



Dear [REDACTED]

On 19 June 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information related to Emergency Housing.

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) helps those with nowhere to stay. The Ministry can help with rent arrears, with referrals to transitional housing providers, and with payments towards temporary accommodation.

To assist we have addressed each of your questions in turn below.

- 1. The total amount paid for emergency accommodation for offenders sentenced to home detention since 1 October 2018. This should include but not be limited to offenders evicted from court-approved addresses and offenders who have had to leave court-approved addresses for other reasons. This should be broken down by month.*
- 2. Information should also be provided on each offender including what total sum was paid, how many nights accommodation was funded and how many are continuing to receive funding for emergency accommodation.*
- 3. Information should also be provided about what other funding was provided on top of accommodation costs ie food, transport, relocation costs.*

Data regarding whether a person in receipt of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH SNG) from the Ministry and who is also placed on Home Detention is recorded on an individual's personal file and is not information the Ministry is able to report on. As such, I am unable to provide you with information specific to these people as Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such I refuse your request 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.

4. Any information on the guidelines around what is paid for in terms of emergency accommodation, who is eligible.

The EH SNG was introduced on 1 July 2016 in order to fund temporary accommodation at places such as hostels and motels to meet people's immediate housing needs. This grant is paid to help meet the cost of short-term accommodation where no Transitional Housing is available. The Ministry acknowledges that motels are not a long-term solution, particularly for vulnerable people with complex needs, but they provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation provider. This grant is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. Assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights, but can be extended dependent on individual circumstances. In most cases, this does not need to be paid back, though this will depend on a household's circumstances.

A client or partner may be able to receive an EH SNG if they meet all of the eligibility criteria. In order to receive an EG SNG the client must:

- meet an income and cash asset test (unless in exceptional circumstances)
- meet residency and ordinarily resident requirements
- not be able to meet the need through their own resources or other sources
- not have received an EH SNG within 52 weeks (unless there are exceptional circumstances)
- require payment for actual and reasonable costs of the emergency housing where not making the grant would worsen the client's position, increase or create any risk to the life or welfare of the client or the client's immediate family or cause serious hardship to the client, the client's partner or dependent children and
- have an immediate emergency housing need.

More information about EH SNGs is available here: www.housing.ms.govt.nz/housing-options/emergency-housing.html.

5. Any information on the change that was implemented in October 2018 leading to the MSD funding emergency accommodation for offenders on home detention.

Since 15 October 2018 processes have been developed to support people who have been released from prison and/or are serving any type of sentence or order in the community who present to the Department of Corrections and/or the Ministry of Social Development with an emergency housing need.

The agency responsible for housing the offender depends on the nature of the Order being served. i.e.

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Type of Order being served	Extended Supervision Orders (ESO) Highest Risk Parole offenders* PPO/PSO	Home Detention (HD) Community Detention (CD) Parole (not subject to Electronic Monitoring) Released on Conditions (RoC) Returning Offender Order (ROO)	Post Detention Conditions Intensive Supervision / Supervision Community Work
Agency responsible for Emergency Housing	The Department of Corrections responsible for emergency housing <i>*Highest Risk Parole offenders defined as those who are subject to electronic monitoring (Residential Restrictions or whereabouts conditions)</i>	The Ministry of Social Development responsible for emergency housing with the Department of Corrections input. Information will be provided using the Department of Corrections referral process. The Department of Corrections will establish and maintain relationships with property owner as appropriate. (NB. An offender subject to HD and CD will not be able relocate without the Probation Officer's permission)	The Ministry of Social Development responsible for emergency housing with the Department of Corrections providing information as necessary.

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 with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cassandra Wise', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cassandra Wise
Manager, Issue Resolution, Service Delivery