



16 AUG 2019

James McNutt
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Tēnā koe James McNutt

Thank you for your email dated 9 July 2019 submitted through the FYI website to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) regarding Contact Centre wait times.

I was concerned to read about the standard of service you have received from Work and Income. I appreciate how frustrating it is to be on hold for a long period of time and that we were unable to resolve the matter you were calling about. I asked Work and Income to investigate your concerns and report back to me.

In response to your email, staff from Johnsonville Service Centre have attempted to contact you to discuss your concerns and apologise for the standard of service you received. I am sorry too about the length of time you were waiting on this occasion and recognise that we could have done better. We do appreciate it when people such as yourself take the time to bring your concerns to our attention as it helps us to improve our service to people.

Contact Centre staff endeavour to answer every call as quickly as possible. While the Ministry does not have an exact wait time which is considered to be reasonable, you may be interested to know that in 2018, two-thirds of all calls were answered in less than five minutes. Wait times vary according to the time of year and the day of the week. For 2018, average wait times on Mondays, for example, were just over six minutes while for the remainder of the week, average wait times were less than four minutes.

We have progressively increased clients' ability to access our services through a range of different channels to ensure they have the option to transact in a way that suits them best. This includes the ability to still access services face-to-face through our Service Centres where this is preferred.

Clients can talk to staff by visiting one of our Service Centres Monday-Friday or by calling the Contact Centre from 7am to 6pm Monday-Friday, and Saturday from 8am to 1pm. Outside of these times, our online service, MyMSD, is available at all times. While not all transactions can be completed through the online channel, some of the most common services are available (for example, applying for a main benefit, one-off costs assistance, declaring wages, or checking payment details).

While there is no policy in Work and Income regarding forwarding calls when the Case Manager is not able to answer the call as such, we expect staff to return the call as quickly as possible and ensure that the matter is resolved.

Work and Income wants to ensure that people feel manaakitanga (respect and support) whenever and wherever they see us or talk to us online. More effective policies, regulations and training are being developed for our people so we can better respond to people's needs and provide the right help and support at the right time.

I apologise again for the delays you experienced. This is not the level of service we want people to experience when trying to contact us, and I expect you will receive an improved standard of service in future.

Should you require further assistance, I encourage you to contact the Work and Income Contact Centre on 0800 559 009.

Thank you for writing. I hope I have clarified this matter for you.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EB' followed by a stylized flourish.

Elisabeth Brunt
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services