



21 February 2022

Tēnā koe

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

- *A copy of all advice, reports or updates MSD has provided the "All Of Government group...who meets and reports daily on accommodation and housing matters, including emergency housing" since 15 August 2021.*
- *Please note this is not a request for names, contact details or personal information of Ministry officials.*

On 22 November 2021, a letter was sent to you to advise you that the Ministry required more time to respond to your request, and a decision would be with you by 24 December 2021. The reason for the extension was that consultations necessary to make a decision on the request were such that a proper response to the request could not reasonably be made within the original time limit.

On 16 December 2021, the Ministry informed you that the information would be with you by 6 May 2022. However, the Ministry has since reconsidered their decision, and advised you that the response would be with you by the end of February 2022.

The All of Government Group (AOG) was set up to help New Zealanders navigate their way through the COVID-19 pandemic. The AOG comprises of government agencies, with responsibilities for the delivery of accommodation and related support services, who connect with each other and exchange ideas to respond to the pandemic collaboratively. The AOG continues to regularly update New Zealanders regarding the pandemic on their *Unite against COVID-19* website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

The AOG recognised that a substantial amount of inter-agency collaboration was required to meet the rapidly changing housing needs of New Zealanders

facing homelessness or isolating due to the pandemic. Therefore, an Accommodation subgroup was established. The AOG Accommodation Group is a sub-function of the National Welfare Coordination Group. The group is comprised of agencies involved in the provision of housing and welfare support including, the Ministry, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Kāinga Ora, the Ministry of Health, Police and the Department of Corrections. Attendance by organisation and role may vary depending on the issues under discussion.

The frequency of meetings was largely dictated by the prevailing Alert Level then in place. For example, at Alert Level 4, the group may have met on a daily basis, whereas at Alert Level 3 meetings may have been weekly. The group continue to meet based on demand.

The following document has been identified to be within the scope of your request and has been attached.

- *AOG Housing Operational Escalation Process August 2021*

As you have advised that you are not interested in the names or contact details of government officials, this information has been removed from the documents and marked as 'out of scope'.

Please see the **Appendix** for minutes summarizing updates the Ministry provided at the following AOG meetings:

- 20 August 2021 (1.30pm to 2.30pm) meeting
- 23 August 2021 (12.00pm to 1.00pm) meeting
- 25 August 2021 (10.30 to 11.30am) meeting
- 27 August 2021 (9.15am to 10.00am) meeting
- 30 August 2021 (10.30am to 11.30am) meeting
- 8 September 2021 (12.00pm to 12.30pm) meeting
- 6 October 2021 (11.30am to 12.00pm) meeting

Please note that the Ministry did not always have updates to contribute to meetings. Information regarding these meetings is not included in this response as it was considered to be out of the scope of the request.

The information released in this response was reflective of the advice given at the time of publication. Some of the information being released to you was previously available as a public resource. However, due to the changing requirements of the pandemic, that information has since been updated or removed from the public domain.

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'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 the AOG meetings, 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
**Group General Manager
Housing**

Appendix

Minutes summarizing updates the Ministry provided at AOG meetings:

20 August 2021 (1.30 to 2.30pm) meeting.

- MSD has stood up PSO process at alert level 4
- Local MSD offices should be supporting agencies
- It is not MSD's role to place people due to medical issues
- MSD's role is to support placement and inform on available and suitable supply
- There have been some minor issues with food, however food banks are open
- Section on response to rough sleepers to be updated in COVID-9 C4C Welfare Resurgence Planning Guidance Document

23 August 2021 (12.00pm to 1.00pm) meeting.

- There are over 4000 adults and children in Emergency Housing across the country
- Increase of around 200 in last week
- We are going to see the numbers increase as families come under pressure
- 800 staff pivoted to process Wage subsidies
- We have extended our operating hours – open Saturday and Sunday until 1pm
- Processing queues are good in the accommodation space

25 August 2021 (10.30am to 11.30am) meeting.

- Clear that MSD will provide support for people who require it
- Keeping in contact with HUD regarding rough sleepers
- There is quite a bit of media around lack of EH across the country
- Potentially only issue in Northland and Eastern BOP – Regional Commissioners are connected in with iwi
- A bit of noise about accommodation for youth – will send out comms for how youth can access services
- Operating hours this weekend 28/8 – 29/8:
 - Saturday 8am – 5pm
 - Sunday 9am – 1pm

27 August 2021 (9.15am to 10.00am) meeting.

- Attended meeting yesterday regarding the return of residents and non-residents from Afghanistan
- MCP are connected at every level in terms of food

30 August 2021 (10.30am to 11.30am) meeting.

- Approx. 4295 households in EH – around 5000 adults and 4000 children
- At level 3, most people still have limited ability to travel so services will still remain in stand-up mode.
- MSD are keeping connected with their Youth Services team.
- Afghanistan refugees – there is a facility in Auckland that has been identified to be used and this is waiting to be confirmed. They will still be looking for additional facilities. We will need to keep a watching brief in this space.
- We will need to keep a watching brief on staff needing to travel between borders, particularly between Auckland and Waikato border.
- There is been an increase of households into emergency housing the past few weeks since the rise in alert levels.

8 September 2021 (12.00pm to 12.30pm) meeting.

- BAU was stood up well this time
- Regions know what they are doing
- Welfare coordination - Connect regularly with key people (community liaison officers)

6 October 2021 (11.30am to 12.00pm) meeting

- There has been a 21% increase in EH since August 17 to Approx. 5000 adults and 4000 children
- thanked KO for all their work over the weekend