

12 FEB 2019



On 10 January 2019 you lodged an Official Information Act (OIA) request, seeking information related to how Housing New Zealand deals with noise complaints against our tenants from neighbours. This was a follow-up request to one you made on 10 January 2018 for the same information.

Specifically, you requested:

I would like to make another OIA request for the same information as my previous request, in order to see what, if any, changes have been made to the anti-social behaviour guidelines. To that effect, please provide all policies, procedures, guidelines, working information and any document related to how Housing New Zealand deals with noise complaints against its tenants from their neighbours.

Management of noise complaints is covered in our anti-social behaviour policy and the attendant procedures. Last year, I sent you the documents listed below. The latest versions of those documents are attached. With the exception of sections regarding pet noise, there have not been any changes in regard to noise. And, we believe that these policies and guidelines, developed over many years, provide a fair process for tenants and neighbours when considering noise issues:

- *T-229 Anti-Social Behaviour Guideline*
- *T-412 Household Action Plan*
- *T-463 Incident Summary*
- *T-464 Interview Sheet*
- *T-465 Anti-Social Behaviour dialogue plan*
- *T-466 Request to Terminate Tenancy*
- *T-480 Request for approval of suspension from applying for a Housing New Zealand home*
- *T-488 Anti-Social Behaviour Checklist.*

Housing New Zealand provides homes to over 185,000 people in more than 64,000 properties across the country. As I advised in my response to your request last year, Housing New Zealand is a responsible landlord and takes all complaints about anti-social behaviour, including noise nuisance, seriously.

Last year I referred to work we were doing on sustaining tenancies. This work cuts across many different areas of our work and was not a reference to work that would result in one policy document. Therefore, I cannot provide a document, but I can provide a further explanation of the new focus.

Our sustaining tenancy focus goes beyond dealing with anti-social behaviour, but it does apply in this area as well. We set the scene at the start of any tenancy by emphasising the sections in our Tenancy Agreement that relate to tenant responsibilities. This includes

being a good neighbour and respecting other people's privacy and enjoyment of their homes.

Most of our tenants abide by their agreement with us. In cases, where they do not, we have changed our approach to put more emphasis on the individual circumstances. When we become aware of any issues at one of our properties that does not reflect those Tenancy Agreement expectations and responsibilities, we get involved. Typically we work closely with these tenants, their whanau/ family and support agencies to turn situations around.

We monitor progress through a Household Action Plan which is created to support the management of any issues, establish support frameworks and help tenants manage their circumstances. Household Action Plans are a joint agreement between a tenant and Housing New Zealand.

We have also employed Intensive Tenancy Managers to focus on particular tenants and situations that need greater attention and resources. These managers work with our tenants and connect them to other support services in the community to address the issues they are having.

Our focus is on supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies, because ending tenancies places vulnerable people in an even more vulnerable situation. By helping tenants to stay in their homes, Housing New Zealand provides them with safe, stable housing which is the foundation to improved life outcomes and functional families and communities.

The management of noise nuisance continues to be a Council responsibility and the Council should continue to be the first point of contact for a complaint, because they have more immediate powers to act. Information from a Council that our tenants have breached regulated noise levels will result in our tenancy management staff taking action to work with tenants as outlined above to address the problem.

I trust the information provided in this letter and the attached documents are of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Kelly
Manager Government Relations