



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

14 APR 2021

Tēnā koe

On 4 March 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Request to know the average amount MSD spends on Emergency Housing per person per week in the capital.*

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. 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 hard 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, can 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. More information about EH SNGs is available here: [www.housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html](http://www.housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html).

Across government, there is a major programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply.

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development) and Kāinga Ora are responsible for increasing the supply of affordable and public housing. This includes planning, and with Kāinga Ora, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. HUD is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring home owners.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with the average amount spent by the Ministry on emergency housing per person per week in Wellington, as the information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, the Ministry refuses your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. 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 the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry is able to provide you with **Table One**, which shows number of EH SNGs granted, the number of clients receiving EH SNGs, the total

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number of nights granted and finally, the total granted amount of EH SNGs, for the Wellington Territorial Local Authority (TLA), for the period 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

It's important to note that "distinct clients" in this case refers to the client who has been granted the EH SNG. The grant may cover different type of family compositions, from one person to a large household including children. Therefore, while an EH SNG is granted to one client, it may cover the costs in relation to households of varying sizes.

Please also note that Emergency Housing costs per applicant will be dependent on size of the family and the number of nights granted. As a result of this, it is not advisable to directly compare the number of nights paid with the total amount granted to get an average.

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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



 Karen Hocking  
**General Manager  
Housing**

**Table One: The number of EH SNGs granted, number of distinct clients receiving EH SNGs, total amount granted, and total nights granted in Wellington Territorial Local Authority (TLA), for the period 01 October 2020 to 31 December 2020**

<b>Number of Grants</b>	<b>Distinct Clients</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Nights Granted</b>
2,328	687	\$7,133,298.46	35,094

**Notes:**

- TLA is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider. Where the client address is not present the location of the Ministry's service centre case managing the client has been used to approximate which TLA clients reside in.
- "Amount" shows the amount granted. The total amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent.
- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to a multiple of three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- A value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.
- 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.
- A client can have more than one grant in the time period.