



21 FEB 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 8 January 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *A breakdown showing the average wait times for face-to-face appointments with Work and Income Case Managers in each of the organisation's South Island branches over the past five years, separated categories e.g. 'Emergency appointments';*
- *The individual longest and shortest wait time for each of the South Island branches across this period;*
- *A spreadsheet table containing a breakdown of the number and overall value of food grants paid by MSD for each of the South Island's branches over the last five years.*

The Ministry has agreed internal service standards in order to ensure that people are able to meet with Case Managers in a timely manner. These standards ensure that Contact Centre and Work and Income staff provide a consistent level of service to people.

Wait times vary for a number of reasons, ranging from staff sickness to localised and temporary peaks in client numbers outside of the Ministry's control. However, the vast majority of Service Centres are meeting internal standards for the timeliness of Emergency and Maintenance appointments and where these are being exceeded they are for relatively short periods.

Please find attached tables one to three which show the average number of working days between a request for an appointment and the appointment itself, for the past five financial years at each South Island Service Centre.

Tables four to six show the longest wait time between a request and an appointment. For all sites, appointment types, and years, the shortest wait time was zero working days, with the exception of the Canterbury Youth Service where the shortest wait time for a New Business appointment in 2013 was one day.

An appointment may be booked some time in advance of the appointment itself for a number of reasons other than availability. In cases where clients have upcoming changes in circumstances, or will need support and follow up at a later date, Work and Income can plan ahead with the client and book these appointments in the future to minimise the need for them to make contact again to organise this. For example, a client moving cities may have a future appointment booked for the site in their new area to ensure they are guaranteed an appointment for when they are due to arrive. Clients can also book appointments for various needs via our online services for up to 20 days in the future.

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It is important to note that data relating to the maximum number of working days between a request and an Emergency appointment may be distorted by instances in which a Maintenance or New Business appointment is booked several weeks in advance and mistakenly recorded as an Emergency appointment.

Where a person has been assessed as having an emergency need and there are no bookable appointments available within the specified standard, the client is referred to their local Service Centre as a walk-in. For some transactions, the emergency need can be met over the phone without requiring an appointment.

Real time data is generated each day on appointment availability. If a Site's appointment availability shows to be consistently out of line with our standards, the Ministry's Client Service Delivery Team engages with Regional or Site Managers to understand the causes for the variation, and what can be done to improve the situation. During periods where appointment demand is high, and availability is consistently affected, sites may address the issue by having Case Managers contact clients prior to their booked appointment. If the need is identified as one that is straightforward, the transaction will be completed by phone and the appointment time will be reallocated to another client.

The ability for clients to apply for assistance online is also reducing the number of appointments needed for non-work related support. The Ministry has an online service, MyMSD, that make it easier for people to keep in touch without having to come in for an appointment or to drop off information.

Food Grants

Hardship assistance is available to help people pay for essential items or services they need urgently. Hardship assistance includes Special Needs Grants which provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to people to meet immediate needs, such as a food grant. More information regarding food grants is available on Work and Income's website at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/urgent-costs/food.html.

Please find attached table seven that shows the number and amount of food related Special Needs Grants for South Island Work and Income sites for the past five years.

You may also be interested in the Benefit Fact Sheets, which provide a high-level view of trends in hardship information over the past five years. The Fact Sheets present numbers and characteristics of clients who have received hardship assistance at the end of the current quarter and for the equivalent quarter one year ago and five years ago. The Benefit Fact Sheets are available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/.

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 available to the wider public shortly. 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.

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 food grants and appointment wait times at South Island Work and Income sites, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Read', written in a cursive style.

Kay Read
Group General Manager, Client Service Delivery

Table One: Average working days between a request and an Emergency appointment for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.8	1.7
Greymouth	1.2	1.2	1.8	2.0	1.5
Invercargill	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.8	0.3
Nelson	2.2	1.6	2.3	3.3	2.1
Timaru	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.5	0.4
Westport	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.9
Rangiora	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.9	2.3
Ashburton	1.2	1.5	1.1	1.9	2.0
Alexandra	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.1
Balclutha	1.3	0.9	1.0	1.6	0.2
Oamaru	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.6	0.2
Gore	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.9	0.2
Shirley	1.4	1.3	1.9	2.5	2.1
Papanui	1.8	1.5	1.8	3.5	3.1
Motueka	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.2
Riccarton	1.1	0.6	1.2	2.4	2.4
New Brighton	1.5	0.9	1.4	2.7	2.4
Sydenham	1.2	1.8	2.1	3.1	1.8
Linwood	1.7	1.7	3.1	2.5	2.3
Hornby	1.2	1.4	2.0	2.8	2.6
Kaiapoi	1.2	1.2	1.4	2.3	NA
Mosgiel	1.0	0.7	0.9	1.9	0.4
South Dunedin	1.2	1.6	1.8	2.9	0.5
Dunedin Central	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.9	0.3
Richmond	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.9	1.0
Queenstown	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.1
Canterbury Youth Service	NA	NA	NA	1.2	2.3

Notes:

- This data does not include the waiting times for clients attending a non-booked appointment.
- Please note that this data relates only to those Work and Income Sites listed and may not be representative of Work and Income Sites nationwide.
- Prior to 2016, Emergency and Maintenance appointments were not offered at the Canterbury Youth Service Site.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.

