



8 April 2022

Tēnā koe

On 2 March 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many people have dropped off the social housing waitlist over the past years, broken down by year?*
- *Could we also have this information broken down by reason for dropping off the waitlist (eg. the person found private rental accommodation), and level of assessed priority (A20, A19, A18 et al)?*
- *On average, how long were those people on the waitlist? What was the longest length of time someone spent on the waitlist before dropping off?*
- *How many people on the social housing waitlist over the past five years have since moved into public housing?*

Please see the **attached Excel spreadsheet** which contains the following tables in response to your request:

- **Table One:** The number of housing register exits where the client was not placed in Social Housing from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021, broken down by calendar year and reason for exit.
- **Table Two:** The number of housing register exits where the client was not placed in Social Housing from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021, broken down by calendar year ending, priority rating and reason for exit.
- **Table Three:** The average number of days a client is on the Social Housing Register before an exit is recorded for reasons other than being placed in Social Housing from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021, broken down by calendar year ending and average number of days.

- **Table Four:** The number of clients on the Social Housing Register that have been housed in public housing from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021, broken down by calendar year ending.
- **Table Five:** The maximum number of days on the Social Housing Register before exiting for a reason other than being placed in Social Housing for clients who were placed on the Register from 8 August 2015.

I would like to address your question about the longest length of time that someone spent on the waitlist before dropping off. The Ministry took over the Social Housing Register from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2015, meaning that the Ministry does not have access to a client's activity on the Register prior to 2015. While researching the longest wait time on the Social Housing Register, the Ministry identified a wait time of 8608 days. Upon further investigation into the client's file, it was determined that this client moved off the waitlist and into Social Housing in 2020. As the Ministry is not confident in the accuracy of wait time data prior to our taking over the Register in 2015, the Ministry has supplied you with **Table Five**, which reflects a wait time that the Ministry believes to be accurate.

The Public Housing Register (the Register) consists of the Housing Register and the Transfer Register. The Housing Register records those who are not currently in Public Housing but who have been assessed as eligible for Public Housing. The Transfer Register represents those already in Public Housing who are eligible to be rehoused, generally due to a change in circumstances prompting a move to somewhere more appropriate to their needs. The longest wait time provided to you in **Table Five** represents a client on the Transfer Register, a client who was already an existing tenant. The impact of the housing crisis on the Register is that people without a home are much likelier to be prioritised for placement in available public housing.

There is a high demand for housing – Emergency, Transitional and Public housing – across the country, which is reflected in the enclosed data. The Ministry has strong relationships with local government, non-government and other community organisations working together to support people who present with housing needs, as well as offering other wrap-around services people may need.

Many factors contribute to the numbers presented in the Public Housing Register for the years in question. The needs of New Zealanders are changing, and many families are finding it harder to access the private rental market. This is particularly true for those who have been renting for a long time and are now looking to buy their first home in an increasingly competitive and expensive housing market.

The Public Housing Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live. This includes ensuring the family has the right number of bedrooms, is close to essential services such as schools, and that the accommodation meets any disability needs if appropriate. Those assessed as having the greater need for housing will be prioritised higher.

Nationally there is an issue of housing demand exceeding supply. More housing is needed to support the most vulnerable people in our community and the Government, through a number of agencies, is working to increase the amount of Public Housing. More information about Public Housing is contained in HUD's quarterly reports which can be found at the following link: [www.hud.govt.nz/research-and-publications/statistics-and-research/public-housing-reports/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/research-and-publications/statistics-and-research/public-housing-reports/).

Further information regarding the assessment of a client's housing need, housing need priority ratings and the calculation of overall priority ratings can be found on the Work and Income website at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html).

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'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 regarding the Social Housing Register, 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  
**Group General Manager  
Housing**