



T. Barnett

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Tēnā koe T Barnett,

On 21 February 2022, you contacted the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Documents/discussions/minutes relating to the functionality of the "MyMSD" app been restricted*
- *Documents/discussions/minutes relating to - why can people no longer use the "MyMSD" app to book appointments?*

On 18 March 2022, the Ministry informed you that more time was required to respond to your request as consultations necessary to make a decision on the request were such that a proper response to the request could not reasonably have been made within the original time limit.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 sparked a series of changes in how the Ministry operated. Due to the nationwide lockdown and the public health guidelines, Ministry staff were unable to engage with clients face-to-face through Service Centres and Community Links.

The Ministry had to adapt to engaging with clients in a contactless format, so that assistance could still be provided while following the lockdown guidelines at the time. This decision facilitated the Ministry's shift to a phone-based model with a focus on resolving client needs within one call.

This change resulted in the Ministry's previous Appointment Booking Tool (ABT) being retired, as clients could not safely attend appointments face-to-face with Ministry staff. The ABT system interacted with the Ministry's online service MyMSD, enabling clients to book appointments online. Consequently, the removal of ABT meant the ability to book appointments online through MyMSD was lost.

In light of the continuous challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, the Ministry continues to utilise the phone-based model and has transitioned to a new appointment booking system called Q-Manager. As the country moved to lower Alert Levels and the Traffic Light System, people have been able to call the Ministry to book face-to-face appointments in Q-Manager. Similar to ABT, Q-Manager will have the ability to interact with MyMSD. The Ministry has not developed the functionality for people to book appointments online using Q-Manager. This is on the Ministry's work programme to complete and will be prioritised against other work. As yet no date has been set for this work.

Your request for documents relating to this decision is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found. There are no documents, records of discussions or minutes relating to the decision to remove the appointment booking function in the MyMSD app or the restriction of the functionality of the MyMSD app. The removal of this functionality was a run-on effect resulting from the retirement of the previous appointment booking system ABT. This decision needed to be made and implemented quickly to ensure that clients remained connected to the Ministry and able to receive assistance during the impacts of COVID-19.

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.

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 retirement of appointment booking through MyMSD, 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



Kay Read
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Client Service Delivery