



1 5 MAR 2019



Dear 

On 31 January 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about bond claims lodged by moteliors during the period 1 July 2017 to 31 September 2018 in Palmerston North and nationally.

The Ministry offers a security deposit (bond) to emergency housing providers. A security deposit helps safeguard the provider against loss or damage caused by the client or anyone staying with the client. The security deposit represents an amount able to be claimed by the emergency housing provider to reimburse loss or damage.

For the sake of clarity your questions are addressed in turn below:

- 1. The number of bond claims lodged by moteliors (with the Ministry).*
- 2. The value of those claims.*

When emergency accommodation providers claim costs against a security deposit, the payment is made using the reason code 'other'. Several types of payments can be made using this code.

In order to provide you with the information you have requested Ministry staff would have to manually review the notes of thousands of individual case files. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

- 3. Any explanatory commentary on how those claims are paid and how or whether the amounts are recovered from clients.*

A security deposit will generally be approved at the start of a client's stay with an Emergency Housing provider. However, payment is only be made to the provider for the amount required to reimburse any costs incurred due to loss or damage (up to the security deposit amount originally granted).

When this happens, a debt for the amount is created and Work and Income makes arrangements with the client for that debt to be paid back to the Ministry.

The security deposit can only be used to cover costs such as:

- any breakages or damages caused by the client or anyone staying with them
- losses relating to failure of the client to meet their obligations to the provider under their agreement for stay
- any loss of accommodation costs that the client fails to pay.

Before a security deposit payment can be made to the provider on the client's behalf, the provider must first discuss these costs with the client. If the client fails to check out or notify the provider that they are leaving the property, the provider is not required to discuss the costs with the client and the Ministry can pay the costs to the provider on the client's behalf.

Information about Emergency Housing is available for Emergency Housing providers here: [www.housing.ms.govt.nz/documents/information-for-housing-providers/emergency-housing-provider-forms/suppliers-factsheet.pdf](http://www.housing.ms.govt.nz/documents/information-for-housing-providers/emergency-housing-provider-forms/suppliers-factsheet.pdf).

Information about security deposits for Emergency Housing providers is available here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/security-deposit-required-by-the-emergency-housing-provider.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/security-deposit-required-by-the-emergency-housing-provider.html).

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding bond claims lodged by moteliors, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Cassandra Wise  
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