

**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

2 June 2022

Dear

On 4 April 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*Under the Official Information Act 1982, we wish to understand more about the number of persons being accommodated in licensed hostels/emergency accommodation in Auckland and Wellington as well as the management of homeless and finally, a question relating to benefits going to households of patched gang benefits:*

1. *Since 2017 by month and year, how many persons are being accommodated within*

- (a) licensed hostels*
- (b) other emergency accommodation*

*in the following postcodes:*

- (a) 1010*
- (b) 6011*

2. *How much money since 2017 by month and year, is being spent accommodating persons in*

- (a) licensed hostels*
- (b) other emergency accommodation within the following postcodes:*
  - i. 1010*
  - ii. 6011*

3. *How many persons since 2017 by month and year, have been evicted from*

- (a) *licensed hostels*
- (b) *other emergency accommodation*

*within the following postcodes:*

- (a) *1010*
- (b) *6011*

4. *How many persons since 2017 by month and year, Police contacted MSD about who are in*

- (a) *licensed hostels*
- (b) *other emergency accommodation*

*within the following postcodes:*

- (c) *1010*
- (d) *6011*

5. *How many persons since 2017 by month and year, are considered to be homeless/living on the streets within the following postcodes:*

- (a) *1010*
- (b) *6011*

6. *How many interactions (ie physically seen and talked to) by month, have Ministry staff had with persons who are homeless/living on the streets within the following postcodes since 2017:*

- (a) *1010*
- (b) *6011*

7. *How many Ministry staff on an FTE basis, have been employed in offices since 2017 by month and year, within the following postcodes:*

- (a) *1010*
- (b) *6011*

8. *Since 26 October 2017, by month and by year, how much has been paid in benefits by benefit type, to households comprising patched gang members and gang prospect members, noting the last accessible report, 'Adult gang members and their children contact with Ministry of Social Development service lines' used 2014 data. For clarification, we are not looking for a report (unless there is one in the scope of Q9 below), but for a table of sums.*

9. *Since 26 October 2017, copies of all reports, briefings, analysis, studies, emails etc, that relate to the amount of benefits being paid to households comprising patched gang members and gang prospect members.*

We will respond to your questions in turn.

1. *Since 2017 by month and year, how many persons are being accommodated within*
  - a. *licensed hostels*
  - b. *other emergency accommodation*

*in the following postcodes:*

  - (c) *1010*
  - (d) *6011*
2. *How much money since 2017 by month and year, is being spent accommodating persons in*
  - a. *licensed hostels*
  - b. *other emergency accommodation within the following postcodes:*
    - i. *1010*
    - ii. *6011*

Regarding these two questions, please find the following data table in the enclosed spreadsheet:

**Table One: The number of grants, clients and amount granted for Emergency Housing in Wellington City and Auckland City Territorial Local Authorities (TLA) between 1 January 2017 and 31 March 2022, broken down by TLA, month and accommodation type.**

On 6 May 2022, you were advised that a breakdown by postcode is not available as the Ministry does not store the data in a way that allows reporting by postcode. This is because the Ministry does not hold the geographical location of each Emergency Housing supplier. Instead, the Ministry usually reports the location of clients who have received an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant. This aspect of your request is, therefore, refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and the Ministry has no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. You agreed to be provided with a breakdown by Territorial Local Authority (TLA) instead.

Please note that the breakdown 'by accommodation' does not specify whether the hostel is a 'licensed hostel'. Whether a hostel is licensed or not may be held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether it would be able to respond to the request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. The

Ministry has concluded that, in either case, its ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

*3. How many persons since 2017 by month and year, have been evicted from*

*a. licensed hostels*

*b. other emergency accommodation*

*within the following postcodes:*

*(c) 1010*

*(d) 6011*

Evictions from Emergency Housing are a last resort and should not be taken lightly. Moteliers and the Ministry must work through a process together before an eviction can be issued. More information is available under question 15. here: <https://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Community-and-Public-Housing/COVID-19-Essential-services/Frequently-Asked-Questions-for-housing-and-related-service-providers-Alert-Level-4.pdf>.

Details regarding the eviction of clients from Emergency Housing are held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether it would be able to respond to the request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. The Ministry has concluded that, in either case, its ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

*4. How many persons since 2017 by month and year, Police contacted MSD about who are in*

*a. licensed hostels*

*b. other emergency accommodation*

*within the following postcodes:*

*c. 1010*

*d. 6011*

For the same reasons as under 3.), this information is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it is held in notes on individual case files.

However, the Ministry records the number of complaints made by clients in Emergency Housing and suppliers of Emergency Housing. Recent information can be viewed here:

[https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/WQ\\_01969\\_2022/1969-2022-nicola-willis-to-the-minister-for-social-development](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/WQ_01969_2022/1969-2022-nicola-willis-to-the-minister-for-social-development).

