

This report aims to provide insights into homelessness using a range of data and observational reports from providers. The data presented represents changes from the September 2023 quarter to the September 2024 quarter, unless otherwise stated. At this stage time-series, longer time series are not available for many of the above as they haven't been collected in this form until recently so it isn't possible to get a longer-term sense of trend.

Key Messages:

- Measuring and understanding factors driving homelessness is challenging and requires bringing together multiple information sources. It is not possible to determine the extent to which changes described in this report reflect existing trends and broader economic and social contexts (e.g., unemployment) or are attributable to policy changes. Improved data and evidence on homelessness and further monitoring is required.
- The most robust estimates of homelessness are available from Census every five years. March 2023 estimates show homelessness has continued to increase over time in terms of numbers of people and has been broadly unchanged in terms of prevalence per 10,000 people. These estimates do not cover the period that the Target 8 Emergency Housing (EH) target has been in place.
- Provider rough sleeping counts and outreach counts from Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington show increases from 2023 to 2024. Providers across the country report increasing levels of homelessness and have increased their efforts to provide data and evidence to support their observations. However, there is limited current quantitative data from providers at this time.
- There has been a steady flow of people into and out of Transitional Housing (TH) across 2024, but the number of households in TH has remained stable across the period.
- The number of households in, and applications for, Emergency Housing Grants (EHGs) has decreased significantly since September 2023. Across 2024; the flow of people in and out of emergency housing has aligned with the policy intent.
- In 2024, there has been an increase in the number of households entering stable housing (private rentals supported by the Accommodation Supplement [AS] or Income-Related Rental Subsidy [IRRS]) or Social Housing after leaving EH and the number of households housed from the Housing Register each month.
- In terms of Housing Register entries since September 2023:
 - Fewer people are living in temporary accommodation (including EH, TH and Contracted Emergency Housing or CEH) and more are living in private housing when entering the Housing Register.
 - The number of households living without shelter or staying with another household when entering the register has increased.
- Māori continue to be overrepresented in homelessness-related data.

Provider Information

Provider information includes rough sleeper counts, outreach data and observations of homelessness shared during conversations with the Auckland Housing First Collective, Takiri Mai, The Salvation Army, the Lower Hutt Housing Network, Downtown Community Ministries (DCM), and Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Homelessness hui. Information was obtained across September to December 2024.

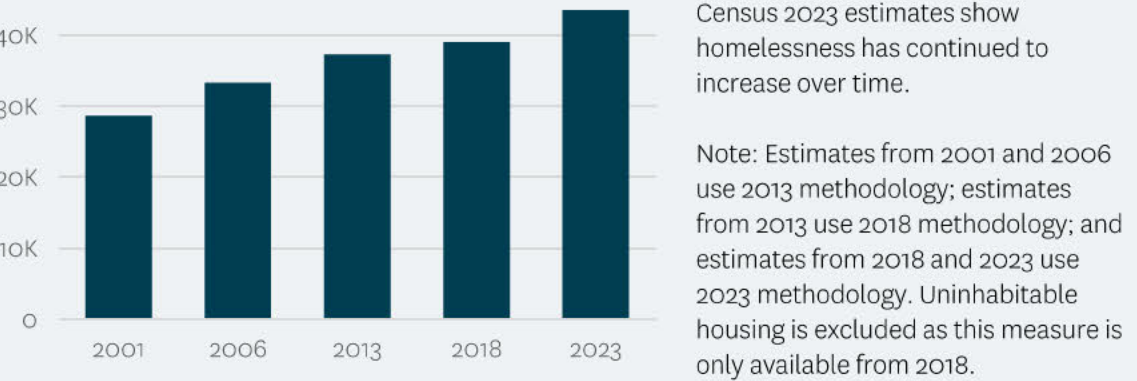
The People's Project conduct a rough sleeping count in **Hamilton** in June each year. In the year to June 2024, rough sleeping increased from **34 to 69 people**. Just over half of people counted were sleeping in cars, with the remainder sleeping rough.

