



15 September 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 28 July 2025, requesting information about Emergency Housing (EH) including data for the last five years, guidelines and advice on changes to the EH Gateway.

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.

May I please request the following, for the past five years (including year to date). From the start of the year, relating to emergency housing applications:

- 1. A breakdown of applications for emergency and transitional housing, including number of applications, approvals and declines (and reason for decline)*

Please find attached **Appendix 1** with the number of Emergency Housing (EH) applications from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2025. There are two tables:

- **Table 1:** Number of Emergency Housing applications processed (grants and declines) from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2025, by calendar year and application outcome.
- **Table 2:** Number of Emergency Housing applications declined from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2025, by decline reason and calendar year.

For Table 2, you will note that some numbers have been suppressed – marked as 'S' in the table – as they are below the count of 5. This is because low numbers could lead to individuals being identified, therefore this information 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.

- 2. For all the applications declined because the applicant "caused or contributed to your immediate need," detail for that reason.*

I refer to **Table 2** which provides decline reasons that address this part of your request. As context, for the decline reason for EH where the reason is the applicant caused or contributed to their immediate need, I advise as follows:

On 6 March 2025, Ministers made an announcement to end the large-scale use of EH, and to strengthen processes for those entering EH. Details are here: www.beehive.govt.nz/release/first-steps-taken-end-emergency-housing.

A new rules-based system related to EH was introduced on 26 August 2024, which requires that where someone asks for help with housing, the Ministry's first move is to look at all their options to avoid homelessness.

When people ask for help with EH, staff test the availability of alternative accommodation options first before they determine their eligibility for the Emergency Housing Grant (EHG).

EH is a last resort. If someone who applies is eligible for another, more suitable type of support, such as transitional housing or other accommodation such as private rentals, we will assist with that instead.

Under the new guidance introduced on 26 August 2024, the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) may decline a person's application for EH if their situation was a result of their own actions (or people they were responsible for, such as visitors). Examples include:

- Someone who has voluntarily left their existing accommodation or tenancy without organising a new place to live. (Note: those leaving housing because they are experiencing family violence will not be considered to have caused or contributed to their immediate emergency housing need).
- 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.

3. Scripts, training documents, guidelines, advice provided to staff when assessing emergency housing applications.

Please find attached as **Appendix 2** extracts from the internal Ministry guidance to staff assessing EH applications.

You may also find the following the page entitled *Emergency Housing: Contents* on the Ministry's website helpful: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/index.html.

4. All advice, memos, briefs or papers prepared about the change in gateways to emergency housing.

The Ministry has not produced any relevant reports including advice, memos, briefings or papers for the period from 1 January 2025 to the date of your request (28 July 2025). As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

However, you may find the following two links to the Ministry's and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) websites helpful, as they list and link to the reports in scope that have been proactively released:

- Documents on HUD's website:
www.hud.govt.nz/documents?q=&sort=&topics%5B%5D=158&from=2024-06-01&to=2024-06-30.
- The Ministry's release on Initial Steps to End the Large Scale Use of EH:
www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2024/initial-steps-to-end-the-large-scale-use-of-emergency-housing.html.

5. *The Homelessness Insights Report notes that only 37 percent of people exiting emergency housing enter social housing. Please provide tracking data showing where people went 60 days after leaving emergency housing (social housing, transitional housing, private rental, unsheltered) and any follow-up evaluation*

The Homelessness Insights Report was produced by HUD and is available here:
www.hud.govt.nz/news/release-of-the-homelessness-insights-report.

Regarding your request for further data showing where people went 60 days after leaving EH, I provide the following most recent exits from EH data. Of the households that exited emergency housing (excluding Contracted Emergency Housing in Rotorua) during March 2025:

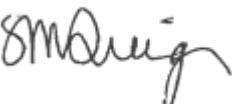
- 21 percent left emergency housing to go into Social Housing (1 percent through Community Housing Providers (CHP), 20 percent through Kāinga Ora).
- 37 percent had moved into Transitional Housing.
- 21 percent were receiving the Accommodation Supplement for a private rental (this includes clients with mortgage, private rental, or board costs)
- 20 percent did not access any of these housing-related services.

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

Scripts training documents guidelines, advice provided to staff when assessing emergency housing applications, to answer Question 4.

