



22 September 2022

Tēnā koe

On 28 July 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *I request the following, for the time period of the last 6 years, broken into year to year dates / figures.*
  - 1) *How many people in New Zealand have been on waiting list to be put into emergency accommodation.*
  - 2) *How many people in New Zealand have been put into emergency accommodation.*
  - 3) *What were the means of emergency accommodation and what is the breakdown of figures how they were used? (Ie hotels/motels/unsafe houses etc - how many cases for each)*
  - 4) *Was anyone given tents as help for accommodation by this ministry? If yes, how many, why, and what were other options exhausted first?*
    - 4b) *For any cases of the above being given tents, please provide details on how many family members were in each group.*
  - 5) *How many people are on waiting list for state homes in New Zealand?*
  - 6) *How many people are currently living in state homes in New Zealand?*
  - 7) *To best of knowledge by the ministry, how many people in New Zealand are homeless, sleeping in cars or on streets or in tents?*

*Please provide stats for each question for each year period for the last 6 years - 2017-2022.?*

On 25 August 2022 the Ministry emailed you to advise that more time was required for necessary consultations to make a decision on your request. In accordance with section 15(1) and 15A of the Act, you were advised that a response will be with you no later than 22 September 2022.

For the sake of clarity, I will answer your questions in turn.

1. *How many people in New Zealand have been on waiting list to be put into emergency accommodation.*

There is no waiting list for 'emergency accommodation' or Emergency Housing, therefore your request for this information is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

When New Zealanders are in need of Public Housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing 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.

Information about the number of people on the Public Housing Register can be found in the Public Housing Quarterly Report for September 2021 (pages 10 and 11) in the following link: [www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insight/public-housing-quarterly-reports/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insight/public-housing-quarterly-reports/).

- 2) *How many people in New Zealand have been put into emergency accommodation.*
- 3) *What were the means of emergency accommodation and what is the breakdown of figures how they were used? (Ie hotels/motels/unsafe houses etc - how many cases for each)*

In regard to question 2 and 3, please see in the attached Excel Spreadsheet **Appendix A**, in **Table One**, which shows the number of distinct clients who received a Special Needs Grant for Emergency Housing for the calendar years 2017 to 2021, and as at 31 July 2022, by accommodation type.

4) *Was anyone given tents as help for accommodation by this ministry? If yes, how many, why, and what were other options exhausted first?*

4b) *For any cases of the above being given tents, please provide details on how many family members were in each group.*

The Ministry pays for a client's emergency accommodation through an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) but does not house people. The Ministry generally would not consider a tent adequate for a client's needs in the short term.

It has never been our standard practice to provide grants for tents, but there were some isolated instances of grants in 2018. We reminded staff at that time not to make grants of this kind.

In regard to questions 4 and 4b I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested. If the Ministry did have the information, it would be in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with the information you have requested, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files.

As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

However, in the spirit of being helpful you can find more information regarding the waiting list for the state homes on the following link: [www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insight/2018-severe-housing-deprivation-estimate/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insight/2018-severe-housing-deprivation-estimate/).

5) *How many people are on waiting list for state homes in New Zealand?*

In regard to question 5, your request for this information is refused under section 18(d) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is publicly available or will be shortly.

In the spirit of being helpful, please find the link to the Ministry's publications and resources page which holds statistics for the Housing Register: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.html).

6) *How many people are currently living in state homes in New Zealand?*

Please see in the attached Excel Spreadsheet **Table Two**, in **Appendix B**, which shows the number of distinct clients currently in a tenancy as at 31 December for the years 2017 to 2021, and as at 31 July 2022.

Note that this includes both Housing New Zealand (HNZ) and Community Housing Provider (CHP) Tenancies. Also note that this data is available on the Housing and Urban Development website here: [www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insight/the-government-housing-dashboard/public-homes/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insight/the-government-housing-dashboard/public-homes/).

7) *To best of knowledge by the ministry, how many people in New Zealand are homeless, sleeping in cars or on streets or in tents?*

The Ministry does not collect data on how many people are homeless, sleeping in cars, or living on streets or in tents. The Ministry's role is to make sure people with an immediate housing need receive the help they need to access emergency accommodation. Our role is to assess eligibility for public housing and to provide financial assistance to help our clients access and sustain long-term housing.

Clients will sometimes approach the Ministry with information about their living situation in the context of an individual grant or assistance. Any information about this is a reflection of their situation at the time they applied and does not show how many people are currently homeless, sleeping in cars or on streets or in tents.

Therefore, question 7, I am refusing your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

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.

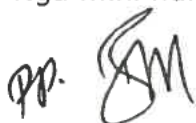
This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by

publishing this letter and attachment 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 regarding emergency accommodation data, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KH' followed by a stylized 'SM'.

Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager  
Housing**