

Our ref: OIA 20 - 20

7 July 2020

[REDACTED]

Email – [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request – Working from home

I refer to your email dated 17 June 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982:

1. *What proportion of the workforce had flexible working arrangements/ were working from home prior to Covid-19? Under Level 4? Under Level 3? Under Level 2? Now under level 1?*
2. *Copies of emails from Cabinet or the office of the Minister to chief executives and from chief executives to staff regarding working from home arrangements under level 1.*
3. *Copies of emails, reports and surveys regarding staff and managers' experience of working from home and any measures of productivity carried out.*

In relation to request 1, prior to Covid-19 please note that there is a difference between flexible working arrangements and working from home for the majority of staff in the Education Review Office. ERO consists of the National Office in Wellington, and regional offices in Auckland, Hamilton, Napier, Whanganui, Christchurch and Dunedin. Most of our staff are reviewer officers who are out of the office reviewing education institutions. They return to their central office of work to meet, discuss their findings and write their reports following the review. There will be situations where they will return from their field trips to work from home. Other staff who are not review officers may work from home, but come into their central office as arranged with their managers. They may be permanent, temporary, casual or work under a contract for service with flexible working arrangements. For this reason I am unable to give the proportion of *the workforce who had flexible working arrangements/ were working from home* prior to Covid-19

Under levels 4 and 3: All ERO staff were working from home.

Under level 2: the majority of staff were working from home, with a small number returning to work on a revolving basis, and in accordance with the State Services Workforce Guidelines under Alert level 2.

Under level 1: Please note the State Services Commission's¹ guidelines as follows -

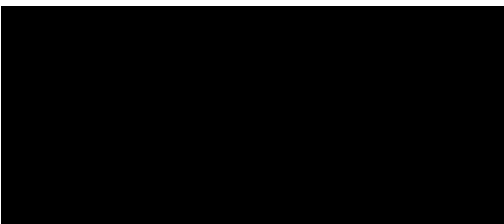
Establish or refresh flexible working policies – Alert Level 1 is about employees returning to the workplace. Arrangements agencies have had in place to support staff working from home at higher alert levels were directly linked to the requirements of the COVID-19 response phase. This is not the same as flexible working. There is a separate process underway with agencies to establish or refresh flexible work policies that fit agencies' specific context and will be implemented over time. These policies will cover all forms of flexible working including alternative start and finish times, part-time work, as well as remote working.

In relation to request 2, there are no emails from Cabinet or the office of the Minister of Education to ERO's chief executive or from the latter to staff regarding working from home arrangements under level 1.

In relation to request 3, I attach a copy of:

- Emails dated 16/4/2020 and 21/4/2020 from ERO's Human Resources unit to all staff which includes the preview survey questions, and
- Email dated 23/4/20 from ERO's Chief Executive/Chief Review Officer, Nicholas Pole. This email sets out the results of the Check-in survey. I have redacted some information in this email which falls outside the scope of your request.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy France
Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Services
Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga
National Office | Tari Matua

¹ COVID-19 State Services Workforce Guidelines – Alert Level 1