



30 October 2020

DOIA20/21090471

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email dated 1 September 2020 to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) requesting:

1. *How many young people aged 16-24 are currently in Emergency Housing?*
2. *How many young people aged 16-24 have been in Emergency Housing this year?*
3. *How many people aged 16-24 are being housed in motels now in New Zealand?*
4. *How many young people aged 16-24 are currently in transitional housing?*
5. *How many young people aged 16-24 have been in transitional housing this year?*

On 3 September 2020, parts four and five, and part three as it relates to transitional housing were transferred by MSD to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (the Ministry) under section 14 of the Act.

Before responding to your specific requests, it may be useful to provide some additional context regarding emergency and transitional housing, as well as the current Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan as it relates to young people.

It should be noted that motels can be used for emergency accommodation, transitional housing and the government COVID-19 response to homelessness. Emergency accommodation in motels is funded through the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) which is administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The purpose of the EH SNG is to help individuals and families with the cost of staying in short-term temporary accommodation (usually a motel) when there is an urgent need and they have no other options such as a private rental. The EH SNG pays for short-term accommodation for up to seven days at a time and a client can receive more than one grant.

The Ministry contracts with transitional housing providers to provide warm, dry, short-term transitional housing for families and individuals who do not have anywhere to live. Families and individuals stay in transitional housing for around 12 weeks, or more if necessary. In most cases, they receive a further 12 weeks of support services once they have found a more permanent place to live.

A key difference between emergency and transitional housing is that transitional housing includes wraparound support to the individual or household, even if the accommodation is in a motel. Transitional housing providers are contracted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to provide this support.

Households may require transitional housing due to a number of difficult circumstances such as unemployment or low income, and/or may face a range of complex issues such as mental health and addictions, criminal history, and family breakdowns. As a result, there are households who require more intense specialised support to seek and maintain housing. Some landlords may consider these circumstances or issues as barriers to accessing their rental properties.

It is important to note that long-term stays in motel accommodation is not ideal for individuals and whanau. There is an extensive programme of work underway to increase the supply of public and transitional housing to reduce the reliance on motel accommodation.

The Government has committed to increasing the number of public and transitional houses by 8,000 over the next four years. This is in addition to the 6,400 committed between 2018 and 2022. Between November 2017 and July 2020, the number of places increased by 5,308.

In February 2020, the Government released the Aotearoa/New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020-2023) to prevent and reduce homelessness. The plan has 18 immediate actions to be put in place in 2020, and a further 18 longer-term actions to be developed for implementation over 2020-2023. One of the longer-term actions is to develop further actions to prevent and reduce homelessness for at-risk groups of people. As part of this work we will be looking at actions to support different at-risk groups of young people.

In addition, the plan includes action to expand supported accommodation for young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care, a programme on data and evidence, including better data and research on youth homelessness. The action plan also includes ongoing involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness to inform policy, delivery and design work at a local, regional and national level.

The Youth Employment Action Plan and the Youth Plan, alongside the Homelessness Action Plan, will collectively be used to drive change for young people and improve housing outcomes.

In addition, as part of the action plan Oranga Tamariki will provide an additional 168 placements to support young people who are leaving care into accommodation over the next four year at a cost of \$17.5 million. This action is underway and approximately 30 young people have been placed already. Young people in these placements are provided with wrap-around support to help ensure safe, stable accommodation and the development of life skills to support the young people to live independently.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020 \$107.6 million was made available for over 1,200 additional places (predominantly motel units) for people who were living rough or in accommodation where social distancing was not possible. \$31 million of the funding was for wraparound support services to support people's needs. These places were brought on as an emergency and temporary measure and funded separately by the Government until April 2021.

Occupancy data is not currently being collected for individuals housed under the 1,200 additional places, so the data released to you does not include individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who may have been placed in accommodation for the lockdown.

In response to your request, I can advise that as at the end of June 2020, there were 404 (10.5 percent of all transitional housing occupants) individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 reported as occupying transitional housing places. Of these 404 individuals, 124 (11.1 percent of all transitional housing occupants) were reported as occupying contracted transitional housing motels. For the current year (January 2020 to end of June 2020), 923 (10.8 percent of all transitional housing occupants) individuals aged between 16 and 24 reported as having occupied, or continued to occupy, a transitional housing place. These figures capture individuals who are currently residing, or have resided, in transitional housing after turning 16 years old, but have not yet turned 24.

For context, according to Stats NZ, as at December 2019 there were approximately 521,300 (10.5 percent) individuals within the same age group in New Zealand, out of an estimated population of 4,977,800.

Please note that the information provided in this response is based on data collected from providers and reflects only what has been reported.

Reporting on occupancy in transitional housing is reliant on manual self-reporting by providers. In some cases, the data is not received in a timely manner or does not meet data quality standards so was not able to be included in this request. The information at issue is, but is not limited to, whether households left transitional housing or not.

For reasons noted above, as with any manually collected administrative data, we are aware that there are data quality and coverage issues. The Ministry works with all housing and service providers to continuously improve our data collection processes.

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



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