



13 September 2024

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 16 August 2024, requesting information from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) about emergency housing and transitional housing.

On 4 September 2024, the Ministry advised you that your questions 3 and 4 about transitional housing issues had been transferred to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development for response, as they hold the information to respond to those parts of your request and are responsible for the Transitional Housing (TH) and the Emergency Housing (EH) motel contracts in Rotorua.

I have considered your remaining requests under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below. For the sake of clarity, I will respond to your request in parts.

What date did the Ministry advise Mana Motel Wellington that they would no longer be contracted to supply Emergency Housing?

The Ministry continues to use the AAA Mana Motel in Wellington as an opted-in supplier of emergency housing (EH).

The Ministry registers hardship suppliers for the purpose of facilitating payments on behalf of eligible clients. It is important to note registered supplier status does not indicate a contractual relationship between the Ministry and a supplier, or an endorsement of the services provided. The contractual relationship is between the client receiving the Emergency Housing Grant (EHG) and the emergency housing supplier. The Ministry's role is to grant EHG for the cost of EH.

How many other Motels in New Zealand (excluding the contracted ones in Rotorua) have had their services to provide Emergency Housing disestablished and from what date?

The Ministry identifies if a supplier is used for EH by their active use of EHG. Your request for the number of motels who have had their services disestablished is very broad, and substantial manual collation would be required to locate and prepare all documents within scope of your request. 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.

You may find the following information useful.

Supplier Standards

The EH Supplier Standards set out the Ministry's expectations that people staying in EH receive the same level of service and are treated with the same care and respect as any other paying customer. While suppliers have the option to choose to opt in, the Ministry expects that all suppliers providing EH should meet minimum standards of suitability, and safety standards set by regulatory agencies.

From 6 November 2023, the Ministry have only granted EHG for clients to stay with opted-in suppliers, except in some limited circumstances (such as a lack of vacancies with opted-in suppliers in a particular location).

The Ministry is therefore encouraging suppliers to opt-in, provided they meet the standards required.

Visits to EH suppliers

Please note that while suppliers have the option to choose to opt in, the Ministry expects that all suppliers providing EH should be meeting legal requirements including relevant building and safety requirements, regardless of opt-in status.

The Ministry makes regular visits to properties to make sure any concerns raised regarding health, safety and sanitation standards are being addressed. The Ministry's regional staff regularly visit EH suppliers to resolve issues around quality or service and address any concerns of safety.

Where suppliers are found to not be providing an acceptable level of service, the Ministry may choose to stop using the supplier.

What provisions has the ministry put in place to ensure Clients at Mana Motel and other Emergency Housing motels will not be homeless?

Ministry staff work with clients on a case-by-case basis to help them identify what alternative, temporary, or long-term accommodation is available to them, before exiting emergency housing.

EH Support Services

Through Budget 2024, the Government is funding the Ministry's EH support services for two further years at a total cost of \$83.5 million. These services include integrated services case managers, housing brokers, contracted navigator services, flexible funding and the ready to rent programme to help people at risk of homelessness, and those in EH to access suitable and sustainable accommodation.

Housing Support Products (HSPs)

The Ministry has expanded its suite of HSPs to assist people into suitable homes. These can now also be used where people are flatting or boarding privately. In

particular, the Accommodation Security Cover Grant provides assistance to obtain or retain accommodation, by providing assurance to accommodation suppliers that any outstanding accommodation costs will be covered, if owed at the end of the accommodation agreement.

Ministry staff can use these supports working with at-risk whanau to prevent homelessness where possible and help them to remain safely housed.

You may find the following links useful about who can get EH, housing support, and clients' rights and responsibilities, on the Ministry's website here:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing/index.html.

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/move-house/index.html>.

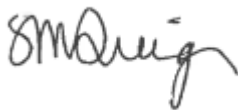
<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/live-in-home/housing-costs/index.html>.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, 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, 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