



22 May 2023

Tēnā koe

On 23 April 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *Is the Ministry of Social Development currently ONLY housing those with a priority rating of A20? And those who meet the criteria of being fast tracked?*

In the interest of clarity, I will respond to each question from your request in turn.

1. *Is the Ministry of Social Development currently ONLY housing those with a priority rating of A20?*

The Ministry does not house people on the Housing Register. The Ministry is responsible for assessing people's need for Public Housing using the Social Allocation System. While the Ministry completes housing assessments which inform the Housing Register, responsibility for funding and supply sits with the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development and Kainga Ora, respectively.

When New Zealanders need Public Housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The Housing Register covers people who are not currently in Public Housing but who have been assessed as eligible for Public Housing. The Transfer Register covers people already in Public Housing who have applied to be rehoused. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register (the Register).

The Social Allocation System is an assessment tool which looks at an applicant's need to move, as well as their ability to afford, access, and sustain a private rental. Each housing application is given a Priority Rating based on their housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria.

The Ministry considers Priority A applicants to be 'at risk' with a severe and persistent housing need. Priority B applicants are those with a 'serious

housing need' that is significant and persistent. If there are many barriers to them accessing a private rental, this will also be reflected in a higher need rating.

The Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live.

Public Housing is allocated on a needs basis rather than a 'first in, first served' basis. Applicants are matched to properties based on their level of need and the availability of a property that fits their selected letting areas and the typology of house required.

The Ministry's information technology and management systems will automatically generate a short-list of the highest priority applicants whose requirements match the property. For this reason, there will be occasions where there are no A20 clients that are suitable for an available property, and the clients with lower ratings are shortlisted.

## *2. And those who meet the criteria of being fast tracked?*

The Ministry is not responsible for housing those who meet the criteria of being fast tracked. To reiterate, it is Public Housing providers who house people, including those that meet the fast-track criteria. The Ministry assesses the client's need for Public Housing through the Social Allocation System.

During the assessment process, the Ministry's fast-track policy recognises that certain households applying for Public Housing are at risk of experiencing negative outcomes. Helping them get into Public Housing quicker through fast-tracking helps improve their long-term outcomes.

The fast-track policy applies to households in the following circumstances:

- the household has children at risk of rheumatic fever
- the household has a specified child or young person who is in custody under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 or is in an approved permanent care arrangement.

Fast-track puts applicants at the top of the list, potentially leading to a quicker time to house. However, fast-tracked households will still only be shortlisted to available properties that match their needs, such as location, number of bedrooms and any necessary modifications. If a B10 application has a fast track, they will be reported as being housed as a B10, but the fast track puts them to the top of the list.

Please note that Public Housing providers are responsible for matching specific clients to a property in addition to signing lease agreements with them directly.

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'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](mailto: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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



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