



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

04 NOV 2020

On 6 October 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The number of complaints made about elderly abuse across New Zealand during 2020, broken down by:*
  - *Area/Region*
  - *Rest home or private care*
  - *Type of complaint, e.g. physical abuse, verbal abuse, neglect*
  
- *The number of complaints made about elderly abuse across New Zealand during the past five years, broken down by:*
  - *Area/Region*
  - *Rest home or private care*

The Ministry funds 28 providers across New Zealand to deliver Elder Abuse Response Services. Providers are not responsible for investigating elder abuse, rather, they deliver interventions to older people affected by abuse. These services are accessed through referrals from family, friends, neighbours, and agencies. Agencies are a major referral group and include: Police, DHB, health care professionals, Work and Income, Needs Assessment Care Services, banks, accountants, lawyers, and rest homes etc. Providers also receive self-referrals.

The Ministry also funds a free 24/7 confidential helpline, 0800 EA not OK (0800 32 668 65). The helpline provides information and advice for people who are experiencing elder abuse or who are concerned about abuse to others.

Providers delivering Elder Abuse Response Services are not required to track, report on or compile complaints detailing instances of elder abuse affecting the people which they provide services to as a part of their reporting to the Ministry. As such, the Ministry is unable to provide you with the number and type of complaints made to the Ministry or to Ministry providers, regarding elderly abuse. This part of your request is, therefore, refused under section 18(g) of the Act as this information is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds to believe that this information is held by any other department, Minister of the Crown, or organisation.

Furthermore, please note that providers delivering Elder Abuse Response Services are not required to report details such as the region of the caller and whether the client is

in a rest home or in private care. Reporting provided to the Ministry does not include individual level data. Instead, rather providers report aggregated data, including the number of referrals, the number of clients undertaking intervention, and number of cases closed. More information on reporting that is required can be found in the Elder Abuse Response Services Guidelines at the following link: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/service-guidelines/elder-abuse-response-services.pdf>. Therefore, your request for a breakdown of complaints by area, region and whether the individual is in private care or home care, is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as this information is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds to believe that it is held by any other department, Minister of the Crown, or organisation.

In an effort to assist, the Ministry can provide you with the number of new clients (individual people) referred to Ministry providers of Elder Abuse Response Services for the financial years 2015 to 2020 (see **Table One** enclosed in Appendix One below).

The Ministry is able to provide you with more details on the nature of interactions and the type of complaints regarding its confidential helpline, 0800 EA not OK. The helpline provides information and advice for people who are experiencing elder abuse or who are concerned about abuse happening to others.

The provider contracted to deliver 0800 EA not OK, HomeCare Medical, reports some detail to the Ministry but is not required to capture or report on data at the level you are seeking with your request. Most importantly, the information reported does not identify whether an instance of abuse occurs within rest homes or private homes, but it does provide an understanding of the type of abuse being reported.

Please see **Table Two** attached in Appendix One below which outlines the numbers of calls (not individual people making contact) each financial year since the 0800 EA not OK helpline opened in July 2017, and the reason for the call.

As the helpline opened in July 2017, information on these calls for the years prior to 2017 does not exist.

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
- 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. 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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding complaints made about elderly abuse, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Henderson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Henderson  
**General Manager**  
**Safe Strong Families and Communities**

## Appendix One

**Table One: New clients referred to Ministry providers of Elder Abuse Response Service for the financial years 2015 to 2020.**

Financial Year	New Clients referred to Ministry Providers
2015/2016	4333
2016/2017	9566
2017/2018	3103
2018/2019	4162
2019/2020	4595

Notes:

- Prior to 2017, elder abuse services significantly focused on education and awareness raising. Therefore, the numbers provided in the table above from the financial years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 include people who received education and awareness support from providers. This may explain the increase in numbers in the financial year 2016/2017.

**Table Two: The number of calls to the Ministry-funded helpline 0800 EA not OK for the financials years 2017 to 2020, broken down by reason of the call.**

Reason for call	FY 2017/2018	FY 2018/2019	FY 2019/2020	Jul 20 - Sep 20
Emotional Abuse	236	300	424	101
Financial Abuse	232	305	351	83
Information only	514	659	567	226
Neglect	58	66	93	16
Physical Abuse	40	61	61	13
Sexual Abuse	2	2	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1704</b>	<b>2060</b>	<b>543</b>

Notes:

- While callers may raise multiple issues or concerns when making contact, these numbers denote the primary reason or concern for the call only.