



31 October 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 1 October 2024, requesting information about the number of children moved out of emergency housing (EH), including details of accommodation moved to, and all communications between the Ministry and Minister Potaka related to this information.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision set out below. For the sake of clarity, I will address your questions in turn.

1. *Since November of last year how many children have been moved out of emergency motels?*

The number of children staying in EH has decreased by approximately 2,085 (65 percent) between December 2023 and August 2024 as shown in Table 1 in the attached **Appendix**. The most significant reduction of children in EH (32 percent) occurred between July and August 2024.

2. *What happened to those children? What accommodation were they going into?*

I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you had requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

The Ministry is unable to report on the pathways of individual children through the housing system because the Ministry does not collect individualised data on children accessing and exiting emergency housing as they are included as part of a EH household. However, we are able to identify post-EH housing outcomes for approximately 80 percent of EH primary clients who included children in their EH applications. Post-EH outcomes for primary clients with children can be used to infer outcomes of most of the children who stayed in EH. This is based on the key assumption that children in EH applications stay within the same household as the EH client shifts from one housing type to another. However the Ministry strongly advises against using these estimates as solidified data as any estimate would be unable to account for children shifting housings when caregivers are moving between housing types.

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3. Can all communications between the Ministry and Minister Tama Potaka related to the above two questions please be provided?

Your request for all information is very broad, and substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all documents within scope of your request. As such, I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

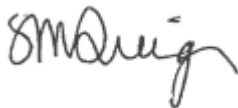
However as referenced above, I have attached a memo from the Ministry to Minister Potaka related to client outcomes post-EH which is highly relevant to your request.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services

Memo



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

To: William Adams, Private Secretary – Housing
Caitlin Hoskin, Private Secretary – Housing

Date: 26 September 2024

Security level: In Confidence

Additional information on Emergency Housing

Purpose

On 10 September, you commissioned three data and insight questions relating to Emergency Housing (EH). These questions covered the number of children who left EH, an updated percentage breakdown of the four categories of accommodation support leavers accessed between April and August and ethnicity data for both Priority One Fast Track clients and EH exits. Responses are provided below.

The number of children¹ staying in emergency housing (EH) has reduced by 65 percent between December 2023 to August 2024.

The number of children staying in EH has decreased significantly by around 2,085 (65 percent) between December 2023 and August 2024 as shown in Table 1. The most significant reduction of children in EH (32 percent) occurred between July and August 2024.

¹ In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in emergency housing for the entire duration the client is in Emergency Housing. Therefore, any reporting on children in emergency housing based on the EH-SNG application is approximate, based on what clients have said at the time of application.

Manaaki tangata, manaaki whānau

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Table 1. Month-end households in EH by number of adults, children, and total people in the household.

Month end	Dec23	Jan24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	May24	Jun24	Jul24	Aug24
Total Emergency Housing households (EH+CEH)	3,141	3,042	3,051	2,817	2,724	2,463	2,133	1,707	1,365
Households in EH	2,976	2,880	2,874	2,628	2,532	2,280	1,959	1,548	1,215
Adults in EH	3,369	3,279	3,261	2,976	2,862	2,574	2,184	1,716	1,332
Children in EH	3,186	3,216	3,210	2,985	2,886	2,544	2,139	1,614	1,101
Total people in EH	6,555	6,495	6,471	5,961	5,751	5,121	4,323	3,330	2,436
Households in CEH	165	162	177	189	192	183	174	159	150
Adults in CEH	198	198	219	234	240	234	219	195	189
Children in CEH	252	246	279	294	300	288	273	249	240
Total people in CEH	450	444	498	528	540	522	492	444	429

Between December 2023 and August 2024, around 204 households with children have exited from CEH and this is approximately 360 children.

The number of clients moving into Kāinga Ora tenancies after ending a spell² in EH is continuing to increase.

