



10 AUG 2021

Tēnā koe

On 4 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 Motels have MSD occupied with homeless people in the periods 31/3/2018/19/20/21?*
- 2. How many homeless people have been placed in motels over the same periods?*
- 3. What has been the cost per year over the above periods?*
- 4. What is the projected number of people so accommodated in the period yearly going forward over 5 years?*
- 5. What is the expected value of refurbishment of these motels going forward?*
- 6. Has the Department considered building a facility to accommodate these homeless people in future?*

On 9 July 2021, the Ministry emailed you to clarify the information they were requesting. The Ministry asked if the requestor was seeking information regarding Emergency Housing. On the same day, you responded "call it what you will...".

On 20 July 2021, the Ministry emailed you to seek further clarification regarding the period of data you were after. On 21 July 2021, you advised that you were after the period "31/03/2018/2019/2020/2021".

On 30 July 2021, the Ministry emailed you to inform you that the due date of your request had been extended to 26 August 2021, as more time was required for the necessary consultation.

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 up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

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 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 as an option 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 potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html

It is important to note that over 50 percent of people accessing EH SNGs need only between one and three grants before securing more suitable 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. This may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time. Please note that the Ministry does not hold any contracts, official agreements, or arrangements with any emergency housing provider.

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing, as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 saw a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, 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 emergency housing into long-term accommodation, which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

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

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.

There is also a distinct group of people that face a range of complex issues that are a barrier, such as mental health and addictions, criminal history, or family violence. There are still others that need to live in a specific area, due to the need to access specialist care or educational needs for themselves or their family.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

To answer questions one, two and three of your request, please see enclosed **Table One** which outlines the number of distinct providers, the number of distinct clients,

the total number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted, and total amount granted for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2021.

Table One: The number of distinct providers, the number of distinct clients, the total number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted, and total amount granted for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2021.

Quarter ending	Count of Distinct Providers	Count of Distinct Clients	Count of Grants	Sum of Amounts paid out
June 2018	468	2,880	9,246	\$10,414,939.16
September 2018	570	3,840	14,019	\$15,931,191.77
December 2018	603	3,750	15,675	\$19,494,969.04
March 2019	606	4,092	17,265	\$23,079,535.77
June 2019	642	5,103	23,574	\$34,338,613.41
September 2019	717	6,063	29,265	\$41,589,048.70
December 2019	705	5,910	30,942	\$48,125,061.98
March 2020	714	6,339	32,142	\$54,069,679.57
June 2020	978	9,612	38,883	\$79,286,768.92
September 2020	954	9,822	44,583	\$82,986,198.54
December 2020	822	8,502	39,342	\$82,531,775.99
March 2021	753	8,022	34,314	\$77,805,320.63
June 2021	732	7,629	34,269	\$81,124,706.31

Notes for Table One:

- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development 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.
- The amount granted is not the amount spent.
- This is a count of distinct client not a count of grants. Clients will only be counted once in a period.

For the sake of clarity, I will answer the rest of your questions in turn.

4. *What is the projected number of people so accommodated in the period yearly going forward over 5 years?*

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants are forecasted on grants supplied and not individuals, and as such we do not have a forecasted number of people in emergency housing over the next five years. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the department or venture or Minister of the Crown or organisation and the person

dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department.

5. What is the expected value of refurbishment of these motels going forward?

The Ministry does not have contractual arrangements with moteliors and therefore, moteliors are responsible for any refurbishments. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the department or venture or Minister of the Crown or organisation and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department.

6. Has the Department considered building a facility to accommodate these homeless people in future?

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(ii) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the department or venture or Minister of the Crown or organisation and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is connected more closely with the functions of another department, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry contacted HUD and they provided the following information.

The Public Housing Plan created by HUD, provides information about the location and number of an additional 8,000 public and transitional housing places that will be delivered by June 2024.

You can find more information at the following link: www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/addressing-homelessness/aotearoa-homelessness-action-plan-2020-2023/.

The Aotearoa Homelessness Action Plan was published by HUD in February 2020 to deliver on the Government's vision that homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring. The action plan sets out a balanced and comprehensive package of actions to address homelessness with an increased focus on prevention, alongside supply, support and system enablers. Actions will build on and support work already underway around New Zealand and put in place essential changes to address gaps in responses to homelessness.

You can find more information at the following link: www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/addressing-homelessness/aotearoa-homelessness-action-plan-2020-2023/.

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 Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants statistics, 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 'Karen Hocking', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing