



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

21 FEB 2020

Jem Traylen

fyi-request-11565-cb1b1287@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Jem Traylen

On 31 October 2019, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *As you are aware, your minister has asked that your staff ensure that people receive their full benefit entitlements. Please provide a copy of any significant internal papers or ministerial advice, on the implementation of this request.*

I want to sincerely apologise for the delay in getting this information to you. There are several documents that have been found in scope of your request, however, further consultation is required regarding the information that will be released. The Ministry, therefore, is providing you with one of the documents in scope of your request at this time. Please find attached the following document:

- 31 October 2019: *Report Service Delivery – Strengthening our Service Culture (October Update)*

Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act as it is under active consideration. The release of this information is likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served.

The Ministry endeavors to ensure that everyone feels welcome and has a positive experience when they come to the Ministry's service centres. The Ministry has been working with clients, staff and community groups to hear what's important to them and is making changes to how things are done. The Ministry wants to create a warm and welcoming environment in our service centres and make it easy for clients to get the services and information they're looking for, including full benefit entitlements.

The Ministry is aware that this is a difficult topic for many clients to discuss. By creating a positive environment from the moment of arrival, Ministry staff can have helpful conversations to ensure that clients are heard and, therefore, receive their full benefit entitlements, as well as any other required assistance. Please find more information about the changes being made in service centres across New Zealand at this link: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/mservice-culture/index.html#Awarmerwelcomeinourservicecentres1>

Please note that the Ministry is working diligently to finish consultation on the other documents in scope of your request and will send them to you as soon as possible.

Page 1 of 2

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachment on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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 this response regarding the Ministry's work to provide all clients with their full entitlement benefits, 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.

Yours sincerely



PP

Bridget Saunders
Manager Issue Resolution, Service Delivery



Report

Date: 31 October 2019

Security Level: IN CONFIDENCE

To: Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development

Service Delivery - Strengthening our Service Culture (October update)

Contributes to Mana Manaaki – A Positive Experience Every Time

Purpose of the report

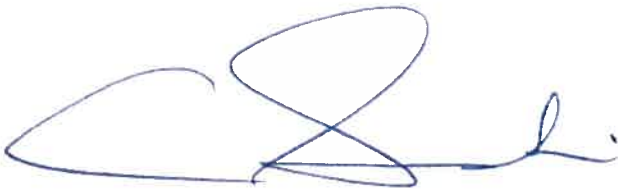
- 1 This report provides you with an update on Service Delivery's 'Strengthening our Service Culture and Client Experience' activity.



Viv Rickard
Deputy Chief Executive
Service Delivery



Date



Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development



Date

Background

- 2 The Ministry has a number of change initiatives planned or underway which focus on strengthening our service culture.
- 3 We'll provide you with a regular update on progress of key initiatives. The next regular update will be provided on 13 December 2019.
- 4 Attached to the report is copy of the 'Service Culture Dashboard'.

Work Programme Update

We're creating a warm and welcoming environment for clients by making improvements to our service centres

A new front of house experience

- 5 We recently implemented the front of house improvements in a further 14 service centres:

Gisborne	22 August
New Lynn	27 August
Avondale	28 August
Warkworth	28 August
Lower Hutt	8 September
Papakura	8 September
Westgate	23 September
Onehunga	24 September
Highland Park	9 October
Hunters Corner	10 October
Dannevirke	24 October
Taradale	25 October
Hastings	25 October
Naenae	26 October

- 6 In total 73 service centres now have the new front of house experience, and we're on track to complete all service centres by the end of April 2020.

