



13 JUL 2021

Tēnā koe

On 19 May 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *A full breakdown of the demographics by age, gender, parental and partnership status of individuals on the emergency housing list from 2017 until current, year on year for the past five years.*
- *The number of sole parents with children under the age of five years old on the emergency housing list from 2017 until current, year on year for the past five years.*
- *What family type makes up the figure of 'unknowns' currently listed on the emergency housing list and what is the reason for this 'unknown'?*
- *Of all the people registered as homeless, how many are under the age of 18 broken down by age, gender and ethnicity from 2017 until current, year on year for the past five years.*
- *All reports, correspondence (including, but in no way limited to, emails and letters), briefing and advisory papers containing advice or recommendations related to the emergency housing list since June 2019.*
- *Any incidence of violence reported to authorities by those in emergency accommodation (including, but in no way limited to, motels) from 2017 until current, year on year for the past five years and reports or advice given to the Ministry about the appropriateness of the emergency accommodation provided.*
- *Any incidence of violence against children reported to authorities by those in emergency accommodation (including, but in no way limited to, motels) from 2017 until current, year on year for the past five years and reports or advice given to the Ministry about the appropriateness of the emergency accommodation provided.*

On 27 May 2021, the Ministry contacted you to discuss your request, you were advised that the majority of the information you had requested would be refused as the Ministry did not hold the information you were requesting. As such, on 28 May 2021, you emailed the Ministry with a new request for the following information:

1. *A full breakdown of the demographics by age, gender, ethnicity, parental and partnership status of families with children receiving the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant, and demographic data by number of, age, ethnicity of children in families receiving this grant,*
2. *The number of sole parents with children under the age of five years old receiving the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant from 2016 until current,*

3. *What family type makes up the figure of 'unknowns' currently listed on the emergency housing list and what is the reason for this 'unknown'?*
4. *Copies of all reports to the Ministers of Housing and Social Development related to children in emergency housing since June 2019.*

On 10 June 2021, the Ministry transferred part of your request regarding papers received by Hon Megan Woods, the Minister for Housing onto the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development.

On 28 June 2021, the Ministry emailed you to extend the timeframe for responding to your request.

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 whether 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 or private rental accommodation. Other options, including transitional housing, can also be explored 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.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html.

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.

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.

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing, as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 saw a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation where they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of emergency housing into long-term accommodation, which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

Across government, there is a major programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply.

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development/HUD) and Kāinga Ora are responsible for increasing the supply of affordable and public housing. This includes planning, and with Kāinga Ora, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. HUD is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring homeowners.

The Ministry is working towards making sure that all clients who are in emergency housing have a dedicated case manager. Having a dedicated case manager means that clients will be able to access an integrated service that works to ensure that they are getting all the support available to them from the Ministry. If an individual or whānau requires further support, they can be referred to a Navigator. Navigators can help coordinate community, health and government services, and be hands-on in making sure those services are accessible to the client. Ministry staff and/or Navigators are in regular contact with all recipients of EH SNGs.

Information regarding children in emergency housing was released in the Ministry's 2019/20 Annual Review to the Social Services and Community Committee. The data used for the 2019/20 Annual Review was operational data. In the past, the Ministry has chosen to publish emergency housing data in line with other official reporting on hardship assistance. However, due to the increased public interest, the Ministry decided to publish operational data, which is at a point in time, of children in emergency housing for the purposes of the Annual Review.

Operational data, taken at a point in time, means that the data is taken from a narrow window and can fluctuate significantly from day to day. Any clients that are entering emergency housing on the day the reporting takes place will not be counted within the reported snapshot of data, resulting in a significant portion of EH SNG clients that will be missed in this method of reporting. Standard reporting is based on quarterly data and thus, provides a clearer indication of the trends and patterns of the emergency housing population. This reporting aligns with the methods used across all government agencies, and is quality assured which ensures the data provided is as accurate as possible.

When a client applies for an EH SNG, the client will provide the appointed Case Manager with the total number of adults and children who will likely be staying the emergency accommodation with them. No other information that identifies the relationships of these adults and children to the applicant is recorded for an EH SNG application, nor is confirmation of whether the children and/or adults will be staying in emergency accommodation for the duration of the EH SNG. EH SNG clients may have complex family or caregiver relationships, and it is not uncommon for children of one parent to stay with another family member or there could be scenarios where the same child is recorded in multiple EH SNG applications, (i.e, both parents are in separate emergency accommodation at the same time).

