



21 APR 2021

Lance O'Riley
fyi-request-14984-b5c6f2c1@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Lance O'Riley

On 23 March, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information relating to Emergency Housing in the wider Wellington City area since January 2010:

1. *New people placed into emergency housing*
 - 1.1 *Total numbers of new people placed in emergency housing during that month,*
 - 1.2 *Numbers of new people placed in emergency housing broken down by race/gender.*
 - 1.3 *Average number of violence related convictions that new people placed in emergency housing have.*

2. *Total number of people placed into emergency housing*
 - 2.1 *Total numbers of people placed in emergency housing during that month,*
 - 2.2 *Numbers of people placed in emergency housing broken down by race/gender,*
 - 2.3 *Average number of violence related convictions that people placed in emergency housing have.*

3. *Length of stay in emergency housing*
 - 3.1 *Average length of stay in emergency housing,*
 - 3.2 *Number of people who stay in emergency housing for a period greater than the intended 12 weeks, please provide this in total figures and broken down by race/gender.*
 - 3.3 *Number of people who stay in emergency housing for a period greater than six months, please provide this in total figures and broken down by race/gender,*
 - 3.4 *Number of people who stay in emergency housing for a period greater than twelve months, please provide this in total figures and broken down by race/gender.*

4. *Conduct of those in emergency housing*
 - 4.1 *Of those in emergency housing, how many are given warnings related to anti-social or illegal behaviour during their stay.*

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- 4.2 *Of those given warnings, how many warnings have they received on average.*
- 4.3 *Of those in emergency housing, how many have their stay terminated due to anti-social or illegal behaviour.*
- 4.4 *Of all complaints received, how many relate to the following:*
 - *Drug use (excluding supply)*
 - *Drug supply*
 - *Alcohol consumption*
 - *Violent behaviour (excluding intimidation)*
 - *Intimidating behaviour*
 - *Other illegal behaviour*
5. *Additionally, please provide the number of people in formal emergency transitional housing and those in emergency accommodation such as hotels as separate figures.*
6. *Please provide all information broken down by suburb. For the avoidance of doubt and for the purposes of this request, Wellington City includes the areas around Wellington Central including Wellington Central, Mt Cook, Newtown, Te Aro, Pipitea, Thorndon.*

On 26 March 2021 and 30 March 2021, the Ministry contacted you to refine your request as many of your questions could not be answered by the Ministry. The Ministry advised that the request was to be refined in 5 working days.

The Ministry is yet to receive a response to the refinement emails and therefore will proceed with your original request dated 23 March 2021.

The Ministry understands that 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 house price and rent growth. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs, and many seek financial help from the Ministry.

Across the government, there is a wider programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) leads the programme of work on New Zealand's housing and urban development.

This includes planning, and with Kāinga Ora, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. HUD is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring homeowners. The Government Housing Programme Dashboard tracks progress on key parts of the Government's housing programme.

The Ministry's role is to assess eligibility for public housing, provide financial support to eligible people to access and sustain suitable housing, and to provide immediate assistance to meet Emergency Housing needs.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or residence, if any, and do not have access to other

accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended, dependent on individual circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution. They provide a shorter-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

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.

The year 2020 has seen a significant increase in demand for Emergency Housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation where they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of Emergency Housing into long-term accommodation which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs

The EH SNG was introduced on 1 July 2016 in order to fund temporary accommodation at places such as hostels and motels to meet people's immediate housing needs. Prior to the 2016 December quarter, Emergency Housing grants were coded in the Ministry's IT system as 'other emergency grants', which includes hardship grants for various other emergency reasons. The Ministry cannot disaggregate Emergency Housing hardship payments from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' category and any information regarding Emergency Housing grant payments prior to the December 2016 quarter is recorded in notes on individual case files. As such, information relating to the value of emergency housing prior to December 2016 is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

Furthermore, the Ministry is unable to provide you with information broken down by the Emergency Housing area requested, including Wellington Central, Mt Cook, Newtown, Te Aro, Pipitea and Thorndon, as this is not standard reporting for the Ministry. In order to be helpful, the Ministry will be responding to your request with data for the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority (TLA). Please note that this data is based on the client's address at the time of grant.

Finally, the Ministry is only able to provide you with information regarding Emergency Housing and is unable to provide you with the number of people in formal emergency transitional housing. This part of your request has not been made in accordance with section 12(2) of the Act, as your request lacks due particularity, meaning that information for the response cannot be provided as what is being requested is unclear.

For the sake of clarity, I will now respond to each of your questions in turn.

