



05 MAY 2021

Tēnā koe

On 6 April 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *How many houses are MSD or HUD (or any other government department) renting from private owners, to be used for emergency and/or social housing?*
2. *Can I please have a breakdown of locations?*
3. *How much is being spent on this?*
4. *When did it start?*
5. *Why is it necessary to rent from private owners?*
6. *How do people qualify for these houses in particular?*
7. *How long are people staying in the houses for?*

On 9 April 2021, your request was partially transferred to Kāinga Ora for response because the information that related to social housing is more closely related to their functions and responsibilities. You can expect to receive a response from Kāinga Ora in response to this aspect of your request in due course.

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.

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 depending on the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry does not rent houses from private owners and is no longer spending money on the use of private rentals for emergency housing.

In the past, the Ministry rented a small number of privately owned properties, primarily in the Auckland region, for emergency housing. This practice ceased on 30 June 2020, as the Ministry recognised that some property managers were

withdrawing properties from the rental market to offer them as short-term emergency accommodation, attracting a higher weekly rate. This resulted in fewer of these properties being available for private rental, which is why the Ministry ceased this approach.

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

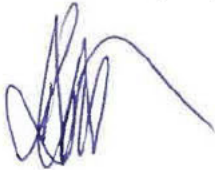
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 regarding 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 regarding information on the use of private rentals for 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Nāku iti noa, nā,



 Karen Hocking  
**General Manager  
Housing**