



15 SEP 2021

Tēnā koe

On 5 August 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information specific to the Auckland region from January 2015 to July 2021:

1. *Number of people turned away from state/public housing in Auckland*
2. *Average number of days on state/public housing wait list in Auckland*
3. *Number of applications from each suburb of Auckland for Emergency Housing*
4. *Emergency Housing applicant by age band in Auckland*
5. *Emergency Housing applicant by gender in Auckland*
6. *Emergency Housing applicants by household composition/number of people applying for one accommodation unit in Auckland*
7. *Emergency Housing applicants by Ethnicity in Auckland*
8. *Number of LGBT emergency housing applicants in Auckland (if known)*
9. *Number of emergency housing applicants with mental health complications in Auckland (if known)*
10. *Average length of stay in emergency accommodation in each suburb of Auckland Please also provide all of the above information for state/public housing (AS WELL AS emergency housing)*
11. *Please also provide a succinct definition of emergency housing in New Zealand - who is it for and why is it different to public housing?*

On 18 and 20 August the Ministry contacted you advising that question 10 of your request was being transferred in part to the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Kāinga Ora (KO) to answer. HUD will be responding to this part regarding transitional housing and KO will be responding to state housing.

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 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 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 who are 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

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. Please note that the Ministry does not hold any contracts or official agreements or arrangements with any emergency housing provider.

There are 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 them 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.

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 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of Emergency Housing into long-term accommodation, which contributed to longer durations of stays and higher costs.

The EH SNG was introduced on 1 July 2016 in order to fund temporary accommodation at places such as hostels and motels to meet people's immediate housing needs. Prior to the 2016 December quarter, emergency housing grants were coded in the Ministry's IT system as 'other emergency grants', which includes hardship grants for various other emergency reasons. The Ministry cannot disaggregate emergency housing hardship payments from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' category and any information regarding emergency housing grant payments prior to the December 2016 quarter is recorded in notes on individual case files. As such, information relating to the value of emergency housing prior to 31 December 2016 is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of 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 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.

Please note that the Ministry only started to capture information about household composition of EH SNG applicants from 1 April 2020. As such, household composition

information before 1 April 2020 has been refused under section 18(f) of the Act as Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of 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 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 lowest geographical boundary the Ministry reports on for clients receiving EH SNGs is Territorial Local Authority (TLA). The Ministry records the addresses of recipients at a local level; however, this information is kept on individual client records and is not part of the Ministry's standard reporting.

Please see enclose **Appendix A** which contains the following tables to answer question one to seven, nine and ten:

- **Table One:** The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of Distinct clients broken down by age category and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.
- **Table Two:** The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of Distinct clients broken down by gender and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.
- **Table Three:** The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of Distinct clients broken down by ethnicity and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.
- **Table Four:** The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of Distinct clients broken down by household composition and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021.
- **Table Five:** The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of Distinct clients broken down by clients receiving a JS or SLP and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.
- **Table Six:** The number of EH SNGs declined and the number of clients broken down by year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.
- **Table Seven:** Average consecutive weeks staying in emergency housing in the Auckland Super TLA broken down by year for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.
- **Table Eight:** Total clients housed and the average time to house broken down by year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

Please note that the Ministry cannot provide you with information relating to those that are receiving a EH SNG with mental health as this information is collated with "reason codes". The "reason code" as to why a client is receiving a Supported Living Payment would need to be manually checked against those clients receiving EH SNGs. Therefore, this part of your request has been refused under section 18(f) of the Act as Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of 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 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 has provided you with **Table Five** located in **Appendix A**.

8. Number of LGBT emergency housing applicants in Auckland (if known)

The Ministry does not require or collect this information. As such, this part of your request is refused under 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

11. Please also provide a succinct definition of emergency housing in New Zealand - who is it for and why is it different to public housing?

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, also known as the Social 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, we capture that as part of the assessment process. Clients who are on the Register are referred to Public Housing providers when suitable properties become available.

Transitional Housing (TH) is contracted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. Transitional Housing is temporary accommodation and support for individuals or families who are in urgent need of housing. Transitional Housing provides a warm, dry, short term housing for people and families who have an urgent need for a place to stay.

Sometimes TH looks like motels (e.g. repurposed motel facilities), and sometimes this would be stand-alone houses or apartments purpose built for TH. Either way, they are

run by community providers, who are contracted by HUD to offer further support for those who stay there. Clients in Emergency Housing may be referred to a TH provider when a place becomes available.

The Income Related Rent Subsidy is paid to Public Housing providers – namely Kainga Ora and Community Housing Providers. These are sustainable/permanent housing options for people on low incomes, where tenants pay an income-related rent rate (25% of income).

People living in Transitional Housing contribute 25% of their income. It is intended that families and individuals stay in Transitional Housing for an average of around 12 weeks. Clients also receive a further 12-week support once they've found a more permanent place to live.

In addition to temporary accommodation, people in Transitional Housing are provided with support services to help them address their needs and move back into long-term accommodation.

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 and attachments 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 regarding Emergency Housing in the Auckland region from January 2015 to July 2021, 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 EH SNGs granted, the number of distinct clients broken down by age category and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

Age Group	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021 (year to June)	
	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients
16-19	603	150	1,077	216	1,779	291	2,481	396	1,728	270
20-24	2,103	540	2,463	603	4,410	861	6,882	1,233	3,087	624
25-29	2,886	684	3,399	735	6,762	993	10,074	1,416	4,182	717
30-34	2,394	546	3,150	630	6,240	843	10,380	1,371	4,077	675
35-39	2,457	501	2,520	453	5,109	663	8,118	1,032	3,363	525
40-44	1,806	387	2,427	423	4,425	537	6,462	792	2,658	384
45-49	1,839	306	1,512	282	3,189	423	5,754	672	2,319	312
50-54	1,122	228	1,101	210	2,391	297	3,468	444	1,554	234
55-59	681	141	741	141	1,506	201	2,736	354	1,158	168
60-64	330	69	405	84	969	117	1,719	207	765	102
65+	435	81	399	69	843	105	1,290	180	672	105
Total	16,656	3,558	19,194	3,771	37,623	5,181	59,367	7,803	25,557	4,035

Notes for Table One.

