



02 SEP 2019



Dear 

On 3 July 2019, you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *What relationship does the Silverfern Property Services have with MSD?*
2. *Please provide the number of complaints, per year, since the MSD had dealings with the above company, to date. This should also include a total number and breakdown of what these complaints referred to and what regions they related to.*
3. *Please provide details on where this company has properties or operates in housing people.*
4. *All correspondence related to Silverfern Property Services since January 2019. This is not limited to emails, documents, phone call (logs).*
5. *The amount given to the company through MSD services, per year, since the MSD had dealings with the above company, to date.*
6. *The number of evictions issued by this company since January 2019, to date.*
7. *Please supply details of where these evictions were.*
8. *The company has suggested the MSDs changes to housing policies has affected its services. If you are aware of what these changes may refer to can you please list them.*
9. *To your knowledge does the Silverfern Property Services have any links to the Silver Fern Farm Ltd?*

On Thursday 25 July 2019 your request was refined specifically to:

- *Correspondence with Silverfern Property Services regarding the incident that occurred on 1 July 2019 when Silverfern Property Services was incorrectly removed as a housing supplier for the Ministry.*
- *also include any information that was collected during the work done on my original OIA request.*

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place or 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 dependant on individual circumstances.

In response to the first question in your original request, Silverfern Property Services Ltd is one of many suppliers in Auckland for accommodation.

On 1 July 2019, the Ministry made an error when Silverfern Property Services Ltd was incorrectly removed as a housing supplier. The Ministry became aware of this matter when it received an email from Silverfern Property Services Ltd on the same day querying the restriction on their account.

The Ministry acted immediately to rectify the error and the issue was resolved within 24 hours. The Ministry can confirm that Silverfern Property Services Ltd remains as one of our accommodation suppliers in the Auckland region.

The Ministry can confirm that no individual stays in emergency housing was affected.

Please find enclosed two emails dated 1 July 2019 between Silverfern Property Services Ltd and the Ministry concerning the mistaken removal of Silverfern Property Services Ltd as an Emergency Housing supplier. Following these, interactions were over the phone to manage and resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(k) of the Official Information Act in order to reduce the possibility of staff being exposed to phishing and other scams. This is because information released under the Act may end up in the public domain, for example, on websites including the Ministry's own website.

You also requested any information that was collected during the work done on your original request. On the date on which your request was clarified, the Ministry had recognised that we would likely be unable to respond to questions two, three, four, six and seven as the information is held in individual client files, and as such advised you that it was likely these parts of your request would be refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

In response to the fifth question in your original request, the average grant amount approved for payment of EH SNGs at Silverfern Property Services Ltd in the Auckland region was \$1986 during the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019. A EH SNG is typically for 7 nights. For the same period, the total amount approved for payment to Silverfern Property Services Ltd was \$4,595,662.

In response to your eighth and ninth questions, I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is 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.

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 and attachments 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



Bridget Saunders
Acting Manager Issues Resolution

From: s 9(2)(a)
To: OIA
Subject: FW: Restriction on account
Date: Monday, 22 July 2019 12:29:58 PM

fyi

From: s 9(2)(a) OIA
Sent: Friday, 12 July 2019 7:24 PM
To: s 9(2)(k) OIA @msd.govt.nz>
Subject: Fwd: Restriction on account

Begin forwarded message:

From: s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a) OIA
Date: 1 July 2019 at 7:44:54 PM NZST
To: s 9(2)(k) OIA @msd.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Restriction on account

Thanks s 9(2)(a) OIA

Thanks for your reply . I have called many case managers today but they telling me you are the only one who can answer as why my account has been restricted. I wont be able to pay the owners out of my pocket because of the short notice. As you can understand that landlords have mortgage and financial commitments which they have to meet on a weekly basis.

I haven't received any payments today and the people are still staying in the houses. Unfortunately the restriction on my account doesn't help. I have given some tenants long term tenancy how will those redirections be paid? One of the tenants said " Silverfern are not the suppliers anymore and we will be put in the motels" while they were standing at Onehunga branch with their case manager. This is definitely coming from regional and i would appreciate if someone gives us a call in good faith to explain as why the account has been restricted and how we can help .

I have been calling many owners and i was just able to get a boarding house to accommodate our small families at a weekly rent which would give the children a little stability and their schooling needs would be met but this restriction on my account doesn't help . i would have been able to help 6 families with at least 12 children.

We are in the process of notifying all our tenants that potentially their extensions this week with Silverfern will not be done and they will need to vacate the premises on the same day.

You kind response and some help will be highly appreciated .

Regards

s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a) OIA

On Mon, 1 Jul 2019 at 17:22, s 9(2)(k) OIA <[redacted]@msd.govt.nz>
wrote:

Hi s 9(2)(a)

I have also heard of this today

I am not sure why this is - I have not been part of that action/direction

When I find out what the situation is I will let you know

I agree, that you should be advised of the change and if there are any concerns,
these also be advised

Regards

s 9(2)(a) OIA

> On 1/07/2019, at 4:07 PM, s 9(2)(a) s 9(2)(a) OIA wrote:

>

> Hello s 9(2)(a) OIA

>

> I have been receiving calls since this morning regarding silverfern account on
hold. May i know why this has happened? I have been servicing MSD for over a
period of time when there was no place to accommodate people in their
homeless situation , i was always available to help. Its only fair if i know where
did me and my company go wrong .

>

> It will be helpful if you just give us a heads up of whats going on so we can
prepare ourselves .

> Please call me back on s 9(2)(a) OIA

>

> --

> Regards,

> s 9(2)(a)

> Silverfern Property Services Limited

> s 9(2)(a) OIA

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Regards,

s 9(2)(a)

Silverfern Property Services Limited

s 9(2)(a) OIA

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OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT