



3 May 2023

Tēnā koe

On 31 March 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Can I have the number of emergency housing special needs grants in Queenstown from February 2022 - February 2023, including all months. If March 2023 data is available by the time the request is submitted, I would love to see that too.*

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.

Please see the below **Appendix** containing **Table One** outlining the number of EH SNGs approved for the Queenstown-Lake District Territorial Local Authority (TLA) between 1 February 2022, and 31 March 2023, broken down by month.

In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information risks identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs and public interest in the information.

Regarding the table provided, please note that the TLA is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. This TLA may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing supplier. Where the client address is not recorded, the location of the Ministry's service centre case managing the client has been used to approximate which TLA a client resides in. However, as the Ministry has switched to working from national queues, EH SNGs and other hardship grants could be granted by a case manager working anywhere in New Zealand. Therefore, in such cases, the TLA may not reflect the actual client address or location. Due to the transient nature of some people receiving EH SNGs, the recorded address for a client may also be that of a trusted family member or friend who receives mail on their behalf.

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 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, 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

Table One: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants approved for the Queenstown-Lakes District Territorial Local Authority between 1 February 2022, and 31 March 2023

Month	Number of Grants
February 2022	S
March 2022	S
April 2022	S
May 2022	0
June 2022	S
July 2022	S
August 2022	0
September 2022	0
October 2022	0
November 2022	0
December 2022	0
January 2023	0
February 2023	0
March 2023	0
Total	21

Notes:

- The number of grants is not the number of individuals. A client can have more than one grant in each time period.

Confidentiality:

- 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.
- Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.