

21 NOV 2018

Ref: H201807185

## Response to your request for information

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 24 October 2018 requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *The date the integrity line was set up and why?*
2. *Since then how many calls have come through to the line?*
3. *Of those calls, how many have led to investigations?*
4. *Of those investigations, how many led to criminal proceedings?*
5. *Of those cases, how many led to criminal convictions and if any, what type of crime – eg fraud, etc.*
6. *Please elaborate on any cases such as which hospital/DHB the incident/crime happened at, what year, if the person committing the wrongdoing was a patient or an employee, any other action taken internally?*
7. *If any investigations found wrongdoing that was not criminal or not pursued criminally, what action was taken – eg employment terminated or employee resigned or debt collectors set on patient or patient reported to police etc?*
8. *What percentage of the tips to the line come from health care workers/managers and what percentage come from members of the public and patients?*
9. *How much does it cost to operate the line each year?*

I will address the matters you raised separately.

1. *The date the integrity line was set up and why?*

The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) established the Health Integrity Line (Integrity Line) in June 2014 to provide a 24/7 0800 complaint line monitored by specially-trained operators. The line provides an avenue for people to report suspected fraud, misconduct or inappropriate behaviour within the health sector. It also provides another avenue for people to report suspected misconduct if they are unwilling or unable to approach the organisation or people involved directly.

The Integrity Line aims to complement existing complaint reporting mechanisms and processes. It does not replace them. The Integrity Line is managed by the Ministry's Audit and Compliance Team. It is important to note that not all calls received by the Integrity Line are for allegations of fraud that the Audit and Compliance team can investigate. The primary function of the Audit and Compliance team is to investigate fraud and overpayments to service providers in relation to primary health care services funded by the Ministry and District Health Boards.

2. *Since then how many calls have come through to the line?*

Since it commenced operation, the Integrity Line has received **447** calls.

3. *Of those calls, how many have led to investigations?*

For the period 1 July 2017 to 5 November 2018<sup>1</sup>, the Integrity Line received 189 calls, of which five contained allegations of health funding fraud that the Ministry's Audit and Compliance team were mandated to investigate. Of those five, one matter is still under investigation. Of the four completed investigations, none have resulted in either criminal proceedings or a conviction.

4. *Of those cases, how many led to criminal convictions and if any, what type of crime – eg fraud, etc.*
5. *Please elaborate on any cases such as which hospital/DHB the incident/crime happened at, what year, if the person committing the wrongdoing was a patient or an employee, any other action taken internally?*
6. *If any investigations found wrongdoing that was not criminal or not pursued criminally, what action was taken – eg employment terminated or employee resigned or debt collectors set on patient or patient reported to police etc?*
7. *If any investigations found wrongdoing that was not criminal or not pursued criminally, what action was taken – eg employment terminated or employee resigned or debt collectors set on patient or patient reported to police etc?*

The Ministry refers all other complaints to the appropriate entity or organisation to follow up. Once an Integrity Line complaint is referred to the appropriate entity, that entity is responsible for taking any necessary action. The Ministry is unable to identify which of these referred complaints were investigated or have resulted to convictions. The Ministry does not require the entities to report back on the referred complaints. Therefore, I refuse parts 4 to 7 of your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry.

8. *What percentage of the tips to the line come from health care workers/managers and what percentage come from members of the public and patients?*

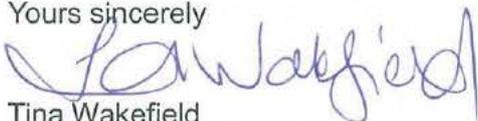
All calls are kept anonymous unless otherwise agreed by the caller. I refuse this part of your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry.

9. *How much does it cost to operate the line each year?*

The Integrity Line operates on a budget of \$18,750 (excl GST) annually.

I trust this information fulfils your request. You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Yours sincerely



Tina Wakefield  
**Acting Deputy Director-General  
Corporate Services**

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<sup>1</sup> Data prior to this date is not immediately available and would require substantial manual collation (reference section 18(f) of the Act).