

s 9(2)(a)

19-D-01763

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 22 August 2019 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Please provide information you hold regarding policies or guidance that assist Private Secretaries to fulfil their roles and duties in Ministers' Offices.

The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) has identified one document, *DRAFT - Letter of Expectations for a Private Secretary secondment*, in scope of your request. As noted in the title, the document is still in draft and contains, among other information, some terms of employment that have yet to be approved or discussed with affected parties. Therefore this document has been withheld in full at this time under section 9(2)(j) of the Act to enable a department holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations). We may be able to release this document, in full or in part, in due course.

The Ministry does not hold specific policies or guidelines around how private secretaries fulfil their duties in ministers' offices. The Ministry offers internal workshops to all its staff, including seconded private secretaries, on topics such as the machinery of government and ensuring an understanding of professional development plans and processes. While the Ministry's private secretaries are invited to attend planned workshops, it is not compulsory for them to attend due to an understanding of commitments within respective ministers' offices.

Managers with responsibility for and with more contact in ministers' offices also provide support through regular meetings, both work programme-related and pastoral care.

It is expected that each minister's office will have a desk file for incoming private secretaries that provides guidance and advice to assist them in fulfilling their roles. An incoming private secretary would also receive hand-over and training on the job by the outgoing private secretary.

Each minister's office is different and will have different guidance and protocols for how the office operates and what each private secretary is expected to do in their day-to-day work. These expectations would be outlined by the senior private secretary of the ministers' office.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our website on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Executive Relations team.

You are welcome to contact Debbie Bell, the Manager, Executive Relations, for more information about the support and guidance we provide to private secretaries. She can be contacted on 022 066 5038 or debbie.bell@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Kirsty Millard
Director - Legal, Procurement and Executive Relations

Released under the
Official Information Act