Children may also be counted more than once, as the Ministry are unable to verify if the child/children are included in more than one household's EH SNG application.

The Ministry will now answer your questions in turn.

To answer questions one and two your request, please find **Tables One, Two, Three** and **Four** attached in **Appendix One** below. These tables will provide you with the following information:

- **Table One:** Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and age group.
- **Table Two:** Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and gender.
- **Table Three:** Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and Ethnic Group.
- **Table Four:** Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and Household Type.

Please note that the Ministry does not record the ages of children in emergency housing, and so your request for information regarding children under five years old is refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

3. *What family type makes up the figure of 'unknowns' currently listed on the emergency housing list and what is the reason for this 'unknown'?*

When a person applies for an EH SNG, they are asked for their household composition. The Ministry records the category 'unknown' when data regarding household composition was not recorded at the time of a grant being made.

4. *Copies of all reports to the Ministers of Housing and Social Development related to children in emergency housing since June 2019.*

The following documents were identified to be within the scope of your request:

- Report, *Homelessness package: Final advice on policy settings for Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant*, dated 22 November 2019
- Report, *Minor Amendments to the Special Needs Grants Programme for Emergency Housing*, dated 20 March 2020
- Report, *Amendments to the Special Needs Grants Programme to defer the introduction of the emergency housing contribution*, dated 25 March 2020
- Report, *Use of Private Rental Properties for Emergency Housing*, dated 20 August 2020
- Aide Memoire, *Meeting with Minister Woods on Emergency Housing - Rotorua Options*, dated 16 April 2021
- Aide-memoire, *Oral item on transforming Emergency Housing in New Zealand*, dated 12 May 2021
- Aide Memoire, *Update on Emergency Housing in Rotorua*, dated 13 May 2021
- Aide-memoire, Draft Cabinet paper: Improving the provision of emergency housing in Rotorua and potential expansion, dated 4 June 2021, and
- Report, *Implementation of the Emergency Housing Contribution and the Flexible Funding Package*, undated

Please note that the document titled "*Draft Cabinet paper: Improving the provision of emergency housing in Rotorua and potential expansion*" and "*Aide-memoire, Oral item on transforming Emergency Housing in New Zealand*" have been withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act as it is under active consideration. The release of this

information is likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served.

You will note that the names of some individuals are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act as it is under active consideration. The release of this information is likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served.

Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(h) of the Act in order to maintain legal professional privilege. The greater public interest is in ensuring that government agencies can continue to obtain confidential legal advice.

Some information is also withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act to protect the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions. I believe the greater public interest is in the ability of individuals to express opinions in the course of their duty.

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 and attachments 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, 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



Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing

Appendix One

Table One: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and age group.

Quarter End	16	17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	Total
December 2016		60	210	1,152	1,620	1,542	1,182	1,152	783	570	330	126	123	8,862
March 2017	3	57	246	1,215	1,581	1,557	1,281	1,047	894	546	450	174	165	9,219
June 2017	24	90	411	1,380	1,905	1,884	1,497	1,170	1,275	726	507	327	252	11,445
September 2017	30	108	420	1,047	1,530	1,509	1,323	945	852	579	345	270	204	9,159
December 2017	12	114	261	765	1,053	924	897	630	534	408	264	156	144	6,171
March 2018	12	114	324	750	1,071	1,092	747	741	444	351	264	141	90	6,138
June 2018	30	96	357	1,158	1,818	1,431	1,212	1,038	771	525	393	204	213	9,243
September 2018	36	144	564	1,986	2,268	2,286	1,830	1,518	1,269	852	579	372	306	14,016
December 2018	45	177	591	2,145	2,544	2,625	2,046	1,626	1,389	948	795	357	390	15,678
March 2019	33	132	672	1,971	2,988	2,892	2,526	1,833	1,632	1,083	723	417	363	17,262
June 2019	51	144	804	3,009	4,029	4,293	3,177	2,421	2,379	1,518	786	486	477	23,574
September 2019	84	252	942	3,828	4,953	4,692	3,843	3,492	2,601	2,115	1,224	609	636	29,268
December 2019	99	243	1,017	3,753	5,232	4,881	4,431	3,768	2,622	2,271	1,233	789	606	30,942
March 2020	57	234	1,014	3,777	5,454	5,394	4,461	3,726	2,856	2,121	1,374	933	732	32,139
June 2020	93	285	1,233	5,124	6,684	6,792	5,145	4,170	3,396	2,463	1,647	1,011	840	38,883
September 2020	129	480	1,500	5,751	7,422	7,533	6,003	4,839	4,179	2,667	1,938	1,182	963	44,580
December 2020	180	543	1,467	5,145	6,528	6,342	5,151	4,215	3,453	2,415	1,794	1,014	1,092	39,342
March 2021	180	648	1,392	4,437	5,586	5,559	4,422	3,573	2,916	2,130	1,527	951	993	34,314

