

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities**

**Question No: SQ17-000370**

**Topic: 1800RESPECT**

**Hansard page: 33**

**Senator Skye Kakoschke-Moore asked:**

If counsellors have been hired for the primary purpose of answering the calls to another helpline but have answered 1800RESPECT calls, how many times has that happened?

**Answer:**

All 1800RESPECT calls are only taken by staff who have:

- the required minimum three year tertiary degree in a relevant field (including social services, social work, welfare studies, psychology and counselling);
- a minimum two years counselling experience;
- undertaken specific training.

If the specialist skills of these counsellors can also assist people on other Medibank Health Solutions (MHS) services (such as beyondblue), MHS will schedule counsellors as appropriate. The Department of Social Services does not require MHS to report on staff activities beyond the 1800RESPECT contract requirements.