

INVESTIGATION UPDATE

# HOLDING PATTERN:

Call wait times for income and disability assistance



**OMBUDSPERSON**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Special Report No. 61  
January 2026

As an independent officer of the legislature, the Ombudsperson investigates complaints of unfair or unreasonable treatment by provincial and local public bodies and provides general oversight of the administrative fairness of government processes under the *Ombudsperson Act*. The Ombudsperson conducts three types of investigations: investigations into individual complaints, investigations that are commenced on the Ombudsperson's own initiative, and investigations referred to the Ombudsperson by the Legislative Assembly or one of its committees.

Under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA)* the Ombudsperson investigates allegations from current and former public sector employees of wrongdoing in or relating to a public body covered by the Act as well as complaints of reprisal.

The Ombudsperson has a broad mandate to investigate allegations of wrongdoing or complaints of reprisal involving provincial ministries, provincial boards and commissions, Crown corporations, health authorities, schools and school boards, and colleges and universities. A full list of the public bodies covered by PIDA can be found on our office's website. The Office of the Ombudsperson also provides advice to those public bodies and their employees about the Act and the conduct of wrongdoing investigations.

We offer educational webinars, workshops and individual consultation with public bodies to support fairness and continuous improvement across the broader provincial and local public sector.

For more information about the Office of the Ombudsperson and for copies of published reports, visit [bcombudsperson.ca](http://bcombudsperson.ca).

Our office is located on the traditional lands of the Lekwungen (Lekwungen) People and ancestors and our work extends across the homelands of the First Nations Peoples within what we now call British Columbia. We honour the many territorial keepers of the lands and waters where we work.





**OMBUDSPERSON**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

January 2026

The Honourable Raj Chouhan  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Speaker,

It is my pleasure to present the Ombudsperson's Special Report No. 61 *Investigation Update: Holding Pattern: Call wait times for income and disability assistance.*

The report is presented pursuant to section 31(3) of the *Ombudsperson Act*.

Yours sincerely,

Jay Chalke  
Ombudsperson  
Province of British Columbia

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
<i>HOLDING PATTERN REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS</i> .....	2
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON CALL WAIT TIMES .....	4
IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS .....	5
REMAINING IMPLEMENTATION WORK .....	6
CONCLUSION: MORE WORK TO BE DONE .....	13
APPENDICES .....	14
APPENDIX A .....	15
APPENDIX B .....	18
APPENDIX C .....	19
APPENDIX D .....	20

# INTRODUCTION

---

One of the ways the Office of the Ombudsperson can improve the fair administration of government programs is by making recommendations. When our investigation identifies unfair administration, we make recommendations that aim to fix the problem. Our recommendations may involve individual remedies or systemic change and encourage accountability by including timelines for the public body to implement the change.

Once an investigative report is released, we begin monitoring the implementation of recommendations by the public body. We collect information about the steps it has taken to implement the recommendations. We expect the public body to provide us with specific, relevant, and verifiable information about its implementation steps; a general commitment to act is not sufficient. We then assess this information to determine whether the recommendation is fully implemented. While some recommendations may be implemented quickly, others may be implemented over time. As part of our monitoring commitment, we issue periodic updates on specific reports and the recommendations.

In this monitoring report, we identify the stage of implementation for each recommendation as fully implemented, partially implemented, and implementation ongoing.

# HOLDING PATTERN REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---



*Holding Pattern: Call wait times for income and disability assistance* was released in April 2018. It described our investigation into the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's centralized telephone system and its impact on applicants for and recipients of income and disability assistance. We began our investigation after receiving many complaints from the public about long wait times, call time limits, restricted services, and other accessibility challenges that people experienced in communicating with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (the ministry) by telephone.

As described in *Holding Pattern*, we found that the call wait times at the ministry's provincial contact centre were unreasonably long. We also found that the ministry's centralized telephone line did not provide a reasonable level of service. In part, this was because the ministry did not employ sufficient staff at the provincial contact centre. In addition, its mitigation strategies were insufficient and led to further delays in providing ministry services.

We made nine recommendations in *Holding Pattern* to increase staffing levels at the provincial contact centre, improve public transparency about telephone and in-person wait times, and address the ministry's unreasonable practice of deferring or underserving callers to mitigate excessive wait times. The ministry accepted six of our recommendations (**Recommendations 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9**), offered alternative commitments for two recommendations (**Recommendations 2 and 3**) and told us that it did not have the technical capacity to monitor in-person wait times (**Recommendation 8**).

In February 2020, we issued a monitoring report summarizing our assessment of the implementation of recommendations to date. At that time, the ministry had fully implemented four of the nine recommendations (**Recommendations 1, 4, 5 and 6**). In this report, we describe our assessment of the ministry's implementation of the remaining recommendations (**Recommendations 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9**) since 2020.

