

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000136

Senator Siewert provided in writing.

Question

Complaints to National Customer Service Line

How many complaints have been made to the National Customer Service Line?

- a. How many of these complaints have been investigated?
- b. Were specific actions taken by the Department of Employment in response to these complaints?

Answer

The Department of Employment's National Customer Service Line (NCSL) answers calls from jobseekers wanting to provide feedback, request transfers, seek information or register a complaint in relation to employment service providers including jobactive. From 1 July 2015 to 31 December 2015, the NCSL answered 75,532 calls. As a result of these calls, 8,719 complaint records were created by the NCSL.

Of the 8,719 complaints, 1,332 were referred to jobactive providers to address the complaint. The remainder was handled internally.

The NCSL also manages phone calls to the Employment Services Tip-off line which was developed primarily for current and former employees of employment services providers to report concerns about a provider's practices. Between 1 July 2015 and 31 December 2015, there were 30 recorded tip-offs pertaining to the jobactive programme.

All Tip-off line reports are investigated and escalated according to the validity and seriousness of the information provided. Approximately one-third of Tip-offs result in recoveries or sanctions against a provider. Where criminal conduct (eg. fraud) is suspected, the matter is referred to the Department's Investigation Branch for further action.

Generally there are a number of actions that result from a complaint including:

- the referral of the complaint to the jobactive provider for resolution;
- the complainant being transferred to another provider if requested;
- the recording of the complaint for internal feedback and use for programme and policy teams when developing or modifying programmes; and
- investigation through the Tip-off line process.