



3 September 2025

Tēnā koe

**Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 17 July 2025, to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry), in which you requested information about social housing.

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.

- 1. All policy documents, guidelines, operational procedures or staff tools (including content from the MSD website and the MAP tool) that outline when and how MSD or Kāinga Ora allows additional occupants to be added to social housing tenancies — particularly in relation to intergenerational living arrangements.*

In order to be considered as an additional occupant, there must be a specific and established ongoing need to be part of a household (and not be considered a household in an individual's own right). Generally, there is some form of dependency.

The person must also be a full-time member of the household.

Information on being an additional occupant in social housing is publicly available on the Ministry's website, here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/additional-occupants-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/additional-occupants-01.html).

- 2. Any specific policy or guidance that permits or encourages additional intergenerational occupants (including adult children or 'of age' children) for refugee families in social housing.*

There may be occasions where two or more families may be able to apply for social housing together.

They may be able to do this if they are reuniting through refugee family reunification or one family might need extra support. In other situations, this may simply be a choice or convenience.

If you would like to read about more about the assessment of need for multiple household unit, I refer you to the Ministry's website, at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-need-for-multiple-household-unit-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-need-for-multiple-household-unit-01.html).

Depending on individual cases, a client may have the right of to apply for a Review of Decision when they have received formal notification of and disagree with a decision regarding the Ministry's assessment of their eligibility to social housing, their housing needs, or the calculation of the rate of Income Related Rent and Income Related Rent debt matters. However, there are some exceptions to this right. For more information, please refer to the following link: <https://workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/changes-and-reviews-assessment-of-eligibility/reviews-and-appeals-01.html>

3. *Any equivalent policy, guidance, or rationale (or the absence of it) that applies to New Zealand citizens, particularly tangata whenua (Māori) tenants, who also have intergenerational living needs and wish to add adult children to the tenancy.*
4. *I am aware that in the Additional Occupants clause, as shown on the MSD site and in the MAP tool, it is noted at the bottom:*  
*"This is not the complete list. If you require assistance when considering whether there is an established need for the person to be part of that household, please contact the helpline."*  
*Please provide:*
  - *The full and complete list referenced.*
  - *Any additional unpublished guidance, criteria, or discretionary considerations that staff may use when deciding if there is an established need for a person (including adult children) to be added to a household.*
5. *Any internal memos, emails, reports, meeting notes, or advice (dated from 2018 to the present) that discuss or explain why adult children are generally allowed to be added to refugee households as additional occupants, but similar requests from New Zealand citizen households (including Māori tenants) may be declined — including any discussion of cultural appropriateness or human rights considerations.*

I am refusing the above parts of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

The Ministry does not have a separate process and assessment for New Zealand citizens and Māori clients. The process and assessment for adding additional occupants as part of a household in social housing is the same for all clients.

The Ministry does not have a list for establishing ongoing need to be part of the household as an additional occupant in social housing. The examples provided on the Ministry's website are provided as a guidance. Clients are encouraged to contact the Ministry to discuss their circumstances if they are unsure whether there is an established ongoing need to be part of a household in social housing.

6. *Statistical data (from 2018 to present) showing:*
  - *The number of requests to add adult children as additional occupants from refugee households, and the proportion approved.*

- *The number of requests to add adult children from New Zealand citizen households (including Māori households), and the proportion approved.*

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information. If held, this information would only be contained within individual client files, which would each require manual review to respond to your request. 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.



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