



1 December 2022

Tēnā koe

On 3 November 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *How many reports/ complaints has MSD received from those in Emergency Housing regarding "Safety Concerns"*
- *You'd like that broken down by region.*
- *Date range - January 2022 – Sept 2022 ( or earlier later if available)*
- *You'd also like us to ask if we have data on how many people have been relocated from emergency housing due to safety concerns.*

The Ministry's role is to ensure that people with no other housing options are supported into emergency accommodation, usually motels. We expect our clients to receive the same quality of service as any other paying guest staying in accommodation. Likewise, we expect our clients to respect the rules that any of those accommodation suppliers have in place.

The Ministry has various avenues for clients or members of the public to voice their complaints or concerns. You can find an overview of the complaints processes on the Ministry's website at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/index.html).

Any violent or criminal behaviour should be immediately raised with the New Zealand Police and progressed through the justice system by phoning 111 in an emergency, or 105 when a matter is non-urgent.

An Emergency Housing (EH) occupant can contact any Ministry staff member to lodge a complaint about an EH supplier. Once the complaint has been lodged, it is managed by the appropriate Regional Housing Manager or delegated staff member. The Regional Housing Manager will determine whether there are any immediate safety risks for the occupant and decide whether the occupant needs to be relocated to another EH supplier. Please note that relocation in this scenario does not necessarily mean relocation to a

different area, instead to a different supplier. The Ministry will work with the occupant and supplier to resolve the complaint, where possible.

If an EH supplier has been the subject of multiple complaints, it may raise concerns about the ongoing health, safety, and wellbeing of EH occupants. In these situations, Ministry staff may advise clients that such a supplier is not recommended, though it is the client's choice whether they stay there.

Please find **Table One** below, which shows the total number of EH complaints made by EH clients regarding safety concerns for the period 1 January 2022 to 30 September 2022, broken down by region.

**Table One: Total number of EH complaints made by EH clients regarding safety concerns for the period 1 January 2022 to 30 September 2022, broken down by region**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
Auckland	S
Bay of Plenty	9
Canterbury	0
Central	0
East Coast	S
National Office	0
Nelson	0
Northland	0
Southern	S
Taranaki	S
Waikato	9
Wellington	S
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

**Notes for Table:**

- This is a count of complaints, not clients. A client could make a complaint multiple times within the period.
- The region is determined by the region of the office in which the complaint was received.
- 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.
- In certain circumstances low number may potentially lead to individuals being identified. Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of

clients have been suppressed. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.

I am unable to provide you with the number of clients who have been relocated from EH due to safety concerns as it is held in notes on individual case files. EH clients may be moved for a number of reasons and the move may not have been as a result of a complaint. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. 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 principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

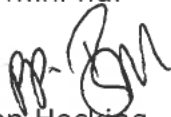
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 complaints made by EH clients, 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**