



31 July 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 29 June 2026, requesting a breakdown of emergency housing and Housing Register applicants from September 2017 to June 2026, by no fixed abode or living in car, held by the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

1. Total count of the number of people in emergency housing, per quarter, with also:

a. Total new emergency housing applications granted and declined, per quarter.

To address most of your requests, please see **Appendix 1** - Number of households granted Emergency Housing and new Emergency Housing grants and declines from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2026.

The data is provided in two tables on the first spreadsheet as follows:

- **Table 1:** Number of households granted Emergency Housing from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2026, by quarter ending.
- **Table 2:** Number of new Emergency Housing applications (grants and declines) from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2026, by quarter ending.

The Ministry's practice and data capture in respect of emergency housing declines has improved, with all applications now having the result recorded, providing greater transparency for clients.

The variation in decline rates is expected. When people first present for emergency housing, staff test the availability of alternative accommodation options (e.g. staying with whānau and friends) to determine eligibility for the Emergency Housing Grant.

Where clients have been declined emergency housing, they may be offered other forms of assistance such as referral to Transitional Housing, the Accommodation Supplement, Bond Grant, Moving Costs Grant, Costs (rent) in Advance Grant or Tenancy Costs Cover Grant (provides assurances to potential landlords that the

Ministry will pay the applicant's outstanding costs at the end of the tenancy, if those costs exceed the amount of bond paid).

- b. Total new emergency housing applications per quarter, who put down 'No Fixed Abode' on the application.*
- c. Total new emergency housing applications per quarter, who put down 'living in car/vehicle' on the application.*

Your requests 1 b and c are refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information. If held, this information would only be contained within individual client files, which would each require manual review to respond to your request. 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 count of number of people on public housing register, per quarter, with also:*
- d. Total new Public Housing Register applicants per quarter.*
- e. Total new Public Housing Register applicants per quarter, who put down 'No Fixed Abode' on the application.*
- f. Total new Public Housing Register applicants per quarter, who put down 'living in car/vehicle' on the application.*

Please see **Appendix 1** - Number of households granted Emergency Housing and new Emergency Housing grants and declines from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2026.

- **Table 3:** Number of new entries to the Social Housing register from 1 July to 30 June 2026, by quarter ending and accommodation type.
- **Table 4:** Number of new entries to the Social Housing Register indicated as living in car from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2026, by quarter ending and accommodation type.

While Appendix 1 addresses the social housing part of your requests, please note that the Ministry doesn't use the term "public housing", instead we call it social housing.

The Social Housing Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change.

Applicants may tell the Ministry they are 'living in a car' in their initial application (which may have been lodged in prior years) but may continue to be counted as living in a car subsequently - e.g. because they have not provided updated information to the Ministry.

If a person does present to the Ministry with an immediate high housing need, such as living in their car, the Ministry will ensure that they have a safe place to stay. This may include providing help with costs to board or rent or transitional housing options. If none are available, the Ministry may assist through an Emergency Housing Grant.

In Tables 3 and 4, please note the data caveats. Table 4 notes that our data records the number of new entries to the Social Housing Register where the applicant indicated they were living in a car, which is defined as 'car' and 'mobile home – caravan'.

The Ministry does not use the term "No fixed abode" and there are varying definitions of what is meant by "homelessness" (e.g. Car, Garage could be included). In the interest of being helpful, Table 3 provides the full list of the type of accommodation the client was staying in, at the time of application for the Social Housing Register. The Ministry can't provide comparable data for emergency housing, as this data is recorded on individual client files as noted earlier.

To address your question 2d, you can view new applications on the Social Housing register here:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.msd.govt.nz%2Fdocuments%2Fabout-msd-and-our-work%2Fpublications-resources%2Fstatistics%2Fhousing%2Fdatafiles%2F2026%2Fsh-national-monthly-may-2026.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.

You can find more social housing data on the former Ministry of Housing and Urban Development website, noting it is now part of the new Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport, here: www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insights.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request, 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

pp. 

Anna Graham
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