

Instrument amending Ministerial Directions and Welfare Programmes 2026

This instrument is made under sections 7 and 101 of the Social Security Act 2018 by the Minister for Social Development and Employment.

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Instrument

- 1 Title**

This instrument is the Instrument amending Ministerial Directions and Welfare Programmes 2026.
- 2 Commencement**

This instrument comes into force on 1 April 2026.
- 3 Principal directions and welfare programmes amended**

This instrument amends the directions and welfare programmes specified in Schedules 1 and 2 (the **principal directions and welfare programmes**).
- 4 Amendments**

Amend the principal directions and welfare programmes in the manner set out in Schedules 1 and 2.

Schedule 1

cl 4

Amendments to directions

Direction in relation to the Advance Payments of Instalments of Benefit (given on 25 May 1999)¹

Clause 2.4

In clause 2.4(a), replace “\$854.30” with “\$879.17”.
In clause 2.4(b), replace “\$981.83” with “\$1,010.41”.
In clause 2.4(c), replace “\$1,426.10” with “\$1,467.61”.
In clause 2.4(d), replace “\$1,191.41” with “\$1,226.09”.
In clause 2.4(e), replace “\$1,255.22” with “\$1,291.75”.

Direction setting approval criteria for specified early childhood education programmes for purposes of social obligations under the Social Security Act 2018 (given on 24 June 2013)²

Clause 3(1)

In clause 3(1), in the definition for “ECE”, replace “2019” with “2018”.

Ministerial Direction on Debt Recovery (given on 30 June 2014)³

Clause 3

In clause 3, in the definition of “allowance” replace “section 302 of the Education Act 1989” with “section 10(1) of the Education and Training Act 2020”.

In clause 3, in the definition of “student loan”, replace “section 302 of the Education Act 1989” with “Schedule 9, clause 1 of the Education and Training Act 2020”.

Clause 6(11)

In clause 6(11), in the definition of “debt”, in paragraph (b) replace “section 307B(2)(c) of the Education Act 1989” with “Schedule 9, clause 6(2)(e) of the Education and Training Act 2020”.

Direction in relation to Special Benefit (given on 10 February 1999)⁴

Schedule

In each provision of Part 1 of the Schedule listed in the first column of the following table, replace the expression set out in the second column with the expression set out in the third column.

Column 1 Provision amended	Column 2 Expressions replaced \$	Column 3 Replacement expressions \$
Clause 1(a)	116.92	120.55

¹ New Zealand Gazette 24 June 1999, No. 75, page 1687.

² New Zealand Gazette 4 July 2013, No. 85, page 2300.

³ New Zealand Gazette 10 July 2014, No. 73, page 2061.

⁴ New Zealand Gazette 16 December 1999, No. 193, page 4600.

Column 1 Provision amended	Column 2 Expressions replaced \$	Column 3 Replacement expressions \$
Clause 1(b)	162.98	168.05
Clause 1(c)	305.80	315.30
Clause 4(a)	155.80	160.64
Clause 4(b)	221.11	227.98
Clause 4(c)	403.38	415.92
Clause 5	172.28	177.63
Clause 6(b)	221.11	227.98
Clause 6(c)	172.28	177.63
Clause 7(a)	221.43	228.31
Clause 7(b)	221.43	228.31
Clause 7(c)	403.99	416.55
Clause 9	257.61	265.62
Clause 10	371.61	383.16
Clause 13	289.39	298.38
Clause 15	403.38	415.92

Schedule 2

cl 4

Amendments to welfare programmes

Away from Home Allowance Programme (as established and approved on 19 January 1998)⁵

Clause 2

In clause 2.1, in the appropriate alphabetical order, insert:

“Private training establishment” has the same meaning as defined in section 10 of the Education and Training Act 2020

“Tertiary institution” has the same meaning as defined in section 7(1)(e) of the Crown Entities Act 2004

Clause 5.1.1(a)

In clause 5.1.1(a) remove “(as those terms are defined in the Education Act 1989)”.

Emergency Housing Grants Programme (as established and approved on 22 July 2024)⁶

Clause 14(1)(a)(ii)

In clause 14(1)(a)(ii), replace “P” with “the applicant”.

⁵ New Zealand Gazette 29 January 1998, No. 14, page 349.

⁶ New Zealand Gazette 26 July 2024, No. 2024-sl3594.

Clause 27

In clause 27, replace the title with “Security deposit grant: when security deposit grant is payable and expires”.

Employment and Work Readiness Assistance Programme (as established and approved on 6 March 2014)⁷

Schedule

In the Schedule, clause 9A(i), replace “\$65.44” with “\$67.48”.

In the Schedule, clause 9A(ii), replace “\$98.16” with “\$101.22”.

In the Schedule, clause 9A(iii), replace “\$130.88” with “\$134.96”.

In the Schedule, clause 9A(iv), replace “\$163.60” with “\$168.70”.

In the Schedule, clause 9A(v), replace “\$196.32” with “\$202.44”.

Family Start and Early Start (Childcare Assistance) Programme (as established and approved on 12 September 2005)⁸

Clause 8(3)

In clause 8(3), definition of c, replace “\$9.72” with “\$10.02”.

Flexi-wage Employment Assistance Programme (as established and approved on 9 February 2021)⁹

Clause 10(2)

In clause 10(2), replace “receive” with “received”.

Guaranteed Childcare Assistance Payment Programme (as established and approved on 13 August 2012)¹⁰

Clause 9(2)

In clause 9(2), definition of c, replace “\$6.52 with “\$6.72” and “\$326” with “\$336”.

Home Help Programme (as established and approved on 6 May 2004)¹¹

Schedule

In the Schedule, clause 1(a), replace “\$24.74” with “\$25.21”.

New Employment Transition Grant Programme (as established and approved on 9 December 1998)¹²

Clause 5.1.1

In clause 5.1.1, replace “\$93” with “\$96”.

Clause 5.2

In clause 5.2, replace “\$930” with “\$960”.

⁷ New Zealand Gazette 13 March 2014, No. 29, page 837.

⁸ New Zealand Gazette 15 December 2005, No. 207, page 5275.

⁹ New Zealand Gazette 11 February 2021, No. 2021-go475.

¹⁰ New Zealand Gazette, 16 August 2012, No. 98, page 2739.

¹¹ New Zealand Gazette 13 May 2004, No. 52, page 1290.

¹² New Zealand Gazette 17 December 1998, No. 200, page 4769.

Recoverable Assistance Programme (as established and approved on 15 February 1999)¹³

Clause 7.4

In clause 7.4(a), replace “\$854.30” with “\$879.17”.
In clause 7.4(b), replace “\$981.83” with “\$1,010.41”.
In clause 7.4(c), replace “\$1,426.10” with “\$1,467.61”.
In clause 7.4(d), replace “\$1,191.41” with “\$1,226.09”.
In clause 7.4(e), replace “\$1,255.22” with “\$1,291.75”.

Seasonal Work Assistance Programme (as established and approved on 7 July 2002)¹⁴

Clause 7(3)

In clause 7(3), replace “\$2,669” with “\$2,754”.

Schedule 1

In Schedule 1, table, replace with:

Hours lost (over the week)	Maximum weekly amounts of Seasonal Work Assistance payments
8 hours or less	\$162
More than 8 and not more than 16 hours	\$324
More than 16 and not more than 24 hours	\$486
More than 24 and not more than 32 hours	\$648
More than 32 hours	\$810

Special Needs Grants Programme (as established and approved on 18 December 1998)¹⁵

Clause 7.1

In clause 7.1(a), replace “\$854.30” with “\$879.17”.
In clause 7.1(b), replace “\$981.83” with “\$1,010.41”.
In clause 7.1(c), replace “\$1,426.10” with “\$1,467.61”.
In clause 7.1(d), replace “\$1,191.41” with “\$1,226.09”.
In clause 7.1(e), replace “\$1,255.22” with “\$1,291.75”.

