



6 November 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 15 October 2025, requesting correspondence between MSD and Ministers' offices concerning emergency housing grants on 14 October 2025.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

Please find attached three appendices with the correspondence in scope of your request.

Please note Appendices 1 and 2 are released in full.

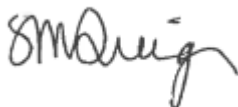
Regarding Appendix 3, you will note that the information regarding some individuals is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

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. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Out
of
scope

IN-CONFIDENCE

Hi Roman,

Here (below/attached) is the OPQ content in scope from the DCE team. This has been risk-checked by Ed.

Confirming the rest of my team have advised they have nothing in scope. s9(2)(a) did you have anything – or want to discuss in OI meeting?

Ben

From: Yurika Nishiyama

Sent: Tuesday, 14 October 2025 12:33 pm

To: 'Euan Alexander' <s9(2)(a)>; Ed Ablett-Hampson

<s9(2)(a)>

<s9(2)(a)>.nz>; Rochelle Necho

<s9(2)(a)>; Housing_Team_ServiceDelivery (MSD)

s9(2)(a); Ailee Gray <s9(2)(a)>;

Michelle Parsons <s9(2)(a)>; MSD_Income_Housing_Insights (MSD)

<s9(2)(a)>; Karen Hocking

<s9(2)(a)>; Service_Delivery_DCE_Office (MSD)

<s9(2)(a)>; Erin Folster <s9(2)(a)>

Subject: RE: A few potential supps - MO suggested

Hi Euan,

Please see MSD's response to the OPQ + supplementary questions enclosed.

Ed will come to the office for 1.15pm

Yurika Nishiyama | DCE Advisor, Service Delivery

Email: s9(2)(a)

Phone: s9(2)(a) **MOBILE:** s9(2)(a)

From: Euan Alexander <s9(2)(a)>

Sent: Tuesday, 14 October 2025 12:06 pm

To: Yurika Nishiyama <s9(2)(a)>

Cc: i_request (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; Rochelle Neho <s9(2)(a)>; Ed Ablett-Hampson <s9(2)(a)>; Housing_Team_ServiceDelivery (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; Ailee Gray <s9(2)(a)>; Michelle Parsons <s9(2)(a)>; MSD_Income_Housing_Insights (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; Karen Hocking <s9(2)(a)>
Subject: RE: A few potential supps - MO suggested

Kia ora Yurika,

Yep we've got a stand-in MO today – having all the luck today! Happy for the questions below to act as a guide for the supps, rather than being required to be used. I highlighted the two in bold as I essentially think they can't be answered with our data and/or aren't true, so don't feel obligated to use them.

Reach out if it's easier to chat .

Ngā Mihi

Euan Alexander | Private Secretary – Housing (Social Housing) | Office of Hon Tama Potaka

Minister of Conservation | Minister for Māori Crown Relations | Minister for Māori Development | Minister for Whānau Ora
Associate Minister of Housing | MP for Hamilton West

M: <s9(2)(a)>

E: <s9(2)(a)>

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

From: Yurika Nishiyama <s9(2)(a)>
Sent: Tuesday, 14 October 2025 11:56 AM
To: Euan Alexander <s9(2)(a)>
Cc: i_request (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; Rochelle Neho <s9(2)(a)>; Ed Ablett-Hampson <s9(2)(a)>; Housing_Team_ServiceDelivery (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; Ailee Gray <s9(2)(a)>; Michelle Parsons <s9(2)(a)>; MSD_Income_Housing_Insights (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; Karen Hocking <s9(2)(a)>
Subject: RE: A few potential supps - MO suggested

IN-CONFIDENCE

Heya Euan,

Can I please get some clarification around what Middle office are asking here?

- **Are DPB/benefit allowances meaning women are not eligible for certain housing?**

Btw – they probs already know that DPB doesn't exist

Yurika Nishiyama | DCE Advisor, Service Delivery

Email: s9(2)(a)

Phone: s9(2)(a) **MOBILE:** s9(2)(a)

From: Euan Alexander <s9(2)(a)>
Sent: Tuesday, 14 October 2025 11:47 am
To: Yurika Nishiyama <s9(2)(a)>
Cc: i_request (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; i_request (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>;
Rochelle Neho <s9(2)(a)>; Karen Hocking
<s9(2)(a)>; Ed Ablett-Hampson <s9(2)(a)>;
Housing_Team_ServiceDelivery (MSD) <s9(2)(a)>; Ailee
Gray <s9(2)(a)>; Michelle Parsons <s9(2)(a)>;
David Arrow <s9(2)(a)>
Subject: A few potential supps - MO suggested

Kia ora Yurika,

It looks likely that the question stems from [Wairarapa Times-Age letters, October 10 | The Post](#) and [Sender of 'disgusting' message sentenced to supervision | The Post](#) as that is where Kieran McNulty is based. So, if there's any intel on it, it would be good for some background info on that for prep.

Here's five potential supps, suggested by MO:

- What is the Minister's response to reports of pregnant women being declined emergency housing?
- Why is this happening and what will he do about it?
- Is the Minister satisfied with the processes and decision making around emergency housing.
- **How many pregnant women are awaiting social housing spaces?**
- **Are DPB/benefit allowances meaning women are not eligible for certain housing?**

HUD are also going to provide a couple of supps. One HUD staff member will also come over for prep.

For the ones in bold, I imagine we can't tell with 4 (due to data limitations/pregnancy not

being recorded on CMS) and for 5 the answer is likely no – I've explained that we don't record everyone who is pregnant.

Thanks

Ngā Mihi

Euan Alexander | Private Secretary – Housing (Social Housing) | Office of Hon Tama Potaka

Minister of Conservation | Minister for Māori Crown Relations | Minister for Māori Development | Minister for Whānau Ora
Associate Minister of Housing | MP for Hamilton West

M: s9(2)(a)

E: s9(2)(a)

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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Possible supplementary questions/answers:**Would it surprise the Minister that I have been informed of such a case?**

As Minister, I cannot comment on individual cases.

Where do people go out of emergency housing?

The Ministry of Social Development's ability to track the housing outcomes of those exiting emergency housing has improved with MSD now able to show where around **79 percent** of those exiting emergency housing go.

- Of the households that exited emergency housing (excluding CEH) during March 2025:
 - **21 percent** left emergency housing to go into **Social Housing** (1 percent through CHPs, 20 percent through Kāinga Ora)
 - **37 percent** had moved into **Transitional Housing**
 - **21 percent** were receiving the **Accommodation Supplement for a private rental** (this includes clients with mortgage, private rental or board costs)
 - **20 percent** did not access any of these housing-related services but **may have accessed other Housing Support Products**.

Emergency housing declines

- If someone asks for help with housing, our first move is to look at all their options to avoid homelessness. Emergency housing is a last resort.
- When people ask for help with emergency housing, Ministry staff test the availability of alternative accommodation options, to determine their eligibility for the Emergency Housing grant.
- If someone who applies is eligible for another, more suitable type of support, such as transitional housing or other accommodation, the Ministry will offer that instead.
- The most common reason for declining a person's application is because their need can be met in another way.
 - This could include providing the person with financial assistance, such as a Housing Support Product, to help them sustain their existing tenancy, help with identifying and meeting the cost of a new rental property, or a referral to a transitional housing provider.

Why would MSD decline an emergency housing application?

- MSD may decline a person's application for emergency housing if their situation was as a result of their own action, or people they were responsible for.
- For example:
 - Someone who has voluntarily left their existing accommodation or tenancy without organising a new place to live.
 - Someone having to leave their accommodation because they intentionally damaged the property.
 - Someone having to leave their accommodation because they engaged in anti-social behaviour such as violence or theft.

Right of review

- Where people disagree with the Ministry's decision, including to decline EH, there are a number of avenues open to clients to contest those including, the formal Review of Decision process, which provides a level of external scrutiny over MSD's decision making.

Supplementary information:

Emergency housing declines and alternative support

- MSD has reported an increase in the number of clients being declined EH. The Ministry's practice and data capture, in respect of emergency housing, has improved.
- All applications now have a result recorded, providing greater transparency for clients. However, this makes it difficult to compare data pre/post implementation of the new rules for entry into emergency housing.
- Between September 2024 and June 2025 declines accounted for around 24% of applications for EH. However, that number obscures some positive progress.
- Of all applications declined between September 2024 and June 2025, over one quarter (26%) were declined because '**the need could be met another way**' – i.e. because the Ministry was able to support the person into a more suitable alternative such as transitional housing.
- Over half of the declines (**58%**) are because the client hasn't met one or more **eligibility criteria** for Emergency Housing, [and then if/when a breakdown is asked for] these include:
 - Need can be met another way (26%)
 - Not a qualifying need (15%)
 - Not an emergency (8%)
 - Alternative housing is available (3%)
 - Do not have an immediate need (3%)
 - Exceeded cash asset and income test (2%)
- A further **27%** of declines are because they have otherwise **contributed to their current circumstances**, [and then if/when a breakdown is asked for] these include:
 - You have contributed to your immediate need (20%)
 - Circumstances could have reasonably been foreseen (5%)
 - Lack of representation (2%)
- Where MSD clients have been declined emergency housing, it is important to note that they may be offered other forms of assistance such as:
 - The Accommodation Supplement
 - Bond Grant
 - Moving Costs Grant
 - Costs (rent) in Advance Grant
 - Tenancy Costs Cover Grant (which provides assurances to potential landlords that the Ministry will pay the applicant's outstanding costs at the end of the tenancy, if those costs exceed the amount of bond paid)
- MSD recognises that many of the people accessing EH experience multiple complexities and require tailored support to help them address the issues underlying their homelessness and to find a new home.
- MSD will continue to provide the client with options and advice on alternative housing options and financial and other support to access those.

