



29 SEP 2020

Tēnā koe

On 1 September 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *How many young people aged 16-24 are currently in temporary accommodation?*
- *How many young people aged 16-24 have been in temporary accommodation this year?*

On the same day, you clarified that your request to be for the following:

1. *How many young people aged 16-24 are currently in Emergency Housing?*
2. *How many young people aged 16-24 have been in Emergency Housing this year?*
3. *How many people aged 16-24 are being housed in motels now in New Zealand?*
4. *How many young people aged 16-24 are currently in transitional housing?*
5. *How many young people aged 16-24 have been in transitional housing this year?*

Questions four and five were transferred to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Information about transitional housing is believed to be more closely connected with the functions of HUD. In these circumstances, we are required by section 14 of the OIA to transfer the request.

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

After these seven nights, Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide short-term accommodation while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available here: www.housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html.

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 in which 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 during this period, contributing to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

Young people aged 16 to 18 years old can access emergency housing through the Ministry's Youth Service. The Ministry's Youth Service works with young people in urgent need of accommodation, to provide support to look at a range of housing options that may be available. This could include staying with extended whānau or friends, providing assistance if they are behind on rent, helping with rent or bond for a new property, assistance for costs to shift to another suitable place, negotiating with landlords and looking at other accommodation options.

If the Youth Service is unable to find a suitable housing option, then emergency accommodation will be considered. The Ministry recognises that in many cases, entering emergency housing may not be the best option for a young person and continuously works with them to find longer-term housing options, including public housing and other supports that may be available.

In regard to questions one and two of your request, please find **Table One** below which shows the number of grants granted to 16 to 24 year old clients, the amount granted, and the number of distinct clients receiving EH SNGs for any accommodation from July 2019 to June 2020, broken down by quarter.

Table One: Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for any accommodation and clients aged between 16 and 24 years, broken down by total number of grants, amount granted, number of distinct clients and quarter from July 2019 to June 2020.

Quarter Ending	Number of Grants	Amount Granted	Distinct Clients
September 2019	5,104	\$7,166,631.20	1,240
December 2019	5,115	\$7,806,006.42	1,173
March 2020	5,085	\$8,265,889.48	1,226
June 2020	6,733	\$12,911,958.01	1,800

In regard to question three of your request, please find **Table Two** overleaf which shows the number of grants granted to 16 to 24 year old clients, the amount granted, and the number of distinct clients receiving EH SNGs for motels or hotels from July 2019 to June 2020, broken down by quarter.

Table Two: Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for motels or hotels and clients aged between 16 and 24 years, broken down by number of grants, amount granted, number of distinct clients and quarter from July 2019 to June 2020.

Quarter Ending	Number of Grants	Amount Granted	Distinct Clients
September 2019	4,704	\$6,845,105.78	1,130
December 2019	4,745	\$7,437,248.90	1,083
March 2020	4,755	\$7,927,923.61	1,155
June 2020	6,447	\$12,595,902.15	1,738

Notes for **Table One** and **Table Two**:

- The table contains the count of grants. A client can have more than one grant in the time period
- Emergency housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants
- These tables contain the amount granted. The total amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent
- Age of client is at date of grant
- Types of accommodation offered by a supplier may cross multiple categories, for example: a motel may also provide camp ground or holiday park facilities, but be recorded solely as a motel
- The types of accommodation funded are categorised under: Motel/Hotel, Hostel, Holiday Park/Camp ground, Marae, shelter; but may include other types of accommodation
- Clients can be counted in multiple quarters if they have grants in more than one quarter.

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 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 emergency housing, 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

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

Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing