



5 July 2022

Tēnā koe

On 1 July 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. I am looking to find out what MSD's priority rating system is for allocating public housing to those awaiting it.*
- 2. How does its priority rating system work? Is it a point or tier-based system?*
- 3. What factors impact the priority rating system and how are those factors ranked?*

The Ministry is responsible for:

- Confirming a client's eligibility for Public housing
- Assessing their need for public housing
- Determining their priority ranking for public housing and
- Determining their housing needs

A client does not have to be getting a benefit to qualify for social housing or income related rent.

For clarity, I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

- 1. I am looking to find out what MSD's priority rating system is for allocating public housing to those awaiting it.*

The Ministry's role is to assess people's needs for public housing. 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. If an applicant or their family member need an accessible home, we capture this information as part of the assessment process. Clients who are on the Register are referred to Public Housing providers when suitable properties become available.

Eligibility to public housing is confined to clients who are determined as at risk (priority A) or in serious housing need (priority B). Housing need is determined as part of the Social Allocation System (SAS). The Social Allocation System:

- is the assessment tool used to process applications for public housing, and
  - makes sure public housing is available only to those in the highest need who do not have alternative housing options.
2. *How does its priority rating system work? Is it a point or tier-based system?*
  3. *What factors impact the priority rating system and how are those factors ranked?*

There are five criteria used to establish the priority rating for a client. Each criterion can be rated from one to four, with the maximum priority rating being A20. The criteria are as follows:

- **Adequacy** - focuses on whether the client needs accommodation or needs to move from their current accommodation due to not currently living in any accommodation or living in emergency housing for the time-being; the physical condition/structure or lack of basic facilities of the accommodation, over-crowding or lack of security of tenure of their current accommodation. You can read more information here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/adequacy-of-current-housing-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/adequacy-of-current-housing-01.html)
- **Suitability** - focuses on needing to move due to: medical, disability or personal needs or family violence or neighbourhood tension (including tension within the household) or other violence relating to the client's current living situation ability to access, afford and sustain alternative housing (that is, the capacity to rent in the private market). You can read more information here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/suitability-of-current-housing-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/suitability-of-current-housing-01.html)

- **Affordability** - focuses on the ability to afford alternative, suitable housing in the private market. You can read more information here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/risk-rating-for-affordability-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/risk-rating-for-affordability-01.html)
- **Accessibility** - focuses on the ability to access and afford suitable and adequate housing as a result of discrimination, lack of financial means to move and availability of alternative, affordable suitable housing in the private market. You can read more information here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/risk-rating-for-accessibility-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/risk-rating-for-accessibility-01.html)
- **Sustainability** - focuses on financial management difficulties and difficulties in social functioning and lack of social skills. You can read more information here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/sustainability-of-alternative-housing-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/sustainability-of-alternative-housing-01.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 and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry'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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Karen Hocking  
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Housing**