Onehunga (before)



Onehunga (after)



New Lynn (before)



New Lynn (after)



- 7 We continue to receive positive feedback from both clients and staff:
- *"All in all, very helpful and efficient from the time we arrived until our departure."* – Warkworth
 - *"Everything looks beautiful and welcoming. Especially for families with children."* – Avondale
 - *"Staff were pleasant and helpful. Waiting area was clean and comfortable."* – New Lynn
 - *"The site is more welcoming, it made me feel at ease."* – Gisborne

Kiosks

- 8 The new self-service kiosk solution will provide a modern self-service experience that securely provides clients with an efficient and intuitive way of transacting with us, as well as completing other activities. This will include the ability to create and update CVs, browse for jobs and housing from a wide range of websites, as well as checking emails and personal banking.
- 9 Between 30 October and 22 November, nine service centres (Wellington, Upper Hutt, Thames, Te Awamutu, Avondale, Mangere, Gisborne, Levin and New Brighton) will get the new kiosks. We will use these service centres to get further feedback from clients

and make any changes needed. The national rollout will begin from 9 December and finish on 1 April 2020.

Future State Physical Security Environment

- 10 Implementation of the Future State Physical Security Environment changes is progressing well. Since August, we've completed the Gisborne, Papakura, Lower Hutt, Naenae and Manurewa Service Centres.
- 11 Feedback from clients has been positive:
 - *"The increase in privacy was good and the layout was more accommodating, the colour scheme was nice and fresh and more updated."*
 - *"Much better, for both interviewer and interviewee."*
 - *"The whole place had been revamped, very nice and friendly set out and atmosphere."*
- 12 The next eight services centres to get the new security layout (which will be completed by the end of the year) are:
 - Queen Street
 - Manukau
 - Otaki
 - Linwood
 - Invercargill
 - Te Kuiti
 - Dinsdale
 - Wairoa.

13 9(2)(f)(iv)

We're continuing to make it easier for clients to give us feedback and for us to learn from and act on it

Heartbeat

- 14 In July, we expanded the client experience survey from the ten prototype sites to all service centres and contact centres. Results have remained both consistent and positive.
- 15 During September:
 - 96,566 survey invitations were sent
 - 9,817 responses were received with 17,974 comments
 - the overall response rate was 10.2% (this is in line with similar surveys in other organisations)
 - the Client Experience Score was 8.6 (out of 10).
- 16 The Service Response team have been monitoring client responses since mid-July, assisting clients where needed. This includes working with clients who need more information about decisions they disagree with and those who need access to further assistance. The Service Response team are also sharing feedback trends relating to systems, processes and policies.
- 17 In August, managers from the prototype sites were trained in dashboard usage and feedback conversations. The survey feedback available in the dashboard allows managers to celebrate where staff have done well and identify opportunities for improvement.

- 18 Managers have responded well to having feedback to share with their teams:
 - *"To be honest, I didn't realise how much my staff would get out of seeing their comments. They were blown away and I could see what a positive difference it made."*
 - *"For a contact centre, this feedback is great. We don't see body language etc so it's not always easy to assess how well the call has gone."*
- 19 Two new variations of the current survey have been developed – one for interactions with the contact centres and another for service centres. The new survey, which has been tested with clients, allows for more specific feedback based around what clients say are important to them (for example, the front of house experience in service centres or the wait time messages for contact centres). These surveys are expected to go live by the end of the year.

We're making it easier for clients to access the information to support their needs

Upcoming appointment proactive reminders

- 20 Proactive text messaging to remind clients of their upcoming appointment was implemented nationwide on 30 September. Since the reminders were implemented, we've further refined the wording in the text messages to cater to a broader range of appointment needs and provide more clarity for clients.
- 21 The new message that clients receive is:

*Work and Income NOREPLY: Hi. Your appt is on 17/12/19 @ 12:00 Talk to you then.
If you're not sure what this is about, please contact us.*
- 22 Overall, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and we're continuing to evaluate the success of these reminders to better understand the impact on our frontline services.

Employment in MyMSD

- 23 MyMSD has a new space where clients are able to access resources to help them find a job. The initial stage, released on 9 September, provides links to popular job search websites (including our 'Find a Job' site). Since the employment space was launched, over 55,000 clients have accessed it.
- 24 This is the first step to introduce more features in MyMSD to help clients find and maintain employment. Further improvements are planned and the following improvements are being considered:
 - better job search functionality
 - access to information about preparing for work
 - access to work-related services and programmes.

