



13 APR 2021

Tēnā koe

On 17 March 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding the waitlist for public housing:

- *Total number on the waitlist?*
- *Number of how many people with disabilities are on the waitlist for housing?*

Later that day, the Ministry's media team advised you that your additional questions regarding how many public houses are accessible for disabled people and whether housing will be accessible were transferred to both the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Kāinga Ora (KO) for response.

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 up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

When New Zealanders are in need of public housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The Housing Register is prioritised by need and consists of applicants who have been assessed as being eligible for public housing. The Transfer Register is made up of people already in public housing, but who have requested and are eligible for a transfer to another property. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register (previously known as the Social Housing Register). While the Ministry do the housing assessments which inform the Public Housing Register (the Register), responsibility for funding and supply sits with HUD and KO respectively.

In response to your request for the total number on the Register, as at 31 December 2020, there were 26,747 applicants on the Register. This figure includes both the Housing Register and Transfer Register. There are currently 22,521 applicants on the Housing Register and 4,226 applicants on the Transfer Register. The Ministry reports housing data quarterly and as such, the most recent data available is for the quarter ending 31 December 2020. The figures for the quarter ending 31 March 2021 are due to be published online in the coming weeks.

More information about the Register can be found at the below links:

- **Housing Register:** www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/index.html
- **Transfer Register:** www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/transfer-register.html

Each housing application is given a priority rating based on the Ministry's assessment of housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria to determine that priority rating. Applicants who are assessed as at risk (Priority A) or as having a serious housing need (Priority B) are placed on the Register until a house becomes available. The Ministry's role is to assess people's needs for public housing and if they or a family member need an accessible home, we capture that as part of the assessment process. Clients who are on the Register will be contacted on a regular basis to confirm their circumstances and are referred to public housing providers when suitable properties become available.

Please note, while the Housing Register is prioritised by need and consists of applicants who have been assessed as being eligible for public housing, there is no way for the Ministry to know the extent of a client's situation without it being disclosed by the client themselves. As such, the Ministry does not have full oversight over applicants' situations. For example, applicants may have more than one disability, or may choose not to disclose their disability if it is not relevant to their application for public housing. Also, this information, where held, would be on individual client files.

In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would need to manually review every file on the Register, of which there are approximately 26,000. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

To meet the intent of your request, the Ministry is providing you with the number of applicants on the Register receiving Supported Living Payment and/or Jobseeker Support Health Care and Disability, as at 31 December 2020. This dataset is enclosed as **Appendix A** at the end of the response.

Jobseeker Support is available to people who can usually work full-time. It also includes people who can only work part-time or can't look for work at the moment, for example because they have a health condition, injury or disability which is known as the Jobseeker Support Health Care and Disability (JS HC-D). More information about this type of assistance is available here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/jobseeker-support/client-has-a-health-condition-injury-or-disability-01.html.

The Supported Living Payment (SLP) is available to people who are severely restricted or unable to work on a long-term basis because of a health condition or disability, and for people who are caring for someone who needs significant care. More information about the SLP is available here: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/supported-living-payment/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 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 to your request for the number of applicants on the Public Housing Register with a disability, 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**

Appendix A

Table 1: The number of applicants on the Public Housing Register receiving Supported Living Payment and Jobseeker Support Health Care and Disability as at 31 December 2020

| As at Quarter Ending | JS HC-D | SLP related |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| December 2020 | 4,296 | 4,302 |

Notes:

- This includes applications both on the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.
- This only includes priority A and B applications.
- JS is Jobseeker Support.
- SLP is Supported Living Payment.
- HC-D is Health Care and Disability.
- SLP Related is comprised of SLP HC-D and SLP Carers.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- This data table have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- A value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.