



23 JUN 2021

Tēnā koe

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

- *How many children are currently staying in emergency accommodation (most up to date information available please)?*
- *How many children have been in emergency accommodation for longer than 3 months or longer than 6 months/ longer than one year?*
- *In which regions are children staying in emergency accommodation?*
- *How many children staying in motels are in the care of Oranga Tamariki?*

On 20 April 2021, part of your request was transferred to Oranga Tamariki, namely the question asking, "*How many children staying in motels are in the care of Oranga Tamariki*". This part of your request will be responded to by Oranga Tamariki in due course.

On 17 May 2021, the Ministry contacted you advising of the need to extend the time available to make a decision on your request to 2 June 2021.

On 2 June 2021, the Ministry sent you a Notification of Decision to advise you that the Ministry had decided to grant your request, and that a response would be sent to you on or before 24 June 2021.

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 depending on the individual's 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 or 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 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 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, or a snapshot, of children in emergency housing for the purposes of the Annual Review.

Please note that operational data, taken at a point in time or as a snapshot, 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.

For the sake of clarity, your questions will be addressed in turn below.

- *How many children are currently staying in emergency accommodation (most up to date information available please)?*
- *How many children have been in emergency accommodation for longer than 3 months or longer than 6 months/ longer than one year?*

When a client applies for an EH SNG, the client will provide the appointed Case Manager the total number of adults and children who will be staying in the emergency accommodation with them at that point in time. 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).

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.

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In line with data released in the 2019/20 Annual Review, the Ministry can provide you with a point in time snapshot of emergency housing composition, which includes children.

Please see **Table One**, attached in **Appendix A**, which outlines the number of distinct applications for an EH SNG, broken down by households, households with children, number of children and their duration of stay, as at 31 March 2021.

Please note, **Table One** has been presented as at a point in time. Unlike standard emergency housing reporting, which is based on the date of the EH SNG, operational reporting is based on a point in time, using the recorded check in and check out details of the main applicant. The Ministry cannot confirm whether the additional adults and/or children are staying in the emergency accommodation for the duration of the EH SNG.

- *In which regions are children staying in emergency accommodation?*

In line with data released in the 2019/20 Annual Review, we can provide you with a point in time snapshot of emergency housing composition, which includes children broken down by Territorial Land Authority (TLA).

Please see **Table Two** in the **Appendix**, which outlines the number of distinct applications for an EH SNG, broken down by households, households with children, number of children and TLA, as at 31 March 2021.

Please note, **Table Two** has been presented as at a point in time. Unlike standard emergency housing reporting, which is based on the date of the EH SNG, operational reporting is based on a point in time, using the recorded check in and check out details of the main applicant. As above, the Ministry cannot confirm whether the additional adults and/or children are staying in the emergency accommodation for the duration of the EH SNG.

Please note that the TLA is based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. Where the client's address is not recorded, the location of the Ministry's service centre case managing the client has been used to approximate which TLA a client resides in. However, as the Ministry has switched to working from national queues, EH SNGs and other hardship grants could be granted by a Case Manager working anywhere in New Zealand. Therefore, in such cases, the TLA may not reflect the actual client address or location. Due to the transient nature of people receiving EH SNGs, the recorded address for a client may also be that of a trusted family member or friend who receives mail on their behalf.

The principles and purposes of the Act 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'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 regarding children in emergency housing 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 A

Table One: The number of clients and children who were in receipt of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants as at 31 March 2021, broken down by duration in emergency housing.

Duration in Emergency Housing	Number of Households	Households with Children	Number of Children
<4 weeks	705	420	804
4-7 weeks	786	444	888
8-12 weeks	669	396	825
3-6 Months	888	468	996
6-12 Months	744	336	675
12-24 months	192	87	177
24+ months	6	S	S
TOTAL	3,987	2,151	4,368

Notes:

- EH SNG is Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.
- This data only includes EH SNGs where the payment was made on or before 31 March 2021.
- The number of households is the number of distinct clients who were granted an EH SNG.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children in each emergency housing 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 makeup 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 duration in 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.
- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. The table has had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row total. 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'.

Table Two: The number of clients and children who were in receipt of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants as at 31 March 2021, broken down by Territorial Local Authority.

Territorial Local Authority	Number of Households	Households with Children	Number of Children
ASHBURTON DISTRICT	S	S	9
AUCKLAND SUPER CITY	1,230	777	1,674
BULLER DISTRICT	6	S	S
CARTERTON DISTRICT	S	S	S
CENTRAL HAWKE'S BAY DISTRICT	15	6	15
CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT	S	S	S
CHRISTCHURCH CITY	201	90	162
DUNEDIN CITY	S	S	S
FAR NORTH DISTRICT	15	9	24
GISBORNE DISTRICT	99	51	117
GORE DISTRICT	S	S	S
GREY DISTRICT	27	12	24
HAMILTON CITY	483	324	678
HASTINGS DISTRICT	87	39	66
HAURAKI DISTRICT	9	9	9
HOROWHENUA DISTRICT	30	15	30
KAPITI COAST DISTRICT	42	18	30
KAWERAU DISTRICT	21	9	15
LOWER HUTT CITY	90	39	66
MANAWATU DISTRICT	9	6	12
MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT	18	S	12
MASTERTON DISTRICT	30	15	21
MATAMATA-PIAKO DISTRICT	12	9	18
NAPIER CITY	162	84	165
NELSON CITY	15	6	21
NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT	42	27	72
OPOTIKI DISTRICT	S	S	6
OTOROHANGA DISTRICT	S	S	S
PALMERSTON NORTH CITY	126	51	84
PORIRUA CITY	75	27	48
QUEENSTOWN-LAKES DISTRICT	S	0	0
RANGITIKEI DISTRICT	S	S	9
ROTORUA DISTRICT	372	192	360
RUAPEHU DISTRICT	S	S	S
SELWYN DISTRICT	S	S	S
SOUTH TARANAKI DISTRICT	6	6	12

Territorial Local Authority	Number of Households	Households with Children	Number of Children
SOUTH WAIKATO DISTRICT	15	S	12
SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT	S	S	S
SOUTHLAND DISTRICT	S	S	S
STRATFORD DISTRICT	S	S	9
TARARUA DISTRICT	6	S	6
TASMAN DISTRICT	S	S	S
TAUPO DISTRICT	66	24	45
TAURANGA CITY	111	72	165
THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT	6	S	9
TIMARU DISTRICT	6	S	6
UNKNOWN/OTHER	S	0	0
UPPER HUTT CITY	21	12	30
WAIKATO DISTRICT	6	S	9
WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT	S	0	0
WAIMATE DISTRICT	S	0	0
WAIPA DISTRICT	12	6	12
WAIROA DISTRICT	18	6	21
WAITAKI DISTRICT	S	S	S
WAITOMO DISTRICT	S	S	S
WELLINGTON CITY	387	96	162
WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT	15	12	18
WESTLAND DISTRICT	S	0	0
WHAKATANE DISTRICT	15	9	9
WHANGANUI DISTRICT	S	S	S
WHANGAREI DISTRICT	36	30	54
NATIONAL TOTAL	3,987	2,151	4,368

Notes:

- EH SNG is Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant.
- This data only includes EH SNGs where the payment was made on or before 31 March 2021.
- Territorial Local Authority is based on the client's address as at the end of the period and may not be reflective of where their emergency housing is located. Ungeocoded address records that are unable to be matched to a TLA through suburb and city details have an unknown TLA.
- The number of households is the number of distinct clients who were granted an EH SNG.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children in each emergency housing 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 makeup 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 duration in emergency housing.
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