



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

29 JUL 2021

Tēnā koe

On 2 July 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development's (the Ministry) media team requesting the following information:

- *How many clients have not had their emergency housing bond refunded over the past two years?*
- *How many bond refunds have been disputed by clients?*

It was determined that your request was more appropriately responded to under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) and your request was forwarded to the appropriate team within the Ministry that same day.

Emergency housing providers (including transitional housing providers funded by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)) may require a security deposit to provide security against loss or damage to their property (whether intentional or unintentional), before they will allow clients to move into their accommodation.

The vast majority of our clients are respectful of the accommodation provided, other guests and the local community. If a client causes damage, they are liable for the cost. This is generally covered by the security deposit organised at the start of the client's stay, which is usually the equivalent of seven nights' accommodation.

The emergency accommodation provider must contact the Ministry to receive this payment (if required), which will only cover the cost of the damage incurred. There is no 'bond' paid from the outset. This payment is recoverable by the Ministry from the client at a rate that won't cause hardship.

Furthermore, before a security deposit payment can be made to the supplier/provider on the client's behalf, the supplier/provider must first discuss these costs with the client. If the client does not agree, we will not pay the security deposit on the client's behalf. If the client fails to check out or notify the supplier/provider that they are leaving the property, the supplier/provider is not required to discuss the costs with the client and we can pay the costs to the supplier/provider on the client's behalf.

The amount of the security deposit will be recovered from the client from the time that the funds are paid to the supplier/provider. If there is no damage or loss, no payment will be made to the supplier/provider

More information regarding this payment can be found at the following link:
www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/security-deposit-required-by-the-emergency-housing-provider.html.

Where there are instances of damages to properties, they are classified and paid out as 'other emergency grants'. The Ministry cannot disaggregate payments regarding property damage or loss from other types of assistance granted under the 'other emergency grants' category. 'Other emergency grants' is a discretionary payment depending on individual circumstances at that time.

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The details of any payments made are captured on individual client files. To report on these payments would currently require substantial manual collation. For this reason we are not able to provide the number of security deposits paid out to suppliers. Development of more detailed reporting is underway, though this may take some time.

In direct response to your questions, we are not able to provide the number of clients who have not had their emergency housing bond refunded, or who have disputed this, over the past two years, as no bonds are paid up front.

We are not able to report on how many claims for a security deposit by a supplier have been disputed by clients, as this information would also be held in the individual notes on client files, which Ministry staff would have to manually collate and review.

As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the 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. The Ministry has concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

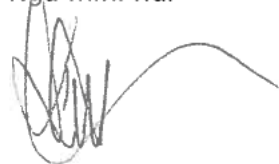
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter 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 to your request for information regarding New Zealanders stranded overseas due to COVID-19, 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



 Karen Hocking
General Manager, Housing