



29 JAN 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 8 December 2017, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of complaints made by Work and Income clients across the Auckland area over the past 3 years;*
- *The nature of each complaint;*
- *What action was taken in regard to these complaints;*
- *A breakdown of the total number of Work and Income Auckland clients across the past three years.*

The Ministry of Social Development works to provide a range of support to clients in the Auckland region. This includes main benefits, housing help for low income people who are working. Further information regarding Work and Income clients in the Auckland region, including a breakdown of the total number of clients across the past three years, is available in the Work and Income regions data tables. These can be found on the Ministry's website here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit.

The Ministry works hard to ensure that all clients receive the best possible service in their interactions with Work and Income, and of the more than 700,000 client interactions in the Auckland region each year, fewer than 1% result in a complaint. In the last 12 months, the Ministry has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at improving our service and the client experience. These initiatives include:

- identifying the "top 20" most effective Case Managers who enabled people to become independent or helped with housing and financial support, in order to understand what makes them so effective and sharing these learnings with staff,
- improving communications to staff to highlight positive client outcomes,
- refining ongoing training to staff, ensuring our case management practice remains focused on achieving good client outcomes, and
- improving our online services and increasing the types of assistance that can be provided over the phone, allowing clients to interact with us in the best way that works for them.

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The Ministry takes all complaints seriously. When a complaint is received, Ministry staff work with the client to put it right and identify a solution, and the majority of complaints are resolved to the client's satisfaction. The Ministry endeavours to learn from the complaint and take steps to improve the service for all clients. More information about Work and Income's complaints process is available on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/index.html.

Please find attached Table One, which provides the number of complaints received from Work and Income clients in the Auckland region, broken down by the nature of the complaint. Please note, the Ministry reports on complaints by financial year. As such, data is included for the financial years ending 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Please note, an additional four complaints have been received by the Fraud Investigation Units over the past three years from Work and Income clients in Auckland. Due to the low number and the nature of the information recorded, further details relating to these complaints are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

The action taken in response to each complaint varies significantly depending on the specific details of the complaint and the client's situation. As a result, these are recorded on individual client files. In order to collate this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review more than 7000 files. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether this information could be provided given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. In either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Once a complaint is concluded, however, the result of the complaint is recorded as one of the following seven outcomes. An example of each outcome is provided for your reference:

- Resolved – complainant satisfied
Apologised for the delay in getting back to them and explained to client about the decision for their application.
- Resolved – complainant dissatisfied
Client understands reason for decision but is still unhappy.
- Resolved – complainant satisfied – Review of Decision
Client appreciated the time taken to explain decision, and apology for service provided. Review of Decision lodged as client disagrees with the decision.
- Resolved – complainant dissatisfied – Review of Decision
Reiterated to client the decision that was made, client remains unhappy. Review of Decision lodged.
- In Error
Spoke with client, who confirmed that they were making a comment about Work and Income policy, and were not making a complaint about service.
- Closed – lack of representation
Have attempted to make contact to discuss complaint, however phone number has been disconnected.

- Closed – message left/ letter sent
*Have attempted to make contact to discuss complaint, no answer on phone.
Message left with contact information, awaiting response from client.*

Please find attached Table Two, which shows the number of complaints received from Work and Income clients in the Auckland region, broken down by the outcome of each complaint over the past three financial years.

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 complaints made by Work and Income clients in Auckland, 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



Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery

Table One: The number of complaints made by Work and Income clients in the Auckland region broken down by the nature of each complaint.

Financial year ending	Nature of complaint											Total
	Designated Doctor	Action Taken	Confidentiality	Environment	Information Provided	Interpersonal Skills/ Staff Attitude	Policy/ Legislation/ Procedural	Technology	Timeliness	Other		
30 June 2015	S	699	24	12	381	761	148	13	259	S	2301	
30 June 2016	S	533	22	10	253	528	113	10	301	S	1775	
30 June 2017	S	590	14	6	267	533	98	18	369	S	1898	

Notes:

- "S" represents a suppressed cell to protect clients' privacy under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982.
- "Other" includes complaints regarding a medical appeals board member, and Ministerial correspondence.

Table Two: The number of complaints made by Work and Income clients in the Auckland region broken down by the outcome of each complaint.

Financial year ending	Outcome										Total				
	Resolved complainant satisfied	Resolved complainant dissatisfied	Resolved complainant satisfied ROD	Resolved complainant dissatisfied ROD	In Error	Closed - lack of representation	Closed message left/letter sent								
30 June 2015	61%	1411	8%	175	0%	10	1%	15	2%	41	10%	238	18%	410	2301
30 June 2016	58%	1031	8%	138	S	S	S	S	2%	40	13%	236	18%	317	1775
30 June 2017	58%	1102	8%	155	0%	6	1%	17	2%	47	12%	222	18%	342	1898

Notes:

- "ROD" represents complaints which were referred for a Review of Decision.
- "In Error" represents complaints which were closed as they were opened in error.
- "Lack of representation" refers to instances in which the Ministry attempted to make contact but was unable to reach the complainant
- "S" represents a suppressed cell to protect clients' privacy under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982.
- Percentage values may not add up to 100% as these are rounded to the nearest whole number.