

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000862

**OUTCOME:** 11 – Ageing and Aged Care

**Topic:** Gateway

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Polley, Helen

- a) What additional costs have been incurred to recruit more staff for the My Aged Care call centre?
- b) Where is the call centre located?
- c) How many staff are employed?
- d) What experience and qualifications are required by staff?
- e) What training is provided?
- f) How many providers are able to accept referrals through My Aged Care?
- g) What is being done to ensure all providers come on line?
- h) How many referrals are going to providers month by month?
- i) What is being done to ensure all providers are being given equal access to referrals through the My Aged Care portal?
- j) What is being done to measure provider, stakeholder and consumer satisfaction with My Aged Care, including the referral process?

**Answer:**

- a) An additional cost of \$1.5 million was incurred for the contact centre.
- b) The My Aged Care contact centre operates in two locations, Box Hill (Victoria) and the Gold Coast (Queensland).
- c) As at the 31 October 2015, there were 247 full time equivalent staff employed in the My Aged Care contact centre.
- d) Every contact centre agent must successfully complete prescribed training delivered by a Registered Training Organisation in order to undertake screening and referrals. Contact centre and/or aged care sector experience has been seen as an advantage in the recruitment of My Aged Care contact centre positions.
- e) All My Aged Care contact centre staff are provided My Aged Care specific aged care training upon commencement. This training is delivered in four units and takes approximately five to seven days. Two units have been classified at the Australia

Qualification Framework (AQF) level 4 and one unit is classified at the AQF level 3. These are equivalent to Certificate IV and Certificate III units, respectively.

In addition to this, internal training is conducted on telephony and system skills and call practice, specific to contact centre operations. Internal training includes caller scenarios, using a supporting knowledge base (with information provided by the Department) and expectation setting.

- f) My Aged Care is designed so that Commonwealth funded aged care providers can receive referrals from My Aged Care. To do so, they must have set up and activate their organisation and key staff members (team leaders) within the provider portal. At the end of October 2015, of approximately 2,200 provider organisations who were listed on the My Aged Care system, 76 per cent had been activated, with approximately 44 per cent having at least one team leader assigned to at least one outlet. This enables at least one outlet for that organisation to receive and process referrals. The Department has been working closely with the provider peaks and directly with provider organisations to emphasise the need for all organisations to complete set up on the My Aged Care provider portal.
- g) A range of activities have been completed to support transition of the aged care sector to My Aged Care. This includes regional workshops in May and June 2015 for home support providers, webinars, conferences, support materials available on the Department of Social Services website (fact sheets, videos and guidance documents, frequently asked questions), regular communication via a Departmental newsletter and a dedicated provider and assessor phone line to provide assistance to the sector. The Department has also worked closely with the peak bodies to promote the importance of activities.

Existing forums were also used to promote transitional arrangements with aged care sector stakeholders, including the Aged Care Gateway Advisory Group, Gateway Consultation Forum and the Aged and Community Care Officials meetings.

h) Number of Clients Referred and Number of Service Referrals issued by Month – July-October 2015

Between 1 July and 31 October 2015, 42,213 clients have been referred for service.

	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	<b>FYTD</b>
Clients Referred to Providers	8,515	8,726	8,262	16,710	<b>42,213</b>
Number of referrals issued to service	30,035	42,542	61,494	68,657	<b>202,728</b>

Source: This data is supplied from My Aged Care system.

- ‘Service referrals’ are referrals sent out on behalf of clients to organisations who provide aged care services; they can be made from either My Aged Care contact centre or by assessors via My Aged Care systems.

i) Referrals can be made in one of three ways:

- a broadcast to providers within a particular area who provide needed services;
- the issue of a referral to named service providers in a priority order set by the client;
- issue of a referral code to the client which allows the client to self-manage their referral.

In all instances client choice is the determining factor. In making a referral, a service finder is used to search for service/s that can support a client’s needs. The search results are randomised so that they do not return lists of services in alphabetical order.

j) The Department contracts Healthdirect Australia to manage the My Aged Care website and national contact centre. This includes delivery of research (surveys and questionnaires) on consumer satisfaction and user experience. The surveys are conducted for clients and providers using both the contact centre and the website.