Emergency Housing Resolution Framework

The purpose of the Emergency Housing Resolution Framework is to support you when you are considering whether to grant an EH Grant. It can be used at the time of an EH Grant application for an initial EH Grant or a subsequent grant.

On this Page:

- [Emergency Housing Request at Reception/ Front of House](#)
- [Understanding the Client's Emergency Housing Need](#)
- [Assess if the Client Qualifies for Emergency Housing](#)
- [Establishing an Immediate EH need](#)
- [Considering an Emergency Housing Grant \(EH Grant\)](#)
- [When an EH Grant is Granted](#)
- [What does an EH Grant cover?](#)
- [If You Are Considering Declining](#)
- [Final Actions](#)

Emergency Housing Request at Reception/ Front of House

For clients requesting Emergency Housing at reception, please follow the steps below:

- **Initial Screening of Emergency Housing Requests:** Front of House staff will screen all clients requesting accommodation support to understand their specific needs and book the appropriate appointment. You must create a Housing Client event note (go to **Housing>Emergency Housing>Screening Pre-Emergency Housing** (if one doesn't already exist).
- **Youth Clients:** Clients who are enrolled in Youth Service and in receipt of either the Youth Payment (YP) or Young Parent Payment (YPP) should follow the [Youth Service Emergency Housing Process](#).
- **Connecting Clients to the Right Support:** Based on the screening, clients will either be connected with an on-site staff member, booked into Q-Manager for an appointment, or have their request completed immediately (if it is something that can be completed at reception). If Emergency Housing is required, an application must be completed. If other support, such as rent arrears or hardship assistance is more appropriate, the relevant appointment will be arranged.
- **EH Application:** All requests for Emergency Housing (EH) application are either approved or declined in CMS and the client is informed of the outcome, including their review rights.
- **Appointment Timing:** Find the best time to book the client appointment based on the urgency of their situation, while keeping in mind the SLA for an EH appointment request is 24 hours.

Understanding the Client's Emergency Housing Need

To help resolve a client's emergency housing needs, we need to understand their situation and why they need immediate assistance. We need to do all we can to make sure people get the right support, including any support that could help them to stay in their current housing (if that is appropriate in the client's situation.) EH is a last resort assistance. Here are the steps to follow:

Assess the client's immediate need:

- **Screening Pre-Emergency Housing CEN:** Check in CMS if there is an existing 'Screening Pre-Emergency Housing' CEN to help you understand a brief background to the client's situation as to why they have contacted MSD for help.
- **Identify the Reason:** Understand why the client has an immediate emergency housing need
- **Living Situation:** Determine where they have been living and what led to their emergency housing need
- **Exploring other options:** Check if the client, their partner, and children have access to other adequate short-term accommodation.
- **Housing Barriers:** Understand factors impacting their ability to find short-term and long-term housing
- **Check Full and Correct Entitlement (F.A.C.E.):** Ensure they are receiving their full and correct entitlements or non-emergency housing assistance.

- **EH is a last resort assistance:** An Emergency Housing Grant (EHG) is last resort assistance for clients with an immediate EH need. It can be used to pay for emergency accommodation when a client cannot remain where they are and don't have access to other accommodation adequate for their needs in the short-term.

You may also want to consider other factors such as health, family violence, safety concerns, and access to work and school, bail conditions (MoJ), corrections cohort.

For more information, see [Map](#).

Access to Other Adequate Accommodation

If a client has access to other accommodation options, they may not have an immediate EH need. Consider the client's circumstances and their immediate family on a case-by-case basis.

A client **may not** have an adequate place to stay if the available accommodation, for example:

- Is an unsafe environment (e.g. drugs or other crimes)
- Is unsafe for children, the client, or their partner
- Lacks essential amenities like toilets, cleaning facilities, and food preparation areas
- Is too far from a hospital if the client, their child, or partner is undergoing medical treatment

For more information, see [Map](#).

Important Reminder: While resolving the client's immediate, short-term housing needs, it's crucial to also consider their longer-term housing needs and the potential barriers they may have.

