



Social housing reform programme

January 2015

The Government has announced a number of new initiatives aimed at improving social housing for vulnerable New Zealanders.

These initiatives build on the changes that have been made to social housing in New Zealand over the past few years through the social housing reform programme.

Social housing reform programme:

The Social Housing Reform Programme aims to increase the amount of social housing by building a fair, efficient and effective social housing market that better supports people in greatest need by:

- ensuring that people who need housing support can get it along with other social services
- ensuring that social housing is suitable for the households that need it
- supporting more people into independence from social housing
- helping increase the supply of affordable housing, especially in Auckland and Christchurch.

In the coming months:

- The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) will introduce a package of new initiatives to better assist people most in need of housing and support more people into independence from social housing when appropriate.
- Government will start national engagement with community housing providers, Māori and other groups around the planned transfer of 1,000 to 2,000 Housing New Zealand properties to approved community housing providers.

Transfer of Housing New Zealand properties

This is an important step in encouraging and developing a more diverse ownership of social housing, that is more innovative and responsive to tenants and communities.

The intention is to transfer the properties for use as social housing, run by approved community housing providers.

Properties will be transferred only if this results in better outcomes for tenants. No decisions have yet been made around when the transfers will happen or where these will be.

Tenants in properties that are transferred will continue to be housed for the duration of their need.

Find more information at www.treasury.govt.nz

Reducing the pressure on emergency and social housing

Development for each initiative has begun, with staged implementation through to July 2015.

Initiatives	Description
Supporting people into independence from social housing	
1	<p>An additional 3,000 tenancy reviews over the next two years</p> <p>An additional 3,000 tenancy reviews are to be started within the next two years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 will begin in 2014/2015, making the total number of reviews underway 1,800.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,000 reviews will begin in 2015/16. <p>New staff will be brought in to manage the extra reviews.</p>
2	Boost intensive case management for work-ready beneficiaries on the social housing register	MSD will prioritise clients on the social housing register with part-time and full-time work obligations. Improving people's income through work would be likely to remove a key barrier to getting private housing. Five additional case managers will be appointed to support this work.
3	More supported accommodation for young people on the social housing register	Expand supported accommodation houses for young people on the social housing register in the high demand areas of Auckland and Christchurch.
4	Conditional grant for recoverable assistance to help people find alternative accommodation	A conditional grant of recoverable assistance will help people cover bond, rent in advance and letting fees. Approval of this grant will be provided in a letter that can be shared with prospective landlords to help remove barriers people may face when trying to move into the private housing market.
5	Support to move from high demand to lower demand areas	Information and advice to people who are referred to MSD by housing providers (including emergency housing providers) about what support could be available to move from areas where there is high demand for social housing to locations where more affordable housing is available.
Finding new IRRS options in Auckland		
6	Additional 300 IRRS places in Auckland	Contract an additional 300 IRRS places in Auckland. MSD will test what the market can deliver and identify any additional support providers may need to provide new social housing places.
Ease pressure on emergency housing		
7	One-off payment of \$500,000 to MSD funded emergency housing providers	A one-off cash injection of \$500,000 will be made to MSD funded emergency housing providers across New Zealand.
8	Coordination of the emergency housing response in Auckland	An emergency housing centralised register in Auckland will be developed to provide up-to-date information on the number of emergency beds available on any given night. There are 14 agencies across Auckland with emergency accommodation.
9	Review of emergency housing funding	MSD will carry out an overall review of emergency housing funding by end of July 2015.

The role of the Ministry of Social Development

MSD is leading key aspects of the programme, integrating housing assistance with the broader range of assistance it offers to low income and vulnerable New Zealanders.

MSD will:

- be the only purchaser of social housing tenancies using the income-related rent subsidy

- continue to publish the social housing register
- provide the market with information about clients and housing demand that providers can use to make decisions to have the right type of properties for people with serious housing needs.

More information

For more information go to www.socialhousing.govt.nz