



6 June 2023

Tēnā koe

On 9 May 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. What has been the longest number of weeks, if any, that an individual has remained in emergency housing for quarterly over the past six years?*
- 2. What is the average number of weeks that an individual has remained in emergency housing for quarterly over the past six years?*

It was clarified with you that for question 2 you would like the average duration of stay, broken down by quarter for the last six years, and that your request was for the districts of Buller, Grey, and Westland.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and many people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing 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.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is 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. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

For both the maximum consecutive stay and the average duration of stay in Emergency Housing, please see **Appendix One**. You will note that a client's stay may cross over from quarter to quarter. The data table shows the length of stay at the time of their last EH SNG in each quarter.

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 consecutive stays in Emergency Housing, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Karen Hocking
**Group General Manager
Housing**

Appendix One

The maximum and average consecutive weeks stay in Emergency Housing for Buller District, Grey District and Westland District Territorial Local Authorities during the period 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2022.

Notes:

- Emergency Housing is paid as a Special Needs Grant (EH SNG).
- The consecutive weeks calculation is operational and as such can change slightly over time.
- A client's total stay may cross more than one quarter. The length of stay at the time of their last grant in each quarter is what is used to calculate the maximum time here.
- Prior to 29 March 2020 consecutive weeks is based on the number of weeks in which the client has received an EH SNG. After 4 weeks with no grants, the consecutive count is reset to zero and a new spell in EH is begun.
- Post 29 March 2020 Consecutive weeks is calculated based on the check in and check out dates for which emergency housing grants have been granted.

Quarter Ending	Max Consecutive Weeks	Average Consecutive Weeks
March 2017	2	1.3
June 2017	5	1.7
September 2017	5	1.8
December 2017	4	1.6
March 2018	5	2.1
June 2018	7	3.4
September 2018	13	3.1
December 2018	15	3.5
March 2019	14	3.1
June 2019	21	4.5
September 2019	27	6.2
December 2019	30	7.1
March 2020	33	5.2
June 2020	46	7.2
September 2020	60	9.9
December 2020	73	12.0
March 2021	82	15.5
June 2021	68	14.8
September 2021	81	17.3
December 2021	88	20.7

Quarter Ending	Max Consecutive Weeks	Average Consecutive Weeks
March 2022	99	22.9
June 2022	110	23.2
September 2022	123	24.5
December 2022	134	25.4