



11 FEB 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 6 January 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

Please supply statistics relating to length of stays by "homeless" individuals and families in temporary accommodation during the period October 2018 to October 2019.

On 8 January 2020 you clarified your request to include lengths of stays in Emergency Housing and Transitional Housing. The aspect of your request for statistics regarding Transitional Housing was transferred to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, as they hold this information.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing and private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available here: www.housing.msd.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html.

It is important to note that over 50 percent of people accessing EH SNGs only need between one and three grants before securing more suitable accommodation.

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

There are also a distinct group of people that face a range of complex issues that are a barrier, such as mental health and addictions, criminal history, or family violence. There are still others that need to live in a specific area, due to the need to access specialist care or educational needs for them or their family.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

Affordable accommodation in New Zealand is also in limited supply, including short term accommodation. More people are seeking help from the Ministry for emergency housing, which is reflected in the figures provided in this response. To address this shortage, the government has invested significantly in creating more housing, overseen by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. An extra 6,400 public housing places will be delivered by June 2022. In the 2018/2019 financial year, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has delivered on 2,178 public houses and there's a future pipeline of more than 2,700. The Budget 2019 provided \$283 million to fund an maintain over 2,800 Transitional Housing places throughout New Zealand, along with another \$197 million to expand and strengthen Housing First to high demand areas.

Please find attached Table One. Table One provides figures for the number of EH SNGs, number of clients that received EH SNGs, the amount granted, and the average amount of consecutive weeks that clients were granted EH SNGs, as at the end of each quarter during the period 1 October 2018 and 30 September 2019.

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 and any attached documents available to the wider public. 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 with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding statistics for lengths of stays in Emergency Housing, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
General Manager Housing

Table One: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, clients in Emergency Housing, amount spent and average consecutive weeks spent in Emergency housing, for the period 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019 broken down by quarter.

Quarter Ending	Number of Grants	Number of Clients	Total Amount Granted	Average Consecutive Weeks
31 December 2018	15,676	3,749	\$19,494,969	5.0
31 March 2019	17,264	4,090	\$23,079,536	5.3
30 June 2019	23,574	5,103	\$34,338,613	6.0
30 September 2019	29,266	6,064	\$41,589,049	6.8

Notes:

- The total amount granted may not be the same as the total amount spent.
- Consecutive weeks is based on the number of weeks in which the client has received an EH SNG. After four weeks with no EH SNGs, the consecutive count is reset to zero. If a client receives a second EH SNG within four weeks, it is considered as two consecutive weeks.
- The average consecutive weeks calculation is based on the client's most recent grant within a quarter. They may have had multiple grants in a quarter. For example, a client may receive an EH SNG in the beginning of the quarter, followed by five weeks without receiving an EH SNG. Following this, if the client receives three consecutive EH SNGs in the same quarter, it will be recorded as 3 consecutive weeks (as this was the more recent grant).
- A client can be counted in more than one quarter if they had grants in each quarter.
- A client's total stay may cross more than one quarter. For each quarter, the length of stay at the time of their last grant is used to calculate the average time in Emergency Housing. For example, if a client received 10 consecutive EH SNGs that crossed over from the quarter ending in 31 March 2019 to the beginning of the quarter ending 30 June 2019, it would be recorded as 10 consecutive weeks for that client in the quarter ending 30 June 2019. This is to avoid a client's consecutive EH SNG count to reset at the beginning of each quarter.