Table Two: Average working days between a request and a Maintenance appointment for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	4.6	4.6	5.1	5.1	4.7
Greymouth	4.7	4.6	5.9	5.5	4.5
Invercargill	3.9	3.9	4.7	4.8	1.1
Nelson	6.8	4.3	6.3	4.8	1.6
Timaru	4.2	4.6	4.2	4.3	1.3
Westport	4.1	3.9	4.5	5.6	3.7
Rangiora	4.2	3.6	4.8	4.4	5.5
Ashburton	3.4	3.9	4.5	4.7	5.3
Alexandra	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.9	1.0
Balclutha	4.3	2.7	3.7	4.7	0.9
Oamaru	3.4	3.7	4.3	4.5	0.5
Gore	3.7	3.9	4.4	4.6	0.9
Shirley	5.4	4.4	5.9	5.7	4.8
Papanui	5.9	4.7	4.8	5.1	3.1
Motueka	3.3	3.0	3.3	2.9	2.6
Riccarton	5.0	2.3	4.3	5.6	5.0
New Brighton	5.1	3.3	5.0	5.7	5.5
Sydenham	5.6	5.9	7.3	6.6	5.2
Linwood	7.1	5.8	7.8	5.5	5.5
Hornby	5.8	6.6	7.4	6.6	5.5
Kaiapoi	4.0	3.8	4.3	3.5	NA
Mosgiel	3.4	2.5	2.9	4.6	1.6
South Dunedin	5.9	5.7	7.0	5.3	1.8
Dunedin Central	5.3	4.5	5.1	4.4	0.9
Richmond	4.5	4.6	5.4	4.9	3.1
Queenstown	4.2	3.5	3.2	3.6	0.9
Canterbury Youth Service	NA	NA	NA	1.1	4.9

Notes:

- This data does not include the waiting times for clients attending a non-booked appointment.
- Please note that this data relates only to those Work and Income Sites listed and may not be representative of Work and Income Sites nationwide.
- Prior to 2016, Emergency and Maintenance appointments were not offered at the Canterbury Youth Service Site.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.

Table Three: Average working days between a request and a New Business appointment for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	3.2	4.0	5.0	5.5	4.9
Greymouth	4.2	3.6	4.7	4.8	4.4
Invercargill	3.7	4.1	4.3	5.1	5.0
Nelson	4.6	5.0	6.5	5.1	4.1
Timaru	3.7	3.4	3.6	4.8	4.3
Westport	3.5	2.9	3.6	4.4	3.4
Rangiora	3.5	3.3	5.6	4.3	4.3
Ashburton	4.3	3.8	3.0	5.1	5.0
Alexandra	2.9	3.8	3.4	3.3	2.4
Balclutha	5.0	3.8	4.7	4.7	4.1
Oamaru	3.7	4.7	5.1	5.8	4.0
Gore	4.3	3.6	4.1	5.5	4.7
Shirley	4.1	3.1	5.3	5.6	4.3
Papanui	5.0	3.3	5.4	5.6	4.4
Motueka	3.0	3.1	3.9	3.5	3.2
Riccarton	5.0	3.2	4.8	5.2	3.7
New Brighton	4.8	2.9	6.1	6.3	3.9
Sydenham	4.9	4.5	6.0	6.3	5.0
Linwood	4.7	3.9	5.1	5.7	4.5
Hornby	4.5	3.8	5.0	5.9	3.8
Kaiapoi	3.6	3.7	5.2	NA	NA
Mosgiel	4.7	3.9	4.0	4.9	3.9
South Dunedin	4.0	4.9	5.8	5.1	3.7
Dunedin Central	4.4	5.3	4.7	4.4	3.6
Richmond	3.1	3.0	3.8	4.0	3.7
Queenstown	3.8	4.3	3.2	3.5	2.2
Canterbury Youth Service	5.7	4.3	5.5	4.2	4.7

Notes:

- This data does not include the waiting times for clients attending a non-booked appointment.
- Please note that this data relates only to those Work and Income Sites listed and may not be representative of Work and Income Sites nationwide.
- Prior to 2016, Emergency and Maintenance appointments were not offered at the Canterbury Youth Service Site.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.