## Implementation of recommendations: Assessment summary

<b><i>Holding Pattern Recommendation</i></b>		<b><i>Assessment</i></b>
<b>R1</b>	Report data on call wait times	<b>Fully implemented (2020)</b>
<b>R2</b>	Hire sufficient staff to answer calls	<b>Ongoing (2025)</b>
<b>R3</b>	Meet call wait time standards	<b>Ongoing (2025)</b>
<b>R4</b>	Report when operating in Tier 1 mode	<b>Fully implemented (2020)</b>
<b>R5</b>	Phase out Tier 1 strategy	<b>Fully implemented (2020)</b>
<b>R6</b>	Phase out one issue per call practice	<b>Fully implemented (2020)</b>
<b>R7</b>	Establish service standards for in-person waits	<b>Partially implemented (2025)</b>
<b>R8</b>	Report on in-person wait times	<b>Not accepted due to lack of technical capacity</b>
<b>R9</b>	Conduct and make public independent audit of reporting of call wait time data	<b>Fully implemented (2025)</b>

# THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON CALL WAIT TIMES

---

In 2020, the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the provincial government invoked the *Emergency Program Act* (EPA) to support its pandemic response. Orders made under the EPA changed significant aspects of service provisions for the ministry. For instance, while the ministry's offices remained open for in-person service, the ministry did not require clients to attend in person to receive services unless it was necessary. The ministry also encouraged clients to use the self-serve option, implemented flexible work arrangements for staff, and allowed clients to verbally agree to a document instead of having to attend an office in person to sign it.

Call wait times at the ministry's contact centre fell during the pandemic. The ministry identified several reasons for this, including the availability of provincial and federal supports and programs like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) which made people less reliant on ministry assistance to meet their basic needs.

However, by mid-2022, call volumes had increased to pre-pandemic levels. According to the ministry's call centre wait time reports, once the call volume increased, it could not meet its service standards despite continuing to use some of the strategies implemented during the pandemic. Long call wait times remain a persistent problem for the ministry.

In this report, we highlight the steps the ministry has taken since 2020 to address call wait times in relation to the outstanding recommendations as well as areas for further work.

# IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS

---

Since our last monitoring update in 2020, the ministry has fully implemented one additional recommendation, bringing the total number of implemented recommendations to five (out of nine).

## Independent performance audit

To improve the transparency of the ministry's reporting on its call wait time performance, we recommended that over three years (by June 30, 2019, June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021) the ministry publish an independent audit of its public reporting about call wait times (**Recommendation 9**).

We made this recommendation with the expectation that an independent audit of how the ministry collects and reports its performance metrics publicly would ensure greater accuracy in the ministry's reporting of the daily contact centre wait times. The ministry accepted this recommendation.

In 2019, the ministry did not publish the full audit report on its website. Consequently, in our 2020 monitoring update, we emphasized that publishing a full independent audit report would help to demonstrate that the ministry's reporting about call wait times was reliable. Additionally, we had three suggestions for the ministry about the audit report:

1. the auditor be provided access to the data the ministry used to create its public reports
2. the auditor produce a report describing the work conducted and their conclusions
3. the audit report, along with the ministry's own report, be made public

The independent audit reports published by the ministry in 2020 and 2021 are available on its website and we are satisfied that they fulfill the objective of **Recommendation 9**.<sup>1</sup> We conclude that **Recommendation 9** is fully implemented.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, "[Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction reports](#)," Updated January 30, 2025.

# REMAINING IMPLEMENTATION WORK

---

Based on our assessment of the information provided by the ministry, we have assessed **Recommendation 7** as ongoing and **Recommendation 2** and **3** as partially implemented.

In response to a draft of this report, the ministry told us about additional steps it has taken to improve access to services (see Appendix A). The ministry pointed to the hiring of nearly 200 community integration specialists and the introduction of a callback model – these and other steps are discussed below. The ministry also noted that over the past year, its income and disability assistance case load has increased, resulting in an increased workload.<sup>2</sup>

We acknowledge that the ministry continues to work to improve call wait times. However, its response to this report has not changed our assessment of the outstanding recommendations.

## Answering calls in a timely way

The fundamental recommendation in *Holding Pattern* was for the ministry to answer calls to its centralized telephone line in 10 minutes or less, for 95 per cent of the days of each month. In addition, we recommended that the longest daily call wait times be no longer than 30 minutes (**Recommendation 3**).

This recommendation was based on our finding that average call wait times were unreasonably long. **Recommendation 3** was intended to prompt the ministry to make long-lasting, meaningful changes to improve telephone access to its services. Service level 1 is the percentage of calls answered or abandoned within 10 minutes. Service level 2 is the percentage of calls answered within 10 minutes.

