



18 NOV 2016



On 28 September 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information concerning the Relocation from Auckland assistance.

Work and Income are offering to help eligible people with a one-off payment of up to \$5,000 to relocate from Auckland from 20 June 2016. To be eligible, people need to be living in Auckland and either a current tenant of or eligible for social housing. This is a voluntary scheme and aims to provide practical assistance to enable people to expand their employment and housing options.

It is estimated that the funding will support at least 150 individuals and families to relocate. As part of this initiative, Work and Income is working closely with people to make sure this is the right move, taking into consideration their family and community support, and employment options in the new region.

If people return to the Social Housing Register in the Auckland region within a 52-week period without exceptional circumstances, or if they use the payment for purposes other than those intended, they may be required to pay the grant back. Exceptional circumstances will be determined on a case by case basis. For example this could include having to return to care for an ill family member.

It is pertinent to note that this is not a mandatory scheme and people will need to be willing and able to move to another part of the country. As with most other Work and Income assistance, this is income and asset tested. If people are in receipt of a benefit, they will have to meet any obligations they may have, including any job search obligations. Work and Income will work with people before they move to ensure they can still meet their obligations.

For the sake of clarity I will address each of your questions in turn:

- *Since Minister Paula Bennett announced her plan to offer homeless families \$5000 to move to empty state houses outside Auckland – how many families have taken up the offer?*
- *How many people total have been relocated?*

The Ministry can advise that as at 30 September 2016, 81 households had relocated under the Relocation from Auckland initiative. A further seven households had been

approved to relocate and had confirmed moving dates as at 30 September 2016, but had yet to move.

- *Where have these families primarily been relocated to?*

Please refer to response to written parliamentary question 13815 (2016) which is publically available on the New Zealand Parliament website:

[www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/](http://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/order-paper-questions/written-questions/)

- *Did they go into state houses or private accommodation?*

The Ministry can advise that 36 households had relocated to private accommodation and the remaining 45 households are residing in social housing.

- *Have of the total who moved are still housed at their new location?*

Unless the household presents to Work and Income asking for further housing assistance, or advises of a change in their circumstances, Work and Income will have no way of knowing if they have moved. However, due to the fact that the programme is at an early stage, the Ministry is currently manually tracking the housing status of recipients of the relocation grant. We can confirm that as at 30 September 2016, 80 households remained housed in their new location. Please note that it may not be possible to replicate this information in the future.

- *Have any of the recipients since returned to Auckland?*

Only one recipient of the Relocation from Auckland grant has returned to Auckland.

- *Are there any previously unforeseen circumstances which are creating difficulties with the new scheme?*

The Ministry can advise the scheme is working well and there have been no unforeseen difficulties to date.

- *When are we likely to see the greatest uptake of this scheme?*

The Ministry can advise that the Relocation from Auckland initiative is tracking as anticipated.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public

after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response regarding the Relocation from Auckland Assistance with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kay Read', written in a cursive style.

Kay Read

**Associate Deputy Chief Executive, Social Housing**