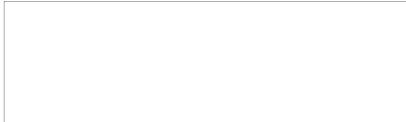




15 JUN 2017



Dear

On 13 April 2017, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of people or family units who have applied for and or have been granted emergency housing assistance through the Upper Hutt Work and Income office between 2015 to 2016 and from 2016 to 2017; also the number of emergency house applications and grants on a monthly basis from January 2017 to April 2017.*

On 1 July 2016, the Ministry introduced a non-recoverable Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (SNG). This grant has been made 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. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven-night's, but can be extended dependent on individual circumstances. In most cases the grant does not need to be repaid.

Further information regarding Emergency Housing SNGs can be found on the Ministry's website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html)

Prior to the 2016 December quarter, emergency housing related hardship grants were coded in the Ministry's IT system as 'other emergency grants', which included 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 quarter is recorded in notes on individual case files.

In order to provide the total number of people or family units who have applied for and/or have been granted emergency housing assistance through the Upper Hutt Work and Income office between 1 January 2015 and 30 June 2016, Ministry staff would have to review hundreds of individual case files. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information 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 reports information about Hardship grants quarterly, this ensures that the data published is accurate and reliable. The Ministry does not produce reports for ad-hoc one-off requests for one month time periods as this is not an efficient use of the Ministry's resources. Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as SNG's.

Below are three tables that show the following:

- the number of Advances granted and declined under the need reason "Other Emergency Payment", at the Upper Hutt Service Centre for the quarters between 31 March 2015 and 30 June 2016;
- the estimated number of Emergency Housing SNG's at the Upper Hutt Service Centre for the quarter ending 30 September 2016, and
- the number of Emergency Housing SNG's granted at the Upper Hutt Service Centre for the quarters ending 31 December 2016 and 31 March 2017.

Please note the Service Centre referred to is the Upper Hutt Work and Income site and represents where the recommending case manager for the application was based at the time of the grant or decline. The tables below include a count of grants and/or declines. It is possible that a client may have more than one grant or decline in the specified period. Distinct clients granted and/or declined is the number of clients who have had an application granted and/or declined.

In order to protect client privacy some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

As noted above, the emergency housing SNG code was not introduced until the December 2016 quarter. Consequently, the data in table two, which was collated for reporting purposes as a one-off exercise for operational purposes, while reporting methods were being developed, and is an approximation.

Since the release of the data in table two, the Ministry has introduced a new code dedicated to Emergency Housing SNGs. The data in table three was compiled using this new code and therefore is not comparable to the data in table two.

**Table One: Number of Advances granted and declined under need reason "Other Emergency Payment" at the Upper Hutt Service Centre for the quarters between 31 March 2015 and 30 June 2016.**

Quarter ending	Applications	Advance granted	Advance declined	Distinct clients granted	Distinct clients declined
31 Mar 2015	160	144	16	121	16
30 Jun 2015	S	166	S	148	S
30 Sep 2015	S	128	S	113	S
31 Dec 2015	164	152	12	120	10
31 Mar 2016	S	146	S	126	S
30 Jun 2016	S	218	S	184	S

**Notes:**

- It cannot determine if these applications were for emergency accommodation, as such this data cannot be compared to Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants data from 1 July 2016.

**Table Two: Estimated number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants at the Upper Hutt Service Centre for the quarter ending 30 September 2016.**

Quarter ending	Applications	Distinct clients granted
30 Sep 2016	8	S

**Notes:**

- This quarter's data counts multiple grants on the same day to the same client, as one application.
- This data includes Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants paid under the "Emergency Housing" payment reason, and those paid under "Other" with client events identified as Emergency Housing related. This quarter's data should not be compared to future quarter's data as it includes security deposits and is indicative only.

**Table Three: Number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (SNG) at the Upper Hutt Service Centre for the quarters ending 31 December 2016 and 31 March 2017.**

Quarter ending	Applications	Emergency Housing SNG granted	Emergency Housing SNG declined	Distinct clients granted	Distinct clients declined
31 Dec 2016	19	19	0	13	0
31 Mar 2017	S	38	S	24	S

The Ministry is unable to provide the number of applications declined for the quarter ending September 2016, as the estimation of this quarter's data was collated by using the client event notes which refer to "Emergency Housing", and this note type does not exist for declined hardship grants. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review hundreds of files. As such I

refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

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 available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter 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 regarding emergency housing assistance 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Gallacher', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Scott Gallacher  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Housing**