



18 AUG 2016



On 8 June 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about the Child, Youth and Family former Family Home located at Greenlane Road, Masterton

In 2014 Child, Youth and Family began a comprehensive review of its Family Home portfolio within the work around the continuum of care and considering regional needs for children in care. This review identified a number of properties which could be disposed of or used for other social services as demand for these types of properties, in the areas concerned, have declined over recent times.

Child, Youth and Family have determined that the Greenlane Road, Masterton Family Home is surplus to requirements. Work is underway to move the property out of the Ministry of Social Development's ownership.

As at the end of March 2016, there were 63 approved or provisionally approved Child, Youth and Family caregivers for the Wairarapa region and 59 children or young people in the custody of the Chief Executive. As such, there are alternative placements for children in the Wairarapa region without this Family Home. There are two providers in the Wairarapa who have section 396 approval (Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989) as a child and family support service.

I will address each of your questions in turn:

- *How long has the house been unoccupied for? When was the last long-term occupation?*

The Greenlane Road Family Home has not been occupied for the last ten years. It was last occupied by a Non-Governmental Organisation.

- *For the above time period (or for the last 10 years at least), how much money has been spent on this property/house including maintenance and rates? Please break down year by year in the answer.*

I am unable to provide you with a breakdown of the expenses as far back as the last 10 years, in order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually search files to extract the expenses. This would require substantial manual collation due to the way historic property records are collated and archived. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information 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 this part of 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.

However, I can advise that in the last ten years there has been no new investment in the Greenlane Road Family Home. During this time period expenses in relation to the property have all been for simple running costs such as rates, lawn mowing, tree trimming and minor maintenance items.

The forecasted property operating budget for year ending 30 June 2016 for the Greenlane Road, Masterton Family Home is \$6,888. Of this total the Rates are \$3,273 and \$1,369 are for maintenance costs. These expenses have little variation year-to-year. Table one below shows the total expense for the property for the financial years 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15.

**Table one: Total expense by financial year for the Child, Youth and Family, Family Home at Greenlane Road, Masterton**

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Expense</b>
2012/2013	\$5,082.50
2013/2014	\$3,704.00
2014/2015	\$5,396.34

- *Why won't CYFs sell this house?*

As a part of the review of their Family Home portfolio, Child, Youth and Family have determined that the Greenlane Road, Masterton Family Home is surplus to requirements. The property is subject to disposal.

This involves a prescribed process which includes Treaty Settlement obligations, obligations to former owners in terms of the Public Works Act and other tasks and checks prior to sale on the open market. It is therefore difficult to accurately forecast how long it will take the Ministry of Social Development to dispose of this property.

- *As mentioned in the story, the General Manger of operations at the time said the house was unused because upgrades were needed to the kitchens, living spaces, wet areas, bathrooms and infrastructure, such as the plumbing. This was 5.5 years ago, are there plans to renovate or will the house just decrease in value?*

Over the previous ten years no new investment in the property has been made. The Family Home has serious plumbing issues and currently cannot be occupied (plastic internal plumbing has perished/failed and would require total replacement).

- *From publicly available information on the property I understand it is currently valued at \$610,000 (Capital Value) but any other values that you would see fit to include would also be welcome.*

The Ministry of Social Development is in the process of obtaining a new 2016 valuation of this property which is due August 2016.

The Family Home was last valued (for Finance/Asset purposes) in 2014. Valuation was \$371,000. This may better reflect the state of the property than the Government Valuation (GV) at that time of \$580,000. The GV in this case is unlikely to match likely sale price should the Family Home be sold.

I hope you have found this information helpful. The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10-152  
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Nicholas Pole  
**Deputy Chief Executive  
Organisational Solutions**