Census 2023 Estimates (March 2023)

Severe housing deprivation refers to people who **due to no other option** are living in severely inadequate housing. Housing deprivation is dynamic and people may move between four different types of homelessness (per the Stats NZ definition): living without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing another household's dwelling or in uninhabitable housing.

Type of Severe Housing Deprivation	2023 Figures	2023 Figures Per 10k people
Without shelter (e.g., sleeping rough, in a car, or in a tent)	4,965	10.1
Temporary accommodation (e.g., Emergency and Transitional Housing, motel, or campground)	13,796	28.0
Sharing another household's dwelling due to no other place to live (e.g., couch surfing)	24,768	50.3
Uninhabitable housing lacking one or more basic amenities such as electricity	68,967	140.0
Total	112,496	228.3

Figure 1. Estimated number of people experiencing severe housing deprivation, not including those in uninhabitable housing, 2001-2023



Downtown Community Ministry (Wellington) regularly records the number of clients who experience homelessness or rough sleeping at anytime during each quarter. The number of DCM clients experiencing homelessness increased from **230 to 277** between the December 2023 and September 2024 quarters, and the number of people sleeping rough from **80 to 103 people** during the same period. DCM homelessness data tends to fluctuate over the year.

Housing First Auckland Collective providers' outreach data shows a significant upward trend in outreach engagements, which indicates changes in visible homelessness levels. Outreach engagements have increased from **88** in August 2024 to **218** in November 2024.

Provider Information (continued)

Providers noted that they are looking to improve data collection so that a sense of trends can be gauged over time.

Other consistent themes from provider conversations are below:

- Reports of increasing levels of homelessness and unmet need for housing services. Providers believe this may be due to changes to EH.
- Concern it is more difficult for people in urgent and genuine housing need to access EHG. Examples included clients being turned away at reception, less availability of urgent appointments, and clients having to prove they did not contribute to their circumstances (e.g., addiction).

MSD Housing Reference Group

At the October 2024 meeting, MSD report the group expressed concern:

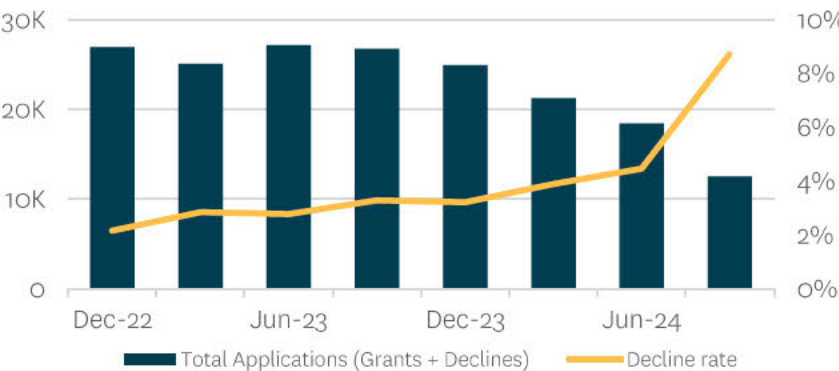
- that EH Gateway changes may be contributing to a higher rate of declines and/or people living in inappropriate situations.
- that HUD may not be replacing lost transitional housing. Reassurance was wanted that this is not the case.
- over the apparent reduction in social and transitional housing supply.

Emergency Housing Applications and Declines

In the 12 months to Sep 2024
53% decrease
In the number of total applications for EHG.

In October 2024
13.9%
of applications for an EHG were declined

Figure 2. Total Emergency Housing Grant applications and percentage of applications declined across the quarter



Applications for EHG decreased since December 2021. EHG declines have increased from 5.6% of grants in July 2024 to 13.9% of grants in October 2024. While other policy, reporting and implementation changes have come into effect more recently that may be contributing to the increase in declines, this data suggests the EH changes are being implemented as intended. More data is required to determine more conclusively what factors are driving these changes.

- Almost half of those who were declined an EHG over October 2024 have received assistance from MSD, with the most common forms of assistance being Rent in Advance and Bond Grants.
- MSD processes are to record all applications for EHG.

