



14 September 2023

Tēnā koe

On 23 August 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The total number of people on the waitlist for accessible housing*
- *The total number of people on the waitlist for accessible housing, broken down by accessibility need e.g. long term health condition; physical disability; sensory; intellectual*
- *The total number of people on the waitlist for accessible housing, broken down by priority rating A or B i.e. 'at risk' or 'serious'*

On 29 August 2023, you agreed to refine the second part of your request to the following:

- *The total number of people on the waitlist for accessible housing, broken down by modification type.*

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, which is driving up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs, and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

When New Zealanders are eligible for public housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The Housing Register is made up of people who are not currently in public housing but who have been assessed as being eligible. The Transfer Register consists of people who want to move from one public house to another, generally due to a change in circumstances prompting a move to somewhere more appropriate to their needs. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register (the Register).

While the Ministry completes the housing assessments which inform the Register, responsibility for funding and supply sits with the Ministry of

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Kāinga Ora, respectively. More information about the Register is available here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.html.

The Ministry assesses the client's need for Public Housing through the Social Allocation System (SAS). The assessment looks at both an applicant's need to move, and their ability to afford, access, and sustain a private rental. Each housing application is given a Priority Rating based on their housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria. Priority A applicants are considered to be 'at risk' with a severe and persistent housing need. Priority B applicants are those with a 'serious housing need' that is a significant and persistent. If there are many barriers to them accessing a private rental, this will also be reflected in a higher need rating.

The Ministry's role is to assess people's needs for public housing and if they or a family member need an accessible home, this is captured as part of the assessment process. The SAS includes identifying modifications that would be required for a property to be suitable accommodation for an applicant. The types of modifications required address varying levels of accessibility needs, such as bathroom facility modifications or property access (such as a ramp). You can find more information regarding the SAS assessment criteria at the following link: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html.

Once the application is completed and live in the system, it includes the letting areas, Priority Rating, and property typology needs (such as whether a modified property is required). Public houses are allocated on needs basis, not a 'first in, first served' basis. The length of time someone will be waiting for a house depends on their Priority Rating under the assessment, as well as the availability of a house that suits their needs in a location they are willing to live.

Applicants are matched to properties based on their level of need and the availability of a property that fits their selected letting areas and the typology of house required. Applicants that require a modified home may spend a longer period of time on the Register before placement due to a lower availability of modified accommodation. Public housing landlords (such as Kāinga Ora or Community Housing Providers) are responsible for matching the specific client to the property, and sign a lease agreement with the applicant directly.

The Ministry has interpreted your request for 'accessible housing' to refer to modified homes.

Please see the **Appendix** which contains the following information:

- **Table One:** The total number of primary applicants on the Housing Register as at 31 July 2023, broken down by whether they require modified housing
- **Table Two:** The number of primary applicants on the Housing Register who require modified housing as at 31 July 2023, broken down by the type of modification required
- **Table Three:** The number of primary applicants on the Housing Register who require modified housing as at 31 July 2023, broken down by priority rating.

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'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, 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
**Group General Manager
Housing**

Appendix

Table One: The total number of primary applicants on the Housing Register as at 31 July 2023, broken down by whether they require modified housing

As at Date	Requires Modified Housing		Total
	Yes	No	
31 July 2023	1,446	23,196	24,639

Table Two: The number of primary applicants on the Housing Register who require modified housing as at 31 July 2023, broken down by the type of modification required

Modified Need Type	31 July 2023
Shower cubicle	261
Low door handles	18
Fully modified kitchen	27
Wet area shower and toilet	513
Sliding doors	24
Lift access	18
Wheelchair access for 1 entrance	282
Wheelchair access for 2 entrances	108
Shower bed	6
Wide hallways	192
Wet area shower	516
Ramps	405
Rails in the bathroom	702
Ceiling hoist	21
Kitchen lever handles	27
Lowered toilet	21
Low light switches	21
Wide doorways	222
Bathroom sliding door	39
Rails in the toilet	609
Access rails	411
Partially modified kitchen	12
Bathroom lever handles	39
Primary Applicant Total	1,446

Table Three: The number of primary applicants on the Housing Register who require modified housing as at 31 July 2023, broken down by priority rating

Priority on the Public Housing Register		Total
A	B	
1,371	75	1,446

Notes for Tables:

- This includes clients only on the Housing Register.
- This includes clients with a priority rating of A or B.
- This is a count of modified needs. A client may have more than one modified housing need type.
- A distinct total of primary applicants has been provided.
- 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.
- A value of one or two will be rounded to three.
- 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.