

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: SQ17-000407

Topic: 1800RESPECT

Hansard page: 61

Senator Larissa Waters asked:

You were asked earlier, I think by Senator Pratt, about the complaints. You said you sought quarterly figures. I am interested in whether you track the resolution of those complaints. If so, how? What is the process for doing that? What proportion of complaints from the period October to December 2016 remain unresolved? If you can add the resolution figures to the earlier request.

Answer:

The Department has governance arrangements in place with Medibank Health Solutions (MHS) to oversee performance of the 1800RESPECT service, including the reporting and resolution of complaints. Complaints are discussed as part of regular operational meetings and instances and trends reviewed through analysis of quarterly reports. The Department seeks information and assurance from MHS regarding the handling of complaints by discussing the root cause of issues and the remediation work MHS has taken to resolve and prevent the issue from occurring again.

Under the First Response model, the Department has greater oversight of complaints as MHS is now responsible for formally managing complaints for the entire 1800RESPECT service. MHS is responsible for the identification, recording, investigation and resolution of complaints for 1800RESPECT, including forwarding complaints to subcontractors for investigation as relevant.

MHS' independent accreditation covers its clinical governance framework, including the complaints and incident management systems. MHS use a complaints management system called RiskMan to record, investigate, track and report on all complaints. Each complaint is formally investigated within a seven day timeframe. The complaint and findings of the investigation are presented to the MHS Clinical Lead Group for agreement on the corrective actions to be taken (if any).

MHS advises that that from 16 August 2016 to 31 March 2017 48,602 contacts (calls and online) were made to 1800RESPECT and, of these, 72 complaints were received. This amounts to 1.48 complaints per 1000 contacts.

MHS advises that all complaints for the period 16 August 2016 to 31 March 2017 are resolved.

The following provides a breakdown of complaint type from 16 August 2016 to 31 March 2017, as per MHS' complaints recording process:

- The **first response complaint type** is used when a complaint about a process or interaction with the first response counselling service is lodged. Of the total contacts, **0.68 per 1,000 contacts** (0.068 per cent) resulted in a complaint under this category.

- The **trauma specialist complaint type** is used when a complaint about a process or interaction with the trauma specialist counselling service is lodged. Of the total contacts, 11,457 calls were offered to trauma specialist counselling. Of these, **1.05 per 1,000 calls** (0.105 per cent) resulted in a complaint under this category.
- The **unrelated complaint type** is used when a complaint is received about a provider or policy that does not form part of the 1800RESPECT service. This could include a complaint about broad government policy, or a complaint about another service delivered by a provider not related or contracted by 1800RESPECT, such as emergency services or a state-based service local to the caller. All counsellors are trained to respond to unrelated complaints by directing the caller to the appropriate channel to lodge their complaint. Of the total contacts, **0.24 per 1,000 contacts** (0.025 per cent) resulted in a complaint of this nature.
- The **service/policy issues complaint type** is used when there is a complaint about the overall service or a policy related to the service, such as protocols for referring to another service. Of the total contacts, **0.22 per 1,000 contacts** (0.022 per cent) resulted in a service/policy issue complaint.
- The **technical complaint type** is used when a complaint refers to a technical issue with the service, such as phone dropout during a call. Of the total contacts, **0.062 per 1,000 contacts** (0.0062 per cent) resulted in a complaint of this nature.
- The **external provider complaint type** is used when a complaint is received about a provider engaged to deliver a component of the 1800RESPECT service (such as a translation provider). Of the total contacts, **0.0205 per 1,000 contacts** (0.0002 per cent) resulted in a complaint of this nature.