



11 January 2024

Tēnā koe

On 14 November 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting a weekly breakdown of average call wait times in the last 12 months, by clients, suppliers, ethnicity, gender, disability.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out below. I have also included some general information about call wait times at the end of this letter, for your further information.

- *Could you also give me the average wait time for calls for each of the following categories, for the last 12 months, broken down by week:*
 - **every one including suppliers*
 - **only suppliers*

Please find below a table which shows the average speed to answer calls for the last year, broken down by week.

Average Speed to Answer (minutes)			
Week starting	MSD Contact Centre	W&I Supplier Line	MSD Contact Centre EXCLUDING W&I Supplier Line
21/11/2022	21:09	48:25	21:05
28/11/2022	20:26	42:21	20:23
5/12/2022	21:05	51:49	21:00
12/12/2022	22:00	49:39	21:56
19/12/2022	21:22	50:28	21:17
26/12/2022	17:17	50:44	17:12
2/01/2023	25:33	62:39	25:25
9/01/2023	24:27	57:43	24:22
16/01/2023	22:12	49:28	22:08
23/01/2023	20:53	59:00	20:48
30/01/2023	19:42	62:33	19:38
6/02/2023	23:02	60:12	22:57

Average Speed to Answer (minutes)			
Week starting	MSD Contact Centre	W&I Supplier Line	MSD Contact Centre EXCLUDING W&I Supplier Line
13/02/2023	16:30	62:00	16:25
20/02/2023	15:15	46:51	15:10
27/02/2023	16:32	26:51	16:29
6/03/2023	16:06	22:31	16:04
13/03/2023	12:57	14:53	12:56
20/03/2023	12:10	12:49	12:10
27/03/2023	12:05	13:21	12:04
3/04/2023	13:50	14:43	13:50
10/04/2023	13:47	10:17	13:48
17/04/2023	12:42	11:21	12:42
24/04/2023	12:52	11:18	12:53
1/05/2023	12:21	12:14	12:21
8/05/2023	11:09	09:42	11:10
15/05/2023	11:00	11:24	11:00
22/05/2023	10:38	11:32	10:38
29/05/2023	11:02	09:02	11:03
5/06/2023	11:47	09:23	11:48
12/06/2023	11:07	09:45	11:07
19/06/2023	11:44	10:46	11:44
26/06/2023	11:07	11:54	11:06
3/07/2023	12:45	14:17	12:44
10/07/2023	11:46	11:29	11:46
17/07/2023	12:17	12:09	12:17
24/07/2023	11:50	10:32	11:51
31/07/2023	11:14	09:58	11:14
7/08/2023	11:05	10:15	11:06
14/08/2023	11:20	09:17	11:21
21/08/2023	11:24	08:38	11:27
28/08/2023	11:18	08:17	11:21
4/09/2023	11:04	10:03	11:05
11/09/2023	11:17	11:54	11:17
18/09/2023	13:01	17:03	13:00
25/09/2023	19:08	20:37	19:07
2/10/2023	10:55	08:13	10:56
9/10/2023	11:38	15:31	11:37
16/10/2023	11:26	16:34	11:25
23/10/2023	12:00	18:47	11:59
30/10/2023	11:23	13:51	11:23
6/11/2023	11:27	13:25	11:27
13/11/2023	11:48	11:01	11:48
Average	14:36	16:33	14:36

- *Could you also give me the average wait time for calls for each of the following categories, for the last 12 months, broken down by week:*
 - **non suppliers, for each self identified ethnicity (ie wait times for Maori vs pakiha) *non suppliers, each self identified gender.*
 - **non suppliers, who are receiving some for of benefit or waver for a disability (including waver of work requirements on job seekers) *who are not receiving some for of benefit or waver for a disability (including waver of work requirements on job seekers) *non suppliers who tell an automated/non human system (via voice or key input) that they are calling to repay a debt.*
 - **non suppliers who did not tell an automated/non human system (via voice or key input) that they are calling to repay a debt.*

Regarding your requests for caller data, this information is only held in individual client files. Due to the substantial amount of work that would be required to find and collate the information you have requested, we are refusing this aspect of your request under section 18(f) of the Act, on the basis that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. To respond to your queries, the Ministry would need to manually collate the data requested.

The Ministry has considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to your request would help, as required by section 18A of the Act. However, the Ministry does not consider that either of these approaches would allow us to meet your request without significant and unreasonable impact on the Ministry's ability to carry out its other operations.

We have considered consulting with you, as required by section 18B of the Act. However, due to the specificity of your request, the Ministry does not consider that consultation would assist in providing you the information that you wish for.

- *Could you also include any other documentation, meetings or notes available regarding the quality of phone services being provided, areas that have been identified as needing improvement, plans for improvement, and costs*

The Ministry does not hold any documents within scope of your request. This aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, under the basis that the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

- *Tell me the average time non suppliers spends waiting to get through to a human when calling wins broken down by day for the last year and broken down by week for as long as you have it.*

Weekly data is centrally reported on by the Ministry. The weekly data is reported on specific categories that enable the Ministry to collate the data quickly and efficiently.

Please note that the average speed to answer relies heavily on the volume of calls answered on that line. When viewing results at a daily level without the context of factors influencing that time, the average speed to answer may appear volatile and/or skewed. We have numerous systems and teams supporting us to understand this and to provide an overview of the daily and weekly call volumes.

Due to the substantial amount of work that would be required to find and collate the information you have requested, we are refusing this aspect of your request under section 18(f) of the Act, on the basis that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. To respond to your queries, the Ministry would need to manually collate the data requested.

The Ministry has considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to your request would help, as required by section 18A of the Act. However, the Ministry does not consider that either of these approaches would allow us to meet your request without significant and unreasonable impact on the Ministry's ability to carry out its other operations.

We have considered consulting with you, as required by section 18B of the Act. However, due to the specificity of your request, the Ministry does not consider that consultation would assist in providing you the information that you wish for.

General information

The Ministry aims to answer all calls to our 0800 services as quickly as possible. Due to changes both to the Ministry's operating environment as well as economic changes, we've seen a significant increase in demand for our phone-based services, which is reflected in the average wait times. In March 2023 we made significant improvements to our call-me system where we offered call-backs to all callers, reducing overall wait-times from this period.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request regarding call wait times, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Magnus O'Neill', written in a cursive style.

pp.

Magnus O'Neill

General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services