



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

28 September 2023

Ashley

fyi-request-24010-dabdf270@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Ashley

On 31 August 2023, you requested, via the FYI website, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) the following information from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry):

- 1. Copies of the Ministry's policies, procedures, and processes regarding the use of teams by staff members, including requests to access teams chats by managers.*
- 2. How many requests for access to staff members' teams chats have been made by managers and/or people leaders in the past 12 months? What justifications or reasons are required when lodging a request to access staff members' teams records? Are the staff members advised when these requests are lodged as part of the process? Is privacy a factor considered when deciding whether to grant access?*

The Ministry has interpreted your request to be for information regarding appropriate use of Microsoft Teams by staff, rather than operational or 'how-to' guidance. Please contact the Ministry if this was not the intent of your request.

I will now respond to your questions in turn.

- 1. Copies of the Ministry's policies, procedures, and processes regarding the use of teams by staff members, including requests to access teams chats by managers.*

Our use of Microsoft Teams by Ministry staff is covered by both the Ministry's overarching policies for information and technology by using Microsoft Teams specific guidance and processes.

Please find attached the following documents:

- Information Governance Policy, reviewed October 2022.
- Recording Standard, approved 13 April 2022.
- MSD Survey Standard, approved 15 June 2022.

- SharePoint page - Personal information use scenarios.
- SharePoint page - Where does information belong?
- SharePoint page - Microsoft Teams Terms of Use.

Two additional documents were also identified to contain information partially in scope of your request. To expedite a response to you, the relevant sections of these documents have been provided as excerpts in accordance with section 16(1)(e) of the Act. You will find the excerpted sections of the following documents in the **Appendix**:

- Ministry of Social Development Information Security Policies – Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, approved 28 March 2017.
- SharePoint page - Recording Meetings with Microsoft Teams (National Office and Whaikaha).

You will note some additional guidelines are referenced in the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. However, the Ministry does not believe these are in scope of your request and as such, we have not included copies of them in this response.

2. *How many requests for access to staff members' teams chats have been made by managers and/or people leaders in the past 12 months? What justifications or reasons are required when lodging a request to access staff members' teams records? Are the staff members advised when these requests are lodged as part of the process? Is privacy a factor considered when deciding whether to grant access?*

The Ministry's Internal Integrity team have not received any requests by managers to access staff member's Teams chats in the past 12 months.

In order to make a request to Internal Integrity to access Teams chat data, there must be cause for suspicion of inappropriate behaviour by the staff member. For example, this could include suspicion of fraud, corruption, misappropriation or dishonesty. Staff are not advised of any requests that are made unless the investigation results in detection of serious misconduct, in which case the staff member, their manager and Human Resources will be advised of the outcome.

Additionally, requests to access Teams chats can be made as part of OIA or Privacy Act requests. Any information of this nature will be managed securely by the appropriate team and assessed under the grounds of the respective Act. These requests may be made to other business units at the Ministry (such as the Windows and Integration team), and requests of this nature are not centrally recorded. In order to find the total number of Ministry-wide requests for Teams chats made by managers or people leaders in the last 12 months, the Ministry would need to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to manually review a significant number of files.

The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as it requires substantial collusion. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your requests given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Ministry's use of Teams, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Fiona McElwee
Director
Information Foundations