



14 AUG 2017

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

On 13 July 2017 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *What is the current waiting time for people to access social housing in CHB; and is the department in the process of building/acquiring any properties in CHB?*

The Social Housing Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live. This includes ensuring the family has the right number of bedrooms, is close to essential services such as schools, and meets any disability needs if appropriate. Those assessed as having the greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change, their priority on the register may change also.

All clients that approach the Ministry seeking social housing are offered other assistance where it is appropriate for their situation. This can include Accommodation Supplement for private rent, an Advance Payment of Benefit or Recoverable Assistance Payment for bond and rent in advance for private accommodation, or Housing Support Products.

The Ministry measures the median number of calendar days it takes for an applicant's social housing tenancy to be activated from the point they were first confirmed on the Social Housing Register as an A or B priority.

The Ministry reports Social Housing Register data on a quarterly basis. The most recent report is available here: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/social-housing/social-housing-quarterly-report-june-2017.pdf

For the quarter ending March 2017, the median time to house nationwide was 52 days. For the quarter ending June 2017, the median time to house was 55 days.

The length of time a client remains on the Social Housing Register can be dependent on a number of reasons. For example, a client may remain on the social housing register for a longer period of time where they have very specific preferences about where they want to be housed, change the region they wish to live in, or seek housing in areas which have high demand. Additionally, when a client is offered

suitable housing and they decline, this will result in the client remaining on the Social Housing Register for a longer duration.

As discussed by phone on 9 August 2017, the number of Social Housing Register applicants housed in the Central Hawke's Bay territorial authority in the 2016/17 financial year was five or fewer (actual number suppressed). As the numbers are so low, providing the median time to house has the potential to breach the privacy of the individual and as such, your request is refused under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

As discussed, the Ministry could look at providing the median time to house for a larger catchment area (for instance including Napier and Hastings). You advised that at present you are not interested in this information.

For your reference, further information including the criteria used to determine an applicant's housing need is available online at: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html. Statistics regarding the Social Housing Register are publicly available online at: www.housing.msd.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Elisabeth Brunt
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