



27 NOV 2020

On 28 October 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

All data and summary statistics regarding length of stay for individuals in Emergency Housing since January 1 2017, broken down by period, type of housing and location.

The Ministry understands that 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, driving house prices and rent growth. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs, and many seek financial help from the Ministry.

Across the government, there is a wider programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply. This includes planning, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring home owners.

The Ministry manages assessments for the social housing register and also provides special needs grants for emergency accommodation.

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 them or their family's needs. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended, dependent on individual circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that emergency housing is not a long-term solution. They provide a shorter-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

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.

The year 2020 has seen a significant increase in demand for Emergency Housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation in which they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of Emergency Housing into long-term accommodation during this period, contributing to longer durations of stay and higher costs. Since 30 March 2020, changes have been made to allow EH SNGs to be issued for up to 21 days (an increase from the standard 7 day period).

This means that the data provided for this period cannot be compared to similar data from previous quarters.

Please find the Excel spreadsheet attached, containing **Table One**, showing the number of Emergency Housing clients and the average length of stay for the period between 1 January 2017 to 30 September 2020, broken down by quarter, region and type of housing.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

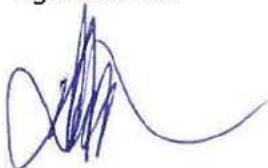
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.


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.

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
General Manager
Housing