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Tēnā koe Jessica

Thank you for your request of 19 November 2023 to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). As you are aware, the MSD partially transferred your request to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), comprising the following questions which I will respond to as follows:

- 1. The details of any EH supplier that is affiliated with Visions of a Helping Hand Trust and the nature of the relationship with Visions**
 - a. Do these include Tuscany, Emerald Spa?**
 - b. When paying an EH SNG to Tuscany Hotel, for example, is this a registered supplier under the name of Tuscany or is it registered under Visions?**

“Emergency Housing (EH) Supplier” is a term that MSD uses to refer to suppliers of short-term accommodation who may have vacancies for people in need of emergency housing. This is separate and apart from the accommodation and support services which HUD funds. More information regarding MSD Emergency Housing suppliers can be found on MSD’s website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/providers/housing-providers/emergency-housing/index.html.

HUD contracts motels and support services providers for the provision of warm, safe, and dry short-term accommodation and wrap-around support services for individuals and whānau urgently needing a place to stay.

I can confirm that HUD has entered into contracts directly with Tuscany Villas and Emerald Spa Motor Inn. These contracts are for these entities to provide exclusive use of the units located at these motels to accommodate whānau with urgent housing need. HUD funds the moteliere, not Visions of a Helping Hand (VOHH), directly for this purpose.

VOHH are contracted separately by HUD to provide tailored wrap-around support to individuals and whānau staying at these motels. This includes helping them to source longer term housing as a priority, regular checks on their wellbeing, ensuring they can access food and welfare, and connecting them with other essential services such as healthcare. HUD funds VOHH directly for this purpose.

Transitional Housing (TH) provides temporary accommodation to those who have nowhere to live and offers tailored support to help these individuals and whānau into longer-term housing. VOHH is contracted by HUD to provide this service.

2. Why are transitional housing rent payments and/or redirections from client benefits for different tenancies being directed to the same accounts? These should be going to separate accounts given they are different tenancies?

Individuals and whānau living in TH or a motel pay a contribution of up to 25 percent of their income to the provider. This sum goes towards the accommodation and support service costs and is in line with income-related rents for public housing and Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EHSNG) which are administered by MSD. It is up to the individual provider, including VOHH, to determine how contributions are collected and tracked. These processes are in line with generally accepted accounting and audit procedures. More information about Transitional Housing processes can be found in the Operational Guidelines for Providers of Transitional Housing, which can be viewed at www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/Transitional-Housing-Operational-Guidelines-December-2023.pdf.

3. Why are Visions putting people in Visions housing and then refusing assistance that should be available as part of their wrap-around support?

HUD has not received any information or other reports that VOHH are refusing assistance to people in its HUD funded services. HUD monitors all contracts to ensure that the services it engages providers to offer are appropriately fulfilled.

In addition, Housing providers must receive and maintain Level Three Social Services Accreditation from Te Kāhui Kāhu to provide housing support services, maintaining this level of accreditation requires assessments at regular intervals from Te Kāhui Kāhu.

4. Please confirm if, under the Residential Tenancies Act (1986), suppliers are obligated or actually allowed to provide wrap-around support to a lot of these clients?

Under [section 5\(1\)\(y\) of the Residential Tenancies Act](#), premises funded wholly or in part by a government department being used to provide emergency or transitional accommodation fall outside the scope of that act as they are not intended to be a person's permanent home.

As noted earlier, VOHH is contracted by HUD to provide TH and tailored wrap around support for people staying in some of our contracted motels. This accommodation is not intended to be a permanent home, it serves as a secure interim solution that offers relief from homelessness while providers work with households to source longer term solutions. Wrap-around support is a crucial element in achieving that objective.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

As part of our ongoing commitment to openness and transparency, the Ministry proactively releases information and documents that may be of interest to the public. As such, this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on our website.

Nāku noa, nā



William Barris
General Manager Partnerships and Performance