



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

13 APR 2021

Dear

On 8 March 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Please provide the number of recipients in emergency housing since 2014 – present across each of the area allocations covered by Accommodation Supplement (eg Area 1, Area 2 etc).*

On 12 March 2021, the Ministry contacted you to advise that the Ministry cannot report on the number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNG) by Accommodation Supplement Area. However, the Ministry suggested refining your request to the following:

- *The number of EH SNG by Territorial Local Authority (TLA) region, broken down by gender.*

Later that day, the Ministry received your confirmation that you were satisfied with the refinement.

The EH SNG is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's need. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended, dependent on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights, Work and Income will arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation, and to determine if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people receiving EH SNGs to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation.

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 Ministry recognises that emergency housing is not a long-term solution, however, is a short-term solution for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. More information about EH SNGs is available on the Ministry's website at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/index.html.

The Ministry understands that the 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, rising 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 government, there is a wider programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) leads the programme of work relating to New Zealand's housing.

HUD's work includes planning, and with Kainga Ora, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. HUD is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring homeowners. The Government Housing Programme Dashboard tracks progress on key parts of the Government's housing programme.

The Ministry's role is to assess eligibility for public housing, provide financial support to eligible people to access and sustain suitable housing, and to provide immediate assistance to meet EH needs.

The year 2020, has seen a significant increase in demand for EH as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation where they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of EH into long-term accommodation which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

Before the December 2016 quarter, EH related hardship grants were coded in the Ministry's IT system as 'other emergency grants' which included hardship grants for various other emergency reasons. The Ministry cannot disaggregate EH hardship payments from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' prior to 01 October 2016 as it is recorded in notes on individual case files.

Please see enclosed Table One in the email that contains this response. This table shows the number of EH SNG's by TLA, broken down by gender and year for the period 1 October 2016 to 31 December 2020.

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

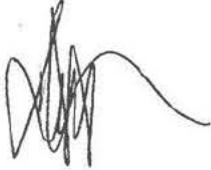
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 for the number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants provided to each TLA, 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KH', followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

 Karen Hocking
**General Manager
Housing**