



20 September 2022

Tēnā koe

On 26 July 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*Details of costs for damage paid out to suppliers of emergency housing. This should include the total amount paid, the amount paid to individual suppliers, and the number of clients serviced by the supplier. If it is not possible to provide the amounts paid to suppliers then please break down the amount paid according to region. This should cover the period 01 April 2021 to present.*

*(I note that in April last year a similar request for information was declined because MSD did not classify information in that way. Minister Carmel Sepuloni said this was "not ideal" and said she wants a system that can better monitor costs and the damage being caused.)*

*Separately, I also understand that suppliers are paid full refurbishment costs to bring units back to 'as new' standard. I would like to request details of costs of refurbishment (that doesn't relate to property damage) - and a break down of the amount paid to suppliers. I would also request a copy of the criteria of the rules for these payments - and an explanation of how often a supplier can make a claim for these costs.*

On 23 August 2022, in accordance with section 15(1) and 15A of the Act, your request was extended to 20 September 2022. The reason for the extension was that consultations necessary to make a decision on the request were such that a proper response could not reasonably be made within the original time limit.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and more people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing driving up house prices and rents. People on

low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) 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. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html)

Where the Ministry is paying EH SNGs for accommodation, they can also facilitate the cost of a security deposit. However, the majority of clients do not need this payment as they do not cause any damage. The Ministry is aware that damage is sometimes caused in Emergency Housing, with the vast majority from normal things such as accidental breakages. When the Ministry is provided with evidence of any damages, the Ministry will, with agreement from the client, make payment (from the security deposit) on behalf of the client. Agreement from the client is not required if the client leaves the Emergency Housing without checking out. Clients are required to pay this back to the Ministry, at a rate that doesn't cause them hardship.

The Ministry provides information on its website to property owners, landlords and providers of emergency and public housing, here:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/index.html)

The Ministry provides a security deposit to housing providers that is designed to protect them when there are losses or damages caused by the Ministry's clients (or anyone else staying with them). Security deposits need to be agreed to by the clients and the supplier/provider of the accommodation, and approved by the Ministry, before a client can stay with a provider. More information on how security deposits work is available here:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/security-deposit.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/security-deposit.html)

In response to your first question, please find attached **Table One** which shows the number of grants for Security Deposit Special Needs Grants (SNGs) and the total amount granted for the quarters ending December 2021, March 2022, and June 2022, by supplier name. Please note that the amount granted does not necessarily equate to the amount spent. SNGs for Security Deposits were not captured prior to December 2021, therefore the number of grants in that quarter is less than subsequent quarters.

You will note that the registered supplier name is the name of the parent company of the accommodation supplier, and not necessarily the name of the

accommodation itself. One registered supplier may provide accommodation across multiple premises in different locations or trading names, receiving payment through the single supplier record.

To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. These data tables have had random rounding where values have been randomly rounded to the nearest multiple of 3. This is applied to all cell counts in the table. The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals. The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

In order to protect client privacy, some values are suppressed and are represented by 'S'. The Ministry is unable to provide you with the exact number as releasing this information is likely to risk identifying the individuals concerned. As such, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in the information.

In regard to your second question, the Ministry does not pay full refurbishment costs to bring units back to 'as new' standard. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding emergency housing, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Hocking'.

Karen Hocking  
**Group General Manager**  
**Housing**