Clause 9.11(b)

In clause 9.11(b) replace “P” with “the applicant”.

Special Transfer Allowance Programme 2000 (as established and approved on 13 November 2000)¹⁶

Schedule

In the Schedule, clause 1, replace “\$459” with “\$479”.
In the Schedule, clause 2, replace “\$456” with “\$460”.

¹³ New Zealand Gazette 25 February 1999, No. 23, page 567.

¹⁴ New Zealand Gazette 11 July 2002, No.78, page 2079.

¹⁵ New Zealand Gazette 28 January 1999, No. 8, page 202.

¹⁶ New Zealand Gazette 16 November 2000, No. 154, page 3995.

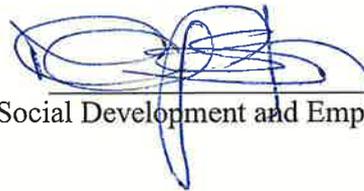
In the Schedule, clause 3, replace “\$360” with “\$388”.
In the Schedule, clause 4, replace “\$568” with “\$584”.
In the Schedule, clause 5, replace “\$591” with “\$575”.
In the Schedule, clause 6, replace “\$460” with “\$496”.

Training Incentive Allowance Programme (as established and approved on 24 May 2021)¹⁷

Clause 11(1)

In clause 11(1), replace “\$138.77” with “\$143.08” and “\$5,550.80” with “\$5,723.20”.

Dated at Wellington this 27th day of February 2026



Minister for Social Development and Employment

Explanatory note

This note is not part of the instrument but is intended to indicate its general effect.

This instrument, which comes into force on 1 April 2026, amends a number of Ministerial Directions and Ministerial welfare programmes under the Social Security Act 2018:

Clause 4 and Schedule 1:

- makes several minor and technical amendments to the Direction setting approval criteria for specified early childhood education programmes for purposes of social obligations under the Social Security Act 2018 and the Ministerial Direction on Debt Recovery;
- adjusts the appropriate income limits in relation to Advance Payments of Instalments of Benefit to reflect the 2.91% increase in the net average wage over the previous year;
- adjusts standard costs, to the Direction in relation to Special Benefit to reflect a 3.11% increase in the New Zealand Consumers Price Index (CPI) from the December 2024 quarter to the December 2025 quarter (calculated using the CPI (All Groups)).

Clause 4 and Schedule 2:

- makes several minor and technical amendments to the Away from Home Allowance Programme, Emergency Housing Grants Programme, Flexi-wage Employment Assistance Programme and the Special Needs Grants Programme;

¹⁷ New Zealand Gazette 26 May 2021, No. 2021-go2032.

- adjusts certain rates and limits in relation to the Employment and Work Readiness Assistance Programme, Family Start and Early Start (Childcare Assistance) Programme, Guaranteed Childcare Assistance Payment Programme, New Employment Transition Grant Programme, Seasonal Work Assistance Programme, and Training Incentive Allowance Programme to reflect a 3.11% increase in the CPI from the December 2024 quarter to the December 2025 quarter (calculated using the CPI (All Groups));
- adjusts the appropriate income limits in relation to the Recoverable Assistance Programme and Special Needs Grants Programme to reflect the 2.91% increase in the net average wage over the previous year;
- amends the Home Help Programme, to adjust the hourly rate, that may be paid to a home helper, in line with the actual 1.91% increase in the adult minimum wage rate from 1 April 2026 (occurring in line with Cabinet's decision to increase the minimum wage by 2.0% and then round to the nearest 5 cents);
- amend the Special Transfer Allowance Programme 2000 to adjust average regional rents to reflect movements in rentals.