



26 November 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 3 November 2025 requesting information relating to people on the Social Housing Register from 1 January 2020 to the date of your request.

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 separately below. Some sections have been reordered for clarity.

- 1. The duration of time people or households have been waiting, aggregated into ranges, for example:*
 - <1 year
 - 1–3 years
 - 3–5 years
 - 5+ years
- 2. The number of people who died while waiting for social housing.*
- 4. Where possible, an aggregated breakdown by region or district.*

There have been significant numbers of people coming off the social housing register and going into social housing in the last two years.

In 2024, 11,844 individuals or families were placed into social housing from the register. In 2025, 8,553 individuals or families have been housed so far.

These figures are a major increase on previous years, such as 2020 when 7,068 people were placed into social housing.

Not everyone who is on the social housing register is ultimately housed in social housing. It isn't a time ranked register, so housing is not allocated based on how long someone has been waiting. Social housing is instead allocated on the basis of the priority of people's situation, how serious their need is, and their ability to afford, access and sustain a private rental.

Due to the size of the group who are on the public housing register, unfortunately there have always been some people who have died while they are on the register. The numbers generally correspond with increases and decreases in the total

number of applicants, as well as being a reflection of the overall death rate in the wider New Zealand population.

Please find attached **Appendix One** containing the following tables:

- **Table One:** The number of Social Housing Register applications housed during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 October 2025, broken down by time to house, year and region.
- **Table Two:** The number of Social Housing Register applications housed during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 October 2025, broken down by time to house and region.
- **Table Three:** The number of Social Housing Register exits for deceased applicant during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 October 2025, broken down by year and region.

The above tables include Priority A and B applications on the housing and transfer register. You can read more about how priority ratings are determined, here:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/housing-need-priority-ratings-01.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html.

3. *The number of people who experienced long-term hospitalisation or equivalent serious health incidents while waiting.*

I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order 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.

5. *Any internal guidance, policies, or reporting frameworks used to monitor or intervene when applicants experience serious outcomes or extended waits.*

The Ministry's role is to assess people's eligibility for Social Housing, to administer the Social Housing Register, and to put forward a shortlist of eligible applicants to housing providers when a housing vacancy becomes available.

When a social housing vacancy becomes available, the Ministry's system will automatically generate a shortlist of 20 suitable applicants for the property, ranked by priority, and sends the shortlist to the social housing provider.

The shortlist only includes households on the Social Housing Register that match the available social housing vacancy, such as:

- The number of bedrooms required
- How accessible the house is
- Household size
- Type of house

- Location

Once the social housing provider receives this shortlist from the Ministry, they are responsible for the allocation of the property.

The supply of public / social housing is very tight and there is a shortage of affordable housing across the country. At any given time, we have many people, often with high and complex needs, looking for housing.

As noted, social houses are allocated on needs basis, not a 'first in, first served' basis. The length of time someone will be waiting for a house depends on their Priority Rating under the assessment, and the availability of a house that suits their needs in a location they are willing to live.

The Ministry does not have any specific guidance, policies or reporting frameworks when an applicant on the Housing Register has been on the waitlist for a long period or who have experienced long-term hospitalisation or equivalent serious health incidents while waiting.

As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

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
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Ministerial and Executive Services