



07 FEB 2018



Dear 

On 15 December 2017, Housing New Zealand transferred to the Ministry your request, under the Official Information Act 1982, for the following information:

- *The number of homeless families in the Auckland area your Ministry has placed in permanent homes since the change of government.*
- *The number of families currently on the waiting list for permanent housing in Auckland and the current waiting time they are facing before your Ministry places them in affordable permanent housing.*

The Social Housing Register (combined Transfer and Housing Register) is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. Placing people and families into public housing accommodation is about matching them with the right property in the area they want to live. Those assessed as having a greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change their priority and place on the register may change also. It is important to understand that the Social Housing Register is not a time ranked waitlist, rather applicants assessed as being in the most urgent need will be matched to a property first.

Clients who approach the Ministry seeking public housing are offered additional support where it is appropriate for their situation. This can include Accommodation Supplement for private rent, Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, or a Recoverable Assistance Payment. Further information regarding available support can be accessed on the Ministry's website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/housing.html.

The Housing Register represents applicants not currently in public housing who have been assessed as eligible for public housing, and who are ready to be matched to a suitable property. The Transfer Register represents applicants already in public housing who need to be rehoused for reasons such as there being too few or too many bedrooms in their current public house, or for health reasons.

We need to be careful not to assume that every person who is without secure accommodation considers themselves homeless and/or seeks help from the Ministry. The Ministry can report the number of applications on the Social Housing Register where the application is recorded as living in an insecure accommodation type. This may not reflect the situation of all household members included in the application.

The Ministry reports information about the Social Housing Register quarterly, this ensures that the data published is accurate and reliable. The Ministry does not produce reports for ad-hoc one-off requests for alternative time periods as this is not an efficient use of the Ministry's resources and the public interest is met through quarterly reporting. As such, I am refusing your request for the number of homeless families in the Auckland area placed into permanent homes since the change of government under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

However, I can advise you that during the December 2017 quarter, 354 applicants who were living in insecure accommodation in the Auckland Super City Territorial Authority (TA) moved into public housing from the Social Housing Register. Insecure accommodation types include 'Temp sharing - Staying with friends / family', 'Emergency Housing Provider (Contracted and Non-Contracted)', 'Garage', 'Rehabilitation Centre', 'Car', 'Motel/Hotel/Campground', 'Homeless or night shelter', 'Refugee centre', 'Mobile Home - Caravan', 'Sleeping rough', 'Hospital', 'Women's Refuge', 'Respite Care' and 'Tent'.

As at 31 December 2017, there were 3,278 applications on the Social Housing Register in the Auckland Super City TA. This includes applicants in all accommodation types.

The Ministry cannot predict the wait time for these applicants to be housed as it is reliant on when a suitable property becomes available. As such, your request for the current waiting time families on the Social Housing Register are facing before being placed in affordable permanent housing is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist. However, I can advise you that for the total 586 applicants on the Social Housing Register in the Auckland Super City TA who moved into public housing between 1 October and 31 December 2017, the median time to house was 70 days.

Please note that this includes applicants on the Social Housing Register with a priority of 'A' and 'B' only. The time to house is defined as the number of calendar days an application was a priority 'A' or a priority 'B' on the Social Housing Register between the date an application is first confirmed live on the Register and the date a tenancy is activated for that application. The date a tenancy is activated may differ from the tenancy start date.

Further information regarding the Social Housing Register, the quarterly statistics and the latest Housing Quarterly Report are available at:
<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/index.html>.

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 shortly. 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.

If you wish to discuss this response concerning the Social Housing Register with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, 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.

Yours sincerely



Scott Gallacher
Deputy Chief Executive, Housing