



17 October 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 6 September 2024, requesting the following information:

- 1. How many people currently on the wait list have Wainuiomata listed as a preferred area? How does this compare to 2023, 2022 and 2021?*
- 2. How many people currently on the wait list have only Wainuiomata listed as a preferred area? On average, how long have these individuals been on the waiting list?*
- 3. How many people are on the waiting list in Lower Hutt more broadly? How does this compare to 2023, 2022 and 2021?*

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please refer to **Appendix One**, which is a spreadsheet setting out the data you have requested:

- **Table One:** Number of primary applicants on the Public Housing Register who have requested Wainuiomata as a preferred area, as at end of August, for the years 2021 to 2024.
- **Table Two:** Number of primary applicants on the Public Housing Register who have only requested Wainuiomata as a preferred area as at end of August 2024.
- **Table Three:** Number of primary applicants on the Public Housing Register in the Lower Hutt City Territorial Local Authority, as at end of August, for the years 2021 to 2024

There are notes included on the spreadsheet to assist with interpreting the data. Please also note:

- The data only includes 'Priority A' and 'Priority B' applicants. The Ministry considers 'Priority A' applicants to be 'at risk' and include households that

have a severe and persistent housing need that must be addressed immediately.

- 'Priority B' applicants are considered to have a 'serious housing need' and include households with a significant and persistent need.

I would like to outline the way the Ministry handles "preferred area" information supplied by Public Housing applicants, to ensure you understand how the data has been collated. "Preferred areas" are locations that a public housing applicant selects to indicate it is an area they would be willing to be placed into public housing. The Ministry's computer system translates these areas into the corresponding NZ Post postcode, and these are the geographical areas the Ministry reports on when responding to queries about public housing preferred areas.

To increase the chances of matching clients with a suitable property that meets their housing needs, prospective tenants are required to nominate a minimum of three areas where they need to live, unless there is a good reason not to do so.

The Wainuiomata "preferred area" is the geographical area covered by postcodes 5014, 5373, 5048 and 5049 (see: www.nzpost.co.nz/tools/address-postcode-finder). This link will also allow you to populate a map of the geographical area represented by particular postcodes.

Please note that, in respect of question 3, where you ask for information about people on the wait list "in Lower Hutt more broadly", we have interpreted this geographical area as the Lower Hutt City Territorial Local Authority area.

Regarding the second part of question 2 ("on average, how long have these individuals been on the waiting list?"), I am refusing this request under section 18(g) of the Act, as this information is not held by the Ministry. I also 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 Ministry does not report on the average period of time applicants spend on the Public Housing Register. This is because different factors can arise which would give an inaccurate picture of how long the person had to wait to find housing. For example, a person's place on the waitlist might be suspended for a time if the Ministry is unable to make contact with them to check if they are still looking for housing.

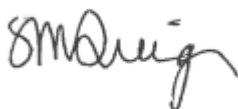
Instead, the Ministry reports on "time to house" data. This is the number of calendar days between the date an application is first confirmed on the Register as an 'A' or 'B' priority applicant and the date a tenancy is activated for that application. As you will be aware, this measure does not apply to your request under the Act, as you are asking about applicants who are still on the wait list.

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.

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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services