Key Considerations for Emergency Housing:

- **Support Network:** Can they stay with whānau or friends who have spare bedrooms/ couch? (when this is adequate for their needs in the short-term)
- **Current/Previous Accommodation:** Why they can no longer stay where they were
- **Transitional Housing:** Consider a referral if there is a suitable vacancy
- **Long-term solutions:** Is there other assistance available that could resolve their housing needs, e.g., through Housing Support Products (HSP) or Accommodation Supplement (AS)
- **Employment:** Check if employment would help them stay where they are
- **Broker Referrals:** Ensure they are referred to a work and/ or housing broker based on client's situation
- **Tenancy Issues:** Previous tenancy problems or tribunal issues.
- **Family Violence:** Address any concerns of family violence immediately.

Note: If there is family violence or concerns of this, it must be addressed immediately.

Assess if the Client Qualifies for Emergency Housing

Qualifications for Emergency Housing

To get an EH Grant, the client must:

- have an immediate housing need
- meet an income and cash asset test (unless there are exceptional circumstances) and
- meet the residence criteria and
- understand and agree to meet the emergency housing (EH) responsibilities

You must also consider:

- the client's ability to meet their immediate emergency housing need in another way
- whether the emergency housing supplier is opted-in to the supplier standards
- if the emergency housing accommodation is adequate and an actual and reasonable cost

You may also consider:

- if the client has caused or contributed to their immediate housing need, e.g. cannot remain in their current place due to damaging the property, or exhibiting anti-social behaviour such as threats, intimidation, drug or alcohol abuse, or theft.

For more information, see [Map](#).

Establishing an Immediate EH need

This section gives you some guidelines to help you establish if a client has an immediate EH (Emergency Housing) need.

What is an immediate EH need

A client would be assessed as having an immediate EH need if, on the date they apply or during some or all of the next 7 nights they:

- cannot remain in their usual place of residence (if any) **and**
- will not have any access to other accommodation that is adequate for the needs of the client and their partner and dependent children (if any) immediate family

Note: If a client has access to other adequate short-term accommodation (but they decline to stay there without a good reason), they do not have an immediate emergency housing need.

Client does not have an immediate emergency housing need

If the client **does not** have an immediate emergency housing need, but they still need help with finding long-term accommodation, you can check if they may qualify for other assistance such as the Accommodation Supplement, Temporary Additional Support, Housing Support Products, or Social Housing. You cannot approve an EH Grant if the client does not have an immediate emergency housing need.

For more information, see [Map](#).

Considering an Emergency Housing Grant (EH Grant)

This section provides you with information about paying an EH Grant.

Note: it is important to check if there is Transitional Housing available that meets the clients' needs before placing them in EH.

Granting for Less Than 7 Nights

- **Less than 7 nights:** An EH Grant can be for less than 7 nights if appropriate for the client's situation. This can be an initial or subsequent grant. For example, if the client has been accepted into TH but the place is not available, we can grant a client EH until the TH place is available for them to move into.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** If a client cannot be seen face-to-face, a phone assessment can take place, the client will need to be booked in to the next available face-to-face appointment and be granted a short stay until that appointment.
- **Face-to-Face Appointments:** If a subsequent grant is likely, book a face-to-face appointment before the current grant ends.
- **Granting less than 7 nights:** If a client needs more time to provide further verification, you may consider granting a short stay (e.g. the client has until their next appointment to provide the further verification MSD asked for, and that is 4 days from now).

For scenarios, see: [Counting the first 7 nights of a new emergency housing event](#).

Granting for 7+ Nights

- **Standard Duration:** Typically, an EH Grant is for up to 7 nights.
- **Extended Duration:** Grants can be extended beyond 7 nights in specific situations:
 - **Up to 14 Nights:** When there is low availability of emergency housing in the region.
 - **Up to 21 Nights:** When a client has had an EH Grant for at least 7 nights for the same event and meets additional qualifications.

For more information, see [Map](#).

When an EH Grant is Granted

Explaining Emergency Housing Responsibilities

You must advise the client of their EH responsibilities. From night 8 onwards, clients must agree to and meet the following responsibilities while staying in emergency housing:

- **Engage with Support Services:** If referred by MSD, clients must actively engage with these services.
- **Seek Other Housing:** Clients must make reasonable efforts to find other housing, including accessing other sources of housing assistance.
- **Pay Client Contribution:** Clients must pay their contribution by the due date determined by MSD.

Warnings: If responsibilities are not met without a good and sufficient reason, the client will receive a warning.

Grant will be declined: After 2 warnings, and not meeting their responsibilities for a third time, the EH Grant will be declined, and a 13-week non-entitlement period will apply

When an Emergency Housing Grant is granted, clients must be advised of the expectations and conditions of payment for emergency housing.

