



29 SEP 2020

Tēnā koe

On 1 September 2020, Kāinga Ora transferred part of your request, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) for a response. A response to the following questions is included in this letter:

- A. How many unique people and/or families have been removed from a State House Waiting List for any reason other than being housed in a State House, each year, since the list(s) began, and tabulated by reason?*
- B. How many unique people and/or families have been placed in a State House from the State House Waiting List each year since the list(s) began, and tabulated by priority category?*
- C. How many unique people and/or families joined the State House Waiting List at any point each year, since the list(s) began, and tabulated by priority category?*
- D. How many unique people and/or families have applied to join the State House Waiting List at any point each year, since the State Housing programme began?*

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, which is 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 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 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 but who have applied to be rehoused. While the Ministry completes the housing assessments which inform the Public Housing Register, responsibility for funding and supply sits with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and Kāinga Ora, respectively. More information about the Housing Register is available here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/index.html.

Each housing application is given a priority rating based on the Ministry's assessment of housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria to

determine that priority rating. Applicants who are assessed as at risk (Priority A) or as having a serious housing need (Priority B) are placed on the Register until a house becomes available. The Ministry's role is to assess people's needs for public housing and if they or a family member need an accessible home, this is captured as part of the assessment process. Clients who are on the Public Housing Register will be contacted on a regular basis to confirm their circumstances and are referred to Public Housing providers when suitable properties become available.

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.

The Public Housing 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 the greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change, their priority on the Public Housing Register may also change. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly.

Clients who approach the Ministry seeking public housing are offered other assistance appropriate to their situation. This can include Accommodation Supplement for private rent, Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNG), or a Recoverable Assistance Payment Grant. Further information regarding available support can be accessed on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/housing.html.

Please find attached the following tables which answer parts A to C of your request:

- **Table One:** The number of applicants who exited the Public Housing Register for reasons other than being housed, broken down by quarter and reason for exit
- **Table Two:** The number of applicants who were housed in Public Housing for the quarters ending December 2015 to June 2020, broken down by priority rating
- **Table Three:** The number of new entries onto the Public Housing Register for the calendar years 2016 to 2020, broken down by priority rating

In order to protect client privacy, some values in Table One are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact numbers as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

Please note that the Ministry is unable to provide you with data prior to the December 2015 quarter, as this information is not held by the Ministry. The Ministry assumed responsibility for housing assessments and associated activities (from

Housing New Zealand / Kainga Ora) in April 2014. The Ministry continued to use Kāinga Ora's systems until August 2015, when the Ministry implemented a new housing client management system. Data for periods prior to the December 2015 quarter is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as this information is not held by the Ministry. If you are interested in information prior to September 2015, you can make an Official Information Act request to Kāinga Ora.

Part D of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as it would require substantial manual collation to compile this information. This is because the Ministry does not centrally record information on applications which are not successful. This information is held on individual client files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of client 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 this part of 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.

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 of Social Development'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 about the Public Housing Register, 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
General Manager, Housing

Table One: The number of applicants who exited the Public Housing Register for reasons other than being housed, broken down by quarter and reason for exit

Reason for exit	Quarter ending																		
	Dec 2015	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	Sep 2016	Dec 2016	Mar 2017	Jun 2017	Sep 2017	Dec 2017	Mar 2018	Jun 2018	Sep 2018	Dec 2018	Mar 2019	Jun 2019	Sep 2019	Dec 2019	Mar 2020	Jun 2020
Applicant deceased	0	S	16	13	13	9	7	16	29	11	22	37	27	30	29	33	31	32	37
Contacted	0	29	38	23	19	15	37	51	42	46	46	50	37	30	38	56	54	56	59
Decline offer	0	113	71	29	28	33	31	25	34	15	11	20	19	20	27	16	31	24	26
Decline reason reviewed	0	345	70	63	42	68	88	72	128	80	49	45	49	36	41	28	20	26	20
No longer eligible	0	S	0	0	0	0	0	33	77	65	165	238	97	97	119	109	141	149	87
No longer requires social housing	S	446	417	387	435	373	578	542	499	524	527	642	800	617	820	1,012	1,031	893	623
Not Recorded	6	1,637	10	92	114	165	71	218	202	155	214	306	180	103	187	157	105	81	78
Unable to confirm eligibility	0	62	94	115	87	64	169	109	87	188	219	199	123	78	54	27	55	98	102
Unable to contact	0	112	150	91	65	38	96	129	171	379	254	217	464	504	791	997	722	688	472
Verification received/required	S	446	469	396	404	453	590	620	553	495	311	384	352	260	435	417	420	396	357
Other reason	21	40	34	16	18	19	10	24	13	12	10	16	23	19	16	34	13	24	13
Total	32	3,247	1,369	1,225	1,225	1,237	1,677	1,839	1,835	1,970	1,828	2,154	2,171	1,794	2,557	2,886	2,623	2,467	1,874

Notes:

- The functionality for people who exited the Public Housing Register for reasons other than being housed was not available in the Ministry's system in the December 2015 quarter.
- The Ministry is not able to produce data for the September 2015 quarter due to the August IT Implementation and migration of data.
- This data includes applications that exited either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register.
- This data includes applications closed in the quarter, and does not include applications in the state, 'closure pending'.
- This data includes Priority A and B applications.
- Each application may represent an individual or a family.
- The exit reason, 'contacted' means that an application was removed after the Ministry had a discussion with the client and determined that social housing is no longer necessary, or that they were no longer eligible.
- In certain circumstances, low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.

Table Two: The number of applicants who were housed in Public Housing for the quarters ending December 2015 to June 2020, broken down by priority rating

Quarter ending	Priority		Total
	A	B	
December 2015	1,243	170	1,413
March 2016	1,250	190	1,440
June 2016	1,476	250	1,726
September 2016	1,472	174	1,646
December 2016	1,595	184	1,779
March 2017	1,646	153	1,799
June 2017	1,618	107	1,725
September 2017	1,763	113	1,876
December 2017	1,579	94	1,673
March 2018	1,497	71	1,568
June 2018	1,446	81	1,527
September 2018	1,605	116	1,721
December 2018	1,679	92	1,771
March 2019	1,368	63	1,431
June 2019	1,628	64	1,692
September 2019	2,009	73	2,082
December 2019	1,954	107	2,061
March 2020	1,777	89	1,866
June 2020	1,144	48	1,192

Notes:

- It is not possible to produce data for the September 2015 quarter due to the August IT implementation and migration of data.
- Each application may represent an individual or a family.
- Applications are considered housed in Public Housing when the application register status is changed to "active tenancy".
- The date a tenancy is activated may differ from the tenancy start date.
- The quarter in which the tenancy was activated is the quarter in which the application has been reported as housed in.
- Applications may have been housed from the Housing Register or the Transfer Register.
- The A and B priority applications used in these tables are as at the time of accepting an offer of public housing. The application priority rating may have changed prior to this date.

Table Three: The number of new entries onto the Public Housing Register for the calendar years 2016 to 2020, broken down by priority rating

Calendar Year	Priority		Total
	A	B	
2016	9,740	3,502	13,242
2017	12,877	3,259	16,136
2018	16,123	4,001	20,124
2019	19,719	3,302	23,021
2020 (to 30 June)	9,238	977	10,215

Notes:

- 2020 is a partial year. Data is provided from 1 January to 30 June 2020.
- 2015 data has not been provided as the functionality was not available due to the August IT Implementation and migration of data that year.
- Each application may represent an individual or a family.
- This data includes applications that are Priority A and B and are entering either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register.
- This includes all applications entering the Public Housing Register and may include incomplete or duplicate applications that were subsequently cancelled.