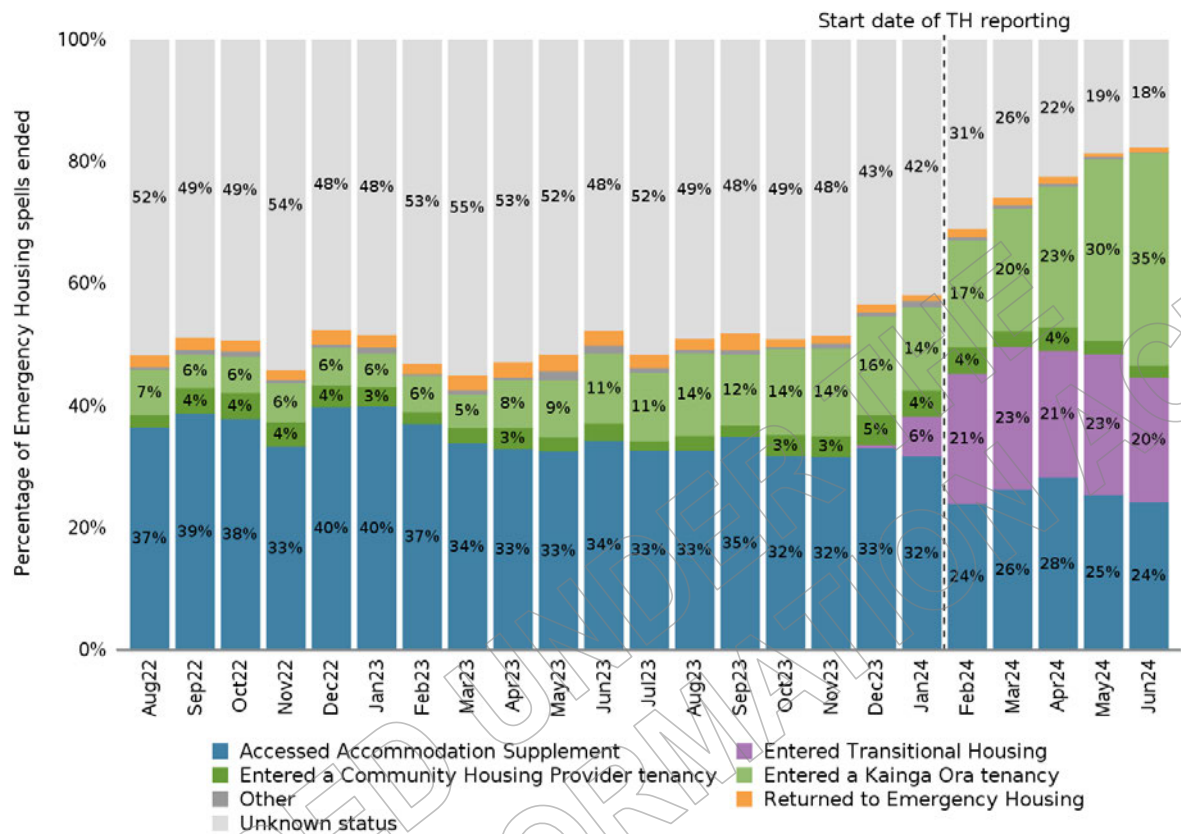
The percentage of clients who have ended a EH spell and entered a Kāinga Ora tenancy has increased from 23 percent in April 2024 to 35 percent in June 2024. This indicates increased opportunities to be placed into social housing.

The proportion of clients where MSD is unable to identify their subsequent housing state up to 60 days after ending a stay in EH has continued to decrease from January 2024. Only 18 percent of exits in June 2024 were unable to be matched to a subsequent housing support, as shown in Graph 1.

The number of clients returning directly to EH continued to decline in 2024, with approximately 1 percent re-entering directly within 60 days after their last EH spell ended in June 2024.

² Unlike benefits, there is no process for cancellation or ending an EH stay. A households stay in EH is known as a 'spell'. A spell is a summation of individual EH stays. Households who leave EH and return having can have multiple spells. Data on the subsequent housing support accessed is based on activity during the EH spell and up to sixty days later. We assume after leaving EH a household can only ever be accessing a single service (EH, AS, SH tenancy, TH, other or unknown). The housing state 'other' includes clients who left New Zealand or been declared deceased.

Graph 1. Monthly number of EH stays (spells) ended between the months of April 2022 and June 2024



There appears to be little difference according to ethnicity³ for the type of accommodation clients access after leaving EH.

