

Open Government Partnership: Developing New Zealand’s Fifth National Action Plan

This table captures key discussion points from *Workshop 1*, held online in September 2025 from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM. The column titled “**Alignment with Integrity Action Plan**” includes commentary from the Public Service Commission, outlining how each theme aligns with the Minister for the Public Service’s scope for developing New Zealand’s fifth National Action Plan (NAP5). If you have feedback on this record, including additions or corrections, please contact us at ogpnz@publicservice.govt.nz

Theme	Discussion and ideas	Alignment with Integrity Action Plan
Agency integrity practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public servants and their managers need to better understand political neutrality obligations. It can be challenging to uphold political neutrality when working with Ministers’ offices. Conflicts of interest involving political activity are not managed well by some agencies to the extent that some staff no longer feel comfortable in participating in political activity in their private lives. How can managers be supported to effectively have these conversations? How can staff be supported to exercise this right? Agencies could publicly consult on conduct policies using the Govt.nz consultations website Need to consider how people should treat information when moving between agencies Agencies need to improve conflict of interest management – it can be hard for public servants to know what a conflict of interest is, and how they can manage them appropriately. 	<p>Improving agency integrity practice is a focus area in the Integrity Action Plan. We’d like to use Workshop 2 to hear about what kind of specific actions the Public Service Commission could take to make sure we are advancing open government principles through our planned work.</p> <p>We will approach conflicts of interest and political neutrality as distinct, but linked, concepts. Taking action to reset expected standards of integrity could improve practice across both themes.</p>
Artificial Intelligence use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to harness the opportunities offered by AI, but in doing so make sure we do not compromise on standards of integrity, open government, and personal information protection. In some cases, AI can support better integrity practice. It can help with more consistent decision-making, for example by removing individual bias and regional differences. Agencies need some standards/guidance on how to use AI effectively and safely to ensure consistency across the public service in its use of AI. The Ministry of Social Development uses an Automated Decision-Making Standard to ensure there are safeguards in place when automated decision-making systems are used. This kind of standard could be expanded across the public service. s23 of the Official Information Act protects people’s right to access the reasons for decisions affecting them. Agencies need to ensure that they can uphold this right when using AI in decision-making. MBIE could research how AI can be used in procurement. 	<p>Artificial intelligence has the potential to transform how public servants work, and how the public experiences government services. It is therefore relevant across all Integrity Action Plan focus areas.</p>
Complaints management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the public see the Crown/government as one entity – it can be difficult to understand different complaints processes and policies across agencies. Agencies could work together to reduce siloes and stop the ‘merry-go-round’ effect. Privacy protections can make it difficult for agencies to talk to each other about complaints. 	<p>Improving complaints management is focus area the Integrity Action Plan. At Workshop 2, we could develop our thinking further by breaking this theme down further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing whistleblower protections

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complainants want to be heard – is this happening across the board? • Timeliness and communication is important. Agencies should work to resolve issues as quickly as possible, and keep complainants updated. Is this happening consistently? • There is room to improve with protected disclosures. We could assess the effectiveness of the current Act and identify potential improvements including whether additional protections can be provided and expanding the protections to a wider range of people. • Review standards with reference to the Abuse in Care Royal Commission and the Working with Survivors Model Standards in mind. • Complaints data could be aggregated and used to detect areas of concern across the public service, and target interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating options to reduce the siloed approach to complaints management • Using complaints data to detect areas of inconsistent practice
Corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no system-wide strategy for combatting corruption in New Zealand. Changing demographics and technology mean that we need a risk-based assessment of where corruption risks exist in NZ and what we can do about them. • It is hard to ‘join the dots’ on corruption risks without cross-cutting standards or data. We lack a coordinated response to corruption and could benefit from more oversight and coordination of work to reduce the risk. • NZ could investigate the effectiveness of Australia’s Anti-Corruption Commissions, and look at Transparency International Australia’s assessment tools. • Beneficial ownership register would help with fighting corruption and meeting international requirements. The work has been done in this already (albeit without including trusts). 	<p>Combatting corruption has clear alignment with the Integrity Action plan. In workshop 2, we could discuss how to turn this theme into an actionable commitment. We could consider how data collection might improve our picture of where corruption risks exist in New Zealand.</p> <p>Creating a beneficial ownership register was removed from government work plans last year and may not be a priority.</p>
Data sharing between agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult for people to know how their information is used by government departments. Is it being on-shared with other agencies? For what purpose? • Data-sharing provisions are being included in new legislation without thorough consideration. This could be addressed through a BORA-type vet, supported by a framework designed with public input. The Land Transport (Time of Use Charging) Amendment Bill is an example of proposed legislation with data-sharing provisions. 	<p>This idea has lower alignment with the Integrity Action Plan than the other themes that have emerged.</p> <p>Other options for addressing this problem could include: select committee submissions on relevant bills, or engagement with the Privacy Commissioner.</p>
Lobbying/revolving door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are ethical issues when senior public servants or Ministers move from government to private sector roles like lobbying. • Research could help us to learn how other countries approach this issue, and what options could be used to manage risk in New Zealand. • There should be guidance and boundaries for people making this move. Things like stand-down periods or restraints of trade might be helpful but also may have financial costs, such as paid stand down periods. 	<p>Managing the risks when senior public servants leave the public service is one of the ‘go further’ areas on the Integrity Action Plan – we can use Workshop 2 to discuss how an OGP commitment could inform and enhance that work.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People moving from government to the private sector can also create risks of foreign interference or corruption. We need to understand this risk better. • Considerable work on lobbying has already been completed by the Ministry of Justice. 	
Open information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the Public Records Act could be slipping as agencies adopt new technologies and ways of working. For example, a potential issue arises with the use of auto-deletion settings on messaging applications. • Do we have the right structures in place to support compliance with the Public Records Act? There is a potential issue in that the Chief Archivist is also responsible for regulating compliance with the Act. • Proactive release of information could go further. There are options to enshrine it in legislation, improve practice, or assess compliance. • Greater access to procurement data would help to detect corruption, and ensure agencies are getting value for money • Work to improve transparency of beneficial ownership should be progressed, and expanded to include trusts. This would meet FATF recommendations. • Consider signing up to the UNCAC Coalition Transparency Pledge. 	Fostering a culture of open government is a public service principle, and relevant to expected standards of agency practice. Reviewing the Official information Act and related legislation is not likely to become a NAP5 commitment, but there may be opportunities to improve agency practice through Public Service Commission guidance.