



6 AUG 2021

Tēnā koe

On 7 July 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *How many nights the Ministry of Social Development booked in Horowhenua in the past 12 months, and how that compares to prior years?*
 - a. *Can you please break down into townships?*
2. *What are the current housing register stats for Horowhenua, please also break down into townships?*
3. *How many people are in Emergency Housing in Horowhenua, broken down into township?*
4. *How many children are in Emergency Housing in Horowhenua, broken down in townships?*
5. *How many people are on the waitlist for housing of any type in Horowhenua, broken down into township?*
6. *What is the median rent for ministry of social development houses in Horowhenua?*

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (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.

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 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.

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will respond to your questions in turn.

1. *How many nights the Ministry of Social Development booked in Horowhenua in the past 12 months, and how that compares to prior years?*
 - a. *Can you please break down into townships?*
3. *How many people are in Emergency Housing in Horowhenua, broken down into township?*

As advised in the refinement email sent to you on 21 July 2021, the Ministry only reports on clients at a Territorial Local authority (TLA) level. Any breakdown smaller than TLA 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, all questions regarding a breakdown of data into townships is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Please see enclosed in **Appendix A, Table One** containing the number of grants, the number of clients and the total nights funded for EH SNGs in the Horowhenua District TLA broken down by financial years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

2. *What are the current housing register stats for Horowhenua, please also break down into townships?*

As previously advised in the refinement email sent to you on 21 July 2021, this information can be found online at the following link: www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Statistics-and-Research/Public-housing-reports/Regional-factsheets-March-2021/MHUD210501-Housing-regional-Factsheets-Mar21-Central-v2.pdf.

As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

4. *How many children are in Emergency Housing in Horowhenua, broken down in townships?*

When a client applies for an EH SNG, the client will provide the appointed Case Manager or Housing Broker the total number of adults and children who will likely be staying in the emergency accommodation with them. No other information that identifies the relationships of these adults and children to the applicant is recorded for an EH SNG application, nor is confirmation of whether the children and/or adults will be staying in emergency accommodation for the duration of the EH SNG. As mentioned above, EH SNG clients may have complex family or caregiver relationships and it is not uncommon for children of one parent to stay with another family member or there could be scenarios where the same child is recorded in multiple EH SNG applications, (i.e. both parents are in separate emergency accommodation at the same time).

Children may also be counted more than once, as the Ministry are unable to verify if the child/children are included in more than one household living in emergency housing.

The Ministry centrally records the total number of children, and separately, the total number of adults who are likely to be staying in emergency accommodation. This is recorded in the main applicant's EH SNG application.

Information relating to children in emergency housing was released in the Ministry's 19/20 Annual Review to the Social Services and Community Committee. In the past, the Ministry has chosen to publish emergency housing data in line with other official reporting on hardship assistance, however, due to the increased public interest, the Ministry decided to publish operational data, which is at a point in time, or a snapshot, of children in Emergency Housing for the purposes of the Annual Review.

Operational data is taken at a point in time or a snapshot, therefore the data is taken from a narrow window and can fluctuate significantly from day to day. Any clients that are entering emergency housing on the day the reporting takes place, will not be counted within the reported snapshot of data resulting in a significant portion of EH SNG clients that will be missed in this method of reporting. Standard reporting is based on quarterly data and thus, provides a clearer indication of the trends and patterns of the Emergency Housing population. This reporting aligns with the methods used across all government agencies, and is quality assured which ensures the data provided is as accurate as possible.

Please see **Table Two** located in **Appendix A** showing the number of households and children receiving EH SNG in the Horowhenua District TLA as at 30 June 2021.

5. How many people are on the waitlist for housing of any type in Horowhenua, broken down into township?

Please note that this information is also publicly available and can be found in the Public Housing Quarterly Report, page 10 located at the following link: www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Statistics-and-Research/Public-housing-reports/Quarterly-reports/Public-Housing-Quarterly-Report-March-2021.pdf.

As this information is publicly available, this part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act.

6. What is the median rent for ministry of social development houses in Horowhenua?

It is important to note that the Ministry does not have specific 'social development houses' for Emergency Housing. Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development/HUD) 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 homeowners. The Ministry pays EH SNGs for clients that are requiring housing assistance. The Ministry has numerous Emergency Housing suppliers that are used to help house those that are in need. As such, the Ministry does not record the median rent for houses in the Horowhenua TLA, therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry.

As previously advised in the email to you dated 21 July 2021, further information about median rents in a regions can be found at the following link: <https://www.tenancy.govt.nz/>.

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 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 in regard to emergency housing in the Horowhenua District, 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

Appendix A.

Table One: The number of grants, the number of clients, and the total nights funded for EH SNG in the Horowhenua District TLA broken down by financial years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Financial Year	HOROWHENUA DISTRICT		
	Grants	Clients	Total Nights
2019	576	132	3,714
2020	1,170	198	9,362
2021	1,197	207	13,426

Table Two: The number of households and children receiving EH SNG in the Horowhenua District TLA as at 30 June 2021.

As at date	HOROWHENUA DISTRICT		
	Number of Households	Households with Children	Number of Children
30 June 2021	36	15	30

Notes:

- Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants (EH SNG).
- Territorial Local Authority (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.
- Grants are not the same as clients. A client may have received more than one grant within a period.
- The number of households is the number of distinct clients who were granted an EH SNG.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children in each Emergency Housing application and may not be reflective of their actual family size. The number of children is declared at the time of each individual EH SNG.
- When a client applies for an EH SNG, the Ministry records the household make up including the number of children.
- In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in Emergency Housing for the entire duration in Emergency Housing. Children may also be counted more than once, as the Ministry are unable to verify if the child/children are included in more than one household living in Emergency Housing.
- 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 base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- 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.