



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

10 May 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 15 April 2024, requesting information about Gamma Hotel. I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

The Ministry does not contract motels to provide emergency housing in New Zealand. Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants are intended as a one-off grant. They are not able to be paid in advance of the need, or beyond what an individual is entitled to at the time of application. Given the high level of need many clients experience, subsequent grants are applied for in succession, and these are paid for up to 21 days at a time.

Our role at MSD is to ensure people with no other housing options are supported into emergency accommodation, usually motels. We expect our clients to receive same quality of service as any other paying guest staying at the motel. Likewise, we expect our clients to respect the rules that any of those moteliers have in place to ensure equal consideration to other guests.

- 1. Gamma Hotel appears to be a trading name. What is the underlying business name and/or NZBN of the supplier?*

The supplier company name is Steelpoint Hotel Limited. You can look up their New Zealand Business Number here: <https://www.nzbn.govt.nz/>

- 2. When did Gamma Hotel register as an emergency housing supplier with the Ministry?*

The first month that Gamma Hotel received an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EHSNG) was March 2022.

3. *For the past three financial years, how much has been paid to Gamma Hotel by the Ministry? I understand this will not be direct nit indirect by way of the EH SNG model.*

Please find the below **Appendix** containing **Table One**: The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EHSNGs) and the amount granted to Gamma Hotel during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024, by financial year.

You will note some data has been replaced with an 'S'. This information is refused 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.

4. *Have any restrictions or penalties been placed on Gamma Hotel by the Ministry at any time?*
5. *Have any complaints been submitted to the Ministry at any point in regards to Gamma Hotel? Either directly to the Ministry or via Auckland Council?*
6. *In general, is there anything you might consider notable about the Ministry's relationship with Gamma Hotel compared to any other providers?*

No restrictions or penalties have been placed on Gamma Hotel. We are also not aware of any complaints being escalated to the region or via Auckland Council. There may, however, be a record of complaints on individual case files. To locate these would require Ministry staff to manually review the files of any client who has stayed at Gamma Hotel, which would be a substantial number of files. As such, this 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. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudice.

There is nothing of note to mention about the Ministry's relationship with Gamma Hotel. As an emergency housing opted in supplier, they are utilised as all emergency housing suppliers are, for emergency housing purposes when a client has a housing need.

7. *What is, roughly, the average amount of time that emergency residents stay with Gamma Hotel before being able to transition to a more permanent residence?*

8. *What is the longest amount of time that any single resident has been with Gamma Hotel before being able to transition to a more permanent residence? This may be historical or ongoing. If ongoing, the running length up to the point that this OIA is actioned is fine.*

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.

9. *Is the Ministry aware of any relationship between Gamma Hotel and the Anglesea Motel and Conference Centre? (There probably isn't, I'm just throwing it in as they coincidentally use the same website template is all)*

The Ministry is not aware of any relationship between the above-named entities.

10. *For motels/hotels acting as emergency housing providers, are non-emergency guests entitled to any up front awareness of emergency housing arrangements?*
- a. *I would assume emergency guests have an overriding right to privacy in this case but would you be able to speak to this point and/or cite any relevant legislation either way?*

In August 2023 the Ministry introduced voluntary supplier standards. The intent of the standards is to ensure a consistent and reasonable level of service across emergency housing. They set out the Ministry overarching expectations of emergency housing suppliers.

The Ministry expects clients to be treated like other paying guests and receive the level of service paid for.

11. *What, if any, official avenues exist for third parties providing feedback about emergency housing providers to the Ministry?*
- a. *From a previous OIA response, it sounds like the Regional Housing team are able to liaise with moteliors on quality and service. If the above is accurate, what would be the intended route to surface information to that team?*

Anyone can make a complaint to the Ministry. You can find all the possible avenues to make a complaint on our website, here:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/contact-us/complaints/index.html#Howtomakeacomplaint1

The Ministry will investigate complaints. The supplier is contacted to discuss the complaint before any further action is taken. The Ministry can decline to pay an EHSNG for a client to stay with a supplier that isn't adequate to meet their needs and would suggest that a client stay with a supplier that is adequate.

The Ministry's role is to grant EHSNGs to clients for the cost of emergency housing. The contractual relationship is between the client receiving the EHSNG and the emergency housing supplier. Due to the Ministry not being a party to the contract, we cannot require any given supplier to opt into the voluntary supplier standards.

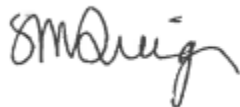
I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details removed, on the Ministry's website in due course.

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 my decision on your request regarding Gamma Hotel, 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

pp.



Magnus O'Neill
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services



Appendix

Table One: The number of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EHSNGs) and the amount granted to Gamma Hotel during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024, by financial year.

Financial Year	Gamma Hotel	
	Grants	Amount Granted
1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022	S	\$1,540.00
1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023	24	\$54,530.00
1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024	567	\$1,667,186.13
Total	591	\$1,723,256.13

Notes:

- The financial year used for this data is 1 April to 31 March.
- Grants are not the same as clients. A client can have more than one grant in a period.
- The amount granted may not be the same as the amount spent.
- 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 to base three 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 certain circumstances, low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified.
- Due to these privacy concerns, numbers for some categories of clients have been suppressed. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'.