- Care must be exercised when making comparisons across time periods of the number or proportion of clients in various age groups.

Table Two: The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of distinct clients broken down by gender and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

Gender	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021 (year to June)	
	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients
Gender Diverse	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	12	27	6
Female	10,650	2,229	12,678	2,421	24,315	3,288	37,212	4,668	17,382	2,751
Male	6,006	1,335	6,516	1,353	13,305	1,893	22,095	3,126	8,151	1,284
Total	16,656	3,558	19,194	3,771	37,623	5,181	59,367	7,803	25,557	4,035

Notes for Table Two.

- From 2 December 2019, MSD has three options to record a clients or child's gender: Female, Gender Diverse, or Male.

Table Three: The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of distinct clients broken down by ethnicity and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

Ethnicity	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021 (year to June)	
	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients
Māori	8,982	1,812	9,882	1,887	19,482	2,622	30,006	3,774	12,444	1,959
NZ European	2,106	522	2,568	534	4,362	654	7,308	1,074	3,297	507
Pacific Island	3,624	744	4,425	813	8,736	1,176	13,806	1,752	6,279	981
Other	1,464	357	1,503	369	3,426	474	5,352	759	2,112	357
Unspecified	483	132	819	180	1,614	270	2,895	468	1,425	243
Total	16,656	3,558	19,194	3,771	37,623	5,181	59,367	7,803	25,557	4,035

Notes for Table Three.

- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.
- Multiple selected ethnicities are then prioritised into a hierarchy. The Māori ethnicity has the highest priority in this hierarchy, followed by Pacific peoples. NZ European has the lowest priority.
- This is to ensure that smaller and politically significant ethnic groups do not get overwhelmed by the larger ethnic groups.
- A single ethnicity is assigned to an individual based on this hierarchy.

Table Four: The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of distinct clients broken down by household composition and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Household Size	2020		2021 (year to June)	
	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients
Couple no children	2,133	546	1,068	261
Couple with Children	6,222	1,005	3,966	663
Single no Children	19,896	3,846	8,916	1,656
Single with Children	18,540	2,757	11,604	1,944
Unknown	12,573	2,370	0	3
Total	59,367	7,803	25,560	4,035

Notes for Table Four.

- Household composition of EH-SNG applicants was not captured prior to 1 April 2020.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children staying in Emergency Housing and may not be reflective of their actual family size.

Table Five: The number of EH SNGs granted, the number of distinct clients broken down by clients receiving a JS or SLP and year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

Service	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021 (year to June)	
	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients	Grants	Distinct Clients
Jobseeker Support HC&D	3,669	789	3,507	777	7,035	1,005	9,615	1,377	4,224	690
Supported Living Payment HC&D	1,968	357	1,917	333	3,564	450	5,481	630	2,631	354
Total	5,634	1,137	5,424	1,104	10,599	1,431	15,096	1,992	6,852	1,029

Notes for Table Five.

- Jobseeker Support HC&D related includes Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability and Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury or Disability Hardship
- Supported Living Payment HC&D is Supported Living Payment Health Condition & Disability and Carers

Table Six: The number of EH SNGs declined and the number of clients broken down by year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021

2017		2018		2019		2020		2021 (year to June)	
Declines	Distinct Clients	Declines	Distinct Clients	Declines	Distinct Clients	Declines	Distinct Clients	Declines	Distinct Clients
153	144	213	192	309	288	1,104	1,002	474	441

Table Seven: Average consecutive weeks staying in Emergency housing in the Auckland Super TLA broken down by year for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (year to June)
Average Weeks	Average Weeks	Average Weeks	Average Weeks	Average Weeks
4	5	6	9	11

Notes for Table Seven.

- This consecutive week's calculation is based on the clients most recent grant within a year. They may have had multiple grants in a year.
- A client's total stay may cross more than one year. The length of stay at the time of their last grant in each year is what is used to calculate the average time here.
- Prior to 29 March 2020 Consecutive weeks is based on the number of weeks in which the client has received an EH SNG. After 4 weeks with no grants, the consecutive count is reset to zero and a new spell in EH is begun.
- Post 29 March 2020 Consecutive weeks is calculated based on the check in and check out dates for which emergency housing grants have been granted.

Table Eight: Total clients housed and the average time to house broken down by year in the Auckland Super TLA for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

2017		2018		2019		2020		2021 (year to June)	
Number Housed	Average Days to House	Number Housed	Average Days to House	Number Housed	Average Days to House	Number Housed	Average Days to House	Number Housed	Average Days to House
2,478	132	2,724	156	3,324	210	3,141	260	1,506	292

Notes for Table Eight.

- Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is based on the main applicant's residential address as at the time housed.
- This includes applications both on the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.
- This includes Priority A and Priority B applications.
- The average days is the number of days (calendar) it takes to for an application to accept an offer of social housing from the point they were first confirmed on the register as an A or B priority until housed.

Notes for all Tables.

- Year is 01 January to 31 December. The year 2021 only includes 01 January to 30 June.
- Emergency housing is paid as a Special Needs Grant
- Grants and declines are not the same as clients. A client may have more than one grant or decline in a period.
- TLA is based on the client's residential address as at the time of grant or decline. 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. 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.