



04 JUL 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

On 22 May 2018, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *A breakdown of the March Social Housing Register numbers by priority number (i.e. not just A and B but A1-A20 and B1-B8.)*
- *What is the longest wait time seen in the period you create the average from?*
- *What is the upper quartile, median, and lower quartile for the same period?*

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 that the accommodation 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. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly.

Nationally there is an issue of housing demand exceeding supply. More housing is needed to support the most vulnerable people in our community and the Ministry is working to increase the amount of Public Housing.

All clients who approach the Ministry seeking Public Housing are offered other financial assistance where it is appropriate for their situation. This can include Accommodation Supplement for private rent, Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, or a Recoverable Assistance Payment Grant. Further information regarding available support can be accessed on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/housing.html.

The Social Housing Register (the Register) consists of the Housing Register and the Transfer Register. The Housing Register records those who are not currently in Public Housing but who have been assessed as eligible for Public Housing. The Transfer Register represents those already in Public Housing who are eligible to be rehoused, generally due to a change in circumstances prompting a move to somewhere more appropriate to their needs.

There is a set of criteria used to determine the housing need of a household and is based on the household composition, housing circumstances and housing history. These criteria are grouped into five categories: adequacy, suitability, affordability, accessibility and suitability. To qualify for public housing, a client must be assessed as having an 'at risk' (Priority A) or 'serious' (Priority B) housing need.

Further information regarding the assessment of a client's housing need, housing need priority ratings and the calculation of overall priority ratings can be found on the Work and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html.

Enclosed are two tables in response to your request:

- Table One shows the number of applicants on the Social Housing Register as at 31 March 2018, broken down by priority and position number
- Table Two shows the time (in days) to house an application on the Social Housing Register within the quarter ending 31 March 2018, broken down by quartile, median and the maximum number of days taken to house an applicant.

It is important to note that the length of time a client remains on the Register can be dependent on a number of reasons. For example, a client may remain on the 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 Register for a longer duration.

The client who had spent 3,103 days on the Register was not homeless and wasn't assessed as a priority A client until 2015. During the time that the client was waiting for a more suitable home, this client was housed in a secure house and had requested to be placed in a home that better addressed their personal circumstances.

The Ministry does not consider this client a true reflection of the average time a client is on the Register and waiting to be housed. The Housing Quarterly report shows that as at 31 March 2018, the mean time to house a client was 121.2 days. Furthermore, the Register is not a time ranked waitlist – people who have been assessed as having the greatest need will be matched to appropriate housing as a priority.

Please note that the information is provided at a point in time and as a person's circumstance changes so too does their housing priority status. For example, if an applicant's housing need becomes more urgent, they will move from the priority B register to the priority A register. Therefore it cannot be assumed that because a person was a priority A applicant at the time they were housed that they were a priority A applicant throughout their time on the social housing register. Statistics regarding the Social Housing Register, including the Housing Quarterly Report are publicly available online at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/index.html.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Social Housing Register statistics for the quarter ending March 2018, 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,



 Scott Gallacher
Deputy Chief Executive, Housing

Table One: Number of applicants on the Social Housing Register as at 31 March 2018, broken down by priority and position number.

| Priority | Position | Total applicants |
|-------------------------|----------|------------------|
| A | 9 | 208 |
| | 10 | 547 |
| | 11 | 1,032 |
| | 12 | 1,285 |
| | 13 | 1,437 |
| | 14 | 1,234 |
| | 15 | 801 |
| | 16 | 442 |
| | 17 | 198 |
| | 18 | 85 |
| | 19 | 15 |
| | 20 | 3 |
| Priority A Total | | 7,287 |
| B | 8 | 235 |
| | 9 | 518 |
| | 10 | 592 |
| | 11 | 504 |
| | 12 | 332 |
| | 13 | 165 |
| | 14 | 54 |
| | 15 | 8 |
| Priority B Total | | 2,408 |
| Total | | 9,695 |

Notes:

- This table only includes clients from the A and B priorities.
- The Social Housing Register is made up of the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.

Table Two: The time (in days) to house an application on the Social Housing Register within the quarter ending 31 March 2018, broken down by quartile, median and the maximum number of days taken to house an applicant.

| Lower quartile | Median | Upper quartile | Maximum |
|----------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| 26 | 64 | 150.5 | 3,103 |

Notes:

- This table only includes clients that were housed as A and B priorities.
- The Social Housing Register is made up of the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.
- The client who had been on the register for 3,103 days was updated to a priority A rating in December 2015. Prior to the client's amended rating, the client was not classified as priority A or B.