

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2016 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Telephony – length of calls

Question reference number: 11 (HS 11)

Senator: Pratt

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Question:

Senator PRATT: Can you take on notice the length of overall calls—how many calls are complete within 10 minutes, how many within 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 and 90-plus for each of the lines. I know I have spent over an hour on the line at various times. I am not so interested in the waiting time; it is the length of time that it takes to actually resolve an issue, if that is possible.

Ms Campbell: That is quite difficult because there is wait time to talk to us but then we are not sure what the customer is going to ask, so we have average—

Senator PRATT: You must know how long they have been on the line for. That is what I am interested in.

Ms Campbell: I am not sure that is an accurate reflection. If we have a customer who has a number of issues, we want to deal with that up front. We are not going to try and get them off the line to improve our stats.

Senator PRATT: No, I do not mean off the line. You answer the call then you say, 'I am going to put you through to the next person.' You might be waiting again for another 20 minutes before you get an answer. It is the overall length of the call that I am interested in.

Ms Campbell: We will see what we can find. In particular, average handling time is another indicator about how long it takes to process that—but it also depends on what the customer wants.

Answer:

Call duration data for Social Security and Welfare is not available broken down by time interval. The average time for a Service Officer to handle a call once the call reached them in 2015-16 was 8 minutes and 37 seconds.