



Tēnā koe

On 25 August 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- How many people have requested assistance for Emergency Housing since the start of level 4 and not got it?

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 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 as an option 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 a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html.

The Ministry can confirm that between 17 August 2021 and 31 August 2021, 99 grants for Emergency Housing were declined. The predominate reasons for these declines were either that there was no presenting emergency need for housing or that the persons need could be meet by some other means.

For example, after discussion with the person, they may have been entitled to other financial assistance from MSD in order to remain in their existing accommodation, or they had access to other temporary accommodation options.

It is important to note that to be considered to have an immediate emergency housing need, the person must not be able to access any adequate accommodation for some or all of the next 7 nights from when they applied.

It is important to note that the number of declines for Emergency Housing are not the same as the number of clients, as a singular client may have more than one decline within a time period.

More information can be found at the following link:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html.

To protect confidentiality the Ministry uses processed to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. The above number has had random rounding to base three applied. The published count will never differ by more than two counts.

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 the number of people who have requested Emergency Housing since the start of level four but were declined, 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
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Housing**