with our ability to perform our roles fairly. If something could be, or is, a **conflict of interest**, we tell our manager and work together to record and manage it. We recognise that circumstances change, so we will regularly discuss, review and update our interests.

### Not using our position for personal gain or to benefit or disadvantage others

We never misuse our position for personal gain or unfairly advantage or disadvantage others in our work. We take care with spending and make sure funds and resources are used appropriately by our organisation. We ensure there is no misuse of funds or position to benefit ourselves, family, friends or other individuals, groups or organisations.

### Gifts and benefits

Regardless of their value, we should generally decline gifts or benefits that place us under any actual or perceived obligation or influence. Gifts should only be accepted in limited situations that are clearly defined. For example, accepting a gift such as koha or other cultural gifting may be appropriate where declining could cause offence, be considered inappropriate, or harm relationships with our partners or stakeholders.

We follow our organisation's policies, including keeping records of all gifts or benefits offered to us, declined or accepted. We must act with the highest integrity if receiving or giving any gifts, benefits or hospitality, as these can be perceived to unfairly influence our work.





## Whaiwhakaaro Accountable



*Being accountable means we are responsible for what we do. We work to the best of our abilities and can answer for our work, actions, and decisions.*

### Ngā Paerewa | The Standards

11. We are open to scrutiny and can account for what we do.
12. We treat our organisation's information and resources with care and use them only for proper purposes.
13. We aim to improve the performance and efficiency of our organisation.

### Being open to scrutiny and accountable for what we do

We must be able to explain our decisions and actions to the people affected by them and to the public. We can do this through:

- keeping accurate records of our decisions and actions
- providing information about our decision-making to individuals, and
- providing authorised information on organisation websites, other digital channels like social media, and in official information responses.

Even when we work carefully, mistakes may happen. If we make a mistake, we are open about it, take responsibility for it, fix it quickly and share what we've learned so others can improve too.

### Treating information with care

We handle information responsibly. This means only collecting what we need, using it for the right reasons and storing it securely.

We must only obtain and use information for proper purposes. We comply with all legal and other requirements about information, including privacy, confidentiality, commercial sensitivity, classifications and national security, official information, and third-party access.

We never make deliberate and unauthorised disclosures or 'leak' non-public information that is in our care, or that we have access to. We must be careful about who we share information with and safeguard sensitive government information.

### Treating resources with care, including using public money responsibly

We are responsible for using public money and resources wisely and the public trusts us to do so. We act prudently, honestly and responsibly when dealing with public funds within our control. We must also use our work time wisely and only use our resources for proper purposes, while safeguarding them against waste, abuse or neglect.

We follow government spending rules and financial management legislation, keep adequate records, and use fair and transparent procurement processes to ensure value for money.

### Aiming to improve the performance and efficiency of our organisations

We aim to improve our organisation's performance and efficiency by looking for ways to improve what we do and how we work. We can do this by:

- collaborating effectively with others
- working to the best of our abilities
- embracing innovation, for example, responsible use of new technologies
- identifying ways to streamline processes and deliver timely services, and
- providing opportunities for feedback from the people we interact with to help improve our work.





## Āta Whakarongo Responsive



*Being responsive is about active engagement and collaboration with people, groups, and communities.*

### Ngā Paerewa | The Standards

14. We take the time to listen to and understand people's circumstances and needs.
15. We aim to collaborate and engage meaningfully with New Zealanders to design policies and deliver services that meet their needs and aspirations.

### A people-centred approach – listen and understand

We take time to listen and understand people's needs so we can respond with the right advice and services. This also means providing people with useful information and support and delivering services that are timely, easy to use/access and effective.

We build trust by being responsive and intentional in our interactions. We adapt our approach to the situation and any changes in a person's circumstances or context. We also seek feedback so we can continue to improve.

### Collaborate and engage on policy and service design and delivery

When designing policies and services, we do our best to identify relevant stakeholders, partners and communities for collaboration. We aim to provide them with information and opportunities to engage with us so we can understand their views, needs and aspirations. Doing this helps us design services that work well for different people and communities.

Collaboration and engagement help us to improve outcomes for New Zealanders. We can achieve this by:

- sharing knowledge, fostering innovation, and learning from each other
- supporting better coordination and delivery, and
- being flexible and adapting to change.





## ***Te Noho Taiapa*** **Political Neutrality**



*Political neutrality<sup>1</sup> is about serving New Zealand's democratically elected government to the best of our professional abilities, irrespective of our political opinions.*

## Ngā Paerewa | The Standards

16. We act in a politically neutral manner, which enables us to effectively serve current and future governments.
17. We respect the authority of the government of the day.

<sup>1</sup> The guidance in this section reflects more comprehensive guidance on political neutrality contained in Te Kawa Mataaho | [Guidance on Public Service Principles](#)

Public servants have the same rights to freedom of expression and political activity as other New Zealanders under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.

We must exercise these rights in a way that doesn't affect our ability to do our work in a politically neutral way. This doesn't prevent us from all political participation, but there are some things we should think about when engaging in political activity that might impact our role as a public servant.

These include:

- the seniority of our role
- the nature of our work, and
- the scope and scale of the proposed political activity.

## Political neutrality when performing our roles at work

Being politically neutral helps keep the work of Ministers (setting policy direction, making decisions, and advocating for government policies) and our work (providing advice, implementing policy, and delivering public services) distinct.

Political neutrality requires us to be particularly careful with:

- our approach to advertising and publicity

- engaging with Members of Parliament and political parties
- our use of organisational social media and media comment
- what we do and say around the general election period, and
- appearing before select committees.

## Political neutrality for public servants as individuals

Being politically neutral at work doesn't generally stop us from being politically active outside of work in our own time. But when we're being politically active outside of work, we must not represent or give the impression that we represent our organisation or disclose or use confidential government information. Sometimes there may be circumstances where it's difficult to reconcile your personal political interests with performing your Public Sector role.

In particular, those of us who are senior public servants or work closely with Ministers should consider public perception and exercise additional judgement and care when being politically active outside of work.



## Political neutrality for members of a profession or a statutory role

If we are **members of a profession** or have a statutory role that involves public advocacy, we need to fulfil our professional obligations or statutory role while staying politically neutral. We have the same rights to political activity as other public servants while also having the same requirements to exercise those rights in a way that doesn't affect our ability to do our work in a politically neutral way.

Professional codes of ethics or obligations – such as those for medical, accounting, social work and legal professions – apply alongside this Code. If there is inconsistency or conflict between our professional obligations and this Code, we need to raise it with our organisation.

Members of a profession may wish to comment publicly in a professional capacity on matters within their areas of expertise or experience including on work-related matters. When considering this we should:

- be open and honest with our organisation, and consider any legal requirements that may apply

- not enter into debate criticising or advocating for particular politicians or political parties, and
- exercise care if commenting on Government or party-specific policies.

Our organisations should have policies and procedures that outline what members of a profession should do if they wish to make a public comment. If we are a spokesperson for a professional body, our comments should clearly be made on behalf of that professional body.

If our professional member or statutory role obligations are also legislative requirements, those will prevail over this Code, although any inconsistency should still be raised with our organisation.

## Respecting the authority of the government of the day

Through our work we support the government of the day to develop and implement its policies. We must respect the authority and decisions of the Government and Ministers as elected representatives. We must act in a way that maintains the trust and confidence of the Government while ensuring the same relationship can be established with future governments. We must follow lawful instructions from Ministers, irrespective of our own political opinion.

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT



## Tohutohu Hāngai Free and Frank Advice



*Free and frank advice is about organisations providing advice to Ministers without fear or favour, using our best professional judgement.*

### Te Paerewa | The Standard

18. We support our organisation to provide Ministers with timely, robust, and unbiased advice.

### Providing free and frank advice

Free and frank advice supports Ministers to make good decisions and gives the public confidence that those decisions are well informed. Our organisational **leaders** are responsible for ensuring that free and frank advice is given to Ministers by their organisations.

Providing free and frank advice is about focusing on our Minister's objectives while being honest, politically neutral, free from undue influence, and constructive about the best ways to achieve their objectives. This may mean we need to respectfully and professionally challenge our Minister's understanding or initial preference. We aim to include a range of perspectives in our advice, canvassing options and informing Ministers about the pros, cons, uncertainties and consequences of the decisions they are being asked to make.

If our job involves providing advice directly or indirectly to Ministers, we need to be mindful of context, including demonstrating awareness of, and responsiveness to, the priorities of the government of the day. Free and frank advice means that we provide the relevant information, evidence and analysis needed to deliver clear, objective and effective advice. We take a 'no surprises'<sup>2</sup> approach by promptly advising on significant matters within our Minister's portfolio responsibilities, particularly where those may be controversial or may become the subject of public debate.

<sup>2</sup> See: Solicitor-General's Guidance (2023) [Chief Executives and the 'No Surprises' Principle](#); The [Cabinet Manual](#) (2023) also outlines requirements under the 'no surprises' principle.





## Kopounga Whai-painga Merit-based Appointments



*Merit-based appointments are an essential cornerstone of our professional and politically neutral Public Sector.*

### Te Paerewa | The Standard

19. We are fair and robust in our recruitment and selection processes and must give preference to the person who is best suited to the position.

## Making merit-based appointments

Merit-based appointments help us recruit, attract and select the best people to work in the Public Sector, building a workforce that has the experience and expertise to improve the lives of New Zealanders.

Those of us who are leaders need to ensure our organisation upholds the principle of merit-based appointments and must make merit-based appointments unless an exception applies under the **Act**.

This means if we have a role in employee recruitment, promotion and selection, we must:

- identify the skills, responsibilities and effort necessary to perform the role
- ensure appointments are made through a fair, open and contestable process, and are free from patronage, favouritism or prejudice, and
- follow our organisation's internal policies and ensure independence, confidentiality, fairness and transparency in the appointment or promotion process.





## Kāwanatanga Tuwhera Open Government



*Open government strengthens democracy by improving transparency and understanding of how government works, facilitating public participation and accountability of the Government to its people.*

### Te Paerewa | The Standard

20. We aim to make government information, decisions, and services transparent, accessible and available.

### Our roles in open government

Open government means we aim to enable public participation by being proactively transparent about our work and how government functions. Where possible we look for ways to improve the accessibility and availability of information and services.

There are rules, frameworks and processes that support open government and transparency, such as:

- access to information through the Official Information Act 1982 or Privacy Act 2020, and proactive release of information
- consultation frameworks to support public feedback
- co-designing services with communities, and
- how we provide advice, for example, accessible formats.

We should use these frameworks where relevant to our work and identify and discuss opportunities to be open with our organisation.

While being open is important, we must balance transparency with the legitimate need to keep some information confidential, for example, privacy concerns or information under active consideration of Ministers. Disclosure of government information must follow our organisation's information management policies and procedures and comply with the law.





## Kaitiakitanga Stewardship



*Stewardship is a proactive duty of care for something that belongs to or exists for the benefit of others, now and into the future.*

### Te Paerewa | The Standard

21. We manage and care for the Public Sector, so that it may continue to meet the needs of New Zealanders now and into the future.

### Our stewardship role

Stewardship helps to protect the Public Sector now and into the future. Where relevant to our role, we must adopt forward-thinking planning and management practices in our work to:

- preserve and protect institutional knowledge and information, and use our assets and resources wisely
- help meet our organisation's stewardship responsibilities, including financial management, policy and regulatory stewardship, performance and sustainability
- support our organisations to have established plans that safeguard the continuity of critical services, and
- support Ministers to act as good stewards under the Act.

### Long-term workforce planning and capability

Where relevant to our role, we need to anticipate, manage and plan for our future workforce so we can meet future challenges. This includes:

- encouraging knowledge sharing and retention of expertise, and supporting skills acquisition and career progression across the Public Sector
- supporting our chief executives or governance boards to develop and maintain the capability to engage with Māori and understand Māori perspectives, and
- developing long-term capability and ensuring this is embedded in our teams and processes.



## Te ū ki tā tātou Tauākī Abiding by our Code

The Code should be read in full as the meaning and requirements for each section overlap. The standards, values, and principles should not be read as separate or isolated from the rest of the Code.

### As a public servant, you must:

- ensure you read, understand, and abide by the Code, and
- adhere to any additional behavioural expectations set by your organisation.

### As a leader, you must also:

- support your team and colleagues' understanding of how to comply with the Code
- encourage your team and colleagues to ask questions and raise any integrity or conduct concerns by speaking up
- deal with integrity or conduct concerns appropriately, and where applicable to your role, enforce the Code consistently, and
- foster a positive, safe, and ethical workplace culture in your organisation.

### As an organisational leader of a Public Sector organisation, you are responsible for:

- the integrity and conduct of your employees, which includes ensuring they have read and understood this Code and agree to abide by it
- ensuring your organisation's code of conduct (if relevant) and policies and procedures are consistent with this Code
- enabling your employees to complete Code of Conduct learning and to regularly renew that learning, and
- ensuring your employees can obtain appropriate advice on integrity issues, including possible conflicts of interest.

## Ngā Takahitanga o te Tauākī Breaches of the Code

Failure to comply with this Code may constitute misconduct or serious misconduct and could result in disciplinary action being taken by your organisation up to and including dismissal. Breaches of law may also result in civil or criminal penalties.

The Code is not intended to outline every possible scenario or list every behaviour or action that could be a breach. Unsatisfactory behaviour or actions not specifically listed in this Code may still constitute a breach, where they are found to undermine the Public Service values and principles. Public servants are required to exercise careful judgement that can withstand scrutiny and should seek advice early if unsure about any of the Code's requirements.

## Whakaputaina he kōrero, whakapuakina ngā āwangawanga Speak up and raise concerns

Speaking up promptly about suspected wrongdoing shows that we care and have the courage to do the right thing. Anyone can report concerns such as behaviour or activities they feel may breach this Code to the relevant Public Sector organisation.

The process for reporting **serious wrongdoing**, and the protections available to those who report it, is outlined in the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022. This includes a list of appropriate authorities to make a report to. Criminal or unlawful activity should be reported to the NZ Police or other relevant enforcement agencies (for example, the Serious Fraud Office).

If you've raised concerns about a public servant or a Public Sector organisation and you feel the concerns haven't been appropriately managed or resolved, or you feel unsafe raising the concerns with the relevant organisation, you can report them to Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission:

[enquiries@publicservice.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries@publicservice.govt.nz)

## Rārangi kupu | Glossary

In this Code, unless the context otherwise requires –

**Act** means the [Public Service Act 2020](#).

**Conflict of interest** means any situation where a person's duties or responsibilities as an employee of, or a contractor to, a Public Sector organisation conflict, or could be seen to conflict or interfere with their personal or other interests or activities. Conflicts of interest can be actual, perceived or potential.

**Leader** means any person who is recognised as a leader in their organisation and includes senior leaders and those with managerial responsibilities.

**Members of a profession** means members of an occupational group with a registration requirement under an Act for the individuals who work or practise in the occupational group.

**Our** means things that belong collectively to public servants and, where the context requires, includes the Public Sector.

**Principles** means the public service principles set out in [section 12 of the Act](#).

**Public power** means the authority and ability of the Public Sector and public servants to make decisions and manage public resources for the benefit of everyone. It must be used in ways that serve the public good.

**Public Sector** means the organisations to which this Code applies, specifically:

- a) Public service agencies (departments, departmental agencies, interdepartmental executive boards, interdepartmental ventures) and Crown agents
- b) Crown entities (other than Crown agents and excluding tertiary education institutions and school boards, and Crown Research Institutes and their subsidiaries)
- c) Companies named in Schedule 4A of the Public Finance Act 1989, and
- d) the Parliamentary Counsel Office.

**Public servant** means any person to whom this Code applies, specifically anyone working in the Public Sector, e.g., employees and contractors. By way of explanation, this does not include Board members of Crown entities or Directors of Public Finance Act 1989 Schedule 4A Companies, as they have their own codes of conduct issued by the Public Service Commissioner.

**Public Service** has the meaning given in [section 10 of the Act](#).

**Sensitive expenditure** means any spending by an organisation that could be seen to be giving private benefit to staff additional to the business benefit to the organisation.

**Serious wrongdoing** has the meaning set out in [section 10 of the Protected Disclosures \(Protection of Whistleblowers\) Act 2022](#).

**Standards** means the minimum standards of integrity and conduct set by the Public Service Commissioner under [section 17 of the Act](#) as outlined in this Code.

**Values** means the public service values set out in [section 16 of the Act](#).

**We** and **us** when used in this Code means all public servants and, where the context requires, also includes the Public Sector.

**Your** means things that individually belong, or apply, to public servants and **you** has a corresponding meaning.



# Rārangi kupu mo te reo Māori

## Te reo Māori Glossary

**Ngākau Pono** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *trustworthy* value. It best describes dependability and integrity. In separating the two words, *ngākau* is often translated to heart or matters of the heart and *pono* to be true or truthful, honest, and sincere.

**Ngākau Tapatahi** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *impartial* value. It is a translation for impartiality, integrity, being neutral, fair, unbiased, even-handed or non-partisan.

**Whaiwhakaaro** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *accountable* value. Rather than a translation, it describes the action of thinking carefully, being open to scrutiny and acting responsibly.

**Whakarangatira** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *respectful* value. The translation describes treating people with dignity, honour, or to revere or enable.

**Āta Whakarongo** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *responsive* value. It describes the act of listening attentively. *Āta* translates to deliberately, purposefully, intentionally, with care. *Whakarongo* is commonly described as listening and hearing.

**Te Noho Taiapa** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *political neutrality* principle. It is a *kīwaha* and directly translates to ‘sit on the fence.’ For clarity, this does not mean that public servants cannot hold and express political opinions. However they should consider political neutrality as part of their role as a public servant and the [Public Service Principles guidance](#) within this context.

**Tohutohu Hāngai** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *free and frank* principle. Tohutohu is a translation for ‘to advise.’ Hāngai is a translation for directly and is commonly used in the *kīwaha* ‘me hāngai te kōrero’ which can be translated to keeping to the point or ‘don’t beat around the bush.’

**Kopounga Whai-painga** is the te reo Māori descriptor for the *merit-based appointments* principle. Kopounga is a translation for appointee, appointment or successful candidate. Whai-painga is a translation for merit-based or to be of value or benefit.

**Kāwanatanga Tuwhera** is the te reo Māori descriptor used for *open government*. Kāwanatanga is the translation for government and tuwhera is to open or be open.

**Kaitiakitanga** is the te reo Māori descriptor for *stewardship*. Kaitiakitanga in its simplest form is translated to guardianship, stewardship or trusteeship.

## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and thank all those who contributed their time, expertise and insights to the development of the Code of Conduct for the Public Sector. The Code has been strengthened by your diverse perspectives, and your engagement and commitment throughout the process has been invaluable.

Illustrations by Ezra Whittaker

ISBN 978-0-473-77623-7 (PDF) March 2026

Crown copyright © 2026, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. All rights reserved.

This work includes proprietary illustrations protected under the Copyright Act 1994. Except for their use within this Code of Conduct, these illustrations must not be copied, reproduced, distributed, displayed, modified, adapted, or otherwise used, in whole or in part, in any form or medium, without the prior written permission of Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission.

Please note that neither the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission emblem nor the New Zealand Government logo may be used in any way which infringes any provision of the Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981. Attribution to Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission should be in written form and not by reproduction of the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission emblem or New Zealand Government logo.



RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT



**New Zealand Government**  
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa



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

---

# Code of Conduct

March 2026

---

# Introduction

As public servants each of us has the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of New Zealanders through the work we do.

So we can do our work, the taxpayers of New Zealand entrust us with the stewardship of their money and they trust us to protect their personal information. These are big responsibilities. It is important that the way we conduct ourselves reflects the trust New Zealanders place in us.

That's why we have a Code of Conduct. This Code provides you with guidelines on how to go about your work and how to best serve the government of the day. It is important you are familiar with the Code and that you read it regularly. In fact, it is a requirement if you work here.

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has a responsibility to you to be a good employer. You have the right to be treated fairly in all aspects of your job.

In return, there are some things MSD expects from you. The Code of Conduct includes clear expectations about behaviour and conduct we cannot and will not tolerate, and the consequences of not meeting these expectations. The Code clearly outlines the consequences of staff fraud, and the deliberate release of information to third parties without proper authorisation.

The Code of Conduct is a guide for you. It won't cover every situation or requirement you experience in your role. If you are ever unsure about what to do, ask for help.

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT



# Contents

|                                                                      |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction .....</b>                                            | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>About the Code of Conduct.....</b>                                | <b>4</b>  |
| Coverage .....                                                       | 4         |
| Standards for Public Servants .....                                  | 5         |
| <b>Zero tolerance.....</b>                                           | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Fair .....</b>                                                    | <b>6</b>  |
| Conflicts of interest .....                                          | 6         |
| Respecting others .....                                              | 7         |
| <b>Impartial .....</b>                                               | <b>8</b>  |
| Political neutrality.....                                            | 8         |
| Commenting on government policy .....                                | 9         |
| Private communications with Ministers or Members of Parliament ..... | 9         |
| Standing as a Member of Parliament.....                              | 9         |
| <b>Responsible .....</b>                                             | <b>10</b> |
| Probity .....                                                        | 10        |
| Information and confidentiality .....                                | 10        |
| Accessing information .....                                          | 11        |
| Misuse of information .....                                          | 11        |
| <b>Trustworthy.....</b>                                              | <b>12</b> |
| Client relationships.....                                            | 12        |
| Fraud .....                                                          | 12        |
| Prior or pending convictions .....                                   | 13        |
| Roles requiring National Security Clearance.....                     | 13        |
| Gifts and rewards.....                                               | 13        |
| Staff who are also clients.....                                      | 13        |
| Exemptions and other considerations .....                            | 13        |
| <b>Breaches of the Code of Conduct.....</b>                          | <b>14</b> |
| Reporting breaches of the Code of Conduct .....                      | 14        |
| Privacy breaches.....                                                | 14        |
| Reporting serious wrongdoing.....                                    | 15        |
| If you think MSD has not met its obligations under the Code.....     | 15        |

---

# About the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct tells you about the way we work. It outlines how we should deal with the people we work alongside and the people we work for, to help make sure we all:

- work with honesty, integrity and respect
- provide the best possible service and advice to the Government, public, stakeholders and clients, and gain their trust and confidence in what we do
- do the best we can do and be the best we can be – every day.

