



18 DEC 2020

Dear

On 20 November 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

The number of applicants on the public housing waitlist for the end of October, split by priority level and within priority level. Not just Priority B and A, but also the splits within priority A (A1-A16 when I last saw them).

The Public Housing Register (the 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 Government, through a number of agencies, 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 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.

Please see **Table One** enclosed in **Appendix A**, which shows the number of applications for the Public Housing Register broken down by the Housing Register, the Transfer Register and priority level, as at end of September 2020.

In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

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

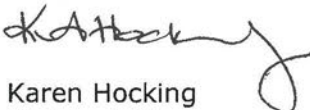
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter 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 Public Housing Register broken down by priority level, 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



Karen Hocking
**General Manager
Housing**

Appendix A

Table One: Number of applications for the Public Housing Register broken down by the Housing Register, the Transfer Register and priority level, as at end of September 2020.

Priority on the Register	Housing Register	Transfer Register	Total Number of Applications
A20	120	14	134
A19	406	37	443
A18	988	99	1,087
A17	2,037	206	2,243
A16	2,942	316	3,258
A15	3,327	441	3,768
A14	3,247	564	3,811
A13	2,592	601	3,193
A12	1,885	502	2,387
A11	1,077	359	1,436
A10	508	156	664
A9	166	57	223
Priority A Total	19,295	3,352	22,647
B15	S	S	20
B14	S	S	86
B13	179	35	214
B12	365	87	452
B11	485	138	623
B10	508	155	663
B9	339	117	456
B8	152	50	202
Priority B Total	2,120	596	2,716
Total	21,415	3,948	25,363

Notes:

- Public Housing register is the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.
- The A and B priority applications used in these tables are as at the end of the quarter and may have changed prior to this data.
- This includes applications both on the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of applicants have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.