



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

29 JUL 2020

Dear

On 2 July 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. A breakdown of costs for the phone number 0800 559 009, for the past five years up to 30 June 2020, including;
2. The cost of any phone call back system if in use for each region;
3. Any reason why the call back system may not have been implemented universally;
4. Any cost/benefit analysis that the ministry has done on the use of a call back system.

Please find a table below showing the annual costs for incoming calls to the 0800 559 009 line for the Financial Years 2015/16 to 2019/20 (up to 30 June 2020).

Financial Year	Annual costs for incoming calls to 0800 559 009
2015/16	\$5,081,875.61
2016/17	\$5,372,010.06
2017/18	\$3,991,768.91
2018/19	\$5,720,126.32
2019/20	\$7,405,067.63
Total	\$27,570,848.53

In regard to your second question, the Ministry does not collect regional information on the call back system. Our Contact Centres and the call back system are managed nationally, regardless of the location of the client calling. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist.

The Ministry can, however, confirm the total call cost component for outbound calls made through the call back system since its implementation in October 2019. As at 30 June 2020, the total outbound call cost component for the call back system was \$1,635,527.93.

In regard to your third question, the call back system was designed as a service enhancement for clients. It gives the option to wait in the queue or accept a call back from a Customer Service Representative (CSR) after the same amount of time the client would have waited in the queue to speak to a CSR. The expected wait time in the queue is played to all callers, with call backs offered to clients who are identified

in the telephony system and when the expected wait time in the queue is over seven minutes.

In regard to implementing a universal call back system, the Ministry is only able to offer the call backs when resourcing levels allow us to. Call backs are not available when a client calls from a withheld/private number, and are not offered after 5:30pm Monday to Friday, or after 12:15pm on a Saturday.

In regard to question four, no specific cost/benefit analysis of the call back system exists and, as such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist.

You may be interested to know that an inbound call costs the Ministry less per minute than an outbound call. However, when wait times are high, the overall cost of having a client waiting in the queue and then talking to a CSR outweighs the cost of the outbound call. In these instances, a call back is offered to the client, provided they are not calling from a withheld/private number and calling during the times calls back are available, as mentioned above.

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. 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 breakdown cost for the phone number 0800 559 009 and questions about the call back system, 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



Geoff Cook
General Manager
Contact Centre and Digital Service