This Code doesn't cover every possible requirement or situation. It gives us a benchmark to work from and gives others a basis from which to judge the way we are working.

We have policies and procedures that give you more detail on the way we work. You should understand and act on the policies and procedures that apply in MSD. You can find these on our intranet (doogle). Meanwhile, read the Code and understand its contents.

Please note, if you don't meet these standards of conduct your behaviour may result in disciplinary action which could include termination of employment.

It is important you fully understand the Code. If you have questions about parts of the Code and how they apply to you in your role, or you are uncertain as to what some of the information means, ask your manager to explain.

## Coverage

The Code applies to anyone who works for us, including:

- employees
- contractors
- consultants
- volunteers at MSD.

Whether you are a permanent staff member, are here temporarily or casually, or are a full-time or part-time worker, the Code applies to you.

The Code is part of your employment terms and conditions. It should be read alongside your employment agreement or contract, our policies and procedures, and the Public Service Code of Conduct.

## Standards for Public Servants

The Public Service Commissioner has issued the Public Service Code of Conduct. This document sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected of public servants and is issued under section 17 of the Public Service Act 2020.

The standards say we must be:

- fair
- impartial
- responsible
- trustworthy.

You can find them in more detail at [www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/code](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/code).

The following pages outline what these standards mean for us as part of MSD, and what policies and procedures help us to comply with them.

---

## Zero tolerance

All public servants are expected to uphold general standards of behaviour which are outlined by the Public Service Commission in the Code of Conduct for the Public Service. In MSD, there are other standards over and above these in some areas because of the work we do.

The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for paying benefits and for prosecuting those who defraud the benefit system. Our clients are required to provide us with highly sensitive, personal information to get what they need, or for our business reasons. This means that in these particular areas the standards we apply to ourselves must be higher than those we expect of others.

For example, it is unacceptable under any circumstances for an MSD staff member to:

- steal from the benefit system or MSD
- interfere with or in any way abuse a child or young person that MSD has a professional relationship with
- sell client information
- deliberately share client details or circumstances with any unauthorised person.

Where a staff member does any of these things, the staff member will be dismissed and the matter may be referred to police. In addition to any penalty the Court might impose, all money fraudulently obtained will have to be repaid in full.

Specific applications of MSD's staff fraud and misuse of information zero tolerance policy are in the following pages. You can find other information in relevant MSD policies on our intranet (doogle).



---

# Fair

We must:

- ▶ treat everyone fairly and with respect
- ▶ be professional and responsive
- ▶ work to make government services accessible and effective
- ▶ strive to make a difference to the wellbeing of New Zealand and all its people.

## Conflicts of interest

At MSD we need to make sure we are always fair in the way we deal with people, no matter who they are, what their backgrounds are or what their needs are.

We must avoid any appearance or suggestion of preferential treatment or favouritism towards any individual or organisation which we or you have an interest in.

Because we live and work in our communities, it is sometimes hard to avoid conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived. That makes it even more important that conflicts of interest are identified, avoided when they can be, and managed when they cannot be avoided.

MSD has a policy and a procedure to help you and your manager identify and manage conflicts of interest that arise in the course of your work. You can find the policy and procedure for managing conflicts of interests on our intranet (doogle).

You must inform your manager if you have a relationship with someone you deal with in your role or someone we deal with at MSD that could cause or be seen to cause a conflict of interest.

Secondary employment and voluntary work – if you take on other work (paid or unpaid) or services while you work at MSD, you'll need to consider how it could affect your work here, and whether there is any potential or perceived conflict of interest. Talk to your manager about this. Refer to the Conflicts of Values, Interests and Politics policy for information on secondary employment and managing conflicts.

## Respecting others

As an MSD staff member you need to make sure you respect the rights of other people, all the time. This includes any client, stakeholder, colleague or member of the public.

In particular, you must:

- treat each other with respect and courtesy
- show mana manaaki and look after the dignity of people
- support a positive and safe work environment free from any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination (refer to MSD's Positive Workplace policy and guides on our intranet (doogle))
- avoid acting in a way that could upset people, or cause harm or disruption
- not bring anything to work that could be seen as offensive to any person or group of people
- ensure any workplace relationships with colleagues don't have a negative effect on your work
- recognise MSD's commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi
- always be professional, fair and unbiased in the work you do, or the advice you give
- remember that everyone has the right to privacy and confidentiality
- make sure you don't abuse your position at MSD, or any power delegated to you in your role.

We understand that sometimes you may need to do something as part of your role that conflicts with your personal beliefs. If you find yourself in this position, talk to your manager. They will be able to discuss this with you and help you find the right solution.

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

---

# Impartial

We must:

- ▶ maintain the political neutrality required to enable us to work with current and future governments
- ▶ carry out the functions of our organisation, unaffected by our personal beliefs
- ▶ support our organisation to provide robust and unbiased advice
- ▶ respect the authority of the government of the day.

## Political neutrality

While we work with the government of the day, we must also be able to work with future governments. This means we need to maintain the confidence of our current Minister and make sure the same relationship can be established with future Ministers. We do this by keeping politics out of our work and our work out of politics.

As public servants we have the same rights as other New Zealanders and may publicly express our own political or personal views. However, at the same time we need to work in a professional and politically neutral way.

Most people at MSD can be involved in social campaigns or the activities of political parties and other organisations without it affecting their ability to be impartial in the work they do.

Talk to your manager about your actual or intended political involvement. It's important to consider what you can do to avoid a perceived conflict with your work. This may include steps so that you are not identified as working for MSD or taking annual leave if you need time off for activities you are involved in.

For senior managers, people who have extensive contact with Ministers, and those responsible for interpreting and implementing government decisions we have to keep a balance and it is not appropriate to publicly express views about government policy related to their work area.

The Public Service Commissioner's guidance about political neutrality is available at **[www.publicservice.govt.nz](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz)** or you can talk to your manager if you have any questions about what this means for you.



## Commenting on government policy

MSD may view any staff members who publicly make strong or repeated criticisms of government policies as being unable to impartially implement, administer or advise on government policies.

For all staff, publicly expressing your personal view of government policy is unacceptable if you:

- disclose information gained by your work at MSD
- are or could be perceived to be representing MSD
- make personal attacks on a Minister, people at MSD or other Public Servants
- strongly or persistently criticise to the extent that it could be perceived that you cannot carry out your work in an impartial way.

Due to the nature of the roles, for Senior Managers, people working with Ministers, and those responsible for interpreting and implementing government decisions there is a greater responsibility to not publicly comment on government policy related to their work area.

Only people who are authorised by the Chief Executive or who have permission as part of their job can make public statements on behalf of MSD. This applies to responses to any media enquiry.

## Private communications with Ministers or Members of Parliament

You have the same right to approach political representatives as any other person, but you must be clear that you are not representing MSD. Remember, any approach to a political representative about something that is not to do with MSD's work should be made with some sensitivity to your role as a public servant.

Any matters concerning MSD must go through the official channels.

## Standing as a Member of Parliament

Public servants can seek election to Parliament but there are rules about this set out in the Electoral Act 1993. If you are thinking about putting your name forward for nomination as a constituency candidate or for inclusion on a party list, or if you have already done so, tell your General Manager, Regional Commissioner or the Group General Manager People (Human Resources). They will discuss this with the Chief Executive.

You can find more information on the Public Service Commission website [www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/code](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/code) and in the Public Service Code of Conduct.

---

# Responsible

We must:

- ▶ act lawfully and objectively
- ▶ use our organisation's resources carefully and only for intended purposes
- ▶ treat information with care and use it only for proper purposes
- ▶ work to improve the performance and efficiency of our organisation.

## Probity

When we deal with public money and resources, there is a standard of behaviour expected of us. This is called probity.

Probity means we have shown integrity and professionalism in using public money to do our work.

Probity isn't about setting a list of rules; it's about showing we have used good judgement and a sensible process to make our decisions around how we spend money.

When spending public money, you can show probity if your expenditure:

- is reasonable
- demonstrates value for money
- is relevant to what we do, or to our goals
- can satisfy the questions of anyone who asks about it, including the public.

If you have questions about probity or how to apply it in your role, talk to your manager.

MSD's financial policies are available on our intranet (doogle).

## Information and confidentiality

We need to keep all MSD information secure, including personal information about our clients, their families or other organisations.

How we treat this information – collect it, store it, share it and use it – affects how the public trusts us and whether they are willing to continue to share their information with us so we can do our jobs properly.

MSD has a number of policies and procedures in place to protect information and to help us manage information appropriately.

This includes complying with the:

- Official Information Act 1982
- Privacy Act 2020
- Public Records Act 2005.

If information is inadvertently or unintentionally released or disclosed, take action straight away to minimise any risks, or impact on people. You must also contact MSD's Privacy Team to report the incident. They can give you further advice about handling it.

Refer to MSD's privacy and security policies on our intranet (doogle).

You can find more about MSD's information policies on our intranet (doogle), including our IT security policies (End User Security Policy).

## Accessing information

Each of us must take care to ensure MSD and client information is only accessible to authorised people for authorised use.

Make sure you always observe people's right to privacy when you are dealing with their personal information.

- You must only access client information or records for legitimate work purposes.
- You must not access your own record or the record of a friend, relative, colleague or acquaintance for any reason, even if the person asks you to, including if you're just interested or browsing.
- Accessing information also includes processing actions on records. You must not undertake any processing action within your own record or the record of any current or former client, including your own record if you're a current or former client of MSD, without a legitimate business reason.

This applies to any information we hold in any form. If you are not sure whether it is appropriate for you to access information, always check with your manager first.

## Misuse of information

Misuse of information includes accessing, falsifying, requesting, or sharing of information without a business purpose. To get the most valid information and to protect people's privacy, information should generally be requested from the person themselves, rather than a third party.

If you are found to have misused or falsified MSD information, formal disciplinary action will be taken, which may include dismissal.

MSD has a zero tolerance policy for the misuse of personal information. Any staff member found to have sold or deliberately given client information to any unauthorised person will be dismissed and the matter may be referred to police.

You can find more information about this on our intranet (doogle).

---

# Trustworthy

We must:

- ▶ be honest
- ▶ work to the best of our abilities
- ▶ ensure our actions are not affected by our personal interests or relationships
- ▶ never misuse our position for personal gain
- ▶ decline gifts or benefits that place us under any obligation or perceived influence
- ▶ avoid any activities, work or non-work, that may harm the reputation of our organisation or of the State Services.

## Client relationships

When we work for a government department it is important to be aware of how our relationships can affect the way we do our jobs or the reputation of MSD.

You must inform your manager if you have a relationship with someone you deal with in your role or someone we deal with at MSD that could cause, or be seen to cause, a conflict of interest.

Disclosing and managing these relationships is important to ensure the public's trust in MSD is well-founded and conflicts of interest are appropriately managed.

MSD has a vital role in our communities to help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent. Because of this, if you have sexual contact with, or abuse in any way, a child or young person we have a professional relationship with, you will be dismissed and the matter may be referred to police.

## Fraud

As an MSD staff member, you must not commit, condone, encourage or be directly associated with any type of fraud.

MSD has a zero tolerance policy for staff fraud and misuse of client information (available on doogle). In every case where a staff member is found to have defrauded MSD, they will be dismissed and the matter may be referred to police. In addition to any penalty the Court might impose, all money fraudulently obtained will have to be repaid in full.

If you know, or think you know, that someone is involved in fraud against MSD, tell your manager, the Internal Fraud Unit or Fraud Intervention Services.



## Prior or pending convictions

If you have a conviction we didn't know about before we hired you, or you weren't truthful about having a conviction, we may take disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

This does not apply to anything covered by section 7 of the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004.

You must tell your manager if you have any convictions or charges laid against you while you work for MSD.

## Roles requiring National Security Clearance

People in roles which require National Security Clearance must obtain and maintain this clearance at the appropriate level.

## Gifts and rewards

Receiving a gift or reward for doing your role could be seen as a bribe or as a way of making you obligated to another person or organisation. As a general rule you should not ask for or accept a gift or reward.

Consider the intention of the gift and whether it is related to a cultural practice. Some occasions (such as a hui) may require an exchange of gifts. We are committed to meeting the needs of different cultures and if a gift is offered in these situations, it should be accepted on behalf of MSD.

Refer to MSD's Gifts, Donations and Koha Policy when giving or receiving a gift.

## Staff who are also clients

If you receive payments or services from MSD, you must make sure anything you do as a client is honest and lawful.

It is your responsibility to give the Staff Assistance Unit full details about your circumstances or any changes in your circumstances to ensure you receive the correct entitlement.

## Exemptions and other considerations

For a small number of staff, obligations under the Code of Conduct must be considered alongside other requirements eg for staff to act independently from MSD or to uphold the maintenance of the law. MSD may consider exemptions on a case by case basis to specified sections of the Code of Conduct, taking ethical and legal considerations into account.

Any exemptions will be approved by the relevant Deputy Chief Executive and the Group General Manager People (Human Resources).

---

# Breaches of the Code of Conduct

We need to identify breaches or potential breaches of the Code as soon as possible. We will always make sure any disciplinary process is impartial, fair, prompt and consistent. We will consider each case on its merits, including reviewing the reasons for the breach and taking into account the individual circumstances of each case before deciding on the action to take.

## Reporting breaches of the Code of Conduct

If you find out about a breach or possible breach of either the Public Service Code of Conduct or this Code of Conduct, you should:

- think carefully about how you can deal with the situation responsibly
- discuss the issue or situation with your manager as quickly as possible – they may have additional information you might not know, so trust them to know the best way to deal with things.

Talk to your manager to report a breach of any other MSD policy, procedure, standard or guideline, unless another process is provided.

If you don't think you can talk to your manager, or if the situation remains unresolved, then you can talk to another MSD manager or the Group General Manager People (Human Resources).

If you need access to confidential counselling, MSD's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is voluntary, private, free, confidential and available to all MSD staff. You can find more details on EAP on MSD's intranet (doogle).

