



## MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Te Manatū Whakahiaiao Ora*

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28 JAN 2014

Ms Donna Wynd  
[fyi-request-1239-9d54ffec@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-1239-9d54ffec@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Wynd,

Further to the Ministry's letter of 21 November, I am now able to respond to your request regarding the Ministry of Social Development's media budget for the financial years 2009 to 2013 and the number of press releases the Ministry has released relating to Benefit Fraud.

The Ministry of Social regularly reports to the Social Services Committee on the number of public relations and communications staff, as part of its Annual Financial Review. This information is available at [www.parliament.govt.nz](http://www.parliament.govt.nz).

As at the end of June 2013, the Ministry employed 14.8 communications staff (including four vacancies) of which four respond to thousands of media enquiries. The salary cost of the communications team was \$1,271,372 in 2012/13. Below is a summary of the salary budget for communication staff over the last five years.

Year	Amount \$ M
2012/2013	1.271
2011/2012	1.352
2010/2011	1.219
2009/2010	1.124
2008/2009	1.151

Press releases are publicly available on the Ministry's website [www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz). To provide the total number of media releases over the last five years (including press releases and media enquiries) that relate to benefit fraud would require substantial manual collation, which I am not prepared to commit Ministry resources to under section 18(f) of the Act. 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 request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested and concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

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I hope that you find this information about the Ministry's communications function helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of our decision to extend the time by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10-152  
WELLINGTON 6143

I will respond to you sooner if I am able to.

Yours sincerely



**PP** David Shanks  
**Deputy Chief Executive Corporate and Governance Executive Services**