



T Barnett

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8 November 2021

Tēnā koe T Barnett

On 11 October 2021, you contacted the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) through the FYI website requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *A copy of the stats regarding average wait times for this year (when calling MSD) and what MSD regards as an acceptable wait time.*

The Ministry aims to answer all calls to our 0800 services as quickly as possible, although we do not currently have a set wait-time target per call. In the last financial year, the Ministry introduced a performance objective called *One Touch, High Quality*. The focus of this objective is to resolve over 90 per cent of calls during the first interaction.

The Ministry operates several services to help improve caller experiences during busier times, including the communication of estimated wait time to all callers. We also offer a call-back service to all identified callers when expected wait times are greater than seven minutes. The call-back service provides callers with the option to either wait in the queue, or to automatically be called back by a Customer Service Representative when their call would have been answered.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and subsequent changes both to the Ministry's operating environment (e.g. limited face to face interactions), as well as economic changes, we've seen an increase in demand for our phone-based services. During the August 2021 COVID-19 lockdown, we have seen a decrease in the average wait times, for example on the Work and Income contact line, where staff have been redirected to help with high call demands.

Please find attached **Appendix One**, containing the following table:

- **Table One:** *Average Call Wait Times for January 2021 to September 2021 in minutes and seconds*

Table One shows the average wait times for callers to the Ministry's largest 0800 number services, by month, for January to September 2021.

The averages presented in the table are in minutes and seconds. When calculating the combined average, each month's average wait time is weighted by the number of calls received for that service in that month.

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 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.

The Ministry oversees multiple contact numbers to help direct clients to the most helpful contact line for their query. As a specific contact number was not mentioned in your request, we have interpreted your request to be for our largest 0800 contact lines. If you were looking for an average wait time for a different contact line not listed here, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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


P.P.

Geoff Cook
General Manager
Contact Centre and Digital Service