Table Two: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and gender.

Quarter End	Gender Diverse	Female	Male	Total
December 2016	0	6,042	2,817	8,859
March 2017	0	6,078	3,138	9,219
June 2017	0	7,500	3,945	11,448
September 2017	0	6,303	2,859	9,159
December 2017	0	4,194	1,977	6,171
March 2018	0	4,416	1,722	6,138
June 2018	0	6,327	2,919	9,246
September 2018	0	9,069	4,950	14,019
December 2018	0	9,939	5,736	15,675
March 2019	0	11,151	6,111	17,265
June 2019	0	15,618	7,956	23,574
September 2019	0	18,825	10,437	29,265
December 2019	0	19,830	11,109	30,939
March 2020	15	20,334	11,790	32,139
June 2020	27	22,794	16,062	38,883
September 2020	69	27,024	17,490	44,580
December 2020	69	24,861	14,412	39,342
March 2021	45	22,638	11,628	34,314

Table Three: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 01 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and Ethnic Group.

Quarter End	Māori	NZ European	Pacific Peoples	Other	Unspecified	Total
December 2016	5,394	1,635	1,068	591	174	8,862
March 2017	5,331	1,890	1,056	762	174	9,219
June 2017	6,723	2,394	1,347	747	234	11,445
September 2017	5,442	1,848	1,098	525	249	9,159
December 2017	3,501	1,281	816	381	192	6,174
March 2018	3,264	1,395	774	495	207	6,138
June 2018	4,956	1,935	1,293	684	375	9,246
September 2018	8,202	2,709	1,716	924	468	14,016
December 2018	9,024	3,249	1,803	1,152	444	15,675
March 2019	10,005	3,438	1,968	1,374	480	17,265
June 2019	13,707	4,314	2,994	1,767	792	23,574
September 2019	18,009	5,190	3,234	1,869	963	29,265
December 2019	19,041	5,376	3,399	2,013	1,116	30,942
March 2020	19,086	5,643	3,927	2,235	1,251	32,139
June 2020	21,945	8,400	4,113	3,042	1,380	38,883
September 2020	26,001	8,853	5,037	3,072	1,614	44,580
December 2020	23,031	7,521	4,557	2,760	1,476	39,342
March 2021	19,455	6,483	4,308	2,523	1,545	34,314

Table Four: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants granted during the period 01 October 2016 to 31 March 2021 by quarter end and Household Type.

Quarter End	Couple no children	Couple with Children	Single no Children	Single with Children	Unknown	Total
June 2020	1,881	3,531	20,406	13,008	57	38,883
September 2020	2,007	4,098	21,534	16,902	39	44,583
December 2020	1,773	4,464	17,001	16,083	18	39,342
March 2021	1,515	4,053	14,157	14,586	6	34,314

Notes for Tables One, Two, Three and Four:

- Household composition of EH-SNG applicants was not captured prior to 1 April 2020.
- This is a count of grants. A client can have more than one grant in the time period.
- Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants. From 2 December 2019, forms and online applications were updated to include three gender options for clients to choose from: 'Male', 'Female', and 'Gender Diverse'.
- Gender Diverse is not available in datasets prior to December 2019.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.
- Multiple selected ethnicities are then prioritised into a hierarchy. The Maori ethnicity has the highest priority in this hierarchy, followed by Pacific peoples. NZ European has the lowest priority. This is to ensure that smaller and politically significant ethnic groups do not get overwhelmed by the larger ethnic groups. A single ethnicity is assigned to an individual based on this hierarchy. Ethnic groups do not currently align with Statistics New Zealand ethnicity groupings.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children staying in Emergency Housing and may not be reflective of their actual family size.
- In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in emergency housing for the entire duration in Emergency Housing.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.