



Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

Severe Housing Deprivation Estimate

Frequently asked questions

What is the 2018 Severe Housing Deprivation Estimate?

The New Zealand definition of homelessness was published by Stats NZ in 2009. Homelessness is defined *as living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing: are without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household or living in uninhabitable housing.*

The operational definition of severe housing deprivation attempts to estimate the number of people on Census night who were homeless, these categories have been defined as:

1. Living without habitable accommodation due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing.¹ This is described as ‘without shelter’ and includes people who were living rough, in an improvised dwelling, or in a mobile dwelling not in a motor camp.
2. Living in a non-private dwelling, due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing. This is described as ‘temporary accommodation’ and includes two groups: Those who live in emergency or transitional accommodation provided by non-government organisations, including night shelters and women’s refuges on Census night; and those who live in camping grounds, motor camps, boarding houses, hotels, motels, guest accommodation, or marae.
3. Living as a temporary resident in a severely crowded, permanent private dwelling due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing. This is described as ‘sharing accommodation’. These are people who are staying in a severely overcrowded permanent private dwelling (ie, with a deficit of two or more bedrooms) who are not part of the ‘host household’ ie, the owners or listed tenants.
4. Living in uninhabitable housing that lacks access to one of six basic amenities – safe drinking water, electricity, cooking facilities, a kitchen sink, bath or shower, toilet – due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing.

Why has it been produced and what will it be used for?

This information helps to support what we know about people living in this situation, so we can make sure we have the right supports in the right places for this population.

This report provides an updated estimate of those living in these circumstances in early 2018 reinforcing the need for the initiatives we have in the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan.

The Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan sets out the Government’s vision for reducing and preventing homelessness. HUD is looking at how the action plan can now focus on the current challenges facing people experiencing homelessness or those at risk of homelessness.

One of the useful aspects of the way this estimate is collated is the different cohorts identified, highlighting the different populations we work with and the need for the different levels of support and targeted services we fund and provide.

This work is being considered alongside more current data and information we have from the providers and agencies we work with to inform how initiatives are implemented to support people in the right ways in the right places.

How was it developed and who by?

Homelessness is defined as living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are:

- without shelter
- in temporary accommodation
- sharing accommodation with a household, or

¹ ‘Minimally adequate housing’ is a term used by Amore et al to describe housing which provides the basics in at least two of the core dimensions of housing adequacy – habitability, privacy and control, and security of tenure.

- living in uninhabitable housing.

Amore, Viggers, Baker and Howden-Chapman used available data from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, as well as data from emergency housing providers, to estimate how many people were experiencing 'severe housing deprivation' (which is synonymous with 'homelessness'). This estimate was published in 2013, and subsequently updated by Amore in 2016, using 2013 Census data.

In July 2020 Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga published the Severe housing deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand 2018 report, an update to this estimate using data from the 2018 Census.

The Authors of this report, Amore, Viggers and Howden-Chapman subsequently published a supplement to this report regarding Housing Lacking Basic Amenities. This supplement documented the methodology, and provided information regarding, the population living in uninhabitable housing – a category that hitherto had not been reported, due to the data being collected for the first time in the 2018 Census.

The June 2021 revised Severe Housing Deprivation Estimate includes estimates for all four categories of the New Zealand definition of homelessness.

Who uses the information in the estimate?

Public servants in central and local government, and NGO housing providers use the estimate information as a guide for the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness.

An example of its use can be seen in the [Public Housing Plan 2021-2024 local area summaries](#).

Can we trust the Census 2018 information in the estimate?

The estimate is presented in the report with a number of caveats regarding the data. This report has been reviewed by several experts and we feel confident that the Census data has been analysed and presented appropriately.

Is the number of homelessness people in New Zealand growing, or not as fast as feared?

This estimate cannot tell us whether the number of people experiencing homelessness currently is growing or not. Due to the number of changes made to the 2018 Census, any comparison over time is not recommended.

However, understanding that people will want to compare over time, the authors have noted that compared with 2013, the rate for the three comparable categories of severe housing deprivation in 2018 had increased by 0.9 per 10,000 people, an increase of about 4,400 people. This increase was largely due to more people sharing accommodation in severely crowded houses.

Can we use the figure 102,000 with confidence?

We feel confident that this is a minimum estimate of the number of people experiencing Severe Housing Deprivation in March 2018.

What are the limitations of the information in the estimate?

There are a number of limitations to consider when interpreting and using the results presented in this report. The 2018 severe housing deprivation count, like previous estimates, will have underestimated the true level of severe housing deprivation in New Zealand. Scope changes, census operational difficulties, and quality limitations inherent in surveying people experiencing homelessness mean comparisons over time are not recommended. These caveats are detailed on pages 12 to 14 of the report.

