



8 September 2023

Tēnā koe

On 11 August 2023 you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

**Part One:**

*I am doing some background research trying to ascertain the % of individuals who identify as having a disability who are currently registered on the Housing Register as published here on your website (attached). I am interested in the Christchurch City TA only and would be very grateful if you could identify the % of the persons registered who have a disability? Age would also be helpful if it could be split out like that.*

*Our Trust is looking at providing more residential housing options for our specific client group, specifically that's those under 65 years old who have a physical disability & this information would provide us with a good indication of the current demand for housing for this group i.e. those currently on the MSD register. I don't need it broken down into Priority levels, although that would be helpful if possible.*

**Part Two:**

- 1. The number of applicants on the MSD Housing Register who are in receipt of a Disability Allowance (the main tenant)*
- 2. The number of applicants on the MSD Housing Register who require a modified house.*
- 3. Please can this information be split into Priority A and Priority B, by Territorial Authority (TA) and by the number of bedrooms required?*

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 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 of Social Development.

When New Zealanders are in need of public housing, their needs are recorded on the Social Housing Register. The Housing Register is prioritised by need and consists of applicants who have been assessed as being eligible for public housing. People on the Social Housing Register are generally in some form of housing, with 95% of applicants on the register already receiving housing support from the Ministry.

The Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live. This includes ensuring the family has the right number of bedrooms and that the accommodation meets any disability needs if appropriate. Those assessed as having greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change, their priority on the Registry may change also. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly.

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, and the availability of a house that suits their needs in a location they are willing to live. Priority A applicants are considered to be 'at risk' and include households that have a severe and persistent housing need that must be addressed immediately. Priority B applicants are those with a 'serious housing need' and include households with a significant and persistent need.

Disability Allowance provides non-taxable assistance to people who have ongoing, additional costs because of a disability. To be able to receive a Disability Allowance, a client must meet an income test, have a disability which is likely to last at least 6 months, and have ongoing additional costs arising from that disability. To be eligible, the disability must also mean that the client has a reduction in independent functioning to the extent that they need ongoing help with normal living tasks, or ongoing supervision or treatment from a health practitioner.

The type of cost covered by the Disability Allowance is broad due to the scope of qualification criteria and may have no effect on a person's housing need or accessibility. This could include counselling or pharmaceutical charges, such as an asthma inhaler. Therefore, the amount of people in receipt of the Disability Allowance is unlikely to correlate to the amount of people that require a modified house on the Public Housing Register.

In regard to your request for information on the Social Housing Register, Disability Allowance, and modified housing requirements, please see the four tables provided in the attachment with this response.

The first table answers Part One of your request and shows the number of primary applicants on the Housing Register in Christchurch City as at 31 July who receive a Disability Allowance. This table has the data shown by age group and Priority A and Priority B.

In order to be helpful, we have also provided a table showing the number of primary applicants on the Housing Register in Christchurch City as at 31 July 2023 who require modified housing, broken down into age group and Priority A and Priority B. This table captures people who require modified housing who may not be receiving a Disability Allowance. Some people may be in receipt of another type of benefit, such as Supported Living Allowance (SLP) and require modified housing.

In response to Part Two of your request, two tables are provided. The first table shows the number of primary applicants on the Housing Register as at 31 July 2023 in all Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) who receive a Disability Allowance. This table is broken down by the number of bedrooms required, and whether they are Priority A or Priority B.

The second table shows the number of primary applicants on the Housing Register for all TLAs who require modified housing as at 31 July 2023, also broken down by number of bedrooms required and whether they are Priority A or Priority B. This table covers all applicants regardless of what benefit, if any, they are on.

You will see that numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed and replaced with an 'S'. In certain circumstances, low numbers could potentially lead to individuals being identified, therefore these numbers are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of these clients.

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 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



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