Table Four: Maximum working days between a request and an Emergency appointment for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	10	11	9	13	27
Greymouth	16	12	14	13	11
Invercargill	40	38	41	39	40
Nelson	18	39	29	23	36
Timaru	7	10	18	10	17
Westport	5	6	5	7	11
Rangiora	17	8	18	17	12
Ashburton	12	10	8	15	16
Alexandra	5	5	5	7	6
Balclutha	19	13	9	10	8
Oamaru	14	12	8	9	12
Gore	7	9	20	24	15
Shirley	9	18	16	13	16
Papanui	12	26	17	14	18
Motueka	17	20	16	7	10
Riccarton	8	8	12	13	26
New Brighton	20	13	12	12	15
Sydenham	14	13	14	15	16
Linwood	21	14	20	19	25
Hornby	20	10	16	13	13
Kaiapoi	8	9	11	24	NA
Mosgiel	7	11	16	12	8
South Dunedin	8	16	12	13	18
Dunedin Central	15	12	15	10	11
Richmond	7	18	17	9	21
Queenstown	5	8	5	10	2
Canterbury Youth Service	NA	NA	NA	4	9

Notes:

- This data does not include the waiting times for clients attending a non-booked appointment.
- Please note that this data relates only to those Work and Income Sites listed and may not be representative of Work and Income Sites nationwide.
- Prior to 2016, Emergency and Maintenance appointments were not offered at the Canterbury Youth Service Site.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.

Table Five: Maximum working days between a request and a Maintenance appointment for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	49	32	33	32	31
Greymouth	50	41	42	30	35
Invercargill	46	38	40	54	27
Nelson	66	54	48	45	31
Timaru	29	30	29	35	29
Westport	42	23	27	37	27
Rangiora	32	24	38	64	44
Ashburton	26	20	26	37	23
Alexandra	15	34	34	27	14
Balclutha	30	21	25	26	20
Oamaru	27	22	34	20	25
Gore	32	31	32	29	27
Shirley	35	46	42	34	29
Papanui	44	70	28	30	54
Motueka	43	47	30	45	38
Riccarton	38	33	30	30	41
New Brighton	32	39	41	45	44
Sydenham	42	35	40	46	57
Linwood	49	37	38	35	42
Hornby	33	44	42	40	49
Kaiapoi	28	24	25	45	NA
Mosgiel	25	33	25	31	31
South Dunedin	34	24	35	28	22
Dunedin Central	28	30	35	29	24
Richmond	31	32	37	35	35
Queenstown	31	20	25	22	17
Canterbury Youth Service	NA	NA	NA	13	21

Notes:

- This data does not include the waiting times for clients attending a non-booked appointment.
- Please note that this data relates only to those Work and Income Sites listed and may not be representative of Work and Income Sites nationwide.
- Prior to 2016, Emergency and Maintenance appointments were not offered at the Canterbury Youth Service Site.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.

Table Six: Maximum working days between a request and a New Business appointment for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	22	30	39	50	33
Greymouth	17	39	27	21	37
Invercargill	27	30	29	54	27
Nelson	31	28	38	35	25
Timaru	21	28	27	29	28
Westport	23	22	18	22	18
Rangiora	27	38	39	40	40
Ashburton	21	18	24	27	23
Alexandra	16	14	19	51	19
Balclutha	21	14	21	19	18
Oamaru	22	18	23	28	25
Gore	19	27	24	22	22
Shirley	21	15	32	41	32
Papanui	21	26	39	37	30
Motueka	28	22	22	18	42
Riccarton	27	31	21	41	28
New Brighton	20	48	25	40	35
Sydenham	31	36	27	49	25
Linwood	49	28	36	55	31
Hornby	36	36	40	38	25
Kaiapoi	30	23	20	0	0
Mosgiel	24	36	27	25	16
South Dunedin	18	35	25	32	22
Dunedin Central	21	39	27	23	42
Richmond	24	23	37	32	38
Queenstown	19	27	30	17	25
Canterbury Youth Service	18	29	34	21	18

Notes:

- This data does not include the waiting times for clients attending a non-booked appointment.
- Please note that this data relates only to those Work and Income Sites listed and may not be representative of Work and Income Sites nationwide.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.

