


5 NOV 2019



Thank you for your email of 19 October 2019 2019 to Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982.

Please find below the questions you have asked and our responses.

1. *Is the smart home program going to be extended to more Housing New Zealand houses, and if so, will this be a permanent program? If the program does continue, will tenants continue to have the option to opt-out with no negative consequences for their tenancy, benefit or other services?*

Kāinga Ora is currently looking at options for extending the Smart Homes Pilot. If it does extend in the form of a larger project, it is expected to continue on the same terms as the Pilot, with tenants providing consent to be involved. If customers do not consent, this will have no impact on any ongoing or future relationship customers have with Kāinga Ora.

2. *What benefits for tenants have resulted from the smart home program?*

The insights from the data will be used to help Kāinga Ora better understand how our properties perform to ensure they are warm, dry and healthy for our tenants and their whānau. This will help inform other customer engagement and work programmes for Kāinga Ora that will help a wider range of customers have warm, dry and healthy homes.

Data from our Smart Homes sensors lets us know more and new information about our homes, and providing us with new ways to engage with tenants about having a warm, dry and healthy home. Being part of the pilot has allowed tenants to understand more about how their home performs through receiving information and having conversations with the Tenancy Managers about the findings from the data.

This has provided opportunities to work closely with tenants to improve and enhance their home's performance, which may include actions such as extra ventilation, or property remediation in some cases. The sensor data provides a tangible evidence of whether these interventions are working, that tenants and Tenancy Managers can discuss and work through together.

3. *Who has aggregated data from the sensors been shared with and for what purposes?*

Kāinga Ora is continuously analysing the data and we have shared this with an external research company to gain further insights for our evaluations. We sought customer consent for this.

In our original consent form to be part of the pilot, we let tenants know we would potentially share information with external researchers where it would help us better understand the sensor data and what it means to have a healthy home.

Privacy is the highest priority, and we give careful consideration to the benefit of sharing data in the future for helping us gain further insights and evaluation. There are strict agreements in place to ensure privacy is respected and data kept secure.

4. *During the program to date, how many tenants were contacted as a result of sensor readings with readings that were higher than expected? What actions were suggested or required as a response?*

We have been in touch on an ongoing basis with tenants throughout the pilot about the insights we are finding from the data. We have worked with them on keeping their home warm and dry, and share any actions they could potentially take.

There have been some specific circumstances where sensor readings have caused us to carry out some more managed and targeted interventions. Where we have seen sensor readings that are unusual, we have visited the tenants to find out what is happening, and find a solution for bringing the levels to a healthy rate.

Examples of these specific interventions include:

- Reduced carbon dioxide (CO2) levels through behaviour change interventions. High CO2 levels can cause drowsiness, headaches, and poor concentration. It can also affect sleep quality and wellbeing. For a small number of homes where the sensors showed high CO2 levels, the Tenancy Manager went through the data reports with the tenants to discuss why this isn't good, and what they can do to reduce the levels through some simple, easy actions such as ventilating rooms more by opening windows, or leaving bedroom doors ajar at night. Following the intervention, the CO2 levels dropped immediately, and have remained low.
 - For some properties that were particularly cold, we worked with tenants on how we could improve the warmth. Fuel poverty is a broad and complex issue, and as part of the trial, we wanted to understand more about this and have paid a portion of energy bills for a small number of homes to see the impact of this on improving how warm and dry the home is.
5. *Can you please clarify what you mean by the secure Housing New Zealand network that transmits data from the sensors? Is this an internet connection for the property that is separate to a connection that the tenant might have, or something else completely?*

The Smart Homes Pilot trialled two different types of technology from two suppliers. Neither used or interfered with any existing internet connection the customer may have. The two communications methods with Sigfox and GSM that communicated data via the respective suppliers to a data analysis system within the Kāinga Ora secure network.

6. *In the June OIA <https://www.hnzc.co.nz/assets/Publications/OIAs-Official-Information-Act/June-2019/OIA-17-June-2019-Smart-Homes-sensors.pdf>, the cover letter noted that tenants will be credited \$15/month for electricity costs. However, the attached FAQ for tenants noted that this was \$4/month. Can you please clarify which is correct?*

At the time the FAQs were written, it was estimated that the hard wired sensors would use no more than \$4 worth of electricity per month. However, we decided the pilot would pay the tenants \$10 per month. That was increased to \$15 in April this year. This amount was decided in case of any additional costs and as a good will gesture for being part of the pilot.

For further information, please contact Sharon Girvan, Manager, Governance Group, through our Customer Service Centre, on 0800 801 601.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Kelly
Manager Government Relations