Online improvements

- 25 On 14 October, the online application form was updated to improve the experience for clients. This update also saw the introduction of a new 'search address' field which vastly improves usability for clients when they're making an online application for an on-going payment.
- 26 A number of accessibility issues were also addressed which means the online forms in MyMSD are now AA-level accessible.

Improving our approach for gender diverse clients

- 27 On 2 December, we're introducing the option of 'Gender Diverse' on our forms and systems.
- 28 This change makes it easier for clients to tell us about who they are. Just like when telling us their ethnicity, they'll be able to choose the gender option they identify with most from Female, Male and Gender Diverse.
- 29 If someone is already a client, they'll be able to change their gender details if they want to. It won't need to match the gender displayed on their government issued identification and they'll be able to do it over the phone.
- 30 We're working with external stakeholders and staff to build awareness of these changes. Communications and resources we provide, like websites and brochures, are also being updated to include gender neutral language and incorporate the third gender option.

Disability Allowance improvements

- 31 We've developed a new Disability Allowance application form which incorporates feedback from a wide range of people including clients, the National Beneficiaries Advocate Consultative Group (NBACG), General Practitioners and staff.
- 32 The revised form has been generally well received by clients and NBACG, as well as GPs at conferences in Rotorua and Christchurch, who participated in testing. All groups have commented that the extra information in the form supports an increased awareness and understanding about what Disability Allowance is, who can get it, the types of costs we can help with and what they need to do to apply, and that the form was a big improvement on the current version.
- 33 Usability testing of the revised form with clients, General Practitioners and staff was completed at the end of October. Results from this testing are currently being reviewed and the timeframe for implementation of the revised application form is dependent any changes needed based on findings from the testing.
- 34 9(2)(f)(iv)

Better Every Day

- 35 The goal of Better Every Day is to take a Systems Thinking approach to improve performance as it relates to clients. Better Every Day has helped us to understand our current performance, what matters to clients and how well we deliver against these expectations.
- 36 The programme is now in 'Test and Learn'. The first phase of this was a Proof of Concept where we had had two case managers and one customer service representative working with clients in a different way. We're testing whether we can use new thinking to change system conditions and therefore improve performance for clients.
- 37 The principles we are currently testing include:
 - we fully understand clients, including their cultural values, and their situation, so that we can best support them
 - we deal with the immediate need and consider how to assist future progression
 - we minimise hand-offs, which can cause delays, and pull expertise when required
 - if we must pass work to another area, pass it 'clean' - this means that work is able to be picked up by the person receiving it without reworking it
 - we have conversations with people that help us to understand their circumstances and what matters to them.

- 38 The team are now transitioning from Proof of Concept to prototype, by introducing this method and thinking to all case managers in the Upper Hutt Service Centre and one team in the contact centre, by the end of the year.
- 39 In the early stages of the Test and Learn phase, we have seen:
- a reduction in the time to grant a benefit – from a median of 23 days to 11 days
 - an improvement in the contact centre resolution rate – with the 'test' contact centre now resolving 69% of client requests on first contact versus a 38.5% baseline
 - an improvement in the case manager resolution rate – from a 62% baseline to 82%.

