



20 December 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 1 November 2024, requesting a breakdown of payments made to Helen Eng and Synergy Investments Limited from 2016 to 29 September 2022.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

I have also included some general information about accommodation suppliers for your further information.

Please see the **Appendix** which provides the amount granted for hardship payments made to two selected suppliers from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2022.

A person may request an Advance Payment of Benefit or Recoverable Assistance payment for some costs, including for Housing Support Products, which they need to pay back. They will need to discuss their eligibility for these payments with Work and Income.

Hardship payments made to suppliers are made on behalf of the client to meet an immediate and essential need. Any recoverable hardship assistance is required to be paid back to the Ministry within 24 months unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Suppliers register with the Ministry as a means of enabling payment. Being registered with the Ministry does not represent endorsement of a supplier's product or service. We expect accommodation suppliers to meet the standards set by all the relevant regulatory authorities and for those authorities to act where necessary. There is a well-established framework of regulation and requirements around rental accommodation, administered by local authorities and the Ministry for Business, Employment and Innovation.¹

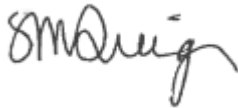
I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

¹ See the Building Standards, MBIE for Healthy Homes, and the Residential Tenancies Act (1986).

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 my decision on your request, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services



Appendix

The amount granted for hardship payments made to specific suppliers from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2022, by year and supplier.

Supplier / Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
SYNERGY INVESTMENTS LIMITED	\$1,110	\$11,835	\$38,777	\$27,101	\$26,629	\$46,010	\$44,505	\$195,967
HELEN ENG	\$0	\$1,980	\$1,875	\$0	\$3,600	\$47,120	\$112,243	\$166,818
Total	\$1,110	\$13,815	\$40,652	\$27,101	\$30,229	\$93,130	\$156,748	\$362,785

Notes:

- This list includes all payments for Special Needs Grants, Recoverable Assistance Payments and Advance of Benefit.
- Amount granted is not necessarily the amount spent.
- This does not include any payments made directly to the clients, or re-direction of any benefit payment data.
- This does not include any COVID-19 Wage Subsidy payment data.