



Report

Date: 8 June 2016

Security Level: IN CONFIDENCE

To: Hon Anne Tolley, Minister for Social Development
REP/16/6/652

Amendments to enable availability of the Relocating from Auckland support package and the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant

Purpose of the report

- 1 This report seeks your approval, through signature of the attached two legal instruments, to amend the:
 - Housing Support Assistance Programme to enable availability of the Relocating from Auckland Package, from 20 June 2016
 - Special Needs Grant Programme to enable availability of the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant, from 1 July 2016.

Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

Relocating from Auckland Support Package

- 1 **note** that on 24 May 2016, you agreed that the Housing Support Assistance Programme be amended to enable availability of the 'Relocating from Auckland Package' (REP/16/03/259)

Yes / No

- 2 **note** that assistance through the *Relocating from Auckland* package will be available to eligible households from 20 June 2016

Yes / No

- 3 **agree** to sign the attached instrument *Housing Support Assistance Amendment 2016* which amends the Housing Support Assistance Programme to enable eligible households to access a one-off non-recoverable:
 - Moving Grant of up to \$5,000 to help with the actual and reasonable direct costs of moving
 - Establishment Grant of \$2,000 or \$3,000 (circumstance dependent) to incentivise some households to move out of Auckland.

Agree / Disagree

Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant

- 4 **note** that on 31 May 2016, you agreed the parameters of the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant, to be available to eligible clients from 1 July 2016 (REP/16/05/621 refers)

Yes / No

- 5 **agree** to sign the attached *Instrument Amending Special Needs Grants Programme 2016* which amends the Special Needs Grants Programme to enable eligible clients to access a non-recoverable grant to cover the actual and reasonable costs of emergency accommodation, for up to 7 days

Agree / Disagree

Approval of the attached Instruments

- 6 **note** that your office will arrange for copies of the attached approved instruments to be tabled in the House of Representatives

Yes / No

- 7 **note** that officials will arrange for publication of the attached approved instruments in the next issue of the New Zealand Gazette

Yes / No

- 8 **note** a copy of this report has been forwarded to the Minister for Social Housing

Yes / No

- 9 **agree** to forward a copy of this report to the Associate Minister for Social Development.

Agree / Disagree

Anna Butler
General Manager
Housing, Income Support and Employment

Date

Hon Anne Tolley
Minister for Social Development

Date

Background

- 2 Housing constraints in the Auckland region mean that some people can be delayed from accessing the housing they need. In addition, some clients across New Zealand require additional support to access Emergency Housing. In response to these issues, the Ministry of Social Development has developed new supports to improve access to housing for vulnerable people.
- 3 The Relocating from Auckland package focuses on supporting eligible clients currently in or eligible for social housing, who are willing and able to move from the Auckland region, to access social or private housing in a region outside of Auckland. The package will be available from 20 June 2016.
- 4 The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (SNG) will support clients who have an immediate emergency housing need, with the actual and reasonable costs of emergency housing for up to seven days. This will help to ensure that people in need are able to access housing support, when they need it. The SNG will be available from 1 July 2016.
- 5 This report provides you with the legal Instruments required to make these two new supports available and enable payments to be made.

The Relocating from Auckland Support Package

- 6 On 24 May 2016, you agreed that the Housing Support Assistance Programme be amended to enable availability of the Relocating from Auckland package (REP/16/03/259 refers). The package will be available to support eligible households currently living in social housing or awaiting allocation of social housing in Auckland, who are willing and able to move into social housing or private housing in another region in New Zealand. The package includes a new one-off non-recoverable:
 - Moving Grant of up to \$5,000 to help some households with the actual and reasonable direct costs of moving (the amount available may exceed \$5,000 in exceptional circumstances)
 - Establishment Grant to incentivise some households to move from Auckland, and assist with the set-up costs.¹ The following limits apply to this payment:
 - \$2,000 for households moving into social housing
 - \$3,000 for households moving into private housing.
- 7 Where somebody is homeless at the time they apply for Relocating from Auckland Assistance, and not on the social housing register, the appropriate steps will be taken to assess their eligibility for social housing before they are placed on the register. The needs assessment undertaken as part of this process will support us to make an assessment about whether relocation is appropriate and sustainable for this applicant.

The Instrument Housing Support Assistance Amendment 2016 makes the amendments required to enable availability of the support

- 8 The attached Instrument *Housing Support Assistance Amendment 2016* will make the amendments required to enable availability of the Relocating from Auckland package, and enable payments to be made.

¹ This payment may become recoverable in some circumstances. For example, if the applicant is back on the social housing register in Auckland within 52 weeks of relocating, without there being exceptional circumstances.

- 9 The enabling amendment to the Housing Support Assistance Programme is a new Part 4 that sets out the eligibility requirements and parameters of the *Relocating from Auckland* support package. Part 4 specifies:
- the parameters of the Moving Grant and the Establishment grant
 - the eligibility criteria
 - the circumstances in which the amount payable for the Moving Grant may be exceeded
 - the circumstances in which the Establishment Grant may become recoverable
 - the principles that support a determination of whether assistance be granted, including the suitability of the move
 - the relationship between receiving this support, and other Housing Support Assistance Programme products.
- 10 An amendment will also be made to the current Part 1, Section 6 of the *Housing Support Assistance Programme*, to explain the relationship between the new Part 4, and the current Parts 1 – 3.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant

- 11 On 31 May 2016, you agreed to the parameters of the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (SNG) as follows:
- a new non-recoverable SNG for actual and reasonable costs of emergency accommodation for up to seven days
 - no more than one grant per client, in any 52 week period
 - available to clients who meet the specified income and asset limits for Special Needs Grants.
- 12 The Ministry will have discretion to pay the SNG outside of these parameters in exceptional circumstances.
- 13 Consistent with other hardship assistance, applicants for the SNG generally must have permanent residence or New Zealand citizenship to receive assistance.²

The Instrument Amending Special Needs Grant Programme 2016 makes the amendments required to enable availability of this support

- 14 The attached *Instrument Amending Special Needs Grants Programme 2016* will make the amendments required to enable availability of the SNG and enable payments to be made. Following your signature, the amendments will come into force on 1 July 2016.
- 15 The key amendments to the Special Needs Grants Programme are as follows:
- in Part 5, a new Clause 14A is added, titled *People in need of Emergency Housing*, which outlines:
 - the circumstances in which the Chief Executive may make an Emergency Housing Grant

² Emergency Benefit or Temporary Additional Support may be paid to some categories of migrants who do not have permanent residence or citizenship, e.g. people waiting for their application for refugee or protection status to be approved. In addition, there are some exceptions explicitly provided for under the Special Needs Grant Programme, such as for applicants who are applying for permanent residence that have lost the support of their partner due to domestic violence.

- that a Grant may be made to cover Emergency Housing Costs for no more than 7 days (unless the Chief Executive determines that there are exceptional circumstances for extending the time period)
- that the Grant must not exceed the actual and reasonable costs of Emergency Housing, including the amount of any bond that may be payable
- the circumstances in which the Grant becomes recoverable (for example where the grant includes payment of a refundable bond)
- what the Chief Executive must consider in making the determination that all or part of the grant is recoverable
- the circumstances in which an Applicant will be considered to have an Emergency Housing Need
- a new Clause 15.1A that specifies that a grant for Re-establishment costs must not be used for Emergency Housing, to remove potential duplication.

Next steps

- 16 Subject to your approval, your office will arrange for a copy of each of the Instruments to be tabled in the House of Representatives.
- 17 The Ministry of Social Development will then arrange for the Instruments to be published in the *New Zealand Gazette*.