

Delivering better public services

BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES RESULT 8

BETTER ACCESS TO SOCIAL HOUSING

RESULT ACTION PLAN

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Ministry of Social Development, P O Box 1556, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Telephone: +64 4 916 3300

Email: info@msd.govt.nz

Web: <http://www.msd.govt.nz>

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Minister's foreword

Better Public Services first social housing target

This Government is focused on making sure that people who need social housing get the support they need, and can use it as a pathway to greater independence.

We have already made good progress in ensuring vulnerable New Zealanders have better access to housing, but we can do more.

We are establishing a single, simple **Better Public Services** target to reduce the **time to house** for Priority A clients from the social housing register by **20 per cent by 2021**.

This will help ensure that people with the most complex needs and barriers to sustaining a tenancy will get access to secure housing sooner – either in social housing or in the private rental market.

Establishing this target will also drive wider changes that make a real difference to the lives of the most vulnerable New Zealanders. To achieve this target the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) will need to continue to work closely with other agencies to anticipate and address the circumstances that drive the need for social housing, purchasing enough social housing places for the people who need them most, and supporting people to live more independently.

This target builds on our progress to date, which includes:

- having extra social housing places in the pipeline, both in Auckland and across New Zealand
- implementing more flexible contracting arrangements to support a broader range of providers to enter the market and boost the number of social housing places available
- aiming to deliver more than 2,000 emergency housing places at any one time by mid-2017, and creating a new Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant to support people with an urgent unmet housing need for up to seven days at a time

- making new Housing Support Products available, to support people towards housing independence
- completing over 3,000 tenancy reviews, which has resulted in over 700 people moving into alternative accommodation and more than 100 people purchasing their own homes
- transitioning Housing New Zealand properties to Community Housing Providers (CHPs) to diversify the market, including opening up the Income Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS) to support better outcomes for tenants.

Social housing is a vital part of an integrated social support system to help vulnerable New Zealanders lead better and more independent lives. Over time, I expect these initiatives to reduce costs both to those in social housing and the taxpayers who fund that accommodation.



Hon Amy Adams
Minister for Social Housing

Better access to social housing

Why this result is important for New Zealanders

Improving vulnerable peoples' lives begins with stable housing. For those with the highest housing need, reducing the time it takes to be placed in safe and stable accommodation means less time facing homelessness or severely inadequate housing.

Vulnerable people can then turn their lives around more quickly and access the support they need for their family and whānau to stay safe and healthy, get work, and access education.

Once their situation has improved, people in social housing will be able to move to more independent, private accommodation and free up social housing places for those in greater need.

Moving into social housing makes a big difference to vulnerable peoples' lives. That's why this target focuses on reducing the time to house people who are assessed as 'Priority A' through MSD's Social Allocation System.

People who are Priority A have the most complex needs and barriers to accessing and sustaining private housing. New Zealand and international research shows that for people in these circumstances, warm, accessible, and right sized housing reduces respiratory conditions, improves mental health, and supports greater attendance at school and work.

Social housing is a significant investment, but it is a proven and effective way of improving outcomes for New Zealanders who have the greatest need.

Our overall strategy

The Government is taking a social investment approach to improving the lives of New Zealanders by applying rigorous and evidence-based investment practices to social services. This means using information and technology to better understand the people who need public services and what works, and then adjusting services accordingly. What is learnt through this process informs the next set of investment decisions.

In practice this means we will reduce the median time to house by:

- addressing the circumstances driving need for social housing – thereby reducing demand
- increasing social housing supply
- supporting people to live more independently.



BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES RESULT 8

Reduce long-term welfare dependence

A good start to life

Strong foundations for work and life

Reduce serious crime

Better access to social housing

People have easy access to public services

By 2021, reduce the median time to house for Priority A clients on the social housing register by 20%

This target focuses on Priority A clients because these are the people with the most complex needs and barriers to accessing and sustaining private rental.

TO REDUCE TIME TO HOUSE WE NEED TO...

Address the circumstances driving need for social housing – thereby reducing demand

Increase social housing supply

Support people to live more independently

SUPPORTING MEASURES

1. The number of Priority A clients entering the social housing register per year

2. The number of Priority A clients who are supported from the social housing register into private or social housing per year

3. The number of social housing places available

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

People's support needs are met earlier, so fewer people need social housing

There are enough social houses for those who need them

People on the social housing register are supported quickly into social housing or the private market

People in social housing have access to tailored support services to help them move into private housing as and when they can

ACTIONS

Government agencies use an investment approach to address the causes of need for social housing, including:

- family violence prevention
- sustaining tenancies
- supporting people into employment
- reintegrating ex-offenders
- mental health and addiction support.

Government agencies use contestability in the provision of social housing and contracting with providers to:

- incentivise new social housing supply
- deliver better utilisation of existing stock
- deliver faster turn around of properties between tenancies.

A range of providers, including HNZ and CHPs, deliver more social housing, especially in high demand areas like Auckland.

More streamlined assessment and referral processes to get people housed more quickly.

Targeted initiatives like Housing First to help ensure homeless people have quick access to a house and services.

Housing Support Products to help people find alternative accommodation in the private market where possible

Supporting people to move from social housing to private housing as and when they can frees up social houses for those in greatest need. To encourage this we need:

- a diverse range of providers delivering tailored support services to help people live more independently
- tenancy reviews, and Housing Support Products to help more people move to the private housing
- to shift expectations so that people know social housing is not intended to be a house for life, but only for the duration of a person's need.

Working together to achieve the Result

The Ministry of Social Development is the lead agency responsible for this target and will work to achieve it in partnership with government agencies and non-government organisations.

Reducing the time to house Priority A people depends partly on ensuring housing supply from Housing New Zealand and Community Housing Providers.

Achieving the target is also dependent on working with other areas of Government, such as Health, Justice, Corrections, Police, Immigration, Housing and Education, who all play an important part in helping to contribute to the result.

Action

The governance arrangements for BPS Result 8 are being finalised.

The key agencies involved include:

- Ministry of Social Development (overall responsibility for the target)
- Housing New Zealand Corporation
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (Building and Construction, and Immigration)
- The Treasury
- Te Puni Kōkiri
- Ministry of Health
- New Zealand Police
- Department of Corrections
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Justice.

Community and emergency housing providers are important for delivering housing for people who are most vulnerable.

Measuring success

By 2021, reduce the median time to house for Priority A clients on the social housing register by 20%.

Three supporting measures have been developed to measure progress towards achieving the target:

- 1. The number of Priority A clients entering the social housing register per year:** this measure provides an indication of how well we are doing at addressing the circumstances driving need for social housing. Social Sector agencies will need to work together to try to ensure people don't end up in insecure housing and in need of social housing. Over time, we expect to be able to reduce the number of Priority A clients who enter the social housing register.
- 2. The number of Priority A clients supported from the social housing register into private or social housing per year:** this measure provides an overall measure of how well we are doing at increasing the supply of social housing and supporting people to transition to independence. The more people we can support to private housing when they are able to, the more social housing places are freed up for placing people in greatest need.
- 3. The number of social housing places available:** this measure provides a specific indicator of our progress towards securing additional supply of social housing places.

**BY 2021, REDUCE THE MEDIAN TIME
TO HOUSE FOR PRIORITY A CLIENTS ON
THE SOCIAL HOUSING REGISTER BY 20%**

**The number of
Priority A clients
entering the social
housing register
per year**

**The number of
Priority A clients
supported from
the social housing
register into
private or social
housing per year**

**The number of
social housing
places available**

