



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

11 October 2023

Tēnā koe

On 19 September 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many emergency housing special needs grants were granted to clients in the Christchurch, Selwyn, Waimakariri and Ashburton territorial local authorities for the calendar years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023?*
- *Can the information please be organised by supplier and calendar year, with separate spreads for each territorial authority?*
- *Can the information include how many people those providers housed, the number of nights, and the amount of money granted to the supplier.*
- *Of the providers, can you include how many were deemed unsuitable and release any final reports regarding those premises.*

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.

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 their needs or those of their family. 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 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 may also be explored, 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](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html)

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

In relation to your question on how many people providers housed, the number of nights and the amount of money granted – MSD collects emergency housing grants data in relation to grants made to the client who apply on behalf of a household. The make up of the household is recorded on individual client files but is not collated centrally.

For this reason, your request for how many individual people were housed is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

However, in the spirit of being helpful, we are able to provide you the number of distinct clients to whom emergency housing special needs grants were made for each provider. Each client represents a household.

Please find the attached **Appendix** containing a breakdown of the number of EH SNGs granted, amount granted, number of distinct clients and number of nights granted for clients in the Waimakariri District Territorial Local Authority (TLA), Selwyn District TLA, Christchurch City TLA and Ashburton District TLA, broken down by year and supplier. Please note that the TLA is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the emergency housing grant, and this may not be the same as the location of the emergency housing provider.

You will note that some of the suppliers are not based in the TLA named in each table title. This is because one registered supplier may provide accommodation across multiple premises with different trading names, receiving payments through a single supplier record.

Emergency housing suppliers are expected to meet all the relevant regulatory standards imposed by regulatory authorities, including local councils. When concerns are raised about the quality of accommodation, Regional Managers follow-up directly with the supplier to resolve any issues concerning quality or service. Where issues cannot be resolved in a timely way, suitable alternative accommodation will be sought for the client.

You may be interested to know that in August 2023, the Emergency Housing Supplier Standards Welfare Program was introduced. The Emergency Housing Supplier Standards Welfare Program introduces quality standards for emergency housing suppliers, and from 6 November 2023, the Ministry will have the ability, if satisfied, to direct clients to a supplier who has opted into the standards. You can read more about this at the following link:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/emergency-housing/supplier-standards.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/emergency-housing/supplier-standards.html)

There are no providers in the Canterbury region that the Ministry has stopped using due to being deemed unsuitable. Some providers asked to no longer be used for emergency housing.

There are no final reports regarding the suitability of such premises being used for emergency housing in Canterbury. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as these documents do not exist.

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 regarding emergency housing in the Canterbury region, 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 blue ink, appearing to read 'PP. Karen Hocking', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager**  
**Housing**