



19 July 2022

Tēnā koe

On 20 June 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I am requesting:

- The number of emergency accommodation providers who have received funds through emergency grants during the Covid-19 pandemic (from March 23, 2020 to present).*
- The total sum given to accommodation providers for EH SNGs during this period.*
- Names and locations of those providers - and how many clients they housed.*

If this is not possible - the maximum amount that has been spent on one provider, and the name and location of that provider.

- The 20 providers that have received the greatest amount of EHSNG grant funding for each region, including the name of the provider and total amount paid.*

For clarity, I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

- The number of emergency accommodation providers who have received funds through emergency grants during the Covid-19 pandemic (from March 23, 2020 to present).*
- The total sum given to accommodation providers for EH SNGs during this period.*

There has been a growing demand nationally for emergency housing, as the shortage of affordable housing and rising rents continues to impact low-income whānau, particularly those who are beneficiaries. The year 2020 saw a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation where they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of emergency

housing into long-term accommodation, which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed.

I refer to **Table One** in **Appendix One**, attached, showing the number of Emergency Housing SNGs, clients and amount granted during the period March 1 2020 and 31 May 2022.

Regarding the data provided, some suppliers may be listed due to a coding error when a client receives multiple assistance payments at one point in time, for example for petrol or groceries. For example, Gary's Plumbing & Gas.

Some of the emergency housing suppliers may have received an incorrect payment which has been refunded. For example, in some of the tables, the Ministry of Social Development is listed as receiving payment as a supplier. This is due to an incorrect payment being made to a supplier, and that payment being returned to the Ministry in order to correct this error.

You will note that the information regarding some individuals are withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

- Names and locations of those providers - and how many clients they housed.

I am unable to provide you with this information as it is held in notes on individual case files. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review a substantial number of files. As such, I refuse your request 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. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

*If this is not possible - the maximum amount that has been spent on one provider, and the name and location of that provider.
- The 20 providers that have received the greatest amount of EHSNG grant funding for each region, including the name of the provider and total amount paid.*

I refer to **Table Two** in **Appendix One**, attached, showing the top 20 EH suppliers for clients in each region based on the amount granted during the period 1 March 2020 and 31 May 2022.

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

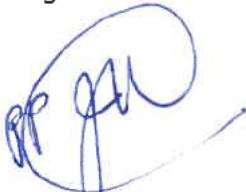
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

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. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry'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, 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
**Group General Manager
Housing**