Once a complaint has been made, it is lodged into the Ministry's complaints register and escalated to the regional office from which the complaint is coming from. The regional office then briefs the Regional Housing Managers who follow up with suppliers and clients to resolve the complaint.

*5. How many persons since 2017 by month and year, are considered to be homeless/living on the streets within the following postcodes:*

*a. 1010*

*b. 6011*

The Ministry does not hold the number of people who are homeless. This aspect of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act. The Ministry has no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

The Ministry approached the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for comment and has been advised that HUD does not hold this information either. However, HUD advised that it contracted the University of Otago to produce an estimate of severe housing deprivation using 2018 Census data. The estimate is broken down to Regional Council level and to Auckland Local Boards, and is available on the HUD website:

<https://www.hud.govt.nz/research-and-publications/statistics-and-research/2018-severe-housing-deprivation-estimate/>.

*6. How many interactions (ie physically seen and talked to) by month, have Ministry staff had with persons who are homeless/living on the streets within the following postcodes since 2017:*

*a. 1010*

*b. 6011*

The Ministry does not generally record the number of physical interactions with homeless people. This aspect of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act. The Ministry has no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

*7. How many Ministry staff on an FTE basis, have been employed in offices since 2017 by month and year, within the following postcodes:*

*a. 1010*

*b. 6011*

Please refer to **Table Two**, enclosed in **Appendix One**, which shows the number of Ministry employees (permanent and fixed-term), employed in offices within the postcodes 1010 and 6011, from January 2017 to end of April 2022, broken down by month.

8. *Since 26 October 2017, by month and by year, how much has been paid in benefits by benefit type, to households comprising patched gang members and gang prospect members, noting the last accessible report, 'Adult gang members and their children contact with Ministry of Social Development service lines' used 2014 data. For clarification, we are not looking for a report (unless there is one in the scope of Q9 below), but for a table of sums.*

The Ministry does not centrally hold information on whether clients are gang members. If and when such information is recorded, it would be held in notes on individual case files, and the refusal ground of section 18(f), outlined in our response to your third question, applies to this portion of your request.

For further information please refer to the following responses to Written Parliamentary Questions received by and responded to by the Minister for Social Development and Employment:

- [https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/WQ\\_23735\\_2021/23735-2021-nicole-mckee-to-the-minister-for-social-development](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/WQ_23735_2021/23735-2021-nicole-mckee-to-the-minister-for-social-development)
- [https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/WQ\\_31954\\_2021/31954-2021-hon-louise-upston-to-the-minister-for-social](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/document/WQ_31954_2021/31954-2021-hon-louise-upston-to-the-minister-for-social)

9. *Since 26 October 2017, copies of all reports, briefings, analysis, studies, emails etc, that relate to the amount of benefits being paid to households comprising patched gang members and gang prospect members.*

In order to provide emails, the Ministry would need to divert a significant number of staff members from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The collation of emails regarding this topic would need to be done manually by each staff member by searching their own email inbox, including within generic team inboxes that may hold relevant information. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it requires substantial manual collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether it would be able to respond to the request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. The Ministry has concluded that, in either case, its ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Regarding documents, an aide-memoire (file number REP/22/3/235) dated 22 March 2022, titled *Justice Sector meeting on 23 March 2022*, references the subject of your request in passing in its Appendix titled 'Appendix One - MSD Action and Response on Gang Involvement to date', by referring to a report dated 22 July 2015, titled *Ministry of Social Development Approach to the Gangs Action Plan*. This report advised:

- *'Service delivery units such as Work and Income and Child, Youth and Family do not record gang membership in any coded fields. This means that any data on gang membership or linkages we hold is currently captured*

*informally and is dependent on input from Frontline staff. For example, in some cases gang-related information is captured in free text fields in the Child, Youth and Family case management system. In the situations where it is recorded, it is often reliant on the judgement of frontline staff or service providers. This makes such information difficult to verify and accurately maintain.'*

- *'The recent Insights MSD data match that utilised New Zealand Police information on known gang members as at July 2014 (estimated at 3,960) is the main source of information we have on services provided to this population. The data match provided us with an insight into how many of the known adult gang members and how many of their children, come into contact with MSD's service arms, and the types and estimated total cost of contacts that occur.'*

Results of this data match are further outlined in a Ministry publication titled *'Adult gang members and their children's contact with Ministry of Social Development service lines'*, dated March 2016. This publication provides on page 2 (page 6 of the entire document) statistics about the receipt of benefits by gang members. The publication is available here:

<https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/research-on-gangs-and-their-cost/gang-members-contact-with-the-msd-service-lines-for-publication-march-2016.docx>

Please note that this document states on page 20 that it is not possible to produce absolutely accurate figures, and that, therefore, caution needs to be taken in interpreting all figures presented in the report.