Our recommendation 3	Ministry's 2018 commitment
By March 31, 2019, for 95 per cent of the days of each month, the ministry answer calls to the centralized telephone line at a daily average speed of answer of 10 minutes or less and attain a longest call wait time for each day of 30 minutes or less.	Answering 80 per cent of calls in 10 minutes or less.

The ministry did not accept this recommendation. Instead, it committed to answering 80 per cent of calls in 10 minutes or less. Since 2018, we have monitored the ministry's efforts and we are disappointed to report that it has consistently failed to meet its own commitment.

---

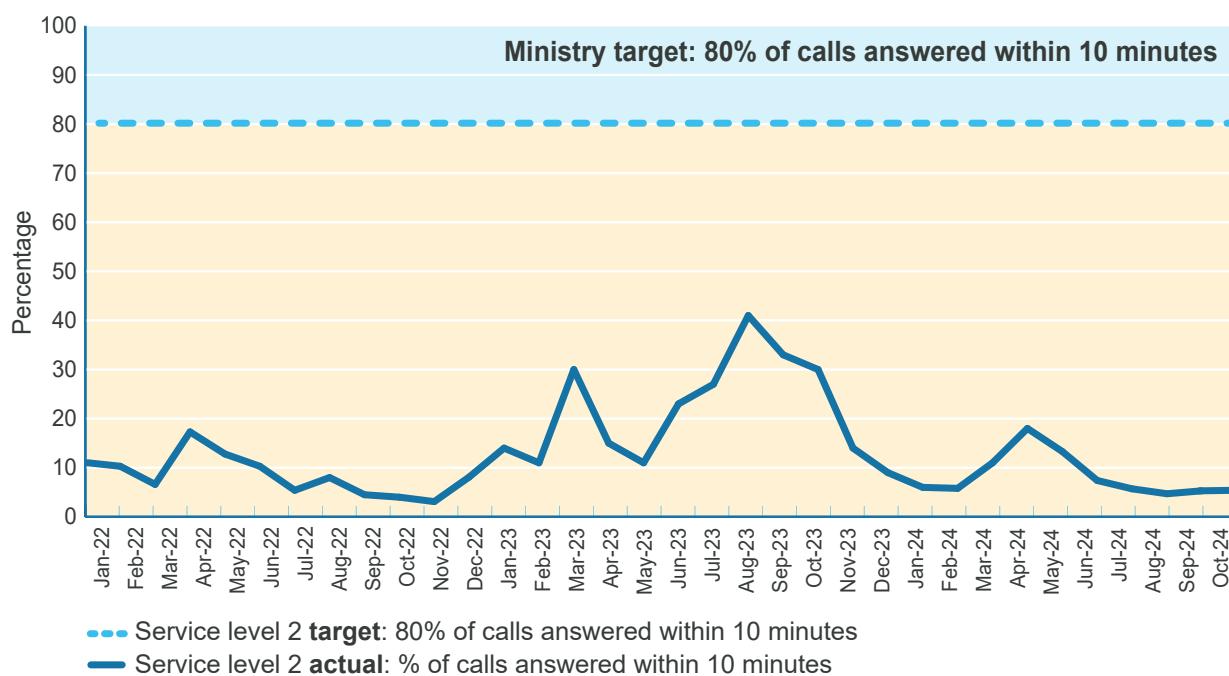
<sup>2</sup> The ministry's income and disability assistance case load data can be found online: Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, "[Summary Report](#)."

The most recent data provided by the ministry shows that from May 2024 to October 2024, it consistently struggled to meet its service standard of answering 80 per cent of calls within 10 minutes. In May 2024, the ministry answered an average of 13.3 per cent of calls within 10 minutes. This slowed further in June, July, and October 2024 when an average of only five per cent of calls were answered within 10 minutes.

Wait times varied significantly across all months, with very few days experiencing short waits, and many days with average wait times exceeding one hour. August, September, and October 2024 had many days with an average wait time of over one hour. Despite some fluctuations in performance, the ministry did not meet its service targets for any of the months. This indicates the ministry's persistent challenge in handling call volumes efficiently.