Table 2 shows that when comparing Māori and non-Māori household applicants, there are only marginal differences between the rate of housing supports accessed by clients after ending a stay in emergency housing.

For example, 24 percent of Māori subsequently accessed accommodation supplement, compared to 25 percent of non-Māori in June 2024. This is consistent across all other housing supports.

This indicate that ethnicity may not be a key demographic variable when compared to others such as household composition.

³ All ethnicity numbers reported are based on the “total response” approach. This recognises all aspects of someone’s ethnicity and reflects our clients more accurately as ethnicity is self-perceived and people can identify with more than one ethnic group. Under the ‘total response’ ethnicity approach, people can appear more than once in our reporting, so ethnic group totals will add to more than 100 percent of clients.

Table 2. Monthly number of EH stays (spells) ended for Māori and non-Māori between the months of April and June 2024

Subsequent housing support	Jun-24		
	Māori	Non-Māori	Total Households
Accessed Accommodation Supplement	24%	25%	24%
Entered a Community Housing Provider tenancy	1%	3%	2%
Returned to Emergency Housing	1%	1%	1%
Entered a Kainga Ora tenancy	36%	33%	35%
Other housing state	0%	0%	0%
Entered Transitional Housing	21%	19%	20%
Unknown status	17%	19%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%

The number of clients on the register with a Priority One Fast Track flag has decreased since May 2024.

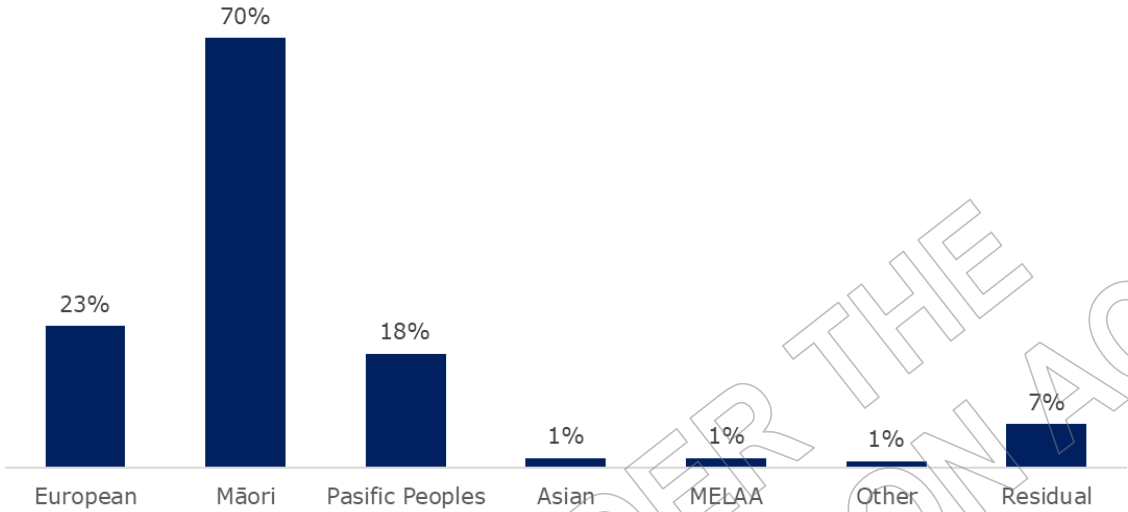
There were around 470 applicants and 1,200 children on the register with a Priority One Fast Track flag in August 2024. This has decreased by around 280 applicants and 590 children since May 2024, as a result of placements.

Māori register applicants with a Priority One Fast Track flag are the highest proportion being housed, consistent with the overall EH population.

Between May 2024 and August 2024, there were 645 applicants and 1,311 children housed. Of these, 420 (70 percent) applicants were identified as Māori, followed by 138 (23 percent) European and 111 (18 percent) Pacific Peoples as shown in Graph 2.

This proportionality is consistent with the overall EH population, where 63 percent were Māori, followed by 38 percent European and 10 percent Pacific Peoples.

Graph 2: Register applications with Priority One Fast Track housed by ethnicity between May 2024 and August 2024.



Next steps

MSD will continue to monitor and report on EH demographics as required.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT