



25 September 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 28 August 2024, requesting information about Emergency Housing grants.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). My decision is set out below.

1. *How many homeless New Zealanders, aged 16 to 24 years old, not in a family situation, were housed in state-funded emergency accommodation each year over the past 5 years (2019-2023)?*
2. *How many 16-24-year-old New Zealanders have paid off debt accumulated from emergency accommodation each year for the past 5 years?*
  - a. *What was the total of that debt for each of the past 5 years?*
  - b. *How many New Zealanders still have outstanding debts for accommodation and what is the current total owing?*

Please find enclosed **Appendix 1**, containing two tables, in response to questions 1 and 2 of your request:

- **Table One** Number of Emergency Housing Grants granted, distinct clients and amount granted for clients aged 16 to 24 from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2023, by calendar year and household composition.

It is important to highlight that household composition data was not recorded before April 1, 2020, which is the reason a partial year is included. Additionally, some information in this table has been marked as 'S'. This information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

- **Table Two** Number of Emergency Housing Grants granted, distinct clients and amount granted that were made recoverable for clients aged 16 to 24 from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2023, by calendar year and age group.

When debt is established, the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) knows whether the debt is the result of recoverable assistance, an overpayment or fraud. However, as a person transfers on and off certain benefits, the debt

balances are consolidated into a single debt amount, therefore, the Ministry cannot accurately distinguish the reason for the debt.

Consequently, the Ministry cannot address your request for the debt that has been paid off, and the amount outstanding accumulated from emergency housing grants made recoverable and accommodation. To provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

- 3. How many individuals received further support outside housing support each year for the past 5 years? Please provide a breakdown of those support services by year.*

Thank you for your email received 16 September 2024 where you clarified question 3 of your request.

*Further support meaning support outside of providing housing, i.e. mental support, career support etc.*

### **Integrated Services Case Managers and contracted navigator support services**

Through Budget 2024, the Government is funding the Ministry's emergency housing support services for a further two years at a total cost of \$83.5 million. These services include Integrated Services Case Managers (ISCMs), contracted navigator support services, housing brokers, flexible funding and the ready to rent programme. ISCMs and contracted navigator support services were developed as an intensive, personalised, single point of contact support which can help clients improve their ability to get ready for housing stability. They support emergency housing clients who are removed from their usual community and facing extra challenges or barriers to receiving the help that they require, such as barriers to access health and /or support services or to engage with other agencies.

Contracted navigator support services coordinate across community, health, and government services to provide wrap-around support to clients.

### **Case Managers**

Outside of housing support, Case Managers engage with and work alongside clients by ensuring clients:

- Are aware of the full range of support and assistance available and are getting the support they need.
- Can easily connect to community services, support and training/employment opportunities available.
- Can successfully transition to work readiness, training, work, maintain independence, or otherwise maximise their potential.

Information regarding the support such as mental health and career support will be held on individual case files. Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse this part of your request under

section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

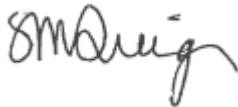
I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

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 nui

pp. 

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