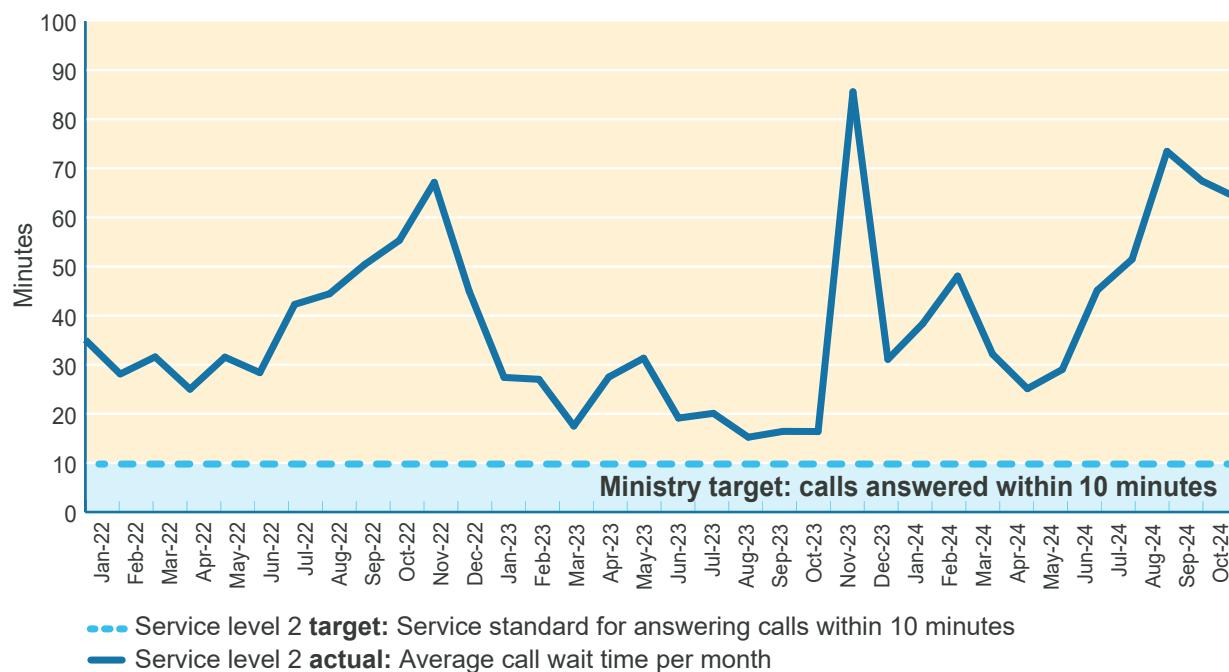
Between January 2022 and October 2024, on average, the ministry answered only 13 per cent of calls within 10 minutes (see Figures 1a and 1b, and Appendix B).

**Figure 1a. Percentage of calls answered compared with service level target, by month, January 2022 to October 2024<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, “[Daily Contact Centre Report](#)”, Jan 2022-Oct 2024. Service level 2 is the percentage of calls answered in 10 minutes or less. Service level 1 is the percentage of calls answered or abandoned in 10 minutes or less.

**Figure 1b. Ministry call wait times, by month, January 2022 to October 2024<sup>4</sup>**



The ministry told us it has taken steps to reduce wait times including:

- Temporarily assigning non-client-facing staff to answer calls when the call volume and/or the call wait times increase. The ministry monitors and adjusts staffing levels throughout the day to address changes in call volume or staff resources.
- Reviewing incoming calls to better understand the services clients are calling the ministry for and to identify frequently asked questions. To help answer these questions, the ministry implemented improved messaging on the main menu of the toll-free line.<sup>5</sup>
- Adding a call-back feature to return calls, used by 68 per cent of clients in 2024.
- Taking steps to route calls to the right area for a response. For example, routing financial institution inquiries to a dedicated line, providing email contact for complaint resolution, and a specified advocate client enquiries call-back line that directs advocates to email instead of telephoning the central contact centre.
- Onboarding approximately 200 community integration specialists across the province to support vulnerable individuals, as of November 2025. Sixteen are based in friendship centres to provide ministry services in culturally safe spaces. The ministry told us the intent of this program was to help underserved individuals who had difficulty accessing ministry services through traditional channels. The ministry informed us that in 2023, community integration specialists provided services to approximately 23,000 vulnerable

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, “[Daily Contact Centre Report](#)”, Jan 2022-Oct 2024.

<sup>5</sup> The ministry told us that examples of these frequently asked questions include the date of next cheque issue, the best time of day to call the ministry, and how to verify cheques (which can be done by financial staff and do not require contact with an EAW).

individuals who accessed ministry services without having to visit an office or call the ministry's toll-free line. The ministry also told us that it expected services provided by community integration specialists to contribute to reducing in person and call wait times.

Despite these efforts, the ministry's call wait times remain significantly higher than its service standard. The ministry told us that it remains committed to continuous improvement to meet the service standard of answering calls within 10 minutes, 80 per cent of the time. However, at the current rate of improvement, the ministry service standard will not be achieved for decades. We concluded that **Recommendation 3** is ongoing because much more work remains to be done.

