



26 August 2022

Tēnā koe

On 1 June 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many complaints MSD received in relation to elder abuse/neglect last year nationally? Can I also please have this divided by district.*

The Ministry currently funds 26 providers/collectives to deliver Elder Abuse Response services across New Zealand. Elder Abuse Response services help address the immediate needs of older people experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse and neglect. The Ministry also funds Whakarongorau Aotearoa – New Zealand Telehealth Services (Whakarongorau) to deliver a free 24/7 confidential helpline, 0800 EA NOT OK. The helpline provides information and advice to people who are experiencing elder abuse or concerned about abuse happening to others.

Ministry funded providers deliver information, advice and interventions to older people affected by or at risk of experiencing elder abuse or people concerned about abuse happening to others.

On 22 June 2022, the Ministry emailed you to advise you that that complaints/reports about elder abuse are not made to the Ministry and that the Ministry can only provide data that is reported to us by our contracted providers. This data indicates the number of people seeking support elder abuse response services, including the helpline delivered by Whakarongorau. You were advised that this information is collected by financial year, as such, the Ministry would be able to provide this information for the period ending 30 June 2021, or the alternative would be to provide an incomplete data set for the current financial year.

On 1 July 2022, the Ministry sent you a follow up email as we had received no response from you. Furthermore, the Ministry advised you that more time was required for necessary consultations to make a decision on your request. As

such, the due date of your request was extended to 27 July 2022, in accordance with section 15(1) and 15A of the Act.

On 5 July 2022, you requested the data for the period ending 30 June 2021 as well as an incomplete data set for the current financial year.

On 27 July 2022, the Ministry advised that we had decided to grant your request and you will be provided with the number of contacts/requests received by Whakarongorau Aotearoa in relation to elder abuse/neglect last year nationally, broken down by district, for the period ending 30 June 2021 and an incomplete data set for the current financial year. You were advised that this information will be sent to you no later than 25 August 2022.

Upon further review, it was determined that the data you have requested cannot be broken down by district as the data is not reported to the Ministry to this level of detail. As such, this part of your request is refused under 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the department and I have no grounds for believe the information is held by another department.

For the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, Whakarongorau received over 2,053 contacts (calls, email and SMS) to the elder abuse helpline and over 2,919 contacts (calls, email and SMS) for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Where possible calls to the helpline are classified by type of concern. Call during the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 that were classified by type of concern are outlined as follow:

- 698 callers were given general information
- 478 callers were concerned about emotional abuse
- 399 callers were concerned about financial abuse
- 146 callers were concerned about neglect
- 102 callers were concerned about physical or sexual abuse

Please note, the call breakdown for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, is from a report which Whakarongorau sent to us but is not part of their standard provider returns. As such, the Ministry is unable to provide a breakdown of call reasons for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 as this detail was not provided by Whakarongorau, therefore the Ministry does not hold this information.

For the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, the 25 Ministry funded providers/collectives delivering the Elder Abuse Response services received 4,513 new referrals for support and for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 December 2021, these same providers/collectives received 1861 new referrals for support.

These providers/collectives report to the Ministry every six months, as such, data for the period 1 January to 30 June 2022 is still in the process of being reported to the Ministry and cannot be provided at this time.

In the spirit of being helpful, you may be interested to know that the Ministry has received \$37.625 million over three years through Budget 22 to strengthen and expand its current prevention work programmes and support the development of three new prevention approaches for older people, ethnic communities, and youth. This investment supports the implementation of Te Aorerekura – National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, specifically Action 21 (Deliver prevention initiatives).

More information about elder abuse in New Zealand can be found here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/initiatives/family-and-sexual-violence/elder-abuse-response-services-in-aotearoa-nz.html.

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 complaints concerning elder abuse/neglect received by the Ministry, 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



Mark Henderson
General Manager
Safe Strong Families and Communities