Ō Wawata

- 40 Ō Wawata (your aspirations) aims to establish an empathetic initial engagement process which treats whānau with respect and dignity while working with them towards achieving their aspirations.
- 41 Using the insights identified so far, we've been engaging with staff to understand what they're doing already that may be aligned to the intent of Ō Wawata, and how they think we could address some of the key insights learned.
- 42 This engagement has informed the development of a high-level prototype which will see Ō Wawata aiming to create an initial engagement through five key steps:
- *Connect*
When the client first takes steps to engage with us either face-to-face, online or over the phone.
 - *Welcome*
The client's initial interactions with us and our attempts to meet their immediate needs.
 - *Discover*
How we understand a client's whole situation; goals, aspirations, immediate and wider needs.
 - *Plan*
This step aims to develop a plan with clients that supports them to meet their aspirations while reflecting their needs throughout our engagement with them.
 - *Case Management*
How we might provide ongoing support to the client.
- 43 We recently held a workshop to develop a deeper understanding of how similar pieces of work (such as Better Every Day and the Front of House experience) and Ō Wawata intersect and how, together we could collectively enhance the client experience. This will feed into the prototype design. Shortly, we will identify prototype service centres and start validating our prototype design with clients.

Housing

- 44 We want to ensure that people approaching us for housing assistance, including public and emergency housing, receive the support they need to access and sustain safe, warm and dry accommodation as soon as possible.
- 45 The Ministry has a range of initiatives underway to strengthen and improve the experience for clients who access housing services, including:
- Roll-out of Intensive Case Managers, who will provide a single point of contact with us and more focused support for priority groups (i.e. whanau with children,

people with identified mental health needs and those at a high risk of housing insecurity. This support will be complimented by contracted navigators, and will be in place by the end of this year.

- Continuation of the 'ask one more question' campaign which seeks to use a range of client engagement opportunities to proactively identify people who are struggling with their housing costs so that support (e.g. rent arrears assistance) can be provided to help them sustain their existing tenancy.
 - Delivery of refresher training to Housing Focused Case Managers and other staff by the end of 2019. This training will help to ensure that we are having quality conversations with applicants, improve the experience of clients (e.g. not needing to tell their story twice), and allow us to accurately understand and record their housing need so that those in the greatest need are prioritised appropriately.
- 46 Work is also underway to review how the Social Housing Register is managed. The focus is on ensuring that our approach to register management provides the best possible understanding of client's circumstances and living situations. This will help to ensure those with significant housing needs are supported into social housing as a priority.

My Food Bag prototype update

- 47 We recently tested Bargain Boxes as an option for clients wanting to apply for a food grant. The testing aimed to ensure that families are eating well for that week, as well alleviating the stress of going to the supermarket and shopping on a limited budget. Each Bargain Box contains breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinners for seven days.
- 48 As a result of the testing, we will be prototyping the following two options:
- Well Plan participants having the option to receive a Bargain Box weekly for six to 12 weeks to support healthy eating as part of their Well Plan
 - Clients making contact for an emergency need for food in Clendon and Manukau Service Centres (the prototype sites) having the option to receive a Bargain Box.
- 49 From 29 October 2019, case managers in the Clendon and Manukau Service Centres will offer clients with an emergency need for food the option of receiving the Bargain Box. The box will be offered instead of, or alongside, a payment card (when there is a need to provide support until the food box is delivered or for other groceries like baby formula and personal items). At the end of the seven days, we will be asking clients for feedback on their experience.

Operational Excellence

- 50 Activity in the operational excellence space continues to focus on case management practice and creating the space for employment focused engagement.
- 51 Our priorities are:
- setting clients up well at their new business appointments reducing the need for them to return for additional assistance - currently 26% clients have a second appointment within 21 days and we are seeing significant improvement across regions.
 - looking across all current and future work for a client when they meet with us to reduce work on hand and the number of clients waiting for service - currently, work on a hand is sitting at 3.8% compared to 11% in December 2018.
 - lifting employment focussed engagement so that more clients are supported towards a work outcome - engagement for clients streamed to work focused case management has increased from 16% to 31% with future bookings at 45%, and is

improving week on week. Work exits for July to September are 13% higher than the same time in 2018.