## Adequate staffing levels

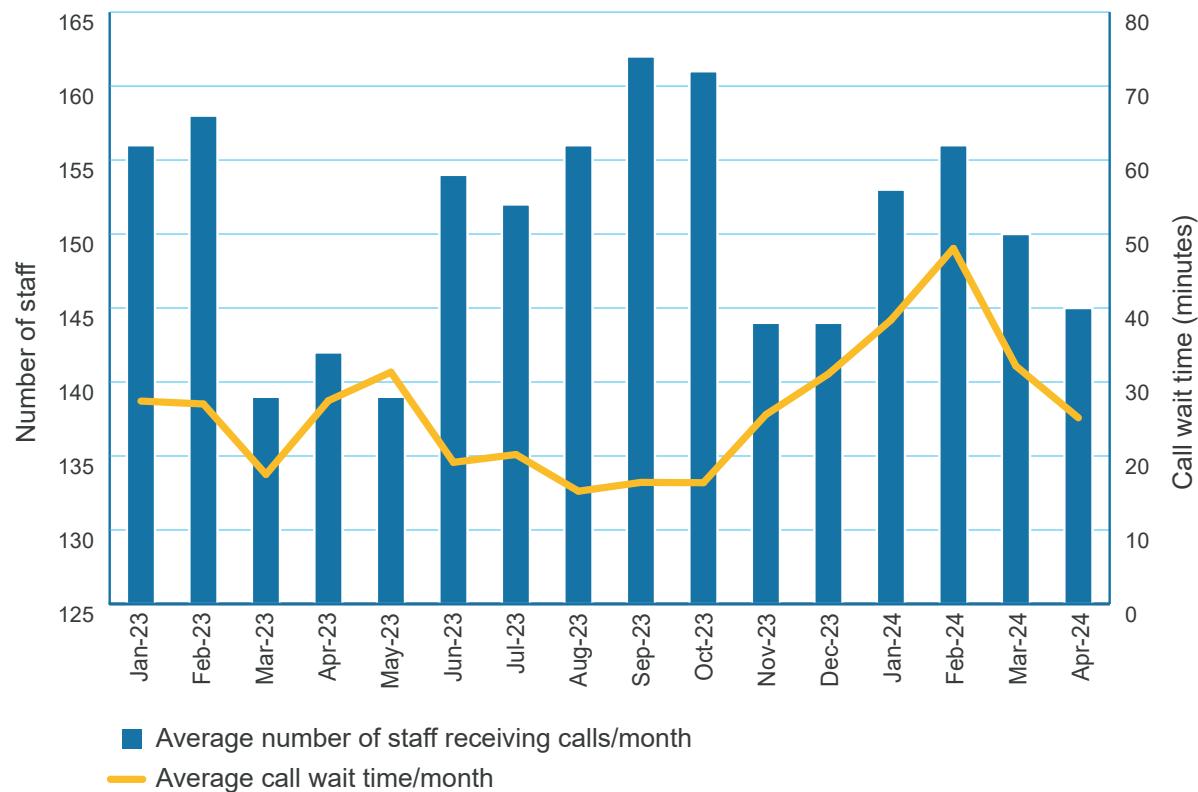
In *Holding Pattern*, we observed that long call wait times at the provincial contact centre were directly related to the number of employment and assistance workers available to answer calls. We found that the ministry did not provide a reasonable level of service via its centralized telephone line because it did not employ enough employment and assistance workers in the provincial contact centre. We also found that over 75 per cent of those working in the contact centre had less than two years experience. Since these workers were relatively new to the role, they could not provide services as efficiently and quickly as more experienced staff.

We recommended that by October 31, 2018, the ministry hire sufficient additional employment and assistance workers to ensure it had a minimum of 220 full-time staff dedicated to answering calls at the centralized telephone line. We also recommended this incremental staffing not be offset from elsewhere in the ministry's income and disability assistance programs (**Recommendation 2**).

While the ministry did not accept this recommendation, it committed to meeting its service standards and agreed to hire an additional 30 new employment and assistance workers, 20 of whom were allocated to answering the centralized telephone line.

To assess the outcomes of this staffing model we compared the average call wait time per month with the average number of staff who received calls per month (Figure 2). The shortest average call wait times occurred between June and October 2023 when average staffing levels were highest. We also noted that in January and February 2024, call wait times increased despite higher staffing levels. In those months, average call volume was 74,500 per month compared to an average call volume of 68,200 per month from June to October 2023.

**Figure 2: Average number of staff receiving calls compared to average call wait time, by month, January 2023 to April 2024**



The ministry explained that to provide an “ideal” level of service, no more than 30 per cent of workers in the contact centre should be new staff. However, the ministry told us that it has been challenging to hire and retain employment and assistance workers in the contact centre as many pursue opportunities for promotion. The ministry has created a centralized recruitment team that can conduct multiple staffing competitions for ongoing recruitment of frontline staff. In addition, the ministry has revised training materials to reduce the time needed for new staff to start answering calls – it now takes approximately one year for employment and assistance workers to become fully knowledgeable and productive at the contact centre. According to the ministry, in 2023 and 2024, 80 per cent of staff employed in the contact centre had more than one year of job experience. This may not necessarily indicate an improvement since our initial investigation – in 2018, the ministry told us that more than 75 per cent of staff had less than two years experience.

We are encouraged by the ministry’s efforts to improve training and increase staffing at the provincial contact centre. In 2023 and 2024, actual staffing levels fluctuated both above and below our recommended 220 full-time equivalent staff. Still, call wait times remain significantly longer than the ministry’s own service standards. We conclude that the ministry’s implementation of **Recommendation 2** is ongoing. Moving forward, we expect the ministry to ensure that its contact centre is sufficiently staffed to meet its own service standards for call wait times.

## Service standards for in-person wait times

In our investigation, we found that the ministry's failure to monitor and set service delivery standards for in-person wait times at local offices was unreasonable. The ministry diverted staff from in-person service to phone service when phone wait times were long. We asked what this practice did to in-person wait times and the ministry said it didn't know. We therefore recommended that by September 30, 2018, the ministry establish and make public service standards for the timeliness of service delivery and monitor wait times for **in-person** services at all local offices (**Recommendation 7**). The ministry accepted this recommendation.

Since October 2018, the ministry has made public its service standards for call wait times. Although the ministry maintains that these service standards should fulfill **Recommendation 7**, the service standard does not include information about in-person service wait times – the ministry's service commitment is only that “clients attending a ministry office are acknowledged and informed of service request processing times.”<sup>6</sup>

Since our last update in 2020, the ministry has implemented a queue management system (the system) in all ministry offices throughout the province. The ministry explained that the system monitors in-person wait times and helps staff gain an understanding of the service experience for individuals accessing in-person services. The ministry told us the data collected from the system is reviewed daily to improve the consistency and standards of services across all offices. For example, the ministry said the system provided the information needed to use a triage approach when offices are busy and to provide more timely and consistent client services. The ministry reported that in 2023, there was an average of 55,044 visits per month in the 36 ministry offices. The average wait time per visit was seven minutes and 42 seconds. However, we note that the system only measures the time from when a client attends the in-person front counter until the client talks to a ministry staff person. The system does not measure the time a client may be waiting in line to reach the front counter.

As the ministry has not developed or implemented a service standard for in-person wait times, we conclude that **Recommendation 7** is partially implemented. The ministry has indicated that it does not intend to develop an in-person service standard for wait times. This is disappointing. Now that the ministry has the technology to know when and for how long people are waiting for service, we urge the ministry to establish a service standard for in-person service.

Additionally, given its implementation of the system, we also encourage the ministry to reconsider its rejection of **Recommendation 8** – the ministry report on its website the average daily individual wait times for in-person service at every local office for the previous month. At the time, the ministry cited lack of technical resources as a reason for not accepting this recommendation.

---

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, [“Service commitment and service standards”](#), October 25, 2022.

## Remaining implementation work

With the system successfully running throughout the province, we asked if it was possible for the ministry to report the average daily individual wait time for in-person services. The ministry told us that the in-person wait time data is not comparable with the call centre wait time information and is not considering reporting this on its website. In response to this report, the ministry told us that the cost to implement these reports is prohibitive.

We encourage the ministry to report this information publicly, and to include qualifications as necessary. We believe that public reporting will provide greater transparency about wait times for the ministry's in-person services. In addition, we expect the ministry to explore ways to measure and reduce the time people may spend waiting to reach the front counter when seeking in-person service.

# CONCLUSION: MORE WORK TO BE DONE

---

We acknowledge the significant work done over the years by many dedicated public servants. However, improving wait times for the ministry's services has presented significant challenges and has not improved much since our initial report.

We remain concerned that the ministry is still struggling to meet its call centre service standards. These long wait times continue to make it difficult for people to access the ministry's income and disability assistance services. In a service satisfaction survey conducted by the ministry in 2021, clients suggested reducing call wait times would improve service delivery. In addition, reducing wait times was the top service improvement for in-person services suggested by clients.<sup>7</sup> Our office continues to receive complaints about call wait times.

Data from 2023 showed that the ministry was failing to answer calls within 10 minutes at least 60 per cent of the time each month. The daily average call wait time still does not meet the ministry's service standards. These ongoing delays are significant given the nature of the services provided by the ministry – services that are often a last resort for people who need assistance for food, clothing, or medical supplies. Persistently long call wait times make the ministry's services less accessible.

