



28 October 2022

Tēnā koe

On 29 September 2022, your request to Kainga Ora was partially transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *What is the waiting list in Palmerston North for social housing?*
- *How many families are currently living in motel accommodation in Palmerston North?*

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and more people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing driving up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of 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 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/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.

In regard to your question about social housing and a waiting list, the Ministry publishes publicly available information on the Social Housing Register. The Social Housing Register contains applicants not currently in public housing who have been assessed as eligible and who are ready to be matched to a suitable property. The latest information as at 30 June 2022 for Palmerston North is available at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.html

Your second question asks about families currently living in motel accommodation in Palmerston North. Please see the table below which shows the number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNGs) granted for distinct clients in the Palmerston North Territorial Local Authority (TLA) during the quarter ending June 2022, by the accommodation type. Note these are grants to distinct clients not 'families'.

Regarding the table provided, please note that the TLA is estimated based on the clients' address at the time of the grant. This TLA may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing supplier. Where the client 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.

Transitional Housing: Contracted by Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD contracts 30 motel units in Palmerston North for transitional housing. Transitional housing is temporary accommodation and support for individuals or families who are in urgent need of housing. It provides warm, dry, short-term housing for people and families who have an urgent need for a place to stay. Accredited social service providers manage transitional housing. They are responsible for making sure the properties are warm, dry and well maintained. These providers also support the people living there, helping them access services from the Ministry, budgeting advice and health

services. Providers will work with people in transitional housing to actively support them in securing permanent housing. A transitional housing place is a house, apartment or unit and may house an individual or a whānau.

Number of distinct clients who received an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant in the Palmerston North City territorial local authority during quarter ending September 2022, by quarter and type of accommodation

Quarter / Accommodation type		Number of distinct clients
September 2022	Motel / Hotel	240
	Hostel	54
	Total	255

Notes:

Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider. This is a count of clients not grants. A client may receive more than one grant within a period and for multiple accommodation types.

A client will be counted once in each relevant accommodation type, and only once in the overall total.

To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development 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.

The Ministry also publishes publicly available information on emergency housing, with various breakdowns of households by TLA that may be of interest to you. Please see the following link:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/index.html

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 regarding emergency housing with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding emergency accommodation, 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
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Housing**