You must also advise the client of the expectations & conditions of payment. This includes:

- **Not causing or contributing to their immediate EH need:** For example, follow the rules of stay set by the housing supplier and be responsible for any damages caused by the client or anyone staying with them
- **Grant may be declined:** If the client causes or contributes to their need for EH (e.g., breaking supplier's rules and being asked to leave), subsequent EH Grants may be declined.
- Provide the client with details on what to expect from us and their accommodation provider, the expectations, and conditions of payment, and
- what to do if they have any issues or concerns when staying in EH – [Emergency housing – what you need to know](#)

For more information, See [Map](#).

What does an EH Grant cover?

An EH Grant covers the cost for the actual and reasonable costs for **adequate emergency housing** that meets the needs of the client, their partner, and dependent children (if any).

This includes:

- nightly rate of the emergency accommodation, for example, in a hostel, motel or night shelter or other community emergency housing provider

Security Deposit Pre-Approval: When the client qualifies for EH grant or TH and the supplier/provider requires a security deposit, a security deposit can be approved as security against loss or damage to the supplier/provider property. You will need to explain the security deposit process and key points such as the pre-approved security deposit amount to the client.

For more information, See [Map](#).

If You Are Considering Declining

There are situations when you cannot grant an EH Grant and it must be declined. These circumstances include (but are not limited to):

- the client does not meet the qualifications for an EH grant
- the client refuses to provide verification and MSD does not have enough information to determine that the client meets the core eligibility criteria
- the client is currently on a 13-week non-entitlement period for EH

There are situations when you can decline an EH Grant. These circumstances include (but are not limited to) when:

- the client can meet their emergency housing need in another way
- the client has caused or contributed to their emergency housing need. **For example:**
 - the client cannot remain in their current accommodation due to intentionally damaging the property, or exhibiting anti-social behaviour such as threats, intimidation, drug or alcohol abuse, or theft or
 - the client had to leave their EH accommodation because they broke the supplier's rules of stay

For more information, See [Map](#).

If you are considering declining an EH Grant where the whānau/ household has dependent children, you will need to follow the [escalation pathway](#) to receive sign off from your Regional Director.

Declining when a client has contributed to their EH need

When a client applies for an EH grant, you may consider if they have caused or contributed to their EH need.

Contributing factors may include:

- seeking EH in one region while travelling to another (just passing through)
- causing intentional damage in their previous EH or Transitional Housing placement
- breaking the supplier's rules of stay in their EH accommodation and being asked to leave or evicted by the supplier
- being asked to leave from EH accommodation by the supplier due to anti-social or dangerous behavior
- exhausting all EH options in the region due to anti-social and/ or dangerous behavior, resulting in suppliers refusing to accommodate the client and their whānau
- voluntarily leaving an affordable private rental/social house without a good and sufficient reason
- being evicted or handed a 90 day notice due to rent arrears or damage to property

People who left their housing due to experiencing family violence or harm will not be considered to have caused or contributed to their immediate emergency housing need.

For more information, See [Map](#).

Final Actions

- **EH Application:** Ensure Emergency Housing application has been completed for every request, regardless of the outcome
- **Providing EH Information:** Provide details on what to expect from MSD and the EH Provider, payment conditions, and how to make a complaint. – [Emergency housing – what you need to know](#)
- **Case Management:** Refer the client for intensive case management while they are in EH.
- **Social Housing Register:** If the client is not on the SH register, complete screening/assessment and/or book client for an SH Assessment Appointment.
- **Update SH Application:** If already on the waitlist, make sure their current circumstances are reflected in their application by referring the client to the Centralised Unit Housing at 0800 463 768 to update their existing application.

Escalation to Oranga Tamariki

If there is a risk to a child including physical or sexual harm, exposure to family violence or neglect, the manager will need to make a report of concern to [Oranga Tamariki](#).

[Child Protection: our commitment - Doogle](#)

Emergency Housing Grants Programme

This page provides an overview of the EH Grants Programme that was introduced as part of the 26 August 2024 changes to emergency housing.

