



18 MAR 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 19 February 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- 1. The number of disabled people on the housing waiting list in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.*
- 2. The average length of time a disabled person is on the housing waiting list for the above years, compared to the average time for a non-disabled person.*
- 3. The number of disabled people who accepted housing in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.*
- 4. The number of times houses were turned down with the reason being inappropriateness for disability in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.*
- 5. List of reasons disabled people rejected houses in the above years.*
- 6. The number of modifications made to housing to make them appropriate for disabilities in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.*

On 24 February 2020 question 6 was transferred to the Ministry of Health.

The Social Housing Register is not a time-ranked waitlist. Applicants with the most urgent need for public housing will be given priority in being matched to a suitable property. The stock of rental properties available through Kāinga Ora and community housing providers is limited, and access to a rental property will depend on how quickly housing becomes available and on the number of other people with urgent needs also waiting.

Kāinga Ora properties are able to be modified to meet people's specific needs. This can be anywhere from installing handrails to making homes completely accessible and functional, to ensure that disabled people are able to live as independently and safely as possible. People can also access funding to modify a property and make it more fit-for-purpose and could discuss this with their General Practitioner in the first instance. You may be interested to know that at least 15% of all new public housing builds are also being developed to be compliant with universal accessibility standards.

The Ministry does not specifically record which clients have physical, intellectual or social disabilities. The data used to answer your questions is collated based on the number of people in receipt of either the Supported Living Payment (SLP) or Jobseeker Support – Health Condition, Injury and Disability (JS-HCD). These types of assistance do not use a definition of 'disability', but rather use an eligibility criteria including a recommendation from a health practitioner to assess client's ability to take up full or part-time work. It is important to note not all households will require modifications to their public house as people in receipt of these types of benefit may also have health conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, or be ill.

Please see Table One below which shows the number of primary applicants on the Social Housing Register who are in receipt of an incapacity tested benefit as at the end of December from 2015 to 2019.

Table One: The number of applications on the Social Housing Register where the primary applicant is in receipt of a main benefit due to an incapacity as at the end of December.

As at the end of December	Housing Register	Transfer Register	Total
2015	1,381	448	1,829
2016	1,933	500	2,433
2017	2,385	566	2,951
2018	3,813	825	4,638
2019	5,130	967	6,097

Notes:

- This includes applicants on the Housing Register and Transfer Register.
- This only includes priority A and B clients.
- This table shows primary applicants with incapacity related benefits on the Social Housing Register only.
- Incapacity related benefits include Jobseeker Support with a Health Condition, Injury, or Disability (JS-HCD), and the Supported Living Payment (SLP) and excludes the Supported Living Payment Carers (SLP-carer).

Table Two below shows the number of Social Housing applicants housed in each calendar year from 2015 to 2019 and the median number of days to house these applicants. It breaks this information into those applications where the main applicant is in receipt of, and not in receipt of an incapacity related benefit, and the overall figures.

Table Two: Number of Social Housing applicants housed and median days to house, broken down by incapacity tested and non-incapacity related benefit.

Year	Incapacity related benefit		Non-incapacity related benefit		Total applicants	
	Applications housed	Median days to house	Applications housed	Median days to house	Applications housed	Median days to house
2015	549	83	1,322	63	1,871	68
2016	1,904	66	4,693	51	6,597	55
2017	2,196	61	4,879	50	7,075	54
2018	2,108	88	4,480	77	6,588	80
2019	2,438	117	4,829	115	7,267	116

Notes:

- Time to house is defined as the number of calendar days between the date the application is first confirmed live on the Social Housing Register as an 'A' or 'B' priority and the date a tenancy is activated for that application. The date the tenancy is activated may differ from the tenancy start date.
- The year in which the tenancy was activated is the year in which the application has been reported as 'housed'.
- Applicants housed may have been housed with Kāinga Ora (previously known as Housing New Zealand) or with a Community Housing Provider.

- Applicants are considered 'housed' when the application register status is changed to 'active tenancy'.
- Incapacity related benefits include Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury, or Disability (JS-HCD) and JS-HCD Hardship, and Supported Living Payment (SLP), and excludes SLP Carers (SLP-Carer)
- Numbers for 2015 are only from 1 September 2015 to 31 December 2015. It is not possible to provide data for the whole 2015 year due to IT changes in August 2015.

Finally, Table Three below shows the number of instances where a social housing applicant has declined the offer of a property by a social housing provider for the reason 'does not meet disability needs' for each calendar year from 2015 to 2019. More information about declining social housing property offers can be found on the Work and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/register-management-and-referrals/declining-offer-of-a-suitable-property-01.html.

Table Three: Number of applications declined for reason 'does not meet disability needs'.

Year of decline	Number
2015	43
2016	119
2017	122
2018	92
2019	114

Notes:

- Number for 2015 are only from 1 September 2015 to 31 December 2015. It is not possible to provide data for the whole 2015 year due to IT changes in August 2015.
- This table shows the number of individual properties declined by an applicant.
- This table shows properties declined with the reason 'does not meet disability needs'. It does not specify the benefit type of the applicant.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with specific decline reasons beyond the property 'does not meet disability needs' as this information is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review hundreds of files. As such I refused your request for this information under section 18(f) of the Official information Act. The greater public interest is in 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 this work would still be prejudiced.

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

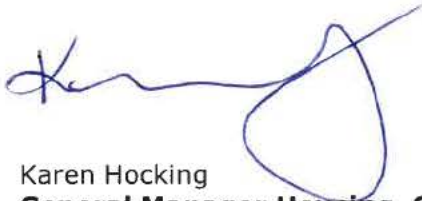
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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 incapacity tested benefits and the Social Housing Register, 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 'Karen Hocking', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Karen Hocking
General Manager Housing, Service Delivery