



11 May 2022

Tēnā koe

On 5 May 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *What the preferences are on the waiting list for housing. And also when on a waiting list for transfer what other aspects of others needs are prioritized over others needs on the waiting list.*

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, which is 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 Public Housing Register consists of the Housing Register and the Transfer Register. The Housing Register records those who are not currently in Public Housing but who have been assessed as eligible for Public Housing. The Transfer Register represents those already in Public Housing who are eligible to be rehoused, generally due to a change in circumstances prompting a move to somewhere more appropriate to their needs.

There is a set of criteria used to determine the housing need of a household and is based on the household composition, housing circumstances and housing history. These criteria are grouped into five categories: adequacy, suitability, affordability, accessibility and sustainability. Each category has a rating from one to four with four being the highest level of risk. The rating across these five criteria makes up a priority rating of up to 20. To qualify for public housing, a client must be assessed as having an 'at risk' (Priority A) or 'serious' (Priority B) housing need. You can find more information regarding the SAS assessment criteria at the following link: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/index.html>

While the Ministry completes the housing assessments which inform the Register, Public and Community housing providers are responsible for matching those on the Public Housing Register with available properties. It has discretion to select the household it believes will fit best with that property based on a number of factors. Due to a shortage of appropriate public houses available to match the level of demand, households with a high housing need will not always necessarily be placed before households with a lower priority rating. In some instances, the factors that cause a household to be in high housing need will be the very factors that work against it in the selection and placement process. For example, a large family that requires a modified house in an area where there are few public houses available would have more difficulty in being placed than a household with a lower priority rating in an area with greater supply of public houses.

Clients who approach the Ministry seeking public housing are offered other assistance appropriate to their situation. This can include support to secure private rentals including rent and bond, and Accommodation Supplement.

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'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, 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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