



30 OCT 2020

Tēnā koe

On 23 September 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information regarding emergency housing in Paraparaumu and Raumati.

On 1 October 2020, you clarified that you would like the data for the latest quarter ending September added to your response, and that you would be happy to wait until later in October to receive the response.

The Ministry understands that demand for housing across New Zealand is growing, and more people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing, driving house price and rent growth. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs, and many seek financial help from the Ministry.

Across the government, there is a wider programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) leads the programme of work on New Zealand's housing and urban development.

This includes planning, and with Kāinga Ora, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. HUD is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring home owners. The Government Housing Programme Dashboard tracks progress on key parts of the Government's housing programme.

The Ministry's role is to assess eligibility for public housing, provide financial support to eligible people to access and sustain suitable housing, and to provide immediate assistance to meet emergency housing needs.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended, dependent on individual circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution. They provide a shorter-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau,

particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 has seen a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation where they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of emergency housing into long-term accommodation which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

Your questions will be addressed below in turn.

- *As of 1 September 2020, how many people are being provided emergency housing accommodation in Paraparaumu and Raumati?*
- *What was the equivalent figure for the same date in 2019?*

I am unable to provide you with this information broken down at Paraparaumu or Raumati locational level, as the Ministry recognises that the clients in question may not have fixed addresses recorded. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review hundreds of files which still may result in inaccurate information. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

However, the Ministry is able to provide you with this information broken down by the lowest locational data the Ministry can report on, which is the Territorial Local Authority (TLA), which is regional data defined under the Local Government Act 2002 as a city council or district council. The TLA is based on the clients' addresses where that is known.

Please see **Table One** below for the number of EH SNGs granted in the Kāpiti TLA between the quarters ending June 2019 and September 2020.

Table One: The number of EH SNGs granted in the Kāpiti TLA between quarters ending June 2019 and September 2020.

Quarter Ending	Grants	Amount granted	Distinct Clients
June 2019	214	\$233,283.45	44
September 2019	279	\$305,021.50	58
December 2019	250	\$283,698.80	53
March 2020	207	\$267,069.01	56
June 2020	376	\$620,827.70	90
September 2020	438	\$661,630.71	84

Notes:

- The number of grants is not the number of individuals. A client can have more than one grant in each time period.
- Amount is the amount granted. The total amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent.
- Numbers may differ from those previously published due to changes in reporting.

- TLA is based on the clients address and may not be reflective of where their emergency housing is located.
 - Non-geocoded client address records that are unable to be matched to a TLA through suburb and city details have an unknown TLA and will not be included in this table.
- *What additional support services have been provided for these people in emergency accommodation since the start of 2020?*

The Ministry has effectively doubled the support offered to people in emergency housing since the start of 2020.

The investments which have been made to increase support for people in emergency accommodation since the start of 2020 by the Ministry are laid out below:

In August 2019, the Government committed over \$47 million in funding for more intensive support for people living in emergency housing. This figure included:

- \$16.1 million over four years, to provide wrap-around support to families with children and people with mental health needs in emergency housing, as well as people with a history of housing insecurity. Support services are delivered by local community organisations contracted by the Ministry and are intended to help people living in emergency housing to address the barriers they face in accessing and sustaining suitable, long-term housing.
- \$31.28 million over four years for intensive case managers and navigators for people living in emergency housing.
 - Intensive case managers are Ministry staff members who provide a single, consistent point of contact for each family or individual, and taking a holistic approach to people's needs to reduce housing instability.
 - Navigators assist where people need more support than an intensive case manager can offer. Navigators co-ordinate services and provide on-going support for people with housing needs. Navigators work with providers, health professionals, and government agencies and community organisations. Navigators are contracted by Ministry from local community organisations.

In February 2020, the Government released the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (HAP). The plan includes funding for 18 priority actions to prevent homelessness where possible and strengthen efforts to effectively respond to homelessness where it does occur. This included the following additional support for people living in emergency housing:

- \$19.8 million to expand intensive case management and navigator services for people in emergency housing longer than 7 nights,
- \$8.7 million for a new housing broker service to connect with local landlords and help more clients secure private rental homes,
- \$9.3 million to provide flexible funding to support the wellbeing needs of children in emergency housing, such paying for transport to school or early childhood education, and
- \$740,000 to fund programmes to help people gain skills and confidence to secure and manage a private rental home.

- *Are there any plans to increase the support services available to these people?*

As described above, the Ministry is working together with other agencies, on the HAP, a multi-year programme, and is continuing to assess the effectiveness of the initial investment. To see a copy of Phase One of the Homelessness Action Plan, please see the following link on the Housing and Urban Development website: www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Community-and-Public-Housing/Support-for-people-in-need/Homelessness-Action-Plan/271a3c7d79/Homelessness-Action-Plan.pdf.

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. 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, 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.

Ngā mihi nui



Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing