



10 May 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 14 March 2024.

On 27 March 2024, the Ministry's Media Team responded to six of the nine questions you asked, and I have considered the remaining under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Please find my decision, on each part of your request, set out separately below.

***Question 1: Can you breakdown the budget allocation for emergency housing over the last 12 months, 24 months, and since the inception of the initiative? Please highlight administrative versus direct support costs. How much has been granted in total to emergency housing suppliers?***

The budget allocation for Emergency Housing is publicly available. You can find the Budget Economic and Fiscal Updates (BEFU) as at 2022 on the Treasury website here: [www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-06/est22-v9-socdev.pdf](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-06/est22-v9-socdev.pdf) (section 3.2, page 241), and as at 2023 here: [www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-06/est23-v9-socdev.pdf](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-06/est23-v9-socdev.pdf) (section 3.2, page 247).

These links show the forecasted budget allocation for Emergency Housing by financial year.<sup>1</sup> BEFU 2022 shows the budget allocation for financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23, and BEFU 2023 shows the budget allocation for 2022/23. Note that budgets in the benefit system are demand driven and are revised every forecast round to reflect changes in the expected demand for benefits over the forecast period.

Similarly, historic budget allocation information is available on the Treasury website. We have provided a link to this information here: [www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/budgets/current-and-past-budgets](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/budgets/current-and-past-budgets).

In terms of your request for a breakdown of the administrative support costs, the administrative budget allocation for Emergency Housing include salaries, payment for contracted services, and extra assistance for families. Included in this budget is the Housing Navigator role. Where a client needs more support

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<sup>1</sup> This forecasted budget allocation does not include administrative costs.

than an Integrated Services Case Manager can offer, the Ministry has contracted Housing Navigators that coordinate services and provide ongoing support to address clients' housing needs. The Housing Navigator role is involved in the personalised planning and coordinating client access to social services providers, health professionals, and a range of government and community agencies.

The Housing Broker role also sits within the administrative budget allocation for Emergency Housing. Housing Brokers are Ministry employees that work with whānau to help to connect them with local landlords and property managers to access housing opportunities in the private rental market.

The Ready to Rent programme is designed to better prepare individuals and whānau for the private rental market. The Ministry contracts community providers to deliver targeted programmes to people living in Emergency Housing or on the Housing Register, equipping them with the skills and confidence to gain and sustain private rental housing.

The administrative budget allocation for Emergency Housing also includes Flexible Funding Assistance, this was introduced in November 2020 to complement the many existing products that provide housing support in our communities. The assistance is in part a recognition that families with children are staying in Emergency Housing for longer periods and need additional support. The purpose of Flexible Funding Assistance is to assist in meeting education, early childhood, and wellbeing needs of families with children when additional costs are incurred because they are staying in Emergency Housing.

Please see **Appendix One, Table One** providing the administrative budget allocation for Emergency Housing between 1 November 2019 and 30 June 2024, by financial year.

Please see **Appendix Two, Table One** showing the total amount granted for Emergency Housing for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024, by month ending.

Please see **Appendix One, Table Two** providing the total amount granted for Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants between 1 November 2019 to 31 March 2024. Please note that information on hardship grants for Emergency Housing is published quarterly on the Ministry website. This includes the number of grants and amount granted, by quarter, this information is publicly available here: [quarterly-benefit-fact-sheets-national-benefit-tables-march-2024.xlsx](https://www.mta.govt.nz/quarterly-benefit-fact-sheets-national-benefit-tables-march-2024.xlsx) ([live.com](https://www.mta.govt.nz/)).

***Question 2: How many suppliers of emergency housing are there in New Zealand? Who are the top 50 suppliers in terms of the value of grants allocated, and how do you assess their performance?***

Please see **Appendix Two, Table One** showing the number of distinct suppliers used for Emergency Housing between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024, by month.

Please see **Appendix Two, Table Two** showing the top 50 suppliers that received an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant, by amount granted, between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2024.

In terms of your question regarding how the Ministry assesses the performance of suppliers of Emergency Housing, the Ministry introduced supplier standards to ensure all whānau have access to suitable accommodation.

The supplier standards set out the Ministry's expectations that people staying in Emergency Housing receive the same level of service and are treated with the same care and respect as any other paying customer. While suppliers will have the option to choose to opt in, the Ministry expects that all suppliers providing Emergency Housing should meet minimum standards of suitability, and safety standards set by regulatory agencies.

From 6 November 2023, the Ministry only grants Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for clients to stay with opted-in suppliers, except in some limited circumstances (such as a lack of vacancies with opted-in suppliers in a particular location). The Ministry encourages suppliers to opt-in, provided they meet the standards required. Where the Ministry is made aware of any concerns with suppliers meeting the standards, these concerns will be discussed directly with the suppliers. Failure to address any concerns in a reasonable timeframe can result in the removal of the supplier's opt-in status. More information can be found here: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/emergency-housing/supplier-standards.html>.

***Question 6: How many families do you anticipate the new 'Priority One' category will move from emergency to social housing over the next 12 months, and what specific criteria define this category?***

In March 2024, the Ministry estimated that 800 families would be eligible for the Priority One category by looking at the number of families who are living in Emergency Housing for longer than 12 weeks.

Your request for the number of families the Priority One category will move from Emergency Housing to Social Housing over the next 12 months, this is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

To qualify for the Priority One category, households must include children under the age of 18 who have been in Emergency Housing for longer than twelve consecutive weeks and are meeting the obligations of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant receipt<sup>2</sup>. More information about the Priority One category can be found here: [www.beehive.govt.nz/release/first-steps-taken-end-emergency-housing](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/first-steps-taken-end-emergency-housing).

For broader context, I am also providing you with a link to the Aotearoa Homelessness Action Plan on the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website. In particular, page 56–58 in Annex 1 shows the list of priority actions assigned to each lead agency: [www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/Homelessness-Action-Plan.pdf](http://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/Homelessness-Action-Plan.pdf).

The HUD website also provides six-monthly progress reports on the Aotearoa Homelessness Action Plan, this link is also publicly available here: [www.hud.govt.nz/our-work/aotearoa-new-zealand-homelessness-action-plan-2020-2023/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/our-work/aotearoa-new-zealand-homelessness-action-plan-2020-2023/).

Information about the broader investment and intent informing the Aotearoa Homelessness Action Plan, the following announcements may also be of interest:

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the *Your responsibilities* section of the Work website for the obligations of a person in receipt of an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing/rights-and-responsibilities.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing/rights-and-responsibilities.html).

[www.beehive.govt.nz/release/more-measures-help-those-facing-homelessness](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/more-measures-help-those-facing-homelessness)  
and [www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-steps-action-prevent-homelessness](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-steps-action-prevent-homelessness).

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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

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Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**



### Appendix One

**Table One:** Administrative budget allocation for Emergency Housing, by financial year

Description	Financial Year				
	2019/20*	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Housing Navigators	\$4,189,104	\$7,680,000	\$8,520,000	\$8,512,000	\$12,399,701
Homelessness Support Services	\$3,560,896	\$3,840,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,330,000	\$3,514,299
Emergency Housing Support Pack	\$1,300,000	\$2,200,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,200,000	\$3,000,000
Ready to Rent	\$140,000	\$190,000	\$199,999	\$200,000	\$1,500,000

\*Financial year 2019/20 starts at 1 November 2019

**Table Two:** Total amount granted for Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants between 1 November 2019 to 31 March 2024

Description	Amount Granted
Emergency Housing	\$1,475,740,815

Amount granted is not necessarily the amount spent.