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KEI MUA I TE AROARO O TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA  
I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI  
BEFORE THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI 2750

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IN THE MATTER OF                    the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF                    Kaupapa inquiry into claims concerning  
Housing Policy and Services

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**EVIDENTIAL FACT SHEET**  
**COVID-19 HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE**  
**(UPDATED NOVEMBER 2021)**  
**(TE TŪĀPAPA KURA KĀINGA –**  
**MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT)**  
**3 Hakihea | December 2021**

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<b>RECEIVED</b>
Waitangi Tribunal
<b>3 Dec 2021</b>
Ministry of Justice WELLINGTON

1.	<b>Basic information</b>	<p><b>Title of policy / programme:</b> COVID-19 Homelessness Response (Updated November 2021)</p> <p><b>Year introduced:</b> 2020</p> <p><b>Still current?:</b> Yes</p> <p><b>Administering agency(ies):</b></p> <p>Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga - The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (<b>HUD</b>), in collaboration with Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities (<b>Kāinga Ora</b>), the Ministry of Social Development (<b>MSD</b>) and the Ministry of Health (<b>MoH</b>).</p> <p><b>High level summary of policy/programme:</b></p> <p>The programme was part of the All of Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 lockdown, delivering accommodation capacity with wrap-around services for housed clients and whānau. Chronically homeless (often rough sleepers) were moved into temporary accommodation as the COVID epidemic reached Aotearoa New Zealand; they were a highly vulnerable group in terms of COVID infection and transmission risks. Once in accommodation, for the most part in motels, they were supported to be self-isolating and the underlying drivers of their homelessness could be addressed.</p> <p>Since the initial months of the All of Government response, the Crown has seen a number of people successfully supported into more stable and longer term housing solutions. The Crown acknowledges that further work is required to ensure support continues and more appropriate longer term housing can be identified – where it has not yet been identified.</p> <p>Since August 2021, Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga has been working with Housing First and other social services providers, as well as other Crown agencies, in response to the outbreak of the Delta strain and subsequent lockdowns. Where further accommodation needs are identified by HUD’s social services providers, and MSD has limited availability, HUD has provided additional capacity and support in some locations under the COVID-19 Homelessness Response. In total, 163 additional places and associated support have been delivered under that programme with the assistance of existing Housing First and other social services providers.</p> <p>As at 31 October 2021, the Crown was supporting 877 places for people who were experiencing homelessness in 54 motels across the country. This includes the additional places provided as part of the 2021 outbreak of the Delta strain.</p> <p><b>Overlapping/related policies/programmes:</b></p> <p>While the programme was initiated in 2020 as a context-specific, one-off intervention designed to address a clear presenting problem (the need to urgently accommodate a cohort of people who needed to be provided the means to self-isolate), it also</p>
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		<p>has a focus on ensuring those accommodated through the response do not need to return to homelessness, but have access to longer term housing and wrap-around services appropriate for their level of need.</p> <p>A substantial proportion of this cohort can benefit from (and be most effectively assisted by) transitioning into Housing First or Rapid Rehousing. This puts more pressure on these programmes, and additional resources for these programmes have been secured.</p> <p>Efforts to find longer term housing for this cohort overlaps with the Government's public and transitional housing building programme which is needed to deliver additional housing.</p>
2.	<b>Description of Policy / Programme</b>	<p>The original purpose of the policy was to get the chronically homeless (often rough sleepers) into accommodation so they could self-isolate during the height of the COVID pandemic in 2020. It achieved its aspirations insofar as it managed to rapidly house over 1,500 people who had been sleeping rough or were in poor housing situations.</p> <p>The objectives (other than maintenance of that situation) are to ensure that the people supported through lockdowns are not discharged back into homelessness and that they are supported into permanent housing with the wrap-around support they need, ensuring their holistic and cultural wellbeing are maintained.</p> <p>Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga on behalf of the Crown is also focused on providing any additional places and support needed under the 2021 Delta outbreak. Of the 163 additional places made available in 2021, most places are motel units, but some are alternative places such as marae (on a temporary basis).</p> <p>In 2020, the budget for the programme was \$107.6 million to support accommodation and wrap-around services out to the end of June 2021. In Budget 2021, funding for programmes which support the chronically homeless was extended, including the COVID Homelessness Response, Housing First, and Rapid Rehousing, to a total of \$199 million over four years. The increase in demand for Housing First and Rapid Rehousing from people accommodated in COVID response motels had resulted in cost pressures for these critical services.</p>
3.	<b>Outline of the process to develop this Policy / Programme</b>	<p>The operating concept was developed by HUD, MoH and Kāinga Ora in consultation with community groups including iwi and Māori organisations, such as Te Kahu o Tāonui (the Northern Iwi Chairs collective) and Te Matapihi He Tirohanga mō te Iwi Trust. The response leveraged off the underpinning principles of the Housing First programme insofar as the intervention prioritised meeting a housing need over prospective clients meeting any specific behavioural entry criteria (for instance, presenting as being drug and/or alcohol free).</p> <p>Te Āo Māori frameworks were incorporated by the wrap-around service providers where appropriate, noting that a significant proportion of the housed cohort self-identify as Māori. Many of the service providers are established Housing First providers with well-developed operating procedures incorporating kaupapa Māori approaches (such as Kāhui tū Kaha and Kahungunu</p>

		<p>Whānau Services). The Māori partners provided on-the-ground lived experience and knowledge of the housing needs and strengths of Māori (as recipients and providers), maximising the reach into communities.</p> <p>Partnerships with providers integrated kaupapa Māori approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agencies were able to quickly coordinate and work together with existing Māori service providers to vulnerable whānau to mobilise people and whānau into accommodation,</li> <li>• providers were able to play a critical role in providing a safe housing solution with the full support of Crown agencies, providers therefore had the drive and support to change the delivery of solutions to better support the most vulnerable, rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness,</li> <li>• providers could triage and wrap around services to this cohort of people to ensure their immediate wellbeing with a level of dignity,</li> <li>• providers who stepped in to support the COVID Homelessness Response continue to support clients and work with them to identify longer term accommodation options.</li> </ul> <p>HUD has worked with a range of providers since March 2020. As at November 2021, the current providers are Kāhui Tū Kaha, Kahungunu Whānau Services, Visions of a Helping Hand, Housing First Rotorua – Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakae, Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa, Te Runanga o Ngai Te Rangi Iwi Trust, Gisborne New Life Fellowship Trust, Te Tuinga Whanau Support Services Trust, The Auckland City Mission, LinkPeople Limited, The Lifewise Trust and VisionWest Community Trust.</p>
4.	<b>Aims or Objectives of the Policy / Programme</b>	<p>The principal objective of the programme was to get the chronically homeless into safe and secure accommodation so they could self-isolate during COVID lockdowns.</p> <p>The objective of the programme has evolved to take advantage of the opportunity provided to end homelessness for those accommodated through the initial response in 2020.</p> <p>The programme also presents an opportunity to provide housing and support to people experiencing homelessness during the 2021 outbreak, where need arises through providers' existing links and connections.</p> <p>Though not all clients accommodated in COVID temporary accommodation present at the high end of the needs spectrum, a significant proportion of those who were rough sleeping were accommodated in both the 2020 and 2021 lockdowns.</p>

