

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ17-000009

Topic: 1800RESPECT

Hansard page: Written

Senator Jenny McAllister asked:

Does MHS allow call centre workers who are employed to take calls for other services (e.g. HealthDirect, Beyond Blue, Garrison Health, etc) to answer 1800 Respect line calls in the same shift?

Answer:

All calls made to 1800RESPECT are answered by qualified, professional and experienced counsellors who have a minimum three year tertiary degree in a relevant field that includes Social Services, Social Work, Welfare Studies, Psychology and Counselling. All counsellors are also required to have a minimum of two years full time counselling experience.

Medibank Health Solutions (MHS) advised the Department of Social Services (the Department) that it uses a blended call model with other services it is contracted to provide. Under this model, the first response counsellors answer calls for multiple services in the same shift. This model allows the workforce, mostly female, to have flexible work arrangements. It is beneficial as it allows the workforce to scale up or down as required based on its forecasting of call numbers. This approach enables MHS to more easily meet any increase in demand of calls for 1800RESPECT.