We note that many clients accessing the ministry's services are people living with a disability. People living with a disability reported lower rates of satisfaction with the ministry's telephone services compared to people without a disability.<sup>8</sup> The *Accessible BC Act* requires government to develop a plan to identify and remove barriers to accessing services, heightening the ministry's obligation to address the barriers caused by long wait times.

Of significant concern is that in its response to our draft report, the ministry indicated that it was "considering a review of current service standards to make sure they reflect today's realities and client expectations." The ministry provided no further articulation of what this means but it appears to be an indication that the service standards will be weakened given its chronic inability to meet its own current standards.

Because the ministry is still not meeting its service standards for answering calls in a timely way, and because it has not yet established a service standard for in-person service, we will continue to monitor the ministry's implementation of our recommendations. We look forward to seeing meaningful and lasting reductions in call wait times.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, "[Service Satisfaction Survey](#)", 2021, p- 55.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, "[Service Satisfaction Survey](#)", 2021, p- 11.

# APPENDICES

---

## APPENDIX A

Ministry response to monitoring report

## APPENDIX B

Ministry call wait times and speed of answer, by month, January 2022 to October 2024

## APPENDIX C

Average number of staff receiving calls compared to monthly call volume and wait time

## APPENDIX D

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Service Standards Poster (2018)

# APPENDIX A

## Ministry response to monitoring report



November 13, 2025

Jay Chalke  
 Ombudsperson for the Province of British Columbia  
 PO Box 9039 Stn Prov Govt  
 Victoria BC V8W 9A5

Dear Jay:

Thanks for your letter dated September 11, 2025, and for the opportunity to respond to the Systemic Investigation Update: *Holding Pattern: Call Wait Times for Income and Disability Assistance*.

We remain focused on improving phone wait times and providing timely, quality service through multiple channels. While wait times sometimes exceed our service standard, we are actively working to address this—particularly as caseloads continue to rise. We are filling frontline staff vacancies and managing within our budgetary constraints to better meet demand.

Clients have 24/7 access to My Self Serve (MySS), which allows them to apply for assistance, request certain supplements like crisis supplements, submit monthly reports, and check payment status. To further support vulnerable individuals, including those experiencing homelessness, we've onboarded nearly 200 Community Integration (CI) Specialists to support vulnerable individuals, including those experiencing homelessness. Clients continue to access services in the community or at Friendship Centres, reducing reliance on the call centre. We continue to provide in-person service through 84 offices (Service BC/SDPR) across BC. In 2024, there were approximately 65,000 visits to the 36 SDPR offices.

...2

- 2 -

Since the initial report, we've introduced the callback to queue feature, which has been well-received by clients. In 2024, 68 per cent of clients have utilized this function, demonstrating its value in improving accessibility and responsiveness. Looking ahead, we're planning further enhancements, such as ensuring clients are ready to speak with staff when called back.

We value client feedback and use it to guide service improvements. In 2024, nearly 8,000 phone service surveys were completed. Of those, 68 per cent of clients were satisfied with wait times and 88 per cent felt respected by staff. In the publicly posted 2023 Client Service Satisfaction Survey, MySS had the highest overall satisfaction score. The Telephone Agent Service scored 70/100, with 64/100 satisfied with service times and 81/100 feeling respected.

As caseloads have increased by 6.2 per cent over the past year—driven in part by a slower economy, increased cost of living, and more clients with complex needs—we've seen a significant rise in workload. We're responding with technology improvements, streamlined processes, a flexible provincial service delivery model, ongoing hiring, and innovative approaches. We're also considering a review of current service standards to make sure they reflect today's realities and client expectations.

In addition, we're streamlining service channels to reduce reliance on the contact centre. For example, financial institution inquiries go to a dedicated line, the complaint resolution poster includes an email contact, and the Advocate Client Enquiries (ACE) callback line allows advocates to reach us via email instead of the toll-free number.

The ministry remains committed to improving service delivery and we recognize the nine recommendations made in the original 2018 *Holding Pattern* report. Of those, we accepted six and agreed with the intent of the remaining three. All accepted recommendations have now been fully implemented.

... 3

- 3 -

Regarding Recommendation 7 being listed as “Partially Implemented” in the 2025 update—while we’ve set service standards for the call centre, intake, and PWD/PPMB applications, we did not commit to setting or publicly reporting in-person wait times. We do, however, monitor in-person wait times at all local offices to allow the ministry to adjust staffing levels as appropriate.

As for Recommendation 8, which suggests publishing average daily wait times for in-person services at each office, we didn’t accept this recommendation. While the technology may exist to support it, the cost of acquiring and implementing it remains prohibitive. Given the low usage of the publicly posted Call Wait Time reports, we cannot justify the additional expense at this time.