5.	<p><b>Outline of steps taken to implement the Policy / Programme</b></p>	<p>Housing First providers, transitional housing and other local social services providers supported people into the motels, providing them with food, checking in on their wellbeing on a regular basis and connecting them with other services such as healthcare.</p> <p>Although Te Maihi o Te Whare Māori (MAIHI) was not officially launched until August 2020, it was used during the 2020 effort to review, respond and where necessary reset policy and programmes using a kaupapa Māori approach. HUD’s approach was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engage with existing Māori housing providers who HUD has ongoing relationships with</li> <li>• work across government with agencies who had a direct responsibility with health, security, accommodation needs and Māori development</li> <li>• review in real time policy and programmes that could accelerate accommodation solutions for the homeless</li> <li>• work at a regional level delivering housing and accommodation for the different needs of Māori organisations and iwi.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ongoing care</b></p> <p>Providers have continued to deliver support to meet the needs of those accommodated and to identify longer term accommodation where they can.</p> <p>Due to limited housing supply across most regions, there is significant reliance on the delivery of new public and transitional housing for this cohort. HUD and Kāinga Ora are working to deliver a robust pipeline of new build public and transitional homes, with more new places being added each month. For example, in July 2021, Wellington City Mission opened Te Pā Pori, the largest transitional housing facility in the city. Over five floors, this facility has provided 83 fully refurbished units for four separate communities consisting of men, women, couples and people who are transgender, many of whom had been living in COVID response motel accommodation.</p> <p>New build places will grow the country’s overall housing stock, however it will take time to deliver what is needed. In the meantime, short term housing for COVID response clients will continue to be provided to ensure this cohort does not return to homelessness, or into emergency housing where support services will not be available to the same extent.</p> <p><b>2021 Delta outbreak</b></p> <p>In response to the 2021 outbreak, HUD contacted Housing First and other social service providers to understand any accommodation or support requirements for those sleeping rough, including rangatahi. Providers identified additional need, and HUD worked with them to help meet this need. HUD has contracted places to support 163 additional households. This</p>
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		<p>includes motel/apartment places as well as alternative accommodation such as marae. Additional support has been provided in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whāngarei – 14 places</li> <li>• Auckland – 94 places</li> <li>• Napier/Hastings – 21 places</li> <li>• Gisborne – 10 places</li> <li>• Wellington – 13 places</li> <li>• Nelson – 4 places</li> <li>• Christchurch – 7 places</li> </ul> <p>No additional capacity has been identified as required to date. In some cases, places were needed for a short period only. HUD is continuing to work with Housing First and other providers as well as MSD to determine adequate housing support as the number of places reduces.</p> <p>Government agencies are focused on responding quickly to the changing needs and circumstances. Each regional location has had its own location-specific needs, for example women seeking refuge, vaccination and testing services, and tailored support services for rangatahi.</p>
6.	<p><b>Outline of monitoring and evaluation built in to Policy / Programme</b></p>	<p>HUD has worked to improve reporting and monitoring arrangements as required, including developing monthly reporting that provides data on people accommodated in COVID response motels. This includes demographic characteristics, the length of stay and housing outcomes. This will enable analysis of a set of data for a group for which there has previously been limited information available.</p> <p>Data is submitted by social services providers; reporting is often incomplete and the quality can vary from month to month. Work is underway to analyse what we have received and improve reporting in the future.</p>
7.	<p><b>Availability of quantitative or qualitative data to demonstrate success or failures of the Policy / Programme to achieve its stated aims</b></p>	<p>The initial response ensured approximately 1500 people sleeping rough or in poor housing situations were safely accommodated, through the 2020 COVID lockdown period and onward. This number included a significant proportion of</p>

	<p>those rough sleeping in New Zealand at that time. This group of people has previously been hard to reach and support but has now been able to receive support services in line with their need.</p> <p>Several providers have reported that people were seeing positive health and wellbeing outcomes from being housed, were developing a sense of community and were providing support to each other. Some of those who have been rough sleeping, in some cases for prolonged periods, have moved into, or are working towards moving into, permanent accommodation.</p> <p>At the peak of the 2020 COVID lockdown, approximately 1,200 motels unit/accommodation places were contracted to support those sleeping rough or in overcrowded situations. As at 31 October 2021 this number had reduced to 877 motel units/accommodation places.</p> <p>HUD continues to collect monthly provider reports to track individuals' progress towards permanent housing. Whilst clients continue to be supported and housed, pressure on the housing register, limited housing supply, and the high cost of private rentals means that providers continue to face significant challenges in identifying longer term housing for those who remain in motels.</p> <p>For April 2020 – August 2021 across New Zealand, 52-58% of reported individuals each month reported Māori ethnicity. It should be noted that the ethnicity of people who have participated in this programme is not a mandatory reporting requirement as declarations of ethnicity have always been voluntary across the range of Government housing offerings. Ethnicity, when collected, is usually only for the lead client of a household and the self-identified ethnicity of that person may not be the same for the balance of the household.</p> <p>Reporting from Auckland providers is of higher quality; this data can give an indication of the type of reporting that will be possible in the future as HUD continues to improve reporting processes.</p> <p>Just under half of the places contracted for the COVID Homelessness Response were in Auckland. As at the end of August 2021 in Auckland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of individuals reported Māori ethnicity and less than 10% of reported individuals were children.</li> <li>• 90% of households were single individuals.</li> <li>• The median number of weeks that households resided in this accommodation as at the end of August 2021 was 17.</li> </ul>
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