



7 FEB 2020

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

On 22 January 2020, the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) received the following request for information, under the Official Information Act 1982:

*How many refugee individuals and families have requested to move from their homes supplied by you over the last three years? Broken down by reasons, in as much detail as possible, why/when/location to and from.*

*How many refugee individuals and families have had their request approved and moved from their homes supplied by you over the last three years? Broken down by reasons in as much detail as possible, why/when/location to and from.*

*Any photographs, visual and/or audio recordings that would assist in relation to the requested information above.*

Upon arrival in New Zealand, quota refugees receive permanent residence and the usual two year stand-down period for accessing the welfare system is waived. Quota refugees spend their first six weeks in New Zealand at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre where they participate in a reception programme that aims to build basic social and coping skills required for their new lives in New Zealand. The reception programme also provides information on work and expectations of employment. Prior to their arrival in New Zealand refugees are provided with information about working and living in New Zealand, and an assessment is completed for each refugee to identify needs and services required once they arrive at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre.

Following completion of the reception programme refugees are sent to one of seven refugee settlement locations across New Zealand. They are Auckland, Hamilton/Waikato, Palmerston North/Manawatū, Greater Wellington, Nelson, Dunedin and Invercargill. These settlement locations are chosen based on a range of criteria including access to employment opportunities.

More information about the refugee quota programme and the refugee resettlement strategy is available at: [www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlement-strategy](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlement-strategy).

Refugees who apply for refugee status under any criteria other than as quota refugees are known as convention refugees. They can apply for refugee status before arriving in New Zealand, upon arrival or after arrival. Once they are granted refugee status, they have to apply for a residence class visa to become entitled to reside indefinitely in New Zealand.

The Ministry has managed Public Housing applications and the Social Housing Register since 2014. The Social Housing 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 for their needs.

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 house 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.

The Ministry does not record information about whether an individual applying for a housing transfer is a refugee. All applicants are assessed on the same basis, and every situation is considered individually to establish a priority rating. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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 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](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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Satterthwaite', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kate Satterthwaite  
**General Manager Ministerial and Executive Services**