We're making changes to our language in all our communications so they are warmer, more engaging and easy to understand

Better Letters

52 So far, we've made changes to over 930 letters, as well as related fact sheets, online information and forms. Recent work of note includes:

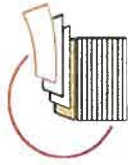
- a better letter and brochure for people turning 65 who may qualify for NZ Super. Feedback told us people didn't understand they needed to apply before they turned 65, and the process was confusing. The new letter is with Inland Revenue for implementation (Inland Revenue sends it out). We're also reviewing our other Seniors letters.
- new and improved fraud letters. These were rewritten to make them less threatening and give people more opportunities to meet with us and talk through the allegations before any action is taken. The new letters meet the recommendations of the Privacy Commissioner and advocates.
- better letters for people who were getting ACC and MSD payments at the same time. These cases can be very complicated, with payments going back many years, so making them easier to understand was a priority.

Strengthening our Service Culture

October overview

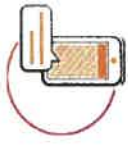
Heartbeat (September results)

We want to make it easier for clients to tell us about their experience with us and use this feedback to understand what a great client experience looks like and where we need to do better.



94,358

survey invitations were sent



8,501

responses have been received



17,974

comments received



Our Client Experience Score

I was treated with respect



It was easy and straightforward



Front of House

The full front of house package (soft seating and rearrangement of waiting areas; community art, introduction of colour, planters, children's area, signage and way-finding) has been implemented in 58 service centres. In addition, water coolers and plants (to create privacy and help with creating different seating zones) have been introduced in every service centre nationwide. Below is a snapshot of feedback we've received so far.

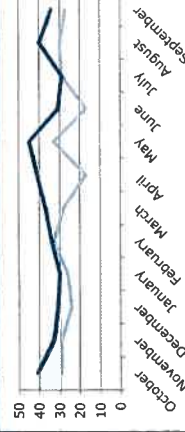


84% of clients say the new layout is more comfortable and inviting



84% of clients say they feel welcomed

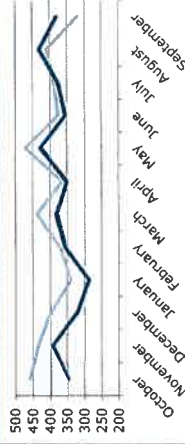
Trespass notices



From October 2018 to September 2019, 36 trespass notices were issued on average each month.

For the corresponding previous period (October 2017 to September 2018), 27 trespass notices were issued on average each month.

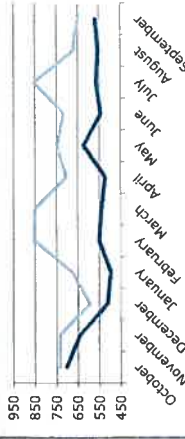
Reviews of Decision



From October 2018 to September 2019, we received 367 Reviews of Decision on average each month.

For the corresponding previous period (October 2017 to September 2018), we received 397 on average each month.

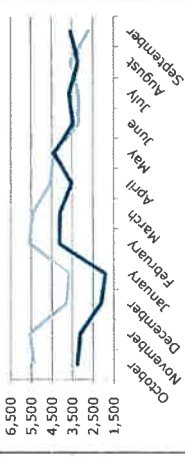
Complaints



From October 2018 to September 2019, we received 570 complaints on average each month.

For the corresponding previous period (October 2017 to September 2018), we received 734 on average each month.

Sanctions



From October 2018 to September 2019, we initiated 3,383 sanctions on average each month.

For the corresponding previous period (October 2017 to September 2018), we initiated 4,267 on average each month.

Our pipeline

Introduction of the Housing Support Product for Rent Arrears
 Front of House package implemented in an additional 5 service centres
 Future State Physical Security Environment changes implemented in 2 service centres

December

Future State Physical Security Environment changes implemented in 6 service centres
 Front of House package implemented in an additional 6 service centres
 Implementation of new self-service kiosk solution begins
 Implementation of changes for gender diverse clients
 Improvements to the Disability Allowance application

January

Future State Physical Security Environment changes implemented in 1 service centre

February

Future State Physical Security Environment changes implemented in 6 service centres