



21 August 2023

Tēnā koe

On 2 August 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Please provide details of the average time spent waiting on hold to try and access services from MSD and make it available. Please provide details of amount of successful job placements transitioning from all benefits.*

On 3 August 2023 the Ministry emailed you asking to you clarify part of your request for information. In particular, ... *details of the average time spent waiting on hold to try and access services from MSD and make it available.*

The Ministry advised that should a response not be received from you by Wednesday 9 August 2023, the Ministry will interpret your request 'as average time spent waiting on hold with the Contact Centre when calling through the 0800 559 009 number'.

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will respond to your request in turn.

- *Please provide details of the average time spent waiting on hold to try and access services from MSD and make it available.*

The Ministry's Contact Centres continue to provide more assistance via the phone to ensure that we are meeting the needs of New Zealanders as fast as we can. As a result of increased engagement over the phone, our average handling time has increased.

While wait times have increased, New Zealanders continue to receive assistance without the need to book an appointment or travel into an office. We aim to resolve all calls at the first point of contact rather than book appointments.

Our current average wait times for July 2023 is 12:10mins.

We are continuing to make changes to bring down wait times, and to shift resources to meet that need. We've also recently made enhancements to our call back service to enable more callers access that call back option. We have been able to help our callers with a fuller range of financial assistance than we have in the past, without having to refer them on to our service centres.

The Ministry offers a call back service to identified callers when expected wait times are greater than seven minutes. The Ministry remains committed to ensuring that New Zealanders can access the support they require quickly and efficiently.

- *Please provide details of amount of successful job placements transitioning from all benefits.*

The Ministry have publicly available benefit fact sheets which hold the number of working age main benefit cancellations for the reason 'Obtained Work' for the last quarter. Of your convenience you can find this information at the following link:
[view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.msd.govt.nz%2Fdocuments%2Fabout-msd-and-our-work%2Fpublications-resources%2Fstatistics%2Fbenefit%2F2023%2Fquarterly-benefit-fact-sheets-grants-and-cancels-tables-june-2023.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://www.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.msd.govt.nz%2Fdocuments%2Fabout-msd-and-our-work%2Fpublications-resources%2Fstatistics%2Fbenefit%2F2023%2Fquarterly-benefit-fact-sheets-grants-and-cancels-tables-june-2023.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

You can find the information related to this request in Summary – Cancels by benefit.

If this was not your intention of your request, you can make another more specific request from the Ministry for information.

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'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 contact centre wait times and benefit cancellations, 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

Bridget Saunders

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Issue Resolution