Further, a document titled *'Rapid Evidence Review: Gang Involvement in NZ and MSD response'*, dated 23 February 2022, mentions the subject of your request in passing. It states that it is *'difficult to identify the full range of services catering to the gang affiliated population because MSD does not systematically collect gang related information. However, we know that from 1993 – 2014:*

- *92% known gang members received main benefits for an average of 8.9 years*
- *59% of all gang members had benefit spells that included a total of 7,075 dependent children.'*

The principles and purposes of the Act 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
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

The Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. MSD 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 its 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 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Short', written in a cursive style.

Stephanie Short  
**Manager**  
**Official and Parliamentary Information**


**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

**Appendix One**
**Table Two: The number of Ministry employees (permanent and fixed-term), employed in offices within the postcodes 1010 and 6011, from January 2017 to end of April 2022, broken down by month**

Date	Number of employees (Headcount)		Full-time Equivalent (FTE)	
	Street Postal Code		Street Postal Code	
	1010	6011	1010	6011
31/01/2017	82	2,261	79.3	2,222.4
28/02/2017	81	2,278	78.5	2,237.5
31/03/2017	81	2,293	78.6	2,251.6
30/04/2017	70	1,815	69.1	1,784.5
31/05/2017	69	1,824	68.2	1,793.4
30/06/2017	69	1,797	68.2	1,768.4
31/07/2017	70	1,812	69.4	1,783.7
31/08/2017	66	1,824	65.3	1,797.0
30/09/2017	62	1,810	61.3	1,782.4
31/10/2017	62	1,813	61.5	1,786.0
30/11/2017	61	1,850	60.3	1,823.8
31/12/2017	64	1,873	63.5	1,846.5
31/01/2018	64	1,894	63.5	1,866.3
28/02/2018	63	1,866	62.5	1,834.9
31/03/2018	64	1,863	63.5	1,832.5
30/04/2018	62	1,894	61.5	1,864.5
31/05/2018	60	1,900	59.5	1,870.9
30/06/2018	48	1,878	47.6	1,849.3
31/07/2018	48	1,871	47.4	1,841.9
31/08/2018	49	1,878	48.3	1,847.8
30/09/2018	49	1,895	48.5	1,866.1
31/10/2018	49	1,848	48.5	1,820.8
30/11/2018	49	1,880	48.5	1,853.6
31/12/2018	50	1,872	49.5	1,847.1
31/01/2019	49	1,902	48.5	1,877.4
28/02/2019	48	1,908	47.7	1,882.0
31/03/2019	50	1,907	49.7	1,879.8
30/04/2019	50	1,951	49.7	1,924.5
31/05/2019	49	1,968	48.7	1,940.6
30/06/2019	51	1,985	50.7	1,956.7
31/07/2019	51	2,019	50.7	1,989.8
31/08/2019	51	2,026	50.7	1,996.9
30/09/2019	53	2,053	52.7	2,021.3
31/10/2019	52	2,058	51.7	2,025.3
30/11/2019	61	2,072	60.7	2,041.1

Date	Number of employees (Headcount)		Full-time Equivalent (FTE)	
	Street Postal Code		Street Postal Code	
	1010	6011	1010	6011
31/12/2019	61	2,071	60.7	2,041.2
31/01/2020	64	2,087	63.7	2,056.7
29/02/2020	64	2,119	63.7	2,088.5
31/03/2020	66	2,163	65.7	2,132.0
30/04/2020	65	2,177	64.7	2,146.1
31/05/2020	64	2,187	63.7	2,157.5
30/06/2020	63	2,216	62.7	2,187.2
31/07/2020	66	2,263	65.7	2,231.9
31/08/2020	70	2,286	69.5	2,255.7
30/09/2020	75	2,292	74.5	2,259.4
31/10/2020	81	2,333	80.5	2,301.5
30/11/2020	85	2,371	84.4	2,339.0
31/12/2020	84	2,388	83.4	2,357.4
31/01/2021	82	2,408	81.4	2,377.2
28/02/2021	91	2,450	90.4	2,418.2
31/03/2021	93	2,455	92.4	2,422.4
30/04/2021	110	2,440	109.4	2,406.0
31/05/2021	110	2,459	109.4	2,424.3
30/06/2021	122	2,482	121.4	2,446.1
31/07/2021	127	2,493	126.4	2,457.8
31/08/2021	132	2,503	131.4	2,469.8
30/09/2021	132	2,486	131.6	2,451.2
31/10/2021	133	2,471	132.6	2,433.8
30/11/2021	139	2,504	138.6	2,468.5
31/12/2021	137	2,476	136.6	2,441.7
31/01/2022	136	2,467	135.6	2,432.1
28/02/2022	136	2,465	135.6	2,429.7
31/03/2022	138	2,466	137.6	2,429.8
30/04/2022	141	2,454	140.2	2,416.4

**Notes:**

- The information is sourced from the Ministry's Employee Directory System (Global) using Street Post code of the office location of staff.
- The first 3 months of 2017 included Child Youth and Family before it left MSD and Oranga Tamariki was formed.