



22 July 2025

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 7 May 2025, requesting information about clients living in emergency housing over the past five years.

Apologies for the delay in providing a response – I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out below.

***Under the Official Information Act 1982, I am writing to ask for information about individuals living in emergency housing. I request that the data be broken down by financial year for the past five years (e.g. 2020/21 to 2024/25) and categorised as outlined below.***

- 1. Number of individuals living in emergency accommodation in Waikato.***
- 2. Number of individuals living in emergency accommodation in Hamilton.***
- 3. Number of individuals living in emergency accommodation in NZ.***

Please refer to Table One in Appendix One for this information.

- 4. The total number and names of Emergency Housing Suppliers in Waikato.***

Please refer to Table Two in Appendix One and Appendix Two.

- 5. The number of people in emergency housing, for each year, who fall into the following categories:***
  - a. Receiving a main benefit***
  - b. Receiving New Zealand Superannuation***
  - c. Receiving a Veteran's Pension***
  - d. Ordinarily resident in New Zealand***
  - e. New Zealand citizens***
  - f. Holders of a residence class visa under the Immigration Act 2009***

***g. Recognised as refugees or protected persons under the Immigration Act 2009***

***h. Receiving a Special Needs Grant as a result of entering New Zealand on a temporary visa to be with a New Zealand partner, where the relationship ended due to domestic violence.***

Refer to Table Three in Appendix One.

Please note the following:

- The response to 5(f) is contained in rows 51 and 57.
- The response to 5(g) is contained in rows 52 – 56.
- The residency data provided should be regarded with caution, as it is only indicative. This is because client files are updated on a continual basis. A client needs to provide verification of their current residential status when they first apply for a benefit, to establish their identity. However, changes to a client's residency status is not necessarily recorded when the client makes any subsequent applications for support, as identity will already have been established.

Your requests contained in questions 5(d) and 5(h) are refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information.

The residency qualifications for Emergency Housing Grants include a requirement that a client either qualify for and be in receipt of a main benefit, New Zealand Superannuation, or the Veteran's Pension, or be ordinarily resident in New Zealand at the time of their application. You can find more information about what it means to be 'ordinarily resident' online here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/emergency-benefit/deciding-ordinarily-resident-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/main-benefits/emergency-benefit/deciding-ordinarily-resident-01.html).

There may be circumstances where the Emergency Benefit (EB) is granted to someone who is not ordinarily resident in New Zealand and, because the EB is a main benefit, they would qualify for emergency housing while their EB is current. This information is contained in individual client files.

In addition, the reason a client's relationship has ended would only be recorded on the individual's client file.

It would require manual review of individual client files to respond to both 5(d) and 5(h), taking hundreds of hours of Ministry staff time. 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.

***6. For each year, please provide the number of individuals in emergency housing who:***

- a. Moved out of previous accommodation without a valid reason and did not have another place to move into***
- b. Were required to leave previous accommodation because they damaged the property, or, did not follow the accommodation provider's rules***

**7. The number of individuals in emergency housing who:**

- a. Had income above the applicable thresholds***
- b. Had cash assets exceeding the limits***

In questions 6 and 7 you have described circumstances where someone may not meet the criteria for emergency housing. Anyone granted emergency housing in these circumstances would only be eligible as a result of Ministry staff exercising their discretion and concluding there are exceptional circumstances.

Your requests in Questions 6 and 7 are there refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information. The reasons for refusing the request are the same as outlined above for question 5(h).

You can find information about guidelines used to decide whether a client has exceptional circumstances at the following link:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/exceptional-circumstances-for-income-and-cash-asset-limits.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/exceptional-circumstances-for-income-and-cash-asset-limits.html)

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.



Anna Graham  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**