What initiatives has the government got to help address homelessness?

In Budget 2020, a total of \$570m was allocated to deliver 8,000 new, warm, dry public homes across the country over the next four to five years. We expect this will be split between approximately 6,000 public housing homes and 2,000 transitional homes.

It is a top priority of this Government to ensure New Zealanders have safe, warm housing. This latest commitment means that by the end of 2024 the Government will have delivered 18,000 additional places since this Government took office.

Since the Alert Levels were put in place, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has secured over 1,200 motel places and continues to look for more. These places are mainly in motels and are for those who are homeless, e.g. people staying in night shelters and sleeping rough.

Housing First is the Government's primary response to homelessness. The programme seeks to house and support people who have been homeless for a long time or who are homeless and face multiple and complex issues.

The [Aotearoa Homelessness Action Plan](#) continues to drive our work to prevent and reduce homelessness and implementation is underway for all 18 immediate actions. Notable progress from September 2020 to February 2021 included:

- Accelerated immediate actions to respond to Māori homelessness, including providing financial support to Māori providers and working with Iwi and Māori partners on projects to increase housing supply.
- Delivered investment through He Taupua Fund which supports projects that build the capability of organisations that use kaupapa Māori approaches to deliver housing related services that assist whānau experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.
- Completed round one of the Local Innovation and Partnership Fund which supports local initiatives to respond to, and prevent, homelessness.
- Continued to increase transitional housing with a further 2,000 places committed in the 2020 Budget.
- Increased the number of Sustaining Tenancies places which provide practical support to help people keep their tenancies
- Support for a percentage of clients in Emergency Housing to fund roles and initiatives such as:
 - Intensive Case Managers
 - Navigators/ Support Services
 - Housing Brokers
 - Ready to Rent programme.
- New accommodation places for people transitioning from government care including:
 - young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care
 - women leaving prison
 - returning overseas offenders
 - people leaving acute mental health and addiction inpatient units.
- Piloting a Rapid Rehousing approach to support individuals and whānau into permanent housing.

Why is counting the homelessness population so hard?

There are several reasons, this population has more immediate needs than 'to be counted', the priority for them, for the providers supporting them, and for the funders is to support and provide funding to address these needs, rather than funding the level of resource required to count them.

Other reasons include:

- People may not consider themselves homeless – they're staying with friends/family until they can find a landlord to rent to them, save enough money, get a job that pays enough, etc.

- People may feel whakamā/ashamed, that they don't deserve any support, that their family don't approve of them anymore.
- People's living circumstances may be illegal, eg, camping without permission; renting someone's garage.
- People may be living off the grid – eg in the bush, so they aren't in a visible dwelling.
- As described in Allen and Clarke's rapid literature review of homelessness counts² for the Ministry of Social Development, point-in-time counts are useful for estimating the size of populations who are without shelter or in temporary accommodation, but often undercount those in shared accommodation or uninhabitable housing.

What is specifically new information in the estimate, that has not been captured previously?

New breakdowns that have not been included in the 2001-2006 and 2013 Estimates include:

- Category of severe housing deprivation by gender, by age, and by ethnic group
- For total Severe Housing Deprivation, ethnic group by gender; and ethnic group by age group
- Category of severe housing deprivation by regional council area.

The 2021 Revision of the 2018 Severe Housing Deprivation estimate includes estimates of people living in uninhabitable housing – dwellings that lack access to one of six basic amenities: safe drinking water, electricity, cooking facilities, a kitchen sink, bath or shower, toilet who live on a poverty-level income. Further information regarding the basic amenities data, the methodology used, and further breakdowns can be found in Viggers, H., Amore, K., Howden-Chapman, P. (2021). Housing that Lacks Basic Amenities in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2018: A supplement to the 2018 Census Estimate of Severe Housing Deprivation. Wellington: University of Otago <https://www.healthyhousing.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Housing-that-Lacks-Basic-Amenities-in-Aotearoa-New-Zealand-2018-1.pdf>

Māori

What Māori housing initiatives has the government got to help address homelessness?

Budget 2021

Through Budget 2021, we are investing \$380 million dollars in Māori housing to deliver approximately 1,000 additional houses in partnership with iwi and Māori and repairs to a further 700 houses. In addition, Māori will have direct access to a \$350 million Māori Infrastructure Fund from the earlier announced \$3.8 billion Housing Acceleration Fund.

This investment focuses on breaking down barriers that are contributing to a housing crisis and helps to unlock underutilised whenua Māori. It also contributes significant support to increase the strength, capacity and capability of Maori housing providers.

