



27 JUL 2021

Tēnā koe

On 25 June 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The number of children currently in Emergency Housing in Bay of Plenty*
- *The number of children in Emergency Housing for the last couple of years.*

On 28 June 2021, you emailed the Ministry adding additional questions to your request. You requested the following information:

- *How many children are currently in the care of people in Emergency Housing placements in the Bay of Plenty?*
 - *This further broken down into specific numbers for Rotorua and Tauranga/Western Bay.*
- *How many children are currently in the care of people in motel/emergency in the Bay of Plenty?*
 - *This further broken down into specific numbers for Rotorua and Tauranga/Western Bay.*
- *How many children are currently in the care of people in transitional housing in the Bay of Plenty?*
 - *This further broken down into specific numbers for Rotorua and Tauranga/Western Bay.*

On 29 June 2021, the Ministry contacted you asking you to refine your request, as question one and two would provide you with the same information. Later that day, you confirmed your refinement and your request for information became the following:

1. *How many children are currently in the care of people in Emergency Housing placements in each of all six Bay of Plenty TLAs?*
2. *How many children have been in Emergency Housing in each of all six Bay of Plenty TLAs for the last five years?*
 - *Can this please be broken down into each year.*
3. *How many children are currently in the care of people in transitional housing in each of all six Bay of Plenty TLAs?*

The Ministry advised you on 29 June 2021, that question three of your request more closely aligns with the functions of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and that it had therefore been transferred to HUD for a response.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or residence, if any, and who do not have access to other accommodation that 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 depending on 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 suitable options are explored. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html.

The Ministry is prioritising a dedicated case management service for all clients in emergency housing. 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 the EH SNG.

Please see **Table One** enclosed in **Appendix A**, which shows the total number of households that, as at the end of each quarter during 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2021, received an EH SNG in the territorial local authorities that comprise the Bay of Plenty region, broken down by quarter, households with children, and the total number of children included in those households.

Please note, the Ministry only started recording information about the household composition of EH SNG recipients on 1 April 2020. And although general household information has been available since then, the Ministry has only recently been able to report on the exact number of children included in an application for emergency housing.

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 living in emergency housing.

The Ministry centrally records the total number of children, and separately, the total number of adults who are likely to be staying in emergency accommodation. This is recorded in the main applicant's EH SNG application.

Information relating to children in Emergency Housing was released in the Ministry's 19/20 Annual Review to the Social Services and Community Committee. 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, or a snapshot, of children in emergency housing for the purposes of the Annual Review.

Operational data is taken at a point in time or a snapshot, therefore 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.

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 emergency housing in the Bay of Plenty region, 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 A.

Table One. The total number of households that, as at the end of each quarter during 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2021, received an EH SNG in the territorial local authorities that comprise the Bay of Plenty region, broken down by quarter, households with children, and the total number of children included in those households.

| TLA | June 2020 | | | September 2020 | | | December 2020 | | | March 2021 | | | June 2021 | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| | Number of Households | Households with Children | Number of Children | Number of Households | Households with Children | Number of Children | Number of Households | Households with Children | Number of Children | Number of Households | Households with Children | Number of Children | Number of Households | Households with Children | Number of Children |
| KAWERAU DISTRICT | 15 | S | S | 24 | 12 | 21 | 21 | 12 | 27 | 21 | 9 | 15 | 27 | 12 | 18 |
| OPOTIKI DISTRICT | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | 0 | 0 | S | S | 6 | 15 | 9 | 24 |
| ROTORUA DISTRICT | 291 | 129 | 234 | 297 | 138 | 249 | 366 | 195 | 354 | 372 | 192 | 360 | 408 | 204 | 381 |
| TAURANGA CITY | 144 | 66 | 117 | 123 | 66 | 126 | 102 | 57 | 132 | 111 | 72 | 162 | 105 | 72 | 159 |
| WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT | S | 9 | 15 | S | S | S | 15 | 9 | 18 | S | 9 | 18 | 12 | 9 | 18 |
| WHAKATANE DISTRICT | 27 | 9 | 18 | 24 | 9 | 12 | S | 9 | 12 | 15 | S | 12 | 21 | 12 | 21 |
| TOTAL | 498 | 222 | 390 | 483 | 231 | 417 | 519 | 282 | 543 | 537 | 297 | 576 | 591 | 324 | 624 |

Notes for Table One:

- EH SNG is Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.
- Territorial local authority is based on the clients address as at the end of the period and may not be reflective of where their emergency housing is located.
- The number of households is based on the number of primary applicants who were granted an EH SNG.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children in each EH SNG application and may not be reflective of their actual family size.
- The number of children is declared at the time of each individual EH SNG.
- When a client applies for an EH SNG, the Ministry records the household make up including the number of children. In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in emergency Housing for the entire period for which the EH SNG was granted.
- 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 living in emergency housing and can be counted in more than one quarter.
- 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.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified. Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed or aggregated.
- Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.