




26 FEB 2020



Tēnā koe 

On 11 July 2019, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (The Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information in relation to the 28 February 2019 to 15 March 2019 Emergency Housing Stocktake (the Stocktake). Your request was subsequently clarified and refined to be for the following information:

- *Details about the complaints in the Stocktake for the Central, Taranaki and Wellington region and any correspondence with the moteliers about these complaints.*

I would like to extend my apologies for the delay in responding to your request for information.

As you are aware, all regions completed a quality and service stocktake of the motels utilised by clients in receipt of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNGs). This occurred between 28 February 2019 and 15 March 2019. The Stocktake predominantly focused on the motels used for emergency housing where the Ministry had received complaints in relation to quality and/or service.

Clients can provide feedback about emergency housing accommodation in various ways including face to face, phone, or email discussions with Ministry staff at Service Centres. In addition to this, when approving subsequent EH SNGs, Case Managers are discussing with clients the standard and quality of the EH SNG accommodation. Issues or complaints are escalated to the Housing Manager or Housing Advisor who follows up directly with the motelier. Compliance issues are raised with the relevant regulatory authority.

The results of the Stocktake provided to you in July 2019 should have been caveated to note that while the Stocktake was carried out over a short period, the experiences of regional staff in relation to complaints outside of this period were included in the results.

The complaints recorded in the Stocktake were those received by frontline staff as part of their usual day to day work with clients. The Ministry's Regional Housing Managers and Advisors addressed the complaints noted in the Stocktake directly with the moteliers. In addition to this, Regional Commissioners were responsible for approaching local councils to determine if there were any compliance issues with motels utilised for Emergency Housing and addressing them through their channels.

Further details regarding the complaints noted in the Stocktake are held on individual files of the clients involved. The Stocktake did not include a reference to the source of the complaint, and the themes noted therein may include issues that came to our staff's attention outside the defined period of the stocktake, but warranted further investigation. As such, to provide further details regarding these complaints, the Ministry would need to review the individual case files of all clients who received EH SNG's in the Central, Taranaki and Wellington region over the period of the Stocktake, as well as the past few years.

Consequently, 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.

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

You may be aware of the recent Government announcement about measures to help those facing homelessness. The announcement is available on the Beehive website: [www.beehive.govt.nz/release/more-measures-help-those-facing-homelessness](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/more-measures-help-those-facing-homelessness). The measures that the Ministry will be delivering are the provision of wrap-around support and Intensive Case Managers and Navigators.

Intensive Case Managers are Ministry staff members who are a single, consistent point of contact for each family or individual, taking a holistic approach to people's needs to reduce housing instability. Navigators assist where people need more support than an Intensive Case Manager can offer. Navigators co-ordinate services and provide on-going support for people with housing needs. Navigators work with providers, health professionals, and government agencies and community organisations. Navigators are from local community organisations contracted by the Ministry.

Wrap-around support will be provided to families with children and people with mental health needs in emergency housing, as well as people with a history of cycling in and out of emergency housing. Support services will be delivered by local community organisations contracted by the Ministry and will help people living in emergency housing to address the barriers they face in accessing and sustaining suitable, long-term housing.

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 and any attached documents 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 regarding complaints noted in the Stocktake report 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, 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KH', with a large loop at the end.

Karen Hocking  
**General Manager Housing**