Managers who are advised of a breach or a possible breach will deal with the alleged breach in accordance with MSD's policy. This means anyone alleging a breach or who is being investigated for a breach of the Code of Conduct will be given adequate notice of meetings, have an opportunity to be heard, and have the right to representation and/or have a support person present at meetings.

## Privacy breaches

Refer to the 'Information and confidentiality' section of the Code of Conduct and MSD's intranet (doogle) for reporting a privacy breach or near miss.

## Reporting serious wrongdoing

In some cases, a breach of the Code of Conduct may also be serious wrongdoing under the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022. If this is the case, you can use the MSD's Protected Disclosures procedures to report the incident or action and receive the protections of the Act. There is information about protected disclosures on our intranet (doogle).

## If you think MSD has not met its obligations under the Code

If you think MSD has not met its obligations, follow the same process as the one to report breaches of the Code of Conduct (as set out above).

Once you have told us about your concerns, we will:

- treat your concerns confidentially, investigate them promptly and appropriately, and take action as necessary
- where appropriate, let anyone affected by an allegation know about it and ask for their explanation
- consider the use of a neutral third party to resolve the issue, if appropriate
- let you know if an investigation or action has started and stay in regular contact, if appropriate
- let you know about the outcome, where appropriate.

MSD will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of an individual making a protected disclosure. This is set out in our Protected Disclosures policy.

Remember, you can also face disciplinary action for breaching other MSD policies, procedures and guidelines.

If you are unsure about how to deal with an ethical issue, discuss it with your manager. If your manager is involved, discuss the issue with your manager's manager or any senior manager.

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



# Internal Fraud and Corruption Policy

---

|                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Last Review Date: | June 2025                            |
| Next Review Date: | June 2028                            |
| Approved by:      | Organisational Health Committee      |
| Owner:            | General Manager, Workplace Integrity |

---

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the Ministry's expectations in relation to instances of alleged or suspected fraudulent, corrupt, or other dishonest behaviour within MSD. This Policy recognises there is an increased risk that because MSD employees hold privileged positions, others may seek to influence MSD employee actions.

This policy describes:

- the objective and scope of the Policy
- standards and expectations for Ministry employee behaviour, including temporary staff, managers, and contingent workers (collectively referred to as "employees")
- how the Ministry defines fraud, corruption, and other dishonest behaviour for the purposes of this Policy
- the Ministry's response to instances of alleged fraud, corruption, and other dishonest behaviour
- employee responsibilities in relation to fraud and corruption
- procedures in relation to reporting and investigating suspected fraud or corruption.

## Policy Statement

The Ministry is committed to managing public funds and personal information with integrity, to maintain trust and confidence in our activities. Fraud, corruption, and other dishonest behaviour are considered to be serious breaches of the MSD Code of Conduct. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken where this has occurred, in line with the approach set out in this policy.

## Scope

This policy applies to all Ministry of Social Development employees.

It applies to all Ministry activities and, as applicable, any other activities for which the employee has a direct management or functional responsibility. It should be read in conjunction with the MSD Code of Conduct, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission Code of Conduct and policies identified in the related policies section below.

## Policy Principles

The Ministry's response to behaviour that is alleged or suspected to be fraudulent or dishonest is based on principles of natural justice and fairness, as well as the Ministry's ability to investigate and prosecute, as set out in legislation.

The policy principles are that:

- Ministry employees will always act with honesty, integrity and fairness to meet the MSD Code of Conduct requirements.
- Allegations or suspicions of dishonest or fraudulent behaviour must be reported
- Allegations or suspicions of dishonest behaviour or fraud will be treated confidentially and investigated promptly to a natural conclusion.
- When fraud or other dishonest behaviour is discovered, the Ministry will ensure that it is taken seriously, and all incidents are reasonably assessed and investigated, if appropriate.
- When, misappropriation of assets, fraud or other dishonest behaviour is found, this is viewed as serious misconduct and the appropriate disciplinary action (relevant to the nature and severity of the dishonest behaviour) will be taken.
- Legal action (including a referral to the Crown Solicitors or the New Zealand Police) may be taken, where it is appropriate to do so, in accordance with the Solicitor-General's Prosecution Guidelines.
- All employees must be careful not to compromise their integrity, the integrity of MSD, the Minister or the wider Public Service, or be perceived to be doing so.
- Ministry employees developing policies and procedures will consider the risk of fraudulent, corrupt or dishonest behaviour and include appropriate counter measures, and consult the GM, Workplace Integrity when any changes or updates to policies are being considered.

## MSD Response to Fraud or Corruption

The Internal Integrity Unit has a responsibility to manage the delivery of prevention, education, and detection initiatives to raise awareness of and address fraud, corruption, dishonesty, and other criminal risks across the Ministry.

This includes regular activities performed on a day-to-day basis, such as carrying out a wide range of systems checks to detect internal fraud, responding to information requests from Ministers, Members of Parliament, and others, identifying who is accessing systems (known as "foot printing checks").

However, it also includes activities that might be carried out in response to a particular concern, allegation, or suspicion of fraud, corruption or other dishonest behaviour, as set out below.

In response to any alleged or suspected incident of fraud, corruption, or other dishonest behaviour, Internal Integrity will:

- Ensure that where further investigation is deemed appropriate, this is done in a timely and professional manner
- Act in a manner that is in accordance with MSD's expectations to demonstrate cultural awareness and cultural appropriateness
- Comply with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness (a fair process)
- Interview persons as required and determined necessary (for example any complainant, witnesses, and respondent employee).
- Act in good faith at all times
- Access Ministry systems (with the appropriate authority, to gather evidence needed for any investigation
- Examine all evidence carefully and thoroughly to determine if fraud occurred
- At its discretion refer appropriate cases of fraud or corruption to the Crown Solicitors or the New Zealand Police for further action.

- Advise the employee, their manager, and Human Resources of the investigation outcome in writing.

Further information about our approach to investigations (including how the approach demonstrates cultural awareness and appropriateness) is available through [Internal Integrity's Doogle pages](#).

## Governance Reporting:

The Manager – Internal Integrity will report on the team's activities, including any trends, on a quarterly basis to the relevant Ministry Governance Committee and the Risk and Audit Committee (RAC).

## Responsibilities

The focus on managing internal integrity and preventing internal fraud is a Ministry-wide responsibility. Individual roles have different parts to play in ensuring that the wider system is appropriately managed.

These roles are described below:

| Person/Party                  | Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chief Executive (CE)          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall responsibility and accountability for fraud and corruption management within the Ministry.</li> <li>• The CE is also accountable for ensuring that MSD's culture reflects expected behaviours.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Leadership team<br>*Line Five | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead and promote the Ministry's commitment to the investigation and resolution of any fraud, corruption, dishonesty, and other criminal activity</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Managers and leaders          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate and require others to demonstrate high standards of integrity as set out in the Ministry's Code of Conduct (reinforcing ethical behaviour)</li> <li>• Ensure employees they manage understand what behaviours are expected and what is unacceptable behaviour</li> <li>• Ensure employees they manage are aware of the policies, controls and assurance systems within their particular role</li> <li>• Reinforcing ethical behaviour within their team or group</li> <li>• Deal with fraud and dishonesty allegations (including any subsequent investigations) in accordance with Ministry policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Implement and adhere to appropriate internal controls. This could include monitoring transactions, activities or other systems that may be susceptible to fraud or corruption.</li> <li>• Ensure employees they manage are fully supported when making allegations of fraud or corruption</li> </ul> |

| Person/Party                                                         | Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact Internal Integrity upon any instance or suspicion of internal fraud or corruption.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| General Manager, Workplace Integrity (Policy Owner)<br><br>*Line two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the policy is fit for purpose and aligns with Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Holds main responsibility for the Ministry's line two function in respect of fraudulent, corrupt, or dishonest behaviour</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Internal Integrity                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary team through which the Ministry's line two function in this area is implemented</li> <li>• Respond to reports of alleged or suspected fraud, corrupt or other dishonest behaviour.</li> <li>• Assess individual cases and determine when further investigation is required</li> <li>• Conduct investigation activities in accordance with this policy</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| *MSD Line two functions                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are the business areas that are responsible for setting Ministry-wide expectations by designing, developing, and implementing systems, policies and processes that touch on or support the internal fraud and corruption policy.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| All Employees<br><br>*Line One                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of and demonstrate high standards of integrity as set out in the Ministry's Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Report allegations or suspected incidents of dishonesty immediately (to their line manager or through internal integrity channels)</li> <li>• Alert their manager where they believe the opportunity for dishonest behaviour exists because of poor procedures or lack of effective controls</li> <li>• Cooperate fully in any investigation</li> </ul> <p>For further information refer to the <a href="#">Internal Integrity homepage</a></p> |



## Definitions

| Word/ phrase | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Corruption   | <p>Corruption occurs where an individual abuses or misuses their position of power, authority, or trust personal gain. Examples of corruption include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting a gift or kickbacks in return for the provision of Ministry services or withholding of Ministry services (bribery)</li> <li>• Showing favour to family and friends in relation to employment decisions or Ministry business (preferential treatment/favouritism)</li> <li>• Manipulation of systems or processes through failure to use or undertake designated controls</li> <li>• Using authorised access to locations, people, systems, and information to cause harm (often referred to as insider threat)</li> <li>• Circumventing or avoiding expected procurement processes to influence the award of a contract/procurement decision.</li> <li>• Using position of power to exert undue influence on matters beyond the jurisdiction of authority (extortion)</li> </ul> |
| Dishonesty   | <p>Dishonesty is dishonest behaviour, deceit, or acting without authority, including fraud and corruption. Examples of dishonesty include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theft</li> <li>• Lying or being deliberately deceptive</li> <li>• Fraud</li> <li>• Misappropriation of assets</li> <li>• Inappropriate accessing of MSD systems/records and misuse of the information</li> <li>• Lack of probity</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Employees    | Any employee of MSD, including temporary staff, managers, and contingent workers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Fraud        | <p>Fraud is intentional deception or misappropriation of funds, in both financial and non-financial domains. It generally has the objective of obtaining an advantage or benefit, or to cause intentional damage or loss to others. Examples of fraud include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit Fraud</li> <li>• Unauthorised creation and/or use of forged/altered documents</li> <li>• Falsifying official documents such as timesheets, expense claims or leave records</li> <li>• Fictitious employment or qualification credentials</li> <li>• Unauthorised payments in the Ministry's financial systems</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of false identity records</li> <li>• Misappropriation (as defined below)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Internal controls | <p>Internal controls are systematic measures (such as reviews, checks and balances, methods, and procedures) are implemented to enable the Ministry to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent and detect errors, fraud, and theft</li> <li>• Ensure accuracy and completeness of MSD records and information management systems</li> <li>• Ensure adherence to policies and plans</li> <li>• Safeguard its assets and resources</li> <li>• Produce financial information that is timely and reliable</li> </ul>                                |
| Investigation     | <p>An investigation is a methodical and specialised process of discovery to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prove whether fraud, corruption, theft, or other dishonest behaviour occurred</li> <li>• Gather forensic evidence to support a prosecution</li> <li>• Quantify the extent of behaviour and, where relevant, losses incurred</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Misappropriation  | <p>Misappropriation is unauthorised use of assets and resources for personal benefit or gain (or another person's benefit or gain). Examples include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outright theft of cash or property</li> <li>• Selling or disclosing Ministry and client information for personal benefit or gain to unauthorised parties</li> <li>• Using Ministry systems to issue fraudulent payments for personal purchases, fictitious clients or vendors, ghost employees and fraudulent invoices.</li> </ul> |

## Related policies/guidance

| Policy/guidance                                                               | Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">MSD Code of Conduct</a>                                           | The Ministry's Code of Conduct outlines our responsibilities in terms of conduct, conflicts and compromise, and Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's Code of Conduct provides overarching principles. This policy supports those responsibilities and principles. It is intended to assist managers and employees to think about the issues and work through the processes appropriately. |
| <a href="#">Fraud and misuse of client information: zero tolerance policy</a> | Sets out our responsibilities as employees of MSD regarding fraud and the protection of client information and builds on                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                       | MSD's Code of Conduct. At MSD we take these responsibilities very seriously.                                                                                                                      |
| <a href="#">The Code of Conduct for the Public Sector - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission</a> | Seeks to reinforce a spirit of service and sets common standards of behaviour required from the diverse range of people and roles across the Public Service.                                      |
| <a href="#">Protected Disclosures Policy - Doogle</a>                                                 | Provides information on how employees can make 'protected disclosures' about serious wrongdoing, what protection(s) they are entitled to, and how the Ministry will respond to reported concerns. |
| <a href="#">Disciplinary Action - Doogle</a>                                                          | Outlines information about the various types of warnings in relation to unresolved performance issues, misconduct, or serious misconduct                                                          |

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

# Handling complaints

How to lodge a complaint, types of complaints, what to do with complaints around certain units/lines and how to manage them.

-  All complaints for Emergency Housing (supplier or occupant) must be assigned to the relevant regional office - do not assign these to individual case managers.

You may get calls from people wanting to make a complaint. This could be for a variety of reasons including (but not limited to):

- how long it took us to answer their call
- a staff member providing insufficient information
- how long it took to get back to them about something
- an emergency housing supplier or occupant.

Clients have the right to make a complaint and have the matter looked into. We take all complaints seriously and aim to learn from them. We'll also try to make sure the same thing doesn't happen again. The caller may be happy to discuss their issue with you when they make the complaint, allowing you to resolve it immediately. If not, you must lodge it in old HIYA.

## ▼ Complaints for Remote Services Unit | Government Helpline | Fraud Investigation | Emergency Housing | Whiteware

### Remote Services Unit

Any RSU clients must be transferred to them on 0508 222 007. RSU clients can leave a voicemail, their complaint will be followed up by the unit. If they call outside of business hours, tell them to call back Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm.  
Don't add the complaint in old HIYA.

### Government Helpline

Any complaints received on the Government Helpline should be recorded in the Government Helpline template. This gives visibility for any trends that may develop by working with other agencies but is not our issue to resolve.



The only complaints that should be lodged are ones about services provided through the Government Helpline or our response to the event.

## Fraud Investigation

If a client wants to make a complaint about a letter asking them to provide information, in the first instance please refer them to the Investigator who has sent the request. The investigator's name will be on the letter in CMS.

- If the client wants to lodge a complaint about information gathered for a previous fraud case, please refer them to the 'How to make a complaint about the investigation' section of [Fraud and investigations - Work and Income](#)
- Complaints about the right to gather information about a client (use of Schedule 6 powers) can also be lodged with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner or with the Ministry's internal Privacy Team.

