



OIAD-482

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 29 November 2022 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *What is Ministry for the Environment's current working from home policy?*
2. *How many staff currently work from home at least some of the time? What percentage is this of total workforce?*
3. *How much has the Ministry for the Environment spent on equipment / resources for staff to be able to work from home in 2022?*
4. *What does the Ministry for the Environment pay per annum for any office space used by the department?*

The Ministry for the Environment is providing you with information in response to your request attached as **Appendix A**.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

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 [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

*Electronically approved.*

Mike Porter  
Chief Information Officer

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## Appendix A:

### 1. What is Ministry for the Environment's current working from home policy?

The Ministry has a flexible-by-default approach to how and where we work.

Work flexibility is a key enabler for many of the Ministry's organisational strategies, such as Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion, Workforce Strategy, and Gender Pay Action Plan.

Flexible working arrangements enable staff to personalise their work style to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

The Ministry is committed to providing a working environment where everyone can perform at their best.

This approach is about ensuring flexible working gives our people real choices to manage their work/life blend and general wellbeing and to support the Ministry in achieving its organisational strategies and goals.

As a flexible-by-default organisation, all roles are suitable for some form of flexibility unless there is a good business reason for any role not to be flexible. Our approach will always be, 'why not?'

Greater flexibility makes it easier for people at all levels of the organisation to balance their work and other commitments and manage their careers as they move through different phases of their life.

Flexible-by-default enables us to attract and retain a diverse cohort of people and operate inclusively and sustainably to deliver better outcomes for New Zealanders.

### 2. How many staff currently work from home, at least some of the time? What percentage is this of the total workforce?

The percentage of the Ministry's FTEs working remotely is **16% (as of November 2022)**.

The Ministry's location-agnostic employment and flexible-by-default approach have existed since the New Zealand Public Service introduced the "Flexible by default" policy in July 2020.

The New Zealand Public Service policy has bolstered work/life balance for all employees across the public sector whilst internally still achieving and meeting the Ministry's Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion, Workforce Strategy, and Gender Pay Action Plan.

The remaining **84% of FTEs** within the Ministry have the ability under the New Zealand Public Service flexible-by-default policy to personalise their work style to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

3. *How much has the Ministry for the Environment spent on equipment/resources for staff to be able to work from home in 2022?*

For those flexible working staff, the Ministry, in financial year 2021/2022, spent \$112,200 providing staff with appropriate business tools to support their flexible working arrangement.

4. *What does the Ministry for the Environment pay per annum for any office space used by the department?*

The total commercial leasing costs for the FY2021/2022, including All of Government colocations, amounts to **\$5,973,926 pa.**

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