



19 August 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 22 July 2025, requesting information about Accommodation Supplement for temporary accommodation.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

1. Confirm advice given at client level that MSD does not provide the Accommodation Supplement for temporary accommodation.

My focus is single adults on the Support Living Benefit ie with long-term health conditions, disabilities or other impairments. The context is a city with one of the worst shortages in NZ for permanent accommodation with adverse winter conditions.

An email was sent to you on 29 July 2025 providing you with information regarding the Accommodation Supplement. I understand you followed up with an email received 5 August 2025 asking for a simple answer to your request regarding accommodation supplement and temporary accommodation.

Unfortunately, there is no 'simple answer'. Anyone who is applying for financial assistance from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) is assessed based on individual circumstances and legislation, such as (but not limited to), income and cash asset test.

If a person meets the qualifications for Accommodation Supplement, then the Accommodation Supplement can be paid to them for the period that the client rents, owns, boards or lodges, or is a joint tenant of the premises the accommodation costs relate to. Please note that this also includes boarding houses.

Information regarding the Accommodation Supplement qualifications can be found here: workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/qualifications.html

Emergency Housing and Transitional Housing for example are considered to be 'temporary accommodation.' Residents are not eligible to receive the Accommodation Supplement as the cost of those types of accommodation is paid through other financial assistance, such as the Emergency Housing Grant, or programmes.

As previously provided, there are examples in the Manuals and Procedures page (MAP) which is what staff use for policy guidelines and legislation to help with decision making when granting financial assistance. There are a range of products and services that staff navigate to help clients.

The MAP page regarding Accommodation Supplement can be found here: workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/examples-of-accommodation-supplement-for-emergency-and-transitional-housing.html

2. The specific legislative and other sources for this policy including publicly available information, manuals and other staff training materials.

I understand this part of your request to be in relation to your comment in question 1, that 'MSD does not provide the Accommodation Supplement for temporary accommodation'.

As noted above, where people are residing in emergency or transitional housing those costs are met through other means. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the policy and specific legislation and other training manuals you are requesting do not exist.

3. Policy and other papers addressing the issue of not providing Accommodation Supplement for temporary accommodation where no permanent accommodation is available, including the decision by the current Government to restrict the provision of Emergency Accommodation.

Policy papers/research/reports/briefings (including to Ministers and Parliament) requested include on the impact of not providing the Accommodation Supplement for temporary accommodation, given beneficiaries cannot afford to pay the costs of the private rental or other accommodation market from their benefit without this. This includes the impact of homelessness and ensuing detriment.

Noted that temporary accommodation is available in backpackers, cabins, caravans and similar in the off-season in the colder months where homelessness and rough sleeping is particularly detrimental to health, wellbeing and life. Such providers commonly limit their accommodation to one-month stays.

Your request regarding policy and other papers on the 'decision by the current Government to restrict the provision of Emergency Accommodation' would appear to be referring to the 'Tightening the Gateway into Emergency Housing' paper.

This paper has been released previously and I am also providing you with a list of links to papers that might be of interest to you on this subject:

- [09082024-request-for-three-reports-in-regards-to-social-housing.pdf](#)
- [HUD2024-003988-Cabinet-Paper-Initial-Steps-to-End-Large-Scale-EH_Redacted.pdf](#)
- [cabinet-paper-initial-steps-to-end-the-large-scale-use-of-emergency-housing.pdf](#)

Your inquiry concerning the impact of Accommodation Supplement not being paid due to 'temporary accommodation' as mentioned, is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist.

I reiterate, that Accommodation Supplement is available to those who meet the eligibility criteria, and that the Accommodation Supplement assists people to privately rent, board privately, stay in boarding houses or help with ownership costs.

Staff assess applicants' qualifications to financial assistance and grant or decline their applications accordingly, using the policy guidelines and legislation found on MAP. workandincome.govt.nz/map/index.html

4. Policy papers/reports/briefings etc on the downstream costs of homelessness compared to the cost of enabling people to obtain temporary accommodation.

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, however, is the lead agency for Homelessness and their latest updates can be found below, which includes the latest homelessness insights report – June 2025.

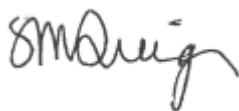
- [News - Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development](#)

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services