20 NOV 2020

Andrew Riddell
fyi-request-13942-4b2c1b68@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Andrew Riddell

On 12 October 2020, the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) received a transfer of your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 from Kāinga Ora. You requested the following information:

- *The criteria used to decide if people are put on the waiting list for state houses, and how those criteria have changed, if at all, since 2016-17.*
- *Please provide the state house waiting list criteria that applied in 2017 under the previous government and the state house waiting list criteria that apply now.*
- *If there is a difference in the two sets of criteria, please provide all analysis, reports, file notes, correspondence, briefings and recommendations regarding the changes to those criteria.*

On 14 October 2020, a member of the Official and Parliamentary Information team contacted you and advised that the core eligibility criteria for public housing has remained unchanged since the Ministry took on responsibility for the public housing assessment function in April 2014, and therefore there would not be any documents held by the Ministry within the scope of your request.

You were asked if you wanted to change the scope of your request to be for something more specific in regard to the public housing assessment policy or process. On 17 October 2020, the Ministry received your rescoped request for the following information:

- *Copies of any operational manual or instructions to staff on how to implement the Public Housing Assessment that applied in 2016-2017, and*
- *Copies of any operational manual or instructions to staff on how to implement the Public Housing Assessment that apply now.*

The Ministry uses the Social Allocation System (SAS) to assess applications for public housing. This system ensures that public housing is available only to those in the highest need who do not have alternative housing options. SAS assesses an individual's need for public housing against five domains, which include the adequacy and suitability of their current accommodation, and the affordability, accessibility and sustainability of alternative, private accommodation.

This assessment results in the applicant being assigned a priority rating that, together with their housing requirements (e.g. the number of bedrooms, or location required), allows the Ministry and housing providers to ensure that those with the most serious needs are housed as a priority.

More information on the Public housing assessment process can be found on the Work and Income website at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/introduction.html.

The Ministry's guidance for staff on the conduct of public housing assessment is available to staff through the Ministry's intranet. Please find enclosed the following intranet pages that have been identified as being within scope of your request.

- *Public housing assessment homepage*, dated 3 September 2019

- *Prior to starting the social housing application*, dated 4 November 2020
    - *Declining an offer of a suitable property*, dated 22 January 2016
    - *Good and sufficient reasons for declining offer of a property*
    - *Client is suspended by a housing provider*

- *Commencing a social housing application*, dated 4 November 2020
    - *Recording assessment information to support housing placements*
    - *Clients must choose three places where they need to live (letting areas)*

- *Updating evidence in the social housing application*, dated 24 June 2019
    - *Nominating and updating letting areas*, dated 22 January 2016

- *Finalising the social housing application*, dated 6 November 2020

- *Talking to clients about the assessment outcome, obligations, and going on the social housing register*, dated 6 November 2020
    - *Review and Appeals*
    - *Changing a client's initial priority rating*
    - *Fast-track provision*

- *Residency requirements for Social (also known as public housing) housing*, dated 4 November 2020
    - *Clients without permanent residence or citizenship*

- *Public housing supply information*, dated 24 June 2019

- *Fast-tracking for households at risk of rheumatic fever*, dated 9 April 2020
    - *Fast-track flow diagram*
    - *Social Housing (also known as public housing) Transfers,* dated 6 November 2020

- *Fast-tracking for households with a specified child or young person in custody under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989*, dated 9 September 2019
    - *Specified child or young persons in custody under the Oranga Tamariki Act or approved permanent care*
    - *Specified child or young person*

- *Changing a priority rating*, dated 24 June 2019

- *Escalation process for addressing immediate need,* dated 6 November 2020

- *Clients in specific circumstances,* dated 5 November 2020
  - *Escalation process for addressing immediate need,* dated 6 November 2020

Please note that information contained within some links has not been provided. This is because the information within those links is either administrative in nature, and does not provide applicable or relevant information, or, the information is not specifically within scope of your request.

As the core eligibility of criteria for public housing has remained unchanged since 2014, the training materials that applied in 2016-2017 are the same as the materials that apply currently.

For further information in relation to public housing, you may be interested to read the Public Housing Plan 2018 – 2022, which is published on the Ministry's website at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/housing/public-housing-plan/2018-public-housing-plan.pdf.

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 of Social Development'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 on instructions to Ministry staff on how to assess and implement the Public Housing Assessment, 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.

Yours sincerely

P.P.

Karen Hocking
General Manager, Housing

Public housing assessment

A public housing (also known as social housing) assessment is a series of questions which determines eligibility for public housing against an agreed set of criteria, which is then used to assist the public housing provider in matching to the most appropriate property. Public housing assessments are completed in CMS and are referred to as 'Applications' in the system.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/starting-social-housing-application.html]
Prior to starting the public housing application [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/starting-social-housing-application.html]
This page outlines the number of factors you need to check before starting the assessment.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/social-housing-assessment.html]
Commencing a public housing application [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/social-housing-assessment.html]
This page provides information and tips to help you answer the questions in the assessment.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/updating-evidence.html]
Updating evidence in the public housing application [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/updating-evidence.html]
This page outlines the process on how to update evidence after completing the assessment.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/finalising-application.html]
Finalising the public housing application [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/finalising-application.html]
This page outlines the process to finalise the application, including the steps to move the client onto the register or close the application.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/assessment-outcome-obligations.html]
Talking to clients about assessment outcome, obligations, and going onto the social housing register [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/assessment-outcome-obligations.html]
How to talk to clients about their priority rating, what their obligations are, and what happens when they go onto the social housing register.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/residency-requirements.html]
Residency requirements for public housing [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/residency-requirements.html]
This page outlines the action to take when a client or partner does not meet the residency criteria for public housing and you are completing a public housing assessment or updating an existing service.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/social-housing-supply-information.html]
Public housing supply information [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/social-housing-supply-information.html]
Information to assist staff in discussing appropriate letting areas with clients, based on where public housing currently exists.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/rheumatic-fever.html]
Households at risk of rheumatic fever [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/rheumatic-fever.html]
Outlines the processes to follow to fast track households at risk of rheumatic fever.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/fast-track-oranga-tamariki.html]
Households with a specified child or young person in custody under the Oranga Tamariki Act [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/fast-track-oranga-tamariki.html]
Outlines the process to fast-track Households with a specified child in custody under Oranga Tamariki Act

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/changing-a-priority-rating.html]
Changing an initial priority rating [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/changing-a-priority-rating.html]
Informs about priority ratings and process for changing when a change in circumstance is notified.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/escalation-process.html]
Escalation process for addressing immediate need [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/escalation-process.html]
Outlines the escalation process for frontline staff to address an immediate need such as domestic violence.

[http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/vulnerable-at-risk-clients.html]
Clients in specific circumstances [http://doogle/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/social-housing/screening-and-assessment/vulnerable-at-risk-clients.html]
This page describes different processes for specific vulnerable and at-risk client groups.

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