- As people in EH can be at risk of having complex needs, we have also introduced a “limited circumstance” pathway for those most vulnerable. People who have multiple risk factors, are experiencing a crisis beyond their control and are at risk of current or near-term harm, will be able to temporarily continue to access EH until their risk to near-term harm is resolved.

RELEASED UNDER THE
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

Oral Parliamentary Question – 14 October

Time signed out info due to me: 12.20pm

Question:

*How many **pregnant women** have been refused access to emergency housing since December 2023, broken down by region, if any?*

MSD response:

I am advised that the Ministry does not record the pregnancy status of applicants for emergency housing. Therefore, it is not possible to say how many pregnant women, if any, may have been declined emergency housing.

Where people approach MSD with an immediate housing need, staff will consider all options to meet that need including support to access private rental or transitional housing.

Emergency Housing is a last resort. Where alternative accommodation is available, people may be declined EH and provided with that support instead.

Where vulnerable people, including households with children, are declined emergency housing, MSD staff escalate those decisions to regional leaders (Regional Director) for review to ensure that decision is justified.

Where people disagree with the Ministry's decision, they can seek Review of Decision challenging it.

Of those who have declined emergency housing, around half have been provided with other support including:

- **The Accommodation Supplement**
- **Bond Grant**
- **Moving Costs Grant**
- **Costs (rent) in Advance Grant**
- **Tenancy Costs Cover Grant** (provides assurances to potential landlords that the Ministry will pay the applicant's outstanding costs at the end of the tenancy, if those costs exceed the amount of bond paid)
- **Referral to Transitional Housing.**

A review of EH applications declined during June 2025 shows the Ministry offered those clients the following alternative assistance:

- 5 percent were granted Accommodation Supplement

- o 13 percent received at least one Housing Support Product (HSP)
- o 45 percent received at least one hardship assistance grant (excludes HSP)

Caveats:

- *The data above captures assistance granted over the three days prior to a decline and for up to 7 days afterwards. Clients may have received other assistance outside of that timeframe.*
- *These percentages do not capture situations where a client has been declined assistance for emergency housing, and their partner has applied for other MSD support or been referred to Transitional Housing.*

Extra:

I did note there was mention of a pregnant woman being refused EH was mentioned in an article and then opinion piece/letter in the Post on Friday:

[Sender of 'disgusting' message sentenced to supervision | The Post](#)
[Wairarapa Times-Age letters, October 10 | The Post](#)

Supplementary Question:

What is the Minister's response to reports of pregnant women being declined emergency housing?

Naturally, I am saddened to hear of anyone struggling with their housing. However, without knowing the full story and without consent of the person involved, I cannot comment on that situation.

I would simply remind the member that the decision to grant or decline assistance is one for MSD staff to make, based on the individual circumstances of the applicant, not Ministers.

Supplementary Question:

Why is this happening and what will he do about it?

As I've said, I won't comment on an individual's situation directly. What I would say is that there are many reasons someone may be declined emergency housing, including because they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

I would note the most common reason MSD decline emergency housing is because the need can be met another way – for example, by referring the person to transitional housing.

Supplementary Question:

Is the Minister satisfied with the processes and decision making around emergency housing.

Yes, I am satisfied that MSD is managing the emergency housing gateway in a way that aligns with the Government's policy intent. Emergency Housing remains available as a last resort for those who are eligible and willing to abide by their responsibilities.

You will have seen the recent announcement of new support for rough sleepers. As part of that initiative, we have encouraged MSD staff to make greater use of existing discretion when assessing eligibility for emergency housing.

I am advised that MSD has already issued updated guidance on the exercise of discretion in relation to the income limit for emergency housing and have been encouraged to consider the use of shorter grants (1-3 nights) where they are unable to immediately establish a person's eligibility for EH.

Supplementary Question:

How many pregnant women are awaiting social housing spaces?

I am advised that the Ministry does not record the number of social housing applicants who are pregnant.

Supplementary Question:

Are DPB/benefit allowances meaning women are not eligible for certain housing?

Eligibility to housing related assistance, including emergency housing, is based in part on applicants meeting an income and asset test. While eligibility would depend on the circumstances of individual applicants, most main beneficiaries, including those in receipt of Sole Parent Support (i.e. DPB), meet the income test for social and emergency housing.