



12 AUG 2016



On 24 May 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding client's access to the internet and staff redundancies due to the Simplification Programme. For the sake of clarity I will answer each of your questions in turn.

- *The number of clients that the Ministry estimates do not have access to the internet or internet-capable mobile phones?*

The Service Quality Monitor (SQM), a survey collected by the Ministry of Social Development comprised of clients that have visited a frontline Service Centre or called the Contact Centre, the SQM includes question on a client's access to the internet.

During April and May 2016, 59 per cent of respondents said they had a mobile phone that they used to access the Internet. Over the same period of time, 65 per cent of clients said they have a computer or tablet at home that they use to access the Internet.

The SQM results do not reflect the total Work and Income client population and are based on clients that interacted with Service Delivery channels in the last 14 days.

- *What provisions are being made in the Simplification Programme for clients who do not have access to the internet or cannot afford data packages for their mobile phones?*

Since 21 June 2016, any client with a smartphone or digital device that can access the internet on the Spark, Vodafone, 2degrees or Skinny mobile networks can use the Ministry's online services at little or no cost. This 'Cheap As' data programme means clients without data are not prevented from using our online services at times and places that work for them.

While clients still are able to make an appointment to have a face to face meeting at a Service Centre with a case manager, there have also been enhancements to the Contact Centre's Voice Enabled Technology to allow clients to have self-service access to information. This included enhancements to the Open Menu in which clients say why they were calling and respond to clarifying questions, new messages

with information about how to find their client number and tailored information about entitlements or the processes to follow for specific enquires related to that caller. This included reminders about upcoming events such as next appointments, Temporary Additional Support expiries and Medical Certificate expiries. The same information is also played to clients on request. Information provided upfront means clients don't wait in the phone queue and also have more information prior to the phone conversation. In April 2016 the Ministry completed improvements to self-service kiosks and conducted a variety of pilots to improve front-of-house and Contact Centre assistance services to better support clients to access online services.

- *How many redundancies (FTEs) have been made to date as part of the Simplification Programme, broken down Work and Income regional office, including Social Housing assessment, tenancy reviews, all social housing related roles?*

I can advise you that there have been no redundancies as part of the Simplification Programme.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10-152  
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Ruth Bound  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery**