



3 AUG 2021

Dear

On 6 July 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The amount of money (if any) MSD has received to advertise Puawaitanga via the 0800 559 009 phone number.*

The Ministry contracts many specialised service providers, such as Homecare Medical, to partner for greater impact and outcomes. The Ministry works with Homecare Medical, who run the national telehealth services, to offer virtual health and wellbeing services to New Zealanders including Puāwaitanga.

Puāwaitanga is a free, voluntary, phone and online counselling service available to anybody on a main benefit or at risk of coming on to benefit. It is provided by qualified and registered counsellors. People can self-refer themselves to the service by calling the self-referral number 0800 782 999.

The Puāwaitanga service comes under the Oranga Mahi Programme of work. Oranga Mahi includes a range of cross agency health-based services that the Ministry are trialing to improve outcomes for our clients in receipt of Jobseeker Support – Health Condition, Injury or Disability (JS-HCD). The development of health conditions when on a benefit is a concern due to the impact they can have on a client's overall wellbeing and their ability to support themselves. The Ministry need to ensure the right support is available at the right time for clients on a benefit.

People calling the Ministry's Contact Centres are currently played an introduction message about Puāwaitanga through the interactive voice response messaging system. This is the main way the Ministry lets people know about the self-referral pathway. The Ministry made this change after clients told us that they would prefer to make contact with the service directly. Clients who self-refer are also more likely to successfully engage with the service, compared to being referred via a Case Manager.

The Puāwaitanga message that you are referring to initially plays at the 6-minute mark in the wait time and is repeated later depending on how long a caller is on hold for. It is played to everyone, not just Ministry clients, who ring through to the Work and Income line. It does not target those who enter their SWN numbers.

Because the service is clinical, it is important that the Ministry ensures clients understand it is separate from the Ministry and the service is completely private and confidential. The Ministry also reminds clients that it is separate from the Ministry to stop clients from ringing Homecare Medical and asking for Ministry support, such as food grants or hardship assistance.

As such, in response to your request, I can confirm that that Ministry has not received any money to advertise this service as it is one of the ways the Ministry can get people to access the self-referral pathway for this service.

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 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.

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 amount of money (if any) MSD has received to advertise Puawaitanga, 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



Jayne Russell
**Group General Manager
Employment**