



17 AUG 2016



On 9 June 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of people who have applied for housing assessment in the Hutt Valley since Jan 2014.*
- *The number of full assessments that were conducted in Hutt Valley.*
- *The number of people who were deemed to have A or B eligibility for social housing since Jan 2014.*
- *The number of people who are deemed to have C or D eligibility for social housing in Hutt Valley*
- *The number of people who are waiting for social housing in Hutt Valley.*
- *The number of people who are waiting for social housing in Upper Hutt.*
- *The number of people deemed to have A, B, C, D eligibility for social housing in Upper Hutt.*

Eligibility for social housing and the length of time applicants may wait for housing will depend on:

- how quickly a suitable house becomes available;
- what the client's needs are;
- the number of people waiting with urgent needs.

Eligible applicants are included in the Social Housing Register, which tracks the number of eligible applicants for social housing properties or transfers between social housing properties at a given point in time. The number of people on the register and their priority rating changes, as people come on and off the register and as their circumstances change.

The Social Housing Register is published on a quarterly basis. There is no longer C and D eligibility, although some were grandfathered from Housing New Zealand. Register numbers are reported by register type, priority (A and B), region (territorial authority, or local board for Auckland), and household demographics. Quarterly information is available on the Ministry's Social Housing website at: [www.housing.msd.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/index.html](http://www.housing.msd.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/index.html) and [www.housing.msd.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/archive/archive.html](http://www.housing.msd.govt.nz/information-for-housing-providers/register/archive/archive.html).

I have interpreted your request for information in the "Hutt Valley" region to include Upper Hutt City and Lower Hutt City, as the Ministry reports by Territorial Authority.

Your request for the number of people who have applied for a housing assessment in the Hutt Valley since January 2014 and the number of full assessments that were conducted in the Hutt Valley is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act, as this information is held in notes on individual case files. As stated above, the Housing Register provides the number of eligible applicants ready to be matched to a suitable property, not the number of people who have applied.

In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review a large number of files. 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.

In response to your third question, I refer you to Table One enclosed with this letter, which shows the National number of applications on the Social Housing Register by priority as at the end of each quarter from 30 June 2014 to 31 March 2016.

The Ministry reports on the number of eligible applicants for social housing at a point in time. Please note that as the Ministry has managed applications for social housing since 14 April 2014, no data in the first quarter of 2014 is held by the Ministry.

As you will note, the number of eligible applicants on the Social Housing Register has declined. A number of factors have contributed to the reduction in the Social Housing Register, including:

- Better information through regular contact with people on the Register to ensure the Ministry has the most up-to-date information about their circumstances, housing and social assistance needs.
- Working more actively with people on the Register to explore all alternative housing options, including staying in their current homes with extra financial help or support services.
- Helping people on the Register move into the private rental market with extra financial help such as rent and bond assistance, assistance with moving costs and the Accommodation Supplement.

Table Two, also enclosed with this letter, provides a response to questions 4–7 of your request. The table shows the number of applications on the Social Housing Register by Territorial Authority (Lower Hutt City and Upper Hutt City) and by priority, as at 31 March 2016. The Ministry does not report on the "number of people waiting for social housing". Instead, the Social Housing Register reports on the number of applications. Note that applications may be for an individual or a household.

Some data in Table Two has been suppressed, as the release of those numbers could lead to the identification of individual applicants.

I hope you find this information regarding social housing in Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10-152  
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Crafer', written over a horizontal line.

Carl Crafer  
**Deputy Chief Executive  
Social Housing**

**Table One: National number of applications on the Social Housing Register by priority as at the end of each quarter**

Quarter Ending	Priority		Total
	A	B	
June 2014	3,188	2,652	<b>5,840</b>
September 2014	2,810	2,789	<b>5,599</b>
December 2014	2,370	2,594	<b>4,964</b>
March 2015	2,348	2,460	<b>4,808</b>
June 2015	2,163	2,378	<b>4,541</b>
September 2015	2,580	1,887	<b>4,467</b>
December 2015	2,795	1,824	<b>4,619</b>
March 2016	2,758	1,827	<b>4,585</b>

**Notes:**

- Numbers include applications on either the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.

**Table Two: Number of applications on the Social Housing Register by Territorial Authority, priority as at 31 March 2016**

Territorial Authority	Priority				Total
	A	B	C	D	
Lower Hutt City	36	42	S	0	<b>S</b>
Upper Hutt City	13	11	0	0	<b>24</b>
Total Hutt Valley	49	53	S	0	<b>S</b>
Total New Zealand	2,758	1,827	50	20	<b>4,655</b>

**Notes:**

- Numbers include applications on either the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.
- Total Hutt Valley is Upper Hutt City and Lower Hutt City Territorial Authorities combined.
- Territorial Authority is defined under the Local Government Act 2002 as a city council or district council.
- "S" represents data that has been suppressed to protect client privacy.