



31 October 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 2 October 2025 requesting information about tenancy bond payments paid by the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) on behalf of beneficiaries.

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

Payment Process:

1. *A description of the process by which WINZ tenancy bond payments are paid then issued back to the beneficiaries, including the mechanisms by which these payments are returned to MSD if they are.*

Policy and Guidelines:

2. *Copies of all current procedures governing the allocation, repayment, and retention of tenancy bonds provided by WINZ, including any clauses regarding early termination of tenancies.*

One form of support the Ministry provides to help eligible clients obtain and retain accommodation are Housing Support Products (HSPs).

One of these products is the Bond Grant, for eligible clients who need assistance to pay for or top-up a tenancy bond. It is a recoverable payment. This assistance is limited to clients who are moving into, or living in, accommodation that the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 applies to. You can find information about the Bond Grant, including eligibility criteria, in the Ministry's Manuals and Procedures (MAP) guidelines at the following links:

- o www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/bond-grant/introduction.html
- o www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/bond-grant/qualifications.html.

A Bond Grant is generally paid directly to the prospective landlord or property manager and Ministry operational policy guidance also outlines certain situations when a person other than the landlord may be paid. Please refer to the following links for further details:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/bond-grant/paying-someone-other-than-the-landlord.html.
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/bond-grant/payment.html.

The landlord is legally required to lodge the bond with Tenancy Services. The Ministry itself is unable to pay the bond to Tenancy Services directly.

Once the Bond Grant has been paid to the landlord, a debt to repay the funds is created and the Ministry begins recovering this debt from the client until it has been fully repaid.

When the tenancy ends, Tenancy Services is responsible for managing the bond. The Ministry is not involved in this process. There are no requirements or mechanisms in place for the Bond Grant money to be transferred from Tenancy Services back to the Ministry. As outlined above, a debt for the funds has already been created for the client and they will continue to pay it off should there still be an amount owing at the point in time when the tenancy ends.

Statistics:

3. *The total number of tenancy bond payments made on behalf of beneficiaries in the last financial year.*

A total of 49,548 hardship grants were granted for HSP Bond Grant between 1 July 2024 to the 30 June 2025.

Please note, this is a count of grants not clients. A client can have more than one grant during the time period.

To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. This total has had random rounding to base three applied. The published count will never differ by more than two counts.

Rationale and Oversight:

4. *Internal reports, reviews, or assessments justifying the policy of paying bonds directly to beneficiaries*

Your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as these documents do not exist.

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

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.



Anna Graham
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Ministerial and Executive Services