



11 MAR 2020

Dear 

On 12 February 2020, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

All oral or written emails, correspondence, text messages, briefings, reports or memos you or your office have received from or sent to motels that have contacted you regarding issues with emergency housing claimants. This also includes any records of motels that have contacted the Ministry or other Government representatives regarding emergency housing tenants.

The Ministry and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) work to ensure people have their immediate housing needs met. Temporary accommodation is primarily provided to clients in the form of Transitional Housing and Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNGs) while more long term housing options are explored.

When clients are unable to find temporary accommodation themselves or there are no Ministry contracted temporary housing places available, the Ministry will pay for a client's accommodation using the EH SNG. This assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights, but can be extended depending on an individual's circumstances.

After these seven nights the Ministry arranges another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html#null.

The Ministry offers a security deposit (bond) to emergency housing suppliers. 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. The client is required to pay for any damage which results from their stay.

Relationships with moteliers are managed locally and interactions can be face to face, over the phone or via email. These interactions can be direct to local service centres or with the Region's centralised housing team, and can involve individual case managers, housing team members, the Regional Housing Advisor and others in the Region.

I am therefore unable to provide you with the information requested. In order to provide this information, Ministry staff would need to review thousands of emails and/or client files of those staying in emergency housing. 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.

The Ministry has also considered alternative ways of providing you with the information requested, for example, by providing internal reports or memos that might contain the information. However, such reports or memos are not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act.

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. 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.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding complaints by emergency housing suppliers, 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 or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Karen Hocking
General Manager Housing