This investment builds on existing Māori housing programmes which are oversubscribed, for example it will:

- support Māori led transitional housing and affordable rentals;
- enable more papakainga developments and repairs;
- support more wraparound kaupapa Māori services increase their capability; and
- support iwi and Māori ropu to build houses for home ownership.

This investment will benefit our people now by addressing immediate demand, and generations to come by

² <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/literature-reviews/we-all-count/homelessness-count-rapid-literature-review-and-deep-dive.pdf>

supporting Māori to scale up their delivery and action long term housing strategies.

MAIHI

We are taking a place-based and MAIHI (Te Maihi o Te Whare Māori: Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation) approach to refine our understanding of local and community needs to identify areas for investment in housing and delivering solutions that meet the needs of vulnerable individuals, whānau and communities.

MAIHI was formally launched on 11 August 2020. MAIHI puts Māori at the heart of Aotearoa New Zealand's housing narrative, acknowledges the history of Māori housing, and responds to these needs through kaupapa Māori approaches.

The MAIHI Framework for action across the Government's housing programme is driving the design and delivery of actions to seek measurable change for whānau, hapū and Iwi in ways they consider best meet the needs and aspirations of their communities.

We have applied MAIHI to the Government's Homelessness Action Plan (released on 13 February 2020). Using MAIHI principles, a kaupapa Māori approach to homelessness was developed, which informed the design of the Homelessness Action Plan, and has specifically informed its implementation projects.

The Homelessness Action Plan also recognises the long-term and intergenerational focus of MAIHI, and the importance of working with Māori and across the system. Applying MAIHI to the whole plan will benefit not only Māori, but all homeless individuals and whānau.

Under the Homelessness Action Plan, we have accelerated immediate actions to respond to Māori homelessness, including working at pace to provide financial support to Māori providers and working with Iwi and Māori partners on projects to increase housing supply.

The plan also includes initiatives targeted to Māori, including:

- partnering with Māori, Iwi, hapū and marae to prevent homelessness
- building the capabilities and capacity of Māori housing providers - Community Housing Providers, Housing First providers, Iwi and hapū and other Māori providers
- increasing housing supply for Iwi and Māori providers by providing alternative and immediate housing options and by linking and leveraging programmes across the system (such as financing projects).

What is known about Maori over-representation in these figures?

Severe housing deprivation disproportionately affected ethnic minorities. Māori severe housing deprivation prevalence rates were close to three and five times the European rate, and the true levels of inequity are probably greater.

The 2018 Severe Housing Deprivation estimate results indicate Māori made up:

- 26 percent of those living without shelter
- 18 percent of those living in commercial accommodation
- 37 percent of those sharing accommodation
- 26 percent of those living in uninhabitable housing.

Rates of severe housing deprivation were high among Māori young people, including 16,338 young Māori under 24 years of age.

The 2018 estimates for Māori are lower than what HUD is hearing from providers who work with Māori experiencing homelessness.

Anecdotally homelessness providers, who are very aware of need, are advising HUD that homelessness has

been getting worse, particularly among Māori.

This report confirms that these figures are a likely undercount of Māori experiencing severe housing deprivation.

There was substantial variation in response rates by ethnicity for the 2018 Census, with Māori particularly affected.

The main impact on the severe housing deprivation estimate is that around 330,000 people could not be allocated to a household. Māori made up about a third of the 330,000 people missing from households and they are more likely to share with family or friends when they cannot access a place of their own.

What is known about Pacific people in the estimate?

Severe housing deprivation disproportionately affected ethnic minorities. Pacific peoples' severe housing deprivation prevalence rates were close to five times the European rate, and the true levels of inequity are probably greater.

The 2018 Severe Housing Deprivation estimate results indicate Pacific peoples made up:

- 7 percent of those living without shelter
- 9 percent of those living in commercial accommodation
- 30 percent of those sharing accommodation
- 21 percent of those living in uninhabitable housing.

These figures are a likely undercount of Pacific peoples experiencing severe housing deprivation.

There was substantial variation in response rates by ethnicity for the 2018 Census, with Pacific peoples particularly affected. The main impact on the severe housing deprivation estimate is that around 330,000 people could not be allocated to a household. Pacific peoples made up about a sixth (17 percent) of the 330,000 people missing from households, they are more likely to share with family or friends when they cannot access a place of their own.

Is there a regional breakdown of the numbers?

Yes, the total numbers and categories are available by region, as well as Territorial Authority and Auckland Local Board areas. However, ethnic group breakdowns have not been produced at area level.