

Case 364 (Complaint ground: 36.5)

Contact F

12 April 2017

Ombudsman

Fairness for all

Mr

By email. @yahoo.co

Dear M:

Official Information Act investigation

Ministry of Social Development

Request for salaries of advisors to MSD.

I refer to my letter of 28 February concerning your complaint about the decision of the Ministry of Social Development to refuse your request for salaries of specific advisors to the Ministry.

In that letter I advised you of my final opinion that the Ministry was entitled to withhold the precise remuneration of three Ministry advisors on the basis of their privacy. I also advised you of my provisional opinion (formed after consultation with the Privacy Commissioner) that privacy concerns applied to release of the salary range of each individual advisor, but there was a public interest in release of further information about the three advisors' salaries.

After consultation with the individuals concerned I assessed that the competing privacy and accountability interests at issue in this case would be best balanced by release of a range that would have the lowest of the three ranges at the bottom and the highest of the three ranges at the top. I considered that this information would, as far as possible, take the focus off the individuals concerned and concentrate on factors relevant to Ministry accountability.

The Ministry agreed with my opinion and I understand they have now made this aggregated range available to you.

In these circumstances I have now concluded my investigation of this complaint.

Yours sincerely



Leo Donnelly
Ombudsman