1. *New people placed into emergency housing*
 - 1.1 *Total numbers of new people placed in emergency housing during that month,*
 - 1.2 *Numbers of new people placed in emergency housing broken down by race/gender, of violence related convictions that new people placed in emergency housing have.*
 - 1.3 *Average number of violence related convictions that new people placed in emergency housing have.*

I am unable to provide you with the number of new people placed into Emergency Housing in the Wellington region as this information is not stored in a way that can be reported on reliably by region. Therefore, in order to determine if this is the first time a client has received a grant, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. 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.

The Ministry does not necessarily hold information about clients' criminal histories. If held, this information would be noted on individual client files, and/or held in relation to a Steps to Freedom Grant. This Grant is available to clients who have been released from prison or are no longer being held on remand. The grant is meant to help clients with their initial set up of living costs. More information about this grant is located on Work and Income's website at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/lost-job/prison.html#null.

Therefore, I am unable to provide you with information on the number of violence related convictions that new people placed in Emergency Housing have, because if this information is held, it would be held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, I refuse this part of 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.

2. Total number of people placed into emergency housing

2.1 Total numbers of people placed in emergency housing during that month,

2.2 Numbers of people placed in emergency housing broken down by race/gender,

2.3 Average number of violence related convictions that people placed in emergency housing have.

Please find, in the attached Excel Spreadsheet, the following two tables:

Table One: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021 and ethnic group.

Table Two: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021 and gender.

As advised in my response to question 1.3, the Ministry is unable to provide you with the average number of violence related convictions held by people placed in Emergency Housing. I am unable to provide you with this information, because if this information is held, it would be held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, I refuse this part of 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.

3. Length of stay in emergency housing

3.1 Average length of stay in emergency housing,

3.2 Number of people who stay in emergency housing for a period greater than the intended 12 weeks, please provide this in total figures and broken down by race/gender.

3.3 Number of people who stay in emergency housing for a period greater than six months, please provide this in total figures and broken down by race/gender,

3.4 Number of people who stay in emergency housing for a period greater than twelve months, please provide this in total figures and broken down by race/gender.

Please find, in the attached Excel spreadsheet, the following three tables:

Table Three: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021, length of stay and ethnic group.

Table Four: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021, length of stay and gender.

Table Five: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021 and length of stay.

4. Conduct of those in emergency housing

4.1 Of those in emergency housing, how many are given warnings related to anti-social or illegal behaviour during their stay.

4.2 Of those given warnings, how many warnings have they received on average.

4.3 Of those in emergency housing, how many have their stay terminated due to anti-social or illegal behaviour.

4.4 Of all complaints received, how many relate to the following:

- *Drug use (excluding supply)*
- *Drug supply*
- *Alcohol consumption*
- *Violent behaviour (excluding intimidation)*
- *Intimidating behaviour*
- *Other illegal behaviour*

The Ministry expects our clients to get the same quality of service as any other guest, and that our clients observe the rules and conditions of the accommodation supplier. A security deposit is available to suppliers to contribute to any damage costs, beyond normal wear and tear. Damages or losses are charged to the client and they are required to pay it back to the Ministry at an agreed rate. Where a client or motelier has concerns around the quality and/or service of a motel, including behaviour of clients, the Ministry's regional housing team address these issues at the time directly with the motelier.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with any information on the conduct of those in Emergency Housing, or complaints received about their conduct as this information is not recorded centrally. If this information is held, it would be held in notes on individual case files, and in order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files.

Furthermore, the Ministry would only hold information about family violence or substance abuse if a Ministry staff member referred the client to an alcohol or drug service or helpline. This information would be managed with the client and recorded in a client's individual file.

In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, I refuse this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act, as it requires substantial collation. 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 this request if 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.

Please note, in regard to **Tables One** and **Three**, the ethnicity classification that is used to construct this table does not necessarily align with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity. Ethnicity details recorded by the Ministry have been gathered under a variety of classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry. The ethnicity data may be self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct. While the Ministry collects multiple ethnicities from clients, we only report a unique form of 'identified' ethnicity for core benefit data (one ethnic group per person with Māori coming first, Pacific groups second followed by other groups ending with NZ European).

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
- 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 regarding Emergency Housing in Wellington City, 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



Karen Hocking
**General Manager
Housing**

The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021, gender, length of stay and ethnic group.

Notes:

This is a distinct count of clients not a count of grants.
 A client may have multiple grants in a period but will only be counted once.
 Territorial Local Authority is derived from geocoded client addresses.
 From 2 December 2019 updated forms and online applications now include three gender options for clients to choose from, Male, Female, and Gender Diverse.
 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.

Table One: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021 and ethnic group.

