



13 JUL 2021

On 3 June 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *the numbers of households on SNGs for EH over the last few months (or even longer, up to last 12 months) in Blenheim?*
- *the approximate percentage of single people in EH*

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 need. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended, dependent on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights, Work and Income will arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation, and to determine if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people receiving EH SNGs to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/%20map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/emergency-housing.html.

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing, as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 saw 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.

Regarding your request, we are unable to provide the number of Blenheim-based clients that were in receipt of the EH SNG over the last 12 months. Information relating to the location of clients is centrally recorded as the Territorial Local Authority (TLA) of their recorded home address. And more precise location data is held on clients' individual files. Given that Blenheim is not a TLA in itself – it is a part of the Marlborough District TLA – providing the requested information would involve a manual review thousands of client files. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, on the ground that it would require substantial manual collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public sector.

In the spirit of being helpful, however, we have provided you with **Table One** (enclosed in **Appendix A**), which shows the number of EH SNG grants to clients residing in the West Coast-Tasman region of New Zealand between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2021, broken down by quarter end, TLA, and household composition.

As already indicated, the TLA figures we have provided are based on a client's address at the time of the EH SNG grant. However, a client's recorded residential TLA may not be the same as that of his or her emergency housing provider. Furthermore, to estimate the location of clients who did not have a recorded residential address, we used the location of the approving case manager. But because the Ministry switched to working from national queues after the advent of COVID-19, an EH SNG could have been approved by a case manager working anywhere in New Zealand. Therefore, in such cases the recorded TLA for a client may reflect neither their address nor the address of the emergency housing supplier. It is also worth noting that due to the transient nature of people receiving the EH SNG, some clients may not have been residing in their recorded residential TLA at the time of the grant. Some clients, for example, may have provided the address of a trusted family member or friend who received mail on their behalf.

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 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 in regard to EH SNGs in the West Coast Tasman region, 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



 Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing

Tables One: The number of EH SNGs in the West Coast Tasman region granted during 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2021, broken down by quarter end, TLA and household composition.

Territorial Local Authority	Quarter End	Couple no children	Couple with Children	Single no Children	Single with Children	Unknown	Total
BULLER DISTRICT	March 2020	S	S	S	0	75	81
	June 2020	9	6	66	9	0	87
	September 2020	6	0	78	12	0	99
	December 2020	9	0	93	12	0	111
	March 2021	S	0	48	21	0	72
GREY DISTRICT	March 2020	0	0	0	S	102	102
	June 2020	30	9	69	57	0	165
	September 2020	24	24	81	57	0	186
	December 2020	39	21	126	45	0	228
	March 2021	30	24	123	48	0	222
MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT	March 2020	0	S	6	S	240	249
	June 2020	9	48	291	54	0	402
	September 2020	12	33	315	135	0	492
	December 2020	6	33	216	51	0	306
	March 2021	6	21	186	48	0	258
NELSON CITY	March 2020	S	S	9	S	129	144
	June 2020	15	30	321	87	S	453
	September 2020	15	36	246	168	0	471
	December 2020	18	24	102	135	S	279
	March 2021	12	15	93	99	0	216
TASMAN DISTRICT	March 2020	0	0	S	S	30	33
	June 2020	S	S	81	33	0	117
	September 2020	15	12	42	66	0	132
	December 2020	0	0	12	48	0	63
	March 2021	0	0	6	24	0	30
WESTLAND DISTRICT	March 2020	0	0	0	0	60	63
	June 2020	9	12	36	12	0	69
	September 2020	S	S	21	12	0	42
	December 2020	9	12	39	15	0	78
	March 2021	6	S	12	S	0	24

Notes for Table One:

- Territorial Local Authority is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the Emergency Housing providers.
- This is a count of grants. A client can have more than one grant in the time period.
- Household composition is based on the declared adults and children staying in Emergency Housing and may not be reflective of their actual family size. In some cases, children may have alternative or alternating living arrangements and may not necessarily be living in Emergency Housing for the entire duration.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry 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 count will never differ by more than two counts.
- In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified. Due to these privacy concerns, some numbers have been suppressed or aggregated. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required and are represented with an "S".