On this Page:

[Emergency Housing Grants Programme](#)

[Responsibilities](#)

[Activities](#)

[Warnings](#)

[Non-entitlement period for EH](#)

[Limited Circumstances during the non-entitlement period for EH](#)

Emergency Housing Grants Programme

The EH Grants process includes:

- Responsibilities
- Activities
- Warnings
- Non-entitlement period for EH

- Limited circumstances

Note: The emergency housing responsibilities, agreed activities, and warnings only apply to the client, not their partner.

Responsibilities

From the 8th night of a new EH event, the client receiving an EH grant must agree to, and meet, the following responsibilities:

- be engaged with support services (if a referral has been made), **and**
- make reasonable efforts to get other housing, including accessing other sources of assistance, **and**
- pay the client contribution by the date MSD determines (due date)

These responsibilities apply to every EH grant for the duration of the client's stay in EH. The only exception to this is when an EH grant has been granted under limited circumstances.

Note: If a client is already engaged with an appropriate support service, they can continue to engage with them as an agreed activity.

Map

[Emergency housing responsibilities](#)

[When the emergency housing responsibilities apply](#)

[Qualifications for emergency housing](#)

[Good and sufficient reason for not meeting responsibilities](#)

Doogle

[Emergency Housing Contribution](#)

Activities

Agreed activities are the reasonable steps a client must take during a defined period to meet their EH responsibilities. Clients will have to agree to and complete activities to meet their responsibilities from their 8th night in EH.

As part of the EH grant application process staff must:

- discuss and agree with the client on the activities they'll be required to do before their next application for an EH grant, and
- ensure the client understands the activities and what is expected of them, and
- provide the client with a written copy of the agreed activities, and
- tell the client they will be issued with a warning if they don't do these without a good and sufficient reason.

Agreed activities must be reasonable for the client to do by their next appointment date to apply for a further EH grant. They must understand their agreed activities and what is expected of them.

For more information and examples refer to [Responsibility and Possible Activity Examples](#)

MAP

[Emergency housing responsibilities](#)

[Paying the emergency housing contribution by date or dates set by MSD](#)

[Making a reasonable effort to get other housing](#)

[Engage with support services](#)

Warnings

When a client has failed to meet their EH responsibilities (without a good and sufficient reason), they will receive a warning.

If a client does not have a good and sufficient reason, MSD will notify the client in writing when they have failed to meet their responsibilities (this is a reviewable decision). This written communication will issue the client with a warning.

A maximum of one warning can be applied per EH Grant. After receiving two warnings, if the client has not met their responsibilities without a good and sufficient reason for a third time, they will be declined their next EH grant application and are subject to an EH non-entitlement period.

MAP

[Emergency housing responsibilities](#)

[Good and sufficient reason for not meeting responsibilities](#)

[Warnings for failing to meet responsibilities](#)
[13 week non-entitlement period for emergency housing](#)

Non-entitlement period for EH

During the client's non-entitlement period for EH:

- they are ineligible for EH grants and there is no opportunity to re-comply,
- the only way they can get an EH grant is if limited circumstances apply during the non-entitlement period,
- they cannot be included as a partner in another's EH Grant during their non-entitlement period
- they cannot be referred to Transitional Housing (TH) by MSD (they can self-refer, or be referred by another 3rd party)
- their EH fast-track tag will be removed if they have one

Note: Clients on a non-entitlement period for emergency housing are still eligible for their benefit.

Staff will still work with clients to assess if they qualify for other products and assistance and ensure they are receiving their full and correct entitlement (FACE).

MAP

[13 week non-entitlement period for emergency housing](#)

[Warnings for failing to meet responsibilities](#)

Limited Circumstances during the non-entitlement period for EH

There is only one way a client may be eligible for an EH grant when they have a non-entitlement period for EH. This is if the client or their dependent children (if any) meet the criteria for limited circumstances.

Either the client or their dependent child(ren) may be facing the unforeseen crisis situation, or be at risk of current or near-term harm. Generally, the client or their dependent child must have two risk factors.

However, depending on the seriousness of a risk factor, MSD can determine the client meets the criteria for limited circumstances if there are at least two risk factors shared between the client and their dependent children (if any).

MAP

[13 week non-entitlement period for emergency housing](#)

[Limited circumstances during during non-entitlement for emergency housing](#)

[Examples of limited circumstances](#)

[Paying the Emergency Housing Grant when limited circumstances apply](#)

[Determining when limited circumstances no longer apply](#)