



16 SEP 2019

K Roe

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Tēnā koe K Roe

Thank you for your emails dated 18 August 2019 and 15 September 2019 submitted through the FYI website to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

You have asked for information regarding the process of correcting personal information, the application process for public housing and the Benefits Review Committee process.

Principle seven of the Privacy Act 1993 outlines that where an agency holds personal information, the individual concerned shall be entitled to request a correction of the information; and to request that there be attached to the information a statement of the correction sought but not made.

If the information held is inaccurate, the Ministry will amend the information. In cases where the Ministry believes the information held is accurate, then a note alongside what we already hold with the statement from the person concerned will be included.

There is no formal process as such with correcting personal information. A person can ask their Case Manager to have their information corrected and can also email the Privacy Team at National Office at the following email address PrivacyOfficer@msd.govt.nz.

Should you, or someone you know have concerns regarding the use of your personal information, you can find out how to make a complaint to the Privacy Commissioner at the following website: www.privacy.org.nz/your-rights/making-a-complaint.

With regards to your question about where a person can find a public housing application form, Social Housing Assessments are generally completed via a telephone appointment, however clients can also request a Face to Face appointment at a Work and Income site.

A manual Social Housing Application form is available, however, this is generally only used if the assessment tool within the Ministry's computer system is unavailable to the Case Manager Housing.

On completion of a Social Housing Assessment, the applicant is either sent by mail or given the Questionnaire summary in person along with obligations to be signed and returned to a Work and Income Site. If the client is not happy or wants to change the Questionnaire summary they can edit and make changes in pen, initial the changes, and return it to a Work and Income Site.

On return of this Questionnaire summary and signed obligations the Case Manager Housing will make the necessary changes to reflect this in the Assessment Tool and access eligibility to Social Housing.

I can advise that there is no formal process in place as such for dealing with delays in processing applications. However, people can lodge a service complaint to the Service Centre Manager regarding lack of timeliness and this would be dealt with by the Service Centre to investigate what occurred.

If a person is dissatisfied with a decision made by the Ministry, they can request a review through the Review and Appeal process. These processes protect the rights of people, where they are dissatisfied with a decision made by the Ministry. They allow consideration as to whether the decisions made are in line with the appropriate legislation. Accordingly, if legislation has not been correctly applied, the Benefits Review Committee will overturn or vary the original decision.

With regards to your questions about the Review of Decision process, you can find the full policy at the following website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/review-of-decisions.html.

A person wanting to review a decision would need to write to the Social Security Appeal Authority within 60 working days (approximately 12 weeks) of receiving the letter conveying the decision of the Benefits Review Committee.

The Social Security Appeal Authority functions under the Ministry of Justice and therefore it would not be appropriate for the Ministry to comment on their timeframes. However, should you wish to raise this matter directly, the address of the Appeals Authority is as follows:

Social Security Appeal Authority
Tribunals Unit
DX SX 11159
Wellington

You can read more about the Social Security Appeal Authority here:
www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/social-security-appeal-authority

The process and forms for making an appeal are available at the following website:
www.justice.govt.nz/tribunals/social-security-appeal-authority/make-an-appeal/.

Should you or someone you know wish to request a face to face appointment, you can contact Work and Income on 0800 559 009 to arrange an appointment.

Thank you for taking the time to write. I hope you find this response helpful.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services