Housing Insecurity in the Elderly

Assessing the available housing insecurity support data on over 55s in Aotearoa New Zealand

Abstract

Housing insecurity in the over 55 population is a significant concern for health and wellbeing, as well as an indicator of the financial resiliency of this demographic. By using two measures of housing insecurity (EH-SNGs and PHR) we are able to gain insight into the prevalence of housing insecurity in this population. Insecurity is specifically assessed in relation to location, duration, and demographic information.
This poster represents initial insights from the data.

Methodology

Data relating to measures of housing insecurity are publically available, but not with a specific lens on over 55s. Two requests were sent to MSD and MHUD to obtain more specific information regarding these two metrics of housing instability using the Official Information Act, which resulted in the data used for this assessment.
The information we received for over 55s was compared to the data available for the whole cohort, to assess the presence and proportionality of over 55s. For regional information, StatsNZ estimates about regional population was used as a comparison.
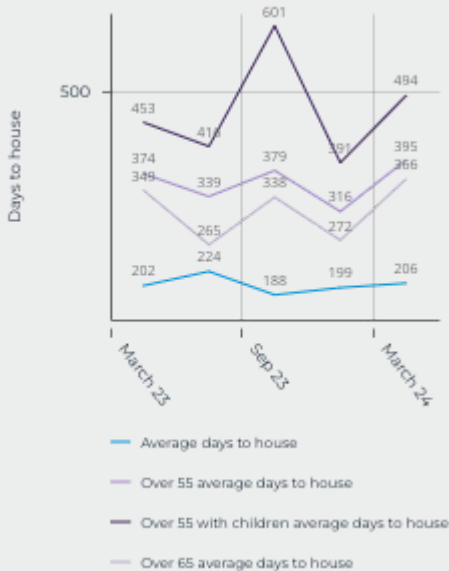
Assessed indicators of Housing Insecurity

Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNGs)

Grants provided by Ministry of Social Development for those in danger of immediate homelessness
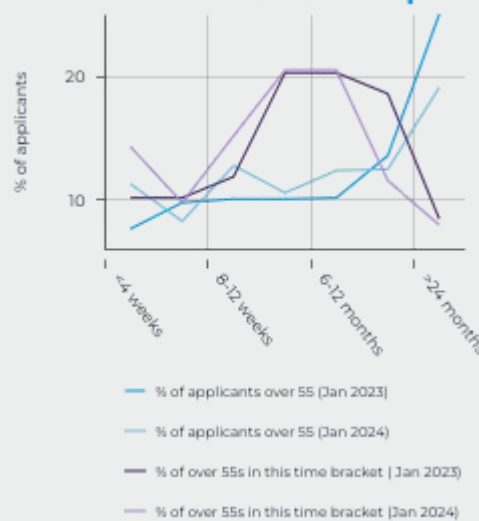Means tested and time limited, needing reapplication every seven days

The Public Housing Register (PHR)

The waiting list for social housing, overseen by Ministry of Housing and Urban Design. Applicants are assessed based to prioritise allocation of housing to those most in need
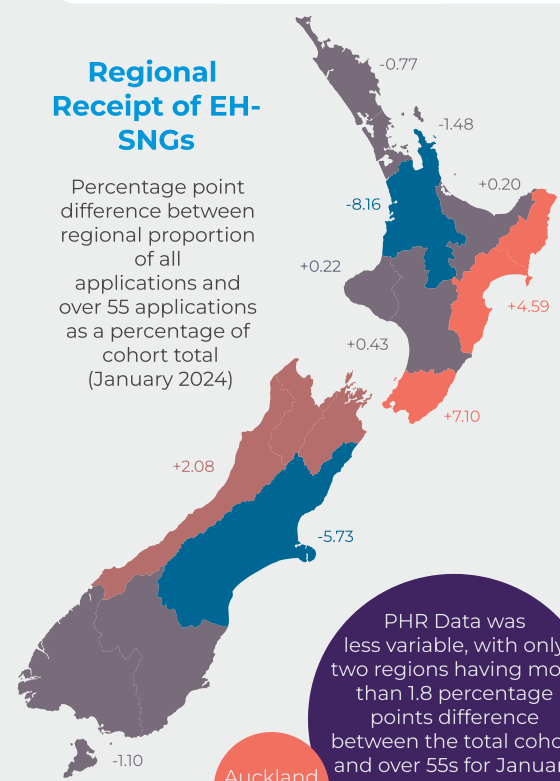
Time to House from PHR

- Average days to house
- Over 55 average days to house
- Over 55 with children average days to house
- Over 65 average days to house

Duration of EH-SNG receipt

- % of applicants over 55 (Jan 2023)
- % of applicants over 55 (Jan 2024)
- % of over 55s in this time bracket (Jan 2023)
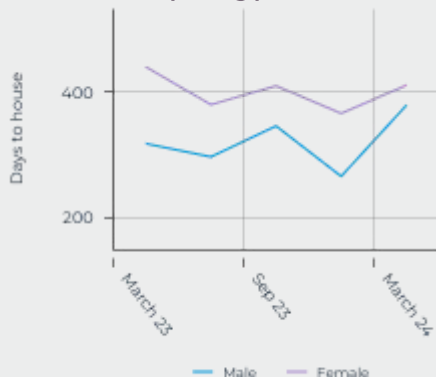- % of over 55s in this time bracket (Jan 2024)

Regional Receipt of EH-SNGs

Percentage point difference between regional proportion of all applications and over 55 applications as a percentage of cohort total (January 2024)
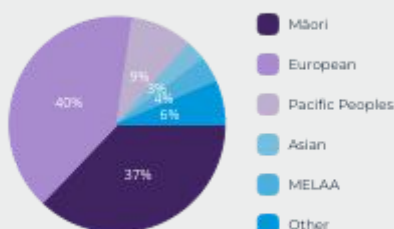

PHR Data was less variable, with only two regions having more than 1.8 percentage points difference between the total cohort and over 55s for January 2024

Auckland +3.5

Waikato -2.0

Time to House from PHR

For over-55 applicants housed during this reporting period

- Male
- Female

Ethnicities of EH-SNG recipients aged over 55

February 2024

- Māori
- European
- Pacific Peoples
- Asian
- MELAA
- Other

3% of all EH-SNGs featuring children have an over 55 as the lead applicant

The maximum time to house an over-55 between Jan 23 and March 24 was **2878 days**

PHR Priority (A & B) distribution is consistent between over 55s and the wider cohort

Limitations on Data

These data are derived from operational information used by MSD and MHUD to provide individuals and households with support. As a result there has been randomised rounding applied to the set, with individual values being adjusted by up to 2 to provide some privacy for low-number regions.
Large operational regions also mean data may be influenced by pockets of significant need or disproportionate wealth, notably the 'West Coast-Tasman' region which also includes Marlborough.

Additionally, the demographic information is only recorded per primary applicant. This means that the age, gender, and ethnicity of any other adults contained in the application are masked. Culturally, most dual applications are done under a man's name, and as a result there are likely a great number of women masked in these data.

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