All these efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and to ensuring clients receive timely, respectful, and effective support.

Yours truly,



Allison Bond  
Deputy Minister

# APPENDIX B

## Ministry call wait times and speed of answer, by month, January 2022 to October 2024

Month	Average wait time	Service level 1: % of calls answered or abandoned within 10 minutes	Service level 2: % of calls answered within 10 minutes
January 2022	0:35:08	20.8%	11.0%
February 2022	0:28:10	19.1%	10.3%
March 2022	0:31:59	15.9%	6.6%
April 2022	0:25:02	26.6%	17.3%
May 2022	0:31:54	22.6%	12.8%
June 2022	0:28:39	20.0%	10.3%
July 2022	0:42:29	16.8%	5.4%
August 2022	0:44:46	21.0%	8.0%
September 2022	0:50:38	12.2%	4.5%
October 2022	0:55:33	11.8%	4.0%
November 2022	1:07:15	12.6%	3.1%
December 2022	0:45:00	14.3%	8.1%
January 2023	0:27:42	21.0%	14.0%
February 2023	0:27:03	17.0%	11.0%
March 2023	0:17:51	34.0%	30.0%
April 2023	0:27:48	20.0%	15.0%
May 2023	0:31:33	16.0%	11.0%
June 2023	0:19:14	28.0%	23.0%
July 2023	0:20:10	32.0%	27.0%
August 2023	0:15:24	46.0%	41.0%
September 2023	0:16:43	38.0%	33.0%
October 2023	0:16:39	35.0%	30.0%
November 2023	1:25:59	19.0%	14.0%
December 2023	0:31:09	15.0%	9.0%
January 2024	0:38:37	12.5%	6.0%
February 2024	0:48:06	12.0%	5.8%
March 2024	0:32:16	18.0%	11.0%
April 2024	0:25:12	23.0%	18.0%
May 2024	0:29:03	19.1%	13.3%
June 2024	0:45:15	13.7%	7.4%
July 2024	0:51:49	12.0%	5.7%
August 2024	1:13:46	11.8%	4.7%
September 2024	1:07:44	12.1%	5.3%
October 2024	1:04:03	12.0%	5.4%

# APPENDIX C

## Average number of staff receiving calls compared to monthly call volume and wait time

Month	Average # of staff receiving calls	Average call volume/month	Average wait time/month
January 2023	156	72,426	0:27:42
February 2023	158	66,635	0:27:03
March 2023	139	73,069	0:17:51
April 2023	142	58,007	0:27:48
May 2023	139	70,545	0:31:33
June 2023	154	66,939	0:19:14
July 2023	152	63,786	0:20:10
August 2023	156	71,759	0:15:24
September 2023	162	68,971	0:16:43
October 2023	161	69,540	0:16:39
November 2023	144	64,854	0:25:59
December 2023	144	64,854	0:31:09
January 2024	153	82,141	0:38:37
February 2024	156	76,861	0:48:06
March 2024	150	73,069	0:32:16
April 2024	145	69,815	0:25:16

Source: Data provided by Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

# APPENDIX D

## Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Service Standards Poster (2018)

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

# Service Standards

There are fluctuations with wait times, response, and decision times that can happen throughout the year (for example, cheque issue week). The target is to meet service standards at least 80 per cent of the time.

## Applying for Assistance

After you have applied for assistance, the ministry will contact you about the application within:

- » **5** business days, except as follows:
  - if you are fleeing abuse **1** business day, or
  - if you have an immediate need for food, shelter or urgent medical attention **1** business day

## Access to Phone Service



Calls answered in  
**10** minutes or less

## Service Delivery Timelines

Once you submit all the required documentation to the ministry, decisions on the following services will be provided within:

» Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Designation Determination • <b>45</b> business days	» Request for Reconsideration (after a signed request has been submitted) • <b>10</b> business days
» Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) • <b>10</b> business days	• <b>20</b> business days when an extension has been granted

We will work to meet these service standards and are committed to listening and addressing your service concerns. For more information, please call toll free **1 866 866-0800**.

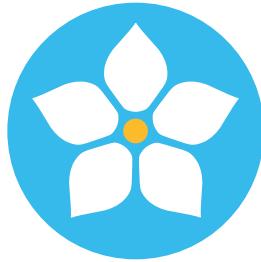


BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Ministry of  
Social Development  
and Poverty Reduction

7550003105





# **OMBUDSPERSON**

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

---

Mailing address: PO Box 9039 Stn Prov Govt • Victoria, BC V8W 9A5

Phone in Victoria: 250-387-5855 • Toll-Free: 1-800-567-3247 • Fax: 250-387-0198 • [bcombudsperson.ca](mailto:bcombudsperson.ca)