



18 April 2023

Tēnā koe

On 15 March 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *What is the current housing stock for accessible Kāinga Ora homes?
  - a. *I would like the total number, and also a breakdown of the numbers in the different regions in Aotearoa and what accessibility features are in the homes (please provide it in machine-readable format eg. csv)**
2. *How many people are on the waiting list for an accessible Kāinga Ora house? (The Housing Register published on MSD's website does not include a breakdown of the number of people seeking accessible housing.)*
3. *What is the average wait time for someone with accessibility requirements from the time they apply with MSD until moving into an accessible home?
  - a. *I understand that different people have different accessibility needs and this might impact who is on the waitlist and how long they need to wait for, so any additional context or information around this would be helpful. I also appreciate the waitlist can change depending on when people get into a home, so any specific timeframes will also be helpful.**

On 17 March 2023, the Ministry transferred the first part of your request to Kāinga Ora as information about Kāinga Ora housing stock is believed to be held by their agency.

On 14 April 2023, the Ministry emailed you to advise that your request is granted in part and that more time was required to prepare the information for release.

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 eligible for public housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The Housing Register is made up of people who are not currently in public housing but who have been assessed as being eligible. The Transfer Register consists of people who want to move from one public house to another, generally due to a change in circumstances prompting a move to somewhere more appropriate to their needs. 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](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.html).

The Ministry assesses the client's need for Public Housing through the Social Allocation System (SAS). The assessment looks at both an applicant's need to move, and their ability to afford, access, and sustain a private rental. Each housing application is given a Priority Rating based on their housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria. Priority A applicants are considered to be 'at risk' with a severe and persistent housing need. Priority B applicants are those with a 'serious housing need' that is significant and persistent. If there are many barriers to them accessing a private rental, this will also be reflected in a higher need rating.

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 SAS includes identifying modifications that would be required for a property to be suitable accommodation for an applicant. The types of modifications required address varying levels of accessibility needs, such as bathroom facility modifications or property access (such as a ramp). 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](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html).

Once the application is completed and live in the system, it includes the letting areas, Priority Rating, and property typology needs (such as whether a modified property is required). Public houses are allocated on needs basis, not a 'first in, first served' basis. The length of time someone will be waiting for a house depends on their Priority Rating under the assessment, as well as the availability of a house that suits their needs in a location they are willing to live.

Applicants are matched to properties based on their level of need and the availability of a property that fits their selected letting areas and the typology

of house required. Applicants that require a modified home may spend a longer period of time on the Register before placement due to a lower availability of modified accommodation. Public housing landlords (such as Kainga Ora or Community Housing Providers) are responsible for matching the specific client to the property, and sign a lease agreement with the applicant directly.

The Ministry has interpreted your request for 'accessibility requirements' to refer to people on the Housing Register who have requested a modified home.

Please see **Tables One and Two** below which show the number of applicants on the Register who have requested a modified house and the average number of days before they are placed in a home, as at 28 February 2023.

**Table One: The number of applicants on the Register who have requested a modified house, as at 28 February 2023**

<b>As at month end</b>	<b>Number of applicants</b>
February 2023	1,887

**Table Two: The average number of days for applicants who have requested a modified house to be placed in the month of February 2023**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Average wait time in days</b>
February 2023	434

**Notes for Tables:**

- The Register consists of the Housing Register and the Transfer Register.
- These tables only include priority A and B applications.
- The average time to be placed in a house is calculated as the total number of days to house all applications divided by the number of applications.
- 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 relation to your request for 'the average wait time for someone with accessibility requirements from the time they apply with the Ministry until moving into an accessible home', please note that the Ministry does not record the nature of the housing that the client has entered. This is why the Ministry has provided the average number of days for an applicant to be placed into any type of housing.

The Ministry does not record whether a Kāinga Ora property is modified or non-modified as this information is held by Kāinga Ora. As the administration of the Housing Register is the Ministry's responsibility, Kāinga Ora does not record the length of time an applicant spends on the Register prior to being placed in a modified home. As such, I am refusing your request for this level of detail under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

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](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.

Ngā mihi nui



Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager  
Housing**