Ethnicity	Quarter Ending																	
	December 2016	March 2017	June 2017	September 2017	December 2017	March 2018	June 2018	September 2018	December 2018	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
Māori	27	12	27	27	15	18	36	39	42	57	72	111	102	81	204	315	333	336
NZ European	15	15	21	15	18	15	24	27	27	33	48	69	57	63	132	156	135	135
Pacific Peoples	3	3	3	0	3	3	9	6	9	12	21	15	15	21	42	57	72	69
Other	12	12	9	6	9	15	9	21	24	21	33	21	24	30	69	102	111	111
Unspecified	3	3	3	3	3	3	6	6	0	3	9	6	9	6	18	30	33	33
Total	60	45	63	48	45	54	75	93	108	123	180	225	207	201	462	660	687	684

Table Two: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021 and gender.

Gender	Quarter Ending																	
	December 2016	March 2017	June 2017	September 2017	December 2017	March 2018	June 2018	September 2018	December 2018	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
Female	24	24	36	30	27	39	42	42	45	66	99	120	111	93	204	261	306	300
Gender Diverse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Male	36	21	24	21	18	18	36	51	63	57	81	105	96	108	258	396	378	378
Total	60	45	63	48	45	54	75	93	108	123	180	225	207	201	462	660	687	684

Table Three: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021, length of stay and ethnic group.

Length of Stay	Ethnicity	Quarter Ending																	
		December 2016	March 2017	June 2017	September 2017	December 2017	March 2018	June 2018	September 2018	December 2018	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
<4 weeks	Māori	24	9	21	24	12	18	24	27	27	36	30	54	51	36	72	57	60	57
	NZ European	12	15	15	9	12	9	18	21	18	21	36	36	24	30	42	30	21	18
	Pacific Peoples	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	9	15	3	9	15	12	12	12	9
	Other	6	9	6	3	3	6	6	15	18	15	21	6	15	18	24	18	18	15
	Unspecified	0	3	3	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	3	3	0	6	6	6	3
4-7 weeks	Māori	3	6	3	0	0	6	6	6	12	12	27	27	15	30	63	87	66	69
	NZ European	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	18	3	12	27	12	27	24
	Pacific Peoples	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	3	0	12	3	12	18
	Other	3	0	0	3	3	6	3	3	3	6	9	6	6	9	18	30	21	15
	Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	12	6	6
8-12 weeks	Māori	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	6	6	9	18	12	6	39	72	60	45
	NZ European	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	6	3	3	6	9	9	39	33	18	18
	Pacific Peoples	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	12	6	12	6
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	6	3	3	3	3	3	15	15	18	15
	Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	3	3	3	9
3-6 Months	Māori	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	6	18	15	3	24	84	96	84
	NZ European	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	6	6	9	12	18	51	33	27
	Pacific Peoples	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	21	24	24
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	12	33	30	30
	Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	6	6	15
6-12 Months	Māori	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	3	6	21	51	72	72
	NZ European	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	15	36	39
	Pacific Peoples	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	15
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	18	33
	Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12-24 months	Māori	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
	NZ European	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Pacific Peoples	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	60	45	63	48	45	54	75	93	108	123	180	225	207	201	462	660	687	684	

Table Four: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021, length of stay and gender.

Length of Stay	Gender	Quarter Ending																	
		December 2016	March 2017	June 2017	September 2017	December 2017	March 2018	June 2018	September 2018	December 2018	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
<4 weeks	Female	15	18	27	24	18	30	24	33	48	51	48	57	48	81	36	57	42	42
	Male	33	18	21	15	12	9	27	36	36	51	54	51	54	81	81	63	63	33
4-7 weeks	Female	6	3	6	3	6	6	12	15	27	27	39	18	27	51	69	72	60	60
	Male	6	3	6	3	6	6	9	15	12	18	24	18	30	72	72	72	69	69
8-12 weeks	Female	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	6	12	15	18	12	12	42	54	54	45	45
	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	75	57	48	48
3-6 Months	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6-12 Months	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12-24 months	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		60	45	63	48	45	54	75	108	123	180	225	207	201	462	660	687	684	

Table Five: The count of distinct people granted Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants in the Wellington City Territorial Local Authority, broken down by quarters ending December 2016 to March 2021 and length of stay.

Length of Stay	Quarter Ending																	
	December 2016	March 2017	June 2017	September 2017	December 2017	March 2018	June 2018	September 2018	December 2018	March 2019	June 2019	September 2019	December 2019	March 2020	June 2020	September 2020	December 2020	March 2021
<4 weeks	48	36	45	39	33	42	51	69	69	84	105	102	108	102	153	171	120	99
4-7 weeks	12	6	9	6	12	9	21	15	21	24	48	63	36	54	123	171	144	132
8-12 weeks	0	0	3	0	0	6	3	6	12	9	15	27	27	21	108	129	111	93
3-6 Months	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	3	6	12	27	30	18	66	192	192	174
6-12 Months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	6	3	48	114	159	159
12-24 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	60	45	63	48	45	54	75	93	108	123	180	225	207	201	462	660	687	684