



21 June 2022

Tēnā koe

On 6 June 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding the current Social Housing waiting list data for the Dunedin city area:

- 1. Could you tell me how many people are on the current waiting list and waiting for a 1 bedroom unit/house in the following categories A17, A18, A19, A20*
- 2. Could you also tell me how many people are on the current waiting list and waiting for a 2 bedroom unit/house in the following categories A17, A18, A19, A20, and*
- 3. Could you please also tell me the current longest wait for an individual application in each of the 8 categories*

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, which is 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.

When New Zealanders are in need of public housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer 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. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register (the Register). While the Ministry completes the housing assessments which inform the Register, responsibility for funding and supply sits with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Kainga Ora, respectively. More information about the Register is available here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.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, this is captured as part of the assessment process.

The Ministry assesses the client's need for Public Housing through the Social Allocation System (SAS). The SAS assessment covers five criteria: Adequacy, suitability, affordability, accessibility, and sustainability. Each category has a rating from one to four with four being the highest level of risk. The rating across these five criteria makes up a priority rating of up to 20. You can find more information regarding the SAS assessment criteria at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html.

Clients who approach the Ministry seeking public housing are offered other assistance appropriate to their situation. This can include support to secure private rentals including rent and bond, Accommodation Supplement or Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNG), for emergency housing.

EH SNGs are 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. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

The Ministry provides ongoing support to help people secure a long-term housing solution, including looking into public housing and private rental accommodation as an option, depending on the individual's circumstances. EH SNGs are short-term in nature. The policy is aimed at encouraging clients to continue to search for their own accommodation options.

More information about emergency housing can be found on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html.

Public and Community housing providers are responsible for matching those on the Public Housing Register with available properties. They have discretion to select the household they believe will fit best with that property based on a number of factors. Because there is a shortage of appropriate public houses available to match people's individual needs, households with a high housing need will not always necessarily be placed before other households with lower priority ratings. Often the factors that cause a household to be in high housing need will be the very factors that work against it in the selection and placement process. For example, a large family that requires a modified house in an area where there are few public houses available would have more difficulty being placed than a household with a lower priority rating in an area with greater supply of public houses.

Please see enclosed the following two tables in **Appendix A**:

- **Table One:** The number of Primary Applicants on the Public Housing Register in Dunedin City Territorial Local Authority who require a one or two bedroom house and have a priority rating of A17 or higher, as at 31 March 2022.
- **Table Two:** The number of Primary Applicants with a priority rating of A17 or higher housed into a one or two bedroom public housing property in the Dunedin City Territorial Local Authority, and the maximum time to house during the quarter ending 31 March 2022.

Please note, the Ministry is unable to provide the current wait times on the Public Housing register as this information is live and is in the notes of individual case files. 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.

However, in the spirit of being helpful, the Ministry has provided you with the maximum time to house.

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'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 the Public Housing waitlist, 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
**Group General Manager
Housing**

Appendix A.

Table One: The number of Primary Applicants on the Public Housing Register in Dunedin City Territorial Local Authority (TLA) who require a one or two bedroom house and have a priority rating of A17 or higher, as at 31 March 2022.

Priority rating	Required Bedrooms	
	1	2
A17	15	12
A18	18	9
A19	6	S
A20	S	S
Total	42	30

Notes for Table One:

- TLA is based on the main applicant's residential address as at the end of each period.

Table Two: The number of Primary Applicants with a priority rating of A17 or higher housed into a one or two bedroom public housing property in the Dunedin City TLA, and the maximum time to house during the quarter ending 31 March 2022.

Priority Rating at the time of being housed	Required Bedrooms			
	1		2	
	Total Housed	Max Time to House (days)	Total Housed	Max Time to House (days)
A17	0	0	0	0
A18	0	0	S	130
A19	0	0	0	0
A20	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	S	130

Notes for Table Two:

- TLA is based on the tenancy address.

Notes for both Tables One and Two:

- This data includes clients on both the Housing Register and Transfer Register
- This data only includes priority categories A17-A20.
- 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 numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.