

13 February 2020

Ref: H202000054

Dear 

Response to request for official information

Thank you for your request of 8 January 2020 to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

"I am requesting the following information under the Official Information Act:

- 1. The number of people currently employed by the Ministry/agency who are being monitored and/or tested for drug use - including testing of hair, saliva, blood and urine.*
- 2. The number of employees who have undergone drug testing or monitoring under the Ministry's instruction in the calendar years of 2019, 2018 and 2017.*
- 3. What policies or protocols does the agency have in place if an employee is found to be using drugs, or is known to have a drug problem/addiction? What supports are available to these employees?"*

The Ministry has a disciplinary policy which allows an investigation into any alleged breaches of our policies. A section called 'Honesty and Trust' in the Ministry's Code of Conduct specifically states that "employees are to refrain from any conduct that impairs your work performance (for example, drug or alcohol use)" as a policy to prevent employee drug use.

In response to parts 1 and 2 of your request, there are currently no Ministry employees who are being monitored and/or tested for drug use. No employee was monitored or tested during the calendar years of 2019, 2018 and 2017 by the Ministry.

In response to part 3 of your request, the Ministry has policies, protocols and supports in place if an employee is found to be using drugs or is known to have an addiction to drugs.

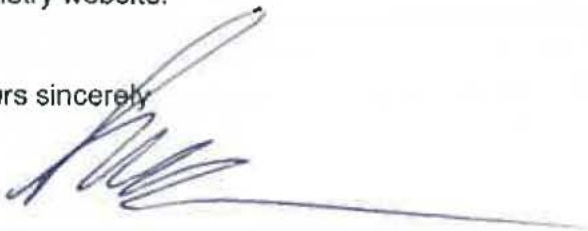
An employee suffering from drug addiction can access confidential support services from the 'Employee Assistance Programme', which is provided by the external contractor Vitae. Information about this service is accessible on the Ministry's intranet. All Ministry employees can use this service with or without involvement or knowledge of colleagues or their manager. The service can be accessed via a confidential 24 hour/7day freephone number or via email.

The Ministry's Human Resources Advisory team is also available for support and can provide assistance in engaging with drug addiction services.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made in this response.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sue Gordon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sue Gordon
Deputy Director-General
Corporate Services