



17 March 2023

Tēnā koe

On 17 February 2023, Kāinga Ora transferred part of your request for information to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry). The part of your request that was transferred to the Ministry is being considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), in particular:

6/ how many tenants on the Kainga Ora housing waiting list in 2020 and 2021 turned down a property or demanded a larger home.

7/ For Intergenerational families wanting to live together are all adults interviewed or carefully considered as to whether they are eligible to be housed by Kainga Ora.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and many 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.

When New Zealanders need Public Housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The Housing Register shows people who are not currently in Public Housing but who have been assessed as eligible for Public Housing. The Transfer Register shows people already in Public Housing who have applied to be rehoused. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register (the Register). While the Ministry completes housing assessments which inform the Register, responsibility for funding and supply sits with the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development and Kāinga Ora, respectively.

The Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live. This includes ensuring the family has the right number of bedrooms, is close to essential services such as schools, and that the accommodation meets any disability needs if appropriate. Those assessed as having greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change, their priority on

the Register may change also. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly.

Further information regarding the assessment of a client's housing need, housing need priority ratings and the calculation of overall priority ratings can be found on the Work and Income website, here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html.

Clients can be referred to a housing provider when the provider has a suitable property available that is likely to meet the client's housing requirements. The provider will make an offer of a property to the client and arrange for them to view it.

More information about declining Public Housing property offers can be found on the Work and Income website, here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/register-management-and-referrals/declining-offer-of-a-suitable-property-01.html

Regarding your questions, each one will be responded to in-turn:

6/ how many tenants on the Kainga Ora housing waiting list in 2020 and 2021 turned down a property or demanded a larger home.

Please see the **Appendix** showing the number of property declines on the Register by 2020 and 2021 calendar year. Please note that to protect confidentiality, all data in the **Appendix** has processes in place to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. In particular, the data table has had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals. The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

7/ For Intergenerational families wanting to live together are all adults interviewed or carefully considered as to whether they are eligible to be housed by Kainga Ora.

Sometimes two or more families apply for public housing together. They might do this if they are reuniting through refugee family reunification or one family might need extra support. In other situations it may simply be choice or convenience.

In order to have a family unit nominated as household number two, at least one adult member of the second household must agree to sign the tenancy agreement (that is, become a signatory to the tenancy agreement).

The housing need of the household is assessed together.

Household units are assessed jointly

Where the two household units apply for public housing together an assessment of their housing need is undertaken as one household. The joint assessment will determine whether the household is at risk (priority A) or has a serious housing need (priority B) and therefore eligible for public housing.

Note the assessment to determine the household's housing need is considered holistically. It is not undertaken separately for each household unit. This includes the income and asset thresholds - these limits do not change even though there is more than one household.

Multiple households create the need for public housing

In some situations a joint housing application may be the only factor that creates the need for public housing, for example where the number of bedrooms required to house the families makes alternative housing inaccessible.

In this situation, we need to establish whether there is a valid reason for the two or more household units to be housed together. This may be because they have a specific and established need to live together as a household, usually because the households have a dependency on each other. For example:

- elderly parent or grandparent (aged over 65 years)
- non-dependent child or other adult with a physical or mental health disability requiring care and support at home
- carer or support person

If there is a need for them to be housed together, an assessment of their housing need is undertaken as one household. If a need for the two households to live together is not established, they should make separate applications for public housing.

A client can apply for a Review of Decision when they have received formal notification of (and do not agree with) the outcome of the eligibility assessment.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
Group General Manager
Housing



Appendix

The number of property declines on the Register, broken down by decline reason, across the 2020 and 2021 calendar years.

Decline Reason	31 December 2020		31 December 2021	
	Number declines	Percent of declines	Number declines	Percent of declines
Declined – location	318	21.0%	237	21.3%
Declined – unsuitable	420	27.7%	354	31.7%
Declined – unsafe	468	30.7%	339	30.6%
No longer required	312	20.6%	183	16.4%
Total	1,521	100.0%	1,113	100.0%

Notes:

This includes both clients on housing and transfer register.

This is a count of declined offers, not individual applications on the register. One application may decline properties multiple times within a year or across multiple years.

'Declined - location' is reasons ('Access is poor', 'Distance from public transport', 'Distance from essential services' 'Offer outside required lettable area', 'Parking is inadequate').

'Declined - unsuitable' is reasons ('Does not meet disability needs', 'Not suitable for cultural reasons', 'Poor exterior condition', 'Poor interior condition', 'Property has stairs', 'Property history', 'Section is too big', 'House is too small', 'Bedroom is too small', 'Other').

'Declined - unsafe' is reasons ('Unsafe community', 'Unsafe physical environment', 'Fencing is not suitable', 'Busy road').

To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals. The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.