Table Seven: The number of food related Special Needs Grants for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	3,141	2,978	2,855	2,389	2,590
Greymouth	1,626	1,463	1,364	1,107	1,086
Invercargill	7,489	7,153	7,322	7,072	6,231
Nelson	3,217	3,227	2,996	2,505	2,299
Timaru	2,715	2,559	2,466	2,630	2,606
Westport	493	611	687	607	616
Rangiora	1,089	870	933	1,373	1,829
Ashburton	918	582	706	586	575
Alexandra	355	278	371	406	387
Balclutha	436	384	342	350	532
Oamaru	1,281	1,306	1,145	743	411
Gore	933	864	935	1,021	1,217
Shirley	1,966	1,316	1,271	1,232	1,428
Papanui	1,495	1,973	2,900	1,882	1,511
Motueka	1,484	1,406	1,439	1,168	1,331
Riccarton	1,715	1,718	1,367	968	705
New Brighton	2,153	2,071	1,921	1,584	1,874
Sydenham	2,034	1,851	2,102	1,719	2,257
Linwood	4,149	3,667	3,182	2,819	2,609
Hornby	2,352	1,971	2,007	1,590	1,547
Kaiapoi	489	446	352	221	-
Nelson Region Processing Unit	8	26	14	52	19
Mosgiel	322	360	498	590	682
South Dunedin	2,322	2,553	2,132	1,970	2,438
Dunedin Central	4,205	4,168	4,088	3,844	4,752
Richmond	1,775	1,705	1,903	1,879	2,093
Queenstown	222	151	210	178	177
Canterbury Youth Service	107	230	444	301	235

Notes:

- This is a count of grants. An individual client may receive more than one grant.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.

Table Eight: The value of food related Special Needs Grants for South Island Work and Income sites for the calendar years 2013 to 2017.

Service Centres	Year ending December 2013	Year ending December 2014	Year ending December 2015	Year ending December 2016	Year ending December 2017
Blenheim	\$342,649.15	\$349,387.82	\$344,232.20	\$284,598.05	\$295,900.76
Greymouth	\$171,890.61	\$166,396.18	\$164,148.60	\$132,998.93	\$124,063.02
Invercargill	\$872,056.85	\$834,988.61	\$863,972.77	\$827,085.26	\$696,186.50
Nelson	\$345,216.33	\$348,527.18	\$329,887.18	\$263,002.03	\$249,403.57
Timaru	\$293,823.69	\$288,121.52	\$269,057.35	\$296,989.64	\$279,591.60
Westport	\$52,141.29	\$67,732.97	\$77,055.08	\$58,281.66	\$59,257.44
Rangiora	\$131,146.89	\$113,050.92	\$119,844.86	\$177,685.79	\$230,187.90
Ashburton	\$120,914.38	\$78,049.38	\$76,865.80	\$62,486.34	\$66,454.35
Alexandra	\$47,497.84	\$37,962.49	\$50,796.26	\$53,346.95	\$51,075.81
Balclutha	\$46,670.10	\$42,824.38	\$36,793.70	\$38,394.26	\$58,806.90
Oamaru	\$147,718.04	\$152,743.16	\$141,010.64	\$94,393.50	\$48,288.96
Gore	\$102,685.27	\$93,751.27	\$103,590.23	\$116,693.77	\$137,777.13
Shirley	\$194,727.94	\$133,100.53	\$128,992.77	\$117,557.77	\$136,428.67
Papanui	\$155,615.08	\$206,663.49	\$307,969.28	\$187,062.34	\$141,048.89
Motueka	\$159,967.64	\$162,332.49	\$162,683.49	\$124,837.19	\$140,788.87
Riccarton	\$160,468.73	\$160,411.38	\$134,103.70	\$88,041.52	\$61,847.60
New Brighton	\$219,141.88	\$211,582.58	\$192,404.66	\$155,036.12	\$180,919.33
Sydenham	\$185,847.74	\$176,756.27	\$201,430.56	\$165,678.14	\$208,391.19
Linwood	\$380,478.57	\$348,800.91	\$306,262.55	\$267,760.12	\$240,528.21
Hornby	\$244,305.33	\$214,887.30	\$228,285.35	\$175,336.21	\$162,212.35
Kaiapoi	\$59,421.48	\$57,428.02	\$43,887.95	\$25,363.50	\$0.00
Nelson Region Processing Unit	\$1,060.00	\$3,590.00	\$1,500.00	\$6,173.23	\$2,440.00
Mosgiel	\$28,277.10	\$35,833.00	\$48,381.91	\$58,654.66	\$65,509.25
South Dunedin	\$201,905.67	\$228,807.27	\$190,868.46	\$181,380.96	\$213,684.90
Dunedin Central	\$374,229.50	\$376,772.85	\$368,426.91	\$357,851.64	\$451,748.37
Richmond	\$210,647.63	\$209,593.35	\$248,098.96	\$239,823.30	\$258,043.34
Queenstown	\$26,422.24	\$19,076.00	\$30,062.58	\$23,079.51	\$25,253.59
Canterbury Youth Service	\$8,872.24	\$17,920.36	\$36,694.01	\$19,531.89	\$14,382.84

Note:

- This is the value of grants. An individual client may receive more than one grant.
- The amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent.
- Please note that the Kaiapoi Work and Income Site was closed in late 2016.