Across September 2024, the leading reasons that people were declined an EHG were: ‘The need can be met another way’ (33.0%), ‘Not a qualifying need’ (15.8%) and ‘Circumstances could have been reasonably foreseen’ (14.9%).

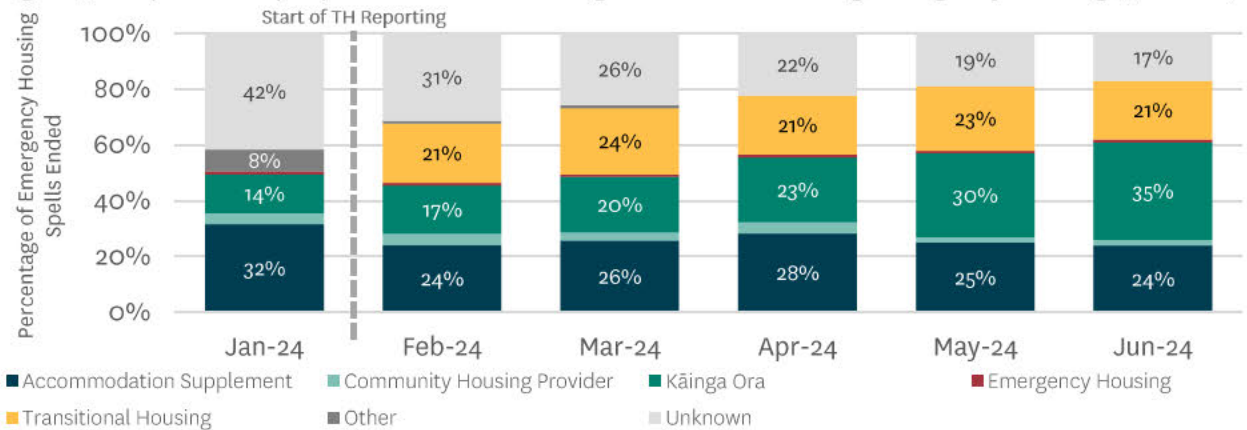
Transitional Housing



TH is a part of the temporary accommodation homelessness category. There has been a steady flow of people into and out of TH across 2024, but the number of households in TH has remained stable across the period. We expect that greater insights regarding TH will feature in further iterations of this report.

Exits from Emergency Housing

Figure 3. Proportion of people who access Housing Services after exiting Emergency Housing (up to 60 days)



On average across the calendar year to October 2024
929 households
were housed each month from the Housing Register compared to 586 a month across the calendar year of 2023.

Across 2024, more households—including whānau with children who had been in EH for 12 weeks or more—entered Social Housing and the number of unknown living situations following an exit from EH decreased from just over 50% in January 2024 to around 16% in October 2024. In addition, more households in total were housed from the Housing Register each month compared to 2023.

While other contextual factors exist (e.g., housing supply, clients’ situational circumstances), these figures suggest the Priority One Fast Track policy and focus on matching are having the intended effects. See the Data Caveats section for further information.

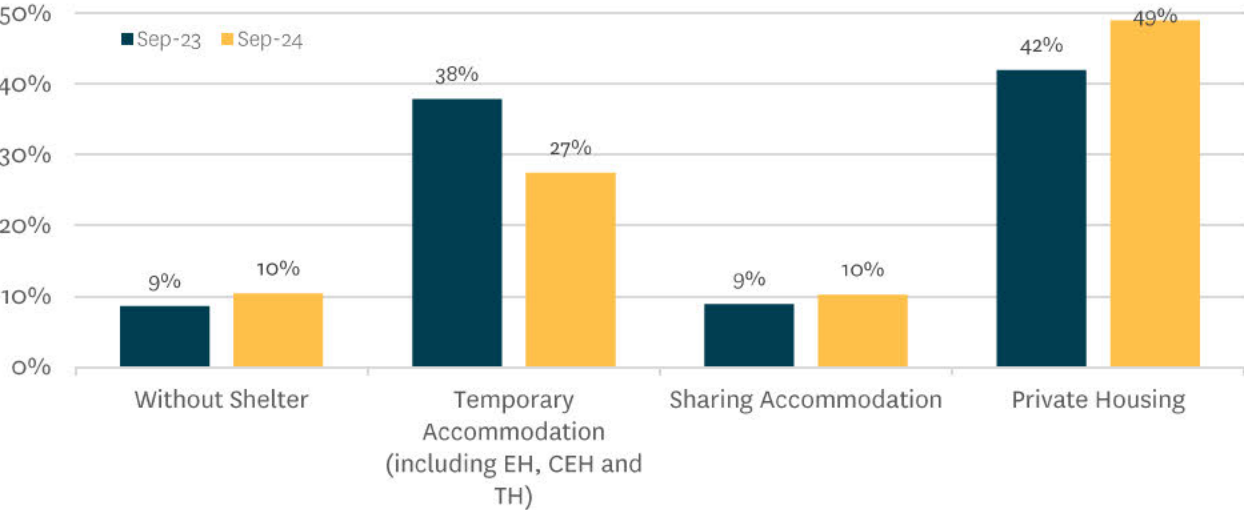
Key Numbers about People Experiencing Homelessness

Number of Households in EH (EHGs and CEH) at the end of October 2024	993
Number of households in TH at the end of September 2024	4,985
Number of households in service in Housing First* at the end of September 2024	3,391
Number of households in service in Rapid Rehousing* at the end of September 2024	1,803
Number of Priority One Fast Track households live on Register at the end of October 2024	249
People experiencing Severe Housing Deprivation (from the 2023 Census)	112,496
Proportion of those people experiencing Severe Housing Deprivation per 10,000 people (from the 2023 Census)	228.3

*Households may also be in EH or TH whilst they are waiting to be housed through these programmes.

Housing Register

Figure 4. Percentage of Primary Applicants on the Housing Register by living situation* at the time of entry (or latest update)



Fewer people may be relying on EH when entering the Housing Register.

Small changes in the data indicate fewer people are living in EH (and TH and CEH), and proportionally more people are living in private housing, without shelter, or are sharing accommodation with another household when they enter the Housing Register.

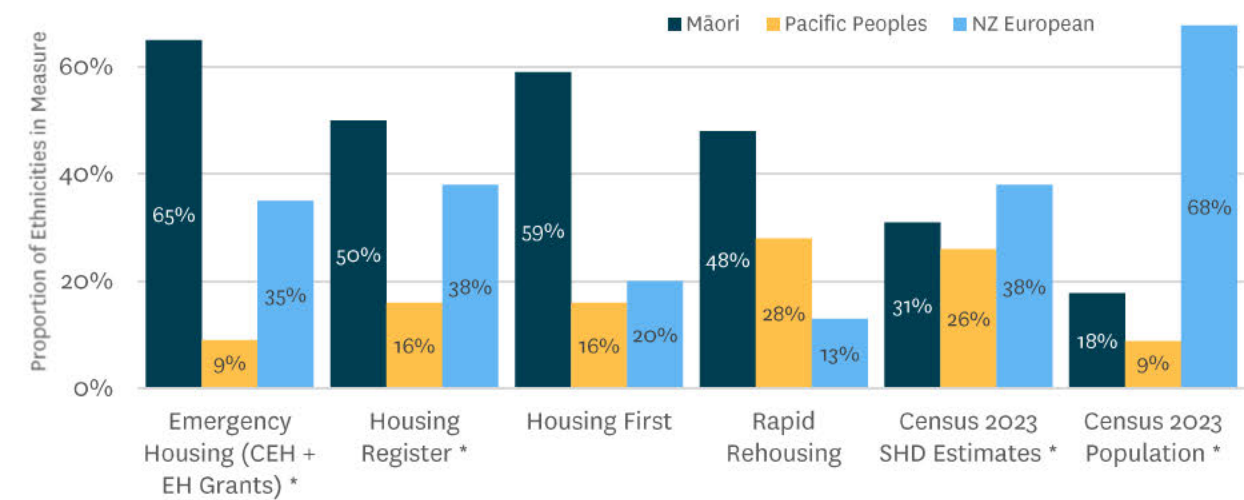
A similar pattern is seen in recent entries to the register, with small increases in the numbers of new applicants to the housing register who are living without shelter at the time of application.

It is too early to determine whether these changes are simply fluctuations in the data or an emerging trend.

* These living situations represent groupings of the accommodation types captured at the time of assessment for the Housing Register.

Ethnicity Comparison

Figure 5. Proportion of Māori, Pacific Peoples, and NZ European in each housing service and 2023 Census estimates



Māori are overrepresented in homelessness-related data. This has remained consistent over time.

* Emergency Housing, Housing Register, and Census (including SHD) data use total response ethnicity so these proportions do not add to 100%.

Data Sources

- Census 2023 estimates of Severe Housing Deprivation.
- MSD Emergency Housing and Housing Register data – both publicly available and requested from MSD.
- HUD Transitional Housing data quarter ending September 2024.
- HUD Housing First and Rapid Rehousing data.
- MSD Housing Reference Group.
- The People’s Project (Hamilton) rough sleeping counts across 2022 to June 2024.
- Downtown Community Ministries (Wellington) homelessness and rough sleeping data from December 2023 quarter to September 2024.
- Housing First Auckland Collective providers’ outreach data from August to November 2024.
- Findings from 10 Housing First Narrative Reports from 2023 to September 2024.

Further Information

- Housing First helps get people who have been experiencing homelessness for at least a year and require high levels of support to access and maintain permanent housing. Most households in service are single adults.
- Rapid Rehousing helps people and whānau who have recently become homeless and require low-to-medium levels of support to access and maintain housing. Most households include children, and primary applicants are more likely to be women.
- Providers have recently increased their efforts to improve data and evidence on homelessness. Recent reports that have been released include:
 - Understanding Barriers and Solutions to Women’s Homelessness in Aotearoa** commissioned by the Coalition to End Women’s Homelessness. This report combines qualitative and quantitative methods to understand women’s homelessness and reinforces what is already known about women’s homelessness.
 - Housing Insecurity in Aotearoa’s Older People** prepared by the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. This report explores housing insecurity among people aged 55 years or older using EHG and Social Housing Register data from March 2024.
 - Quality Education Services** commissioned ImpactLab to produce a report on the social value of their Youth Housing Support Service.
 - The Salvation Army** are preparing a briefing for Ministers summarising key information and data from a group of Non-Government Organisations working with people experiencing with homelessness. This includes recommendations for addressing issues identified by providers.

Data Caveats

- Caution is required when drawing conclusions about homelessness from service data (e.g., EH Grants, Housing Register, TH data, provider data). Service data is sensitive to operational and administrative changes and reflects the number of people accessing a service. Service data does not measure of the number of people experiencing homelessness.
- An EH Grant decline represents an application that has been processed and considered ineligible. The number of declines should not be considered representative of unmet demand for services, as we do not know the level of need that does not progress to a processed application (Figure 2).
- Regarding exits from Emergency Housing: 1) It is not possible to determine whether households may have accessed other Housing Services or returned to EH up to 60 days after these reporting timeframes. 2) The ‘Unknown’ category includes those who may now be experiencing homelessness and those who may have gone on to other suitable housing options. 3) The ‘Other’ category includes those who have left New Zealand or are deceased (Figure 3).
- Data on households in TH was not included before February 2024. Prior to this date, exits to TH are likely to be included in the ‘Unknown’ category (Figure 3).
- Where people are living when they enter the Housing Register (and all Housing Register client information) is accurate as at the original time of application or at the last instance of update. Client circumstances may have changed since the last point of client engagement and should not be taken as current (Figure 4).
- When a household enters the register, MSD staff select the client’s current accommodation type from 22 options. For simplicity, this report has used the Stats NZ homelessness definition to create higher-level categories where possible (without shelter, temporary accommodation, staying with another household, private housing). There may be some error due to variation in how MSD staff assign accommodation type (Figure 4).
- Ethnicity comparisons are based on primary client rather than household data. There could be a household of Pacific Peoples, but if the primary applicant of EH identifies as Māori that will be recorded. This also applies to Rapid Rehousing and Housing First data (Figure 5).