## Emergency Housing

All complaints for Emergency Housing (supplier or occupant) must be assigned to the relevant regional office in old HIYA - do not assign these to individual case managers.

Make sure you choose the most accurate complaint type e.g. there are 10 emergency housing specific complaint types to choose from.

**Important:** If it's a complaint about an Emergency Housing occupant, please do not add any client information (first/last name, address, client number or contact number) into the form – leave these fields blank to maintain privacy.

## Whiteware

If the client has a complaint about a whiteware appliance or the service they have received, check they have raised this with the supplier first.

If the complaint is still unresolved:

1. lodge this in HIYA
2. complete the CMS note 'Hardship whiteware complaint' with as much detail as possible (issue, complaint number, etc)
3. copy and paste the CMS note into an email and forward to [Whiteware@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Whiteware@msd.govt.nz).  
This team will then investigate the complaint with the whiteware supplier and provide the site with an outcome to complete HIYA.

The gatekeeper will assign the complaint to the client's office.

**More information:** [Complaints process involving preferred whiteware suppliers - Doogle](#)

---

## ▼ How to lodge a complaint in HIYA



A complaint is not a Review of Decision (ROD). These have their own guidelines and processes.

| Step | Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.   | <b>Access old HIYA Complaint Management System</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. open your <a href="#">HIYA web browser</a></li><li>2. login<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• username - your CNP login</li><li>• password - your password</li></ul></li></ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2.   | <b>Record the complaint</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Complete the form to record all details of the complaint<p><b>Important:</b> If it's a complaint about an Emergency Housing (EH) occupant, please do not add any client information (first/last name, address, client number or contact number) into the form – please leave these fields blank to maintain privacy.</p></li><li>2. Make sure you choose the most accurate complaint type eg there are 10 emergency housing specific complaint types to choose from.<br/>When selecting the site involved in the complaint:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ assign all EH supplier complaints to the relevant regional office</li><li>◦ assign all other complaints to the relevant service centre, regional office or unit - Do not assign to National Office, Contact Centre Operations, etc</li><li>◦ if you're unsure where the complaint should go, assign it to your site and the Gatekeeper who will determine where it's best to go.</li></ul></li><li>3. click 'submit' once you have finished.</li></ol> <div><b>❗ Important</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• all information recorded must be professional. If the client has used abusive language, don't add this to the complaint. Just record that the client has used abusive/threatening/rude language</li><li>• if the complaint is about an individual, don't put their name in the details section. If you need to refer to them, please put their role eg, customer service representative or case manager (there is a separate section where you can add the name).</li></ul></div> |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3. | <p><b>Complaint number</b></p> <p>Once you click 'Submit', a box will pop up with the HIYA complaint number.</p> <p>You need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write this number down</li> <li>• tell the client</li> <li>• add it to a CMS note under 'General Engagement'</li> </ul> <p>If you don't write the number down, you can search for it in the complaints list - it will be assigned to your site, with the date and time it was submitted. You can check by clicking on 'V'.</p> |
| 4. | <p><b>Sign Off</b></p> <p>Once the complaint has been submitted, the site gatekeeper who receive a system generated email to follow up and re-assign if necessary.</p> <p>The assigned person will look into the complaint and update it as appropriate. Once the complaint has been resolved, you will receive an email (you don't have to do anything with this).</p>                                                                                                                                      |

## ✓ Types of complaints

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing and can lodged with CSRs, services centres, regional or national office. All complaints must be lodged in the HIYA complaints system and then assigned to the correct place.

| Complaint Type                                     | Definition                                                                                                            | Example                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Action Taken</b>                                | Complainant is not happy about the action a staff member has taken as it's caused hardship or distress to the client. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff member changes a client's appointment time without talking with the client first</li> <li>• client was referred to an inappropriate seminar</li> </ul> |
| <b>CE Correspondence</b><br>(National Office only) | A complaint is made to the Chief Executive (CE) about a service received from MSD.                                    | More information: <a href="#">Ministerial and Executive Services</a>                                                                                                                                  |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        | <p>This correspondence is formally lodged with Ministerial and Executive Services in National Office. There are strict timeframes for providing a written response in order for the letter to be sent from the CE.</p> <p>If a client requests the CE email suggest they are supplied with the feedback form <b>first</b>. This is the best way to make sure complaints are sent to the right place. If this does not satisfy the client, have a chat with a manager to see if they can help alleviate the callers concerns.</p> <p>If this fails, then they can direct their concerns via email to:<br/> <a href="mailto:Debbie_power@msd.govt.nz">Debbie_power@msd.govt.nz</a></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Confidentiality</b> | <p>Complainant states their information hasn't been kept confidential.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal information was discussed and overheard by nearby staff and clients</li> <li>• personal information has been released without the client's consent e.g. family members, third parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ client could see personal information of other clients on the desk when they came in</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



|                                                                       |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Designated Health Practitioner OR Medical Appeals Board Member</b> | A complaint about a designated health practitioner or medical practitioner on a medical appeals board. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Manner</b> e.g. practitioner was abrupt, rude or didn't give their case due consideration</li> <li>• <b>Conduct</b> - e.g. practitioner behaved or said something inappropriate</li> <li>• <b>Decision</b> - e.g. client is unhappy about a health practitioner's decision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> this becomes a matter for the <a href="#">Medical Appeals Board</a>.</p> |
| <b>Environment</b>                                                    | A complaint about a service centre / community link's appearance or functionality.                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not accessible to public transport / free parking</li> <li>• no suitable access for disabled clients</li> <li>• site is dirty / smells / dead plants</li> <li>• site is operating on skeleton staff due to planning or training</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Information Provided</b>                                           | Complainant is unhappy with information provided by staff.                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff member has insufficient product / process knowledge</li> <li>• client wasn't offered</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|                                                                                |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                |                                                                                                                             | appropriate advice or service                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Interpersonal Skill / Staff Attitude</b>                                    | Complaint about a staff member's attitude, manner or demeanour.                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• client felt belittled during an appointment</li> <li>• staff member was abrupt on the phone or on reception</li> <li>• staff member wasn't listening to the client</li> </ul> |
| <b>Policy / Legislation / Procedural</b><br>(This is not a Review of Decision) | Complaint about the policy or processes used by Work and Income.                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unhappy about opening hours</li> <li>• feels a policy is incorrect / unfair / wants to change</li> </ul>                                                                      |
| <b>Technology</b>                                                              | Complaints about delay in payments that have been caused by a system delay/fault in service provided due to system outages. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delayed payments from SWIFTT</li> <li>• delays in answering calls at the contact centre</li> </ul>                                                                            |
| <b>Timeliness</b>                                                              | Complaint about a delay in getting a service or decision from Work and Income.                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• benefit application hasn't been granted and it is passed the expected timeframe.</li> <li>• staff member hasn't responded to a client's voice mails / emails</li> </ul>       |
| <b>Emergency Housing (EH)</b>                                                  | A complaint about an emergency housing supplier or occupant.                                                                | For examples, see <a href="#">Complaints from an EH Supplier or</a>                                                                                                                                                    |

|  |  |                                          |
|--|--|------------------------------------------|
|  |  | <a href="#">EH Occupant -<br/>Doogle</a> |
|--|--|------------------------------------------|

---

Feedback

RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT