



DOIA21/22090622

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email dated 3 September 2021 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*All correspondence, including but not limited to emails, with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) since March 25, 2020 to date relating to homelessness or insecure housing during Covid-19 lockdown periods in New Zealand.*

On 8 September 2021 we asked you to refine your request as it may have required substantial collation to respond. On 13 September 2021 you refined your request to:

*In August, Kararaina Calcott-Cribb from HUD told the media that HUD had "contacted sector leaders and housing providers to get an understanding of what help homeless people needed during lockdown". Please provide any documents that relate to this statement, including the communications from HUD to those organisations; responses from those organisations to HUD's communications; and any follow-on documents.*

During the 2021 COVID-19 Level 4 lockdown, there was a concerted effort from agencies to house people who were experiencing homelessness or had no other place to live. Many of these people would have been sleeping rough in and around cities across New Zealand, in night shelters, or living in parks and cars, couch surfing or in other shelter that was not suitable for self-isolation.

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (the Ministry) contacted Housing First providers, community housing providers, iwi and Māori organisations as a priority to understand the need for accommodation or support requirements for people and whānau experiencing homelessness during lockdown. An email sent to providers on 19 August 2021 along with an attachment to that email, and a letter of 25 August 2021 are released to you in full. These documents are what the Ministry was referring to in its statement to the media.

The Ministry also published information and advice for housing and related service providers on operating at different Alert Levels on its website: [www.hud.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-housing-and-related-service-providers/](http://www.hud.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-housing-and-related-service-providers/).

The Ministry has been in regular contact with all our providers since the August lockdown was announced and has been part of industry wide hui including other Government agencies. Due to the large number of organisations involved and the volume of correspondence and communications, the part of your request that asks for the responses from the Ministry's communications is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

As part of our ongoing commitment to openness and transparency, the Ministry proactively releases information and documents that may be of interest to the public. As such, this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on our website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Shaw', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anne Shaw  
**Deputy Chief Executive**  
**Housing Supply, Response and Partnerships**

**From:** [HSRP Issues Management](#)  
**To:** [HSRP Issues Management](#)  
**Subject:** LETTER OF PROOF – ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES - HOUSING  
**Date:** Thursday, 19 August 2021 5:29:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [2021 August Letter of Proof - Essential Social Services - Housing - SIGNED.pdf](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image007.jpg](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image008.jpg](#)

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Kia ora koutou katoa

Thank you for continuing your work to provide support services in this challenging time of COVID-19 Alert Level 4.

As a social service that provides and supports a place for someone to live, you are providing an essential service to support New Zealanders. I can confirm that your organisation's work and people are 'essential services'.

This means you will continue to operate during COVID-19 Alert Level 4, along with services such as supermarkets, hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and service stations. You can find detailed information about essential and non-essential businesses on the government [COVID-19](#) website.

Please note:

- If your organisation cannot meet all Alert Level 4 rules to operate safely, your workers should not go into work.
- If your employees need to go into your premises or travel for the purpose of work they can use public transport to commute.
- Everyone legally must wear a face covering on all public transport unless they have an exemption.
- Employees may be asked to show who they work for so they can prove they have a reason to travel. We recommend you provide your employees with a letter to confirm who they are, and their role.
- Mask wearing is now mandatory for those 12 and over when **providing or accessing any essential service**.

**Attached is a letter for your staff, as essential service workers to carry, which can be used as proof they are providing an essential service.**

Given the increased risk of infection with the COVID-19 Delta variant – we strongly recommend that this letter only be used where absolutely necessary during Alert Level 4 and that wherever possible, staff provide support remotely and/or work from home.

If you have any concerns, or if queries arise, regarding the use of this letter, please contact your HUD relationship manager in the first instance. We will update you if anything changes regarding the letter's use.

We are currently updating our COVID-19 Alert Level 4 guidance for social and community services. This will be available on our website in the next few days.

With continued thanks for the all the mahi you and your teams do supporting our vulnerable whanau.



Noho ora mai - Stay well, look after yourself

**Jeremy Steele**

Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Housing Supply, Response and Partnerships

[www.hud.govt.nz](http://www.hud.govt.nz) | Level 6, 7WQ, 7 Waterloo Quay, Wellington 6011

Released under the  
Official Information Act 1982



## LETTER OF PROOF – ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES - HOUSING

Kia ora

As you are aware, the Prime Minister and the Director General of Health declared that New Zealand is at Alert Level 4 in our COVID-19 response from 11.59pm on Tuesday 17 August 2021.

Auckland and the Coromandel Peninsula is at Alert Level 4, likely for a period of 7 days. The rest of New Zealand is at Alert Level 4, initially for a period of 3 days

Essential businesses and those that support them, will continue to provide the necessities of life for everyone in New Zealand. In accordance with the Health Order, as a social service that provides *“social and community-based services provided to support persons to maintain critical well-being or as crisis support for people who are unsafe or homeless”*, you are providing an essential service to support New Zealanders.

**Your staff, where they meet the relevant criteria below, can use this letter as proof they are providing an essential service and show it to authorities as needed.**

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga - The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will keep working with you to ensure these essential services are available and delivered in a way that maintains everyone's health and safety.

### Essential social services

Essential social services for the purpose of our COVID-19 response Alert Level 4 are those that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Where the social service is the only way for people accessing food and other goods they need to survive (e.g. money management (but not budget advice), food banks, and other delivery of essential goods), and/or
- A social service that provides and supports a place for someone to live (e.g. transitional and Community Housing Providers, supported accommodation, Housing First, residences, bail hostels, night shelters, family homes, remand homes, foster carers of children in state care, resettlement services for recent migrants and refugees), and/or
- A social service that supports disabled people to maintain critical wellbeing (e.g. disability services for those with high or very high needs, and excluding disability employment services), and/or
- Crisis support for people who are unsafe (e.g. funded helplines, refuges and family violence services, foster care support services, sexual violence crisis services).

If any queries arise regarding the use of this letter, please contact your HUD relationship manager in the first instance. We will update you if anything changes regarding its use.

Your continued support in delivering essential housing assistance to vulnerable New Zealanders at this difficult time is appreciated.

Noho ora mai - Stay well, look after yourself

**Jeremy Steele**

Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Housing Supply Response and Partnerships





25 August 2021

## Update on COVID-19: Government extends Alert Level 4

**Ko te reo mihi tēnei te maioha ake nei ki a koe, kei te mōtoi kahotea, me te tangi ki ō tāua mate huhua o te wā, ki te iwi kua whetūrangitia, tauārai i te pō, titoko o te ao mārama, tēnā tāua.**

We wrote to you last week following the Prime Minister's announcement that Aotearoa New Zealand was moving to Alert Level 4 Lockdown. Now that the lockdown has been extended, we want to let you know Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga continues to support your organisation and your mahi to ensure you can provide emergency and temporary accommodation to those in need.

We want to acknowledge the fantastic job all our housing providers have done to ensure the homeless have a roof over their heads during lockdown. Thank you for working so hard to support individuals and whānau experiencing homelessness to move quickly into stable accommodation and access wider social support to address their needs.

We are working closely with the Ministry for Social Development to ensure everyone has accommodation. People with nowhere to stay should contact MSD who will support them with emergency housing.

Government Ministers and officials are meeting regularly with iwi to ensure effective engagement to ensure strong open communication continues in our response to COVID 19. These meetings enable open dialogue and actions for agencies to follow up on.

The collective work done across agencies in response to COVID-19 in 2020 means we're in a much stronger position to respond swiftly now to ensure our providers and staff can operate under any alert level. We continue to work with all our providers as they assess the level of need and have responded quickly to these changing circumstances.

A number of additional units have already been secured in Auckland in response to a request from one of our providers and additional places have been sourced in Whangārei for rough sleepers.

A big thanks to our providers like Kahungunu Whānau Services have also begun offering vaccination programmes for the homeless in and around Wellington amongst the wide service provision they provide to whānau in need, while organisations such as Wellington City Mission have been delivering shopping orders to support individuals and families where needed.

HUD is working with the Ministry of Health to provide further information about vaccination needs. DHBs in some areas have already begun working with providers on the initial vaccinations.

We continue to support our partners and sector leads Te Matapihi and Community Housing Aotearoa who have contacted other housing providers including iwi and Māori organisations to access immediate needs required for the homeless.

Our providers have told us that while there has been no significant change to the demand for emergency and temporary accommodation, there have been pockets of increased need and we've been able to respond as required to add capacity.

Evictions from emergency and transitional housing need to be a last resort, now more than ever. However, welfare of other residents and staff is also important. Talk to your relationship manager if you need any support with security.

If you want to talk with HUD directly about any aspect of your service delivery including housing opportunities, please contact your HUD relationship manager or email [ProviderEnquiries@hud.govt.nz](mailto:ProviderEnquiries@hud.govt.nz)

You can find information about operating in [Alert Level 4 on the HUD website](#)  
For more detailed information about Alert Level 4 please refer to the [Ministry of Health website](#)

Ngā manaakitanga ki a koutou katoa i roto i ngā āhuatanga katoa o te wā. Kia haumaru te noho.

**Kararaina Calcott-Cribb**  
Deputy Chief Executive, Tumuaki,  
Te Kāhui Kāinga Ora

**Anne Shaw**  
Deputy Chief Executive, Housing Supply,  
Response and Partnerships