

Flexible Funding Programme

This welfare programme for special assistance is established and approved under section 101 of the Social Security Act 2018 by the Minister for Social Development.

Contents

1	Title	1
2	Commencement	1
3	Expiry	1
4	Purpose	1
5	Interpretation	1
7	Application requirements	3
8	Immediate need for assistance	3
9	Eligibility for assistance	4
10	Matters to be applied in exercise of discretion to grant assistance	4
11	Payment of assistance	5

Programme

1 Title

This programme is the Flexible Funding Programme.

2 Commencement

This programme comes into force on 2 November 2020.

3 Expiry

This programme expires on 2 November 2023.

4 Purpose

The purpose of this programme is to provide non-recoverable financial support to assist with meeting the educational, early childhood and wellbeing needs of families with children where additional costs are incurred because they are staying in Emergency Housing.

5 Interpretation

(1) In this programme, unless the context otherwise requires,—

Act means the Social Security Act 2018.

applicant means a person who has applied, or on whose behalf an application has been made, for flexible funding assistance under this programme.

cash assets, in relation to any person, means assets of that person and their spouse or partner (if any) that can be readily converted into cash and include—

(a) shares, stocks, debentures, bonus bonds, and other bonds; and

- (b) bank accounts, including fixed and term deposits with any bank, friendly society, credit union, or building society; and
- (c) money invested with or lent to any bank or other financial institution, or other person; and
- (d) the net equity held in any property or land not used as the person's home; and
- (e) building society shares; and
- (f) mortgage investments and other long-term loans; and
- (g) bills of exchange or promissory notes; and
- (h) the applicant's share in any partnership;

but does not include—

- (i) the motor vehicle principally used by the applicant for their personal use; or
- (j) a caravan, boat, or other vehicle—
 - (i) the net equity in which is less than \$2,000; or
 - (ii) which is used by the person or a member of their immediate family for day to day accommodation;
- (k) the personal effects of the person and their spouse or partner (if any); or
- (l) any payment or item declared not to be cash assets by Part 1 of Schedule 8 of the Social Security Regulations 2018; or
- (m) money the person has been required to contribute in lieu of rent and held to the credit of the person by a provider contracted by the department to provide short-term accommodation to the person and their household under the Government's short-term housing response scheme in Christchurch.

emergency housing grant has the same meaning as in clause 3.1 of the Special Needs Grants Programme, established and approved under section 124(1)(d) of the Social Security Act 1964 and saved by clause 21 of Schedule 1 of the Act as if it were a special assistance programme approved and established under section 101 of the Act.

Emergency Housing has the same meaning as in clause 3.1 of the Special Needs Grants Programme, established and approved under section 124(1)(d) of the Social Security Act 1964 and saved by clause 21 of Schedule 1 of the Act as if it were a special assistance programme approved and established under section 101 of the Act.

immediate family, in relation to an applicant means an applicant's dependent children and spouse or partner (if any), who are staying with the applicant in the same Emergency Housing.

income means—

- (a) income within the meaning of Part 2 of Schedule 3 of the Act; and
- (b) any New Zealand superannuation or veteran's pension received by the applicant or their spouse or partner (if any); and
- (c) the amount of any payments under the New Employment Transition Grant Programme or the Seasonal Work Assistance Programme or the Work Bonus Programme approved under section 124(1)(d) of the Social Security Act 1964 (and saved by clause 21 of Schedule 1 of the Act) made to the applicant or their spouse or partner (if any).

and in relation to an applicant means—

- (d) the applicant's income; and
 - (e) the income of the applicant's spouse or partner (if any).
- (2) If a term used in this programme is defined in the Act but not in this programme, the term has the meaning given by the Act.

6 Application of the Social Security Act 2018

- (1) Sections 8, 19, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 187 to 191, 197, 202, 203, 204, 205, 217, 218, 292, 293, 298, 301, 303, 346, 364, 366 to 368, 371 to 417, clauses 2, 9, 11 to 14, 16 of Schedule 3, and clauses 1 to 12 of Schedule 6 of the Act apply to the following as if the special assistance under this programme were a benefit under the Act:
- (a) this programme; and
 - (b) an applicant; and
 - (c) the spouse or partner of an applicant (if any).
- (2) Nothing in clause 6(1) limits or affects the application of any other provision of the Act.

7 Application requirements

Flexible funding assistance may be granted to an applicant if MSD is satisfied—

- (a) the applicant has an immediate need for assistance set out in clause 8; and
- (b) the applicant meets the eligibility criteria set out in clause 9; and
- (c) any supporting evidence reasonably required by MSD has been received.

8 Immediate need for assistance

An applicant has an immediate need for assistance if MSD is satisfied that—

- (a) the applicant or their immediate family has an immediate need for flexible funding assistance; and

- (b) the need has arisen because the applicant or their immediate family are staying in Emergency Housing; and
- (c) the applicant and their spouse or partner (if any) have insufficient resources available to them to meet the need; and
- (d) the need cannot be met by other assistance available; and
- (e) a grant would be consistent with the purpose of this programme.

9 Eligibility for assistance

- (1) An applicant is eligible for flexible funding assistance if—
 - (a) MSD has granted the applicant or their spouse or partner (if any) an emergency housing grant; and
 - (b) MSD is satisfied the applicant or their spouse or partner (if any) continues to meet the eligibility criteria for an emergency housing grant; and
 - (c) the applicant is caring for at least 1 dependent child; and
 - (d) the applicant and at least 1 dependent child are staying in the same Emergency Housing; and
 - (e) the flexible funding assistance relates to the period in which the applicant and their immediate family are staying in Emergency Housing; and
 - (f) the applicant's income is less than the appropriate amount in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Act; and
 - (g) the amount of the applicant's cash assets is less than the amount in clause 2, Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Act; and
 - (h) the applicant is ordinarily resident in New Zealand.
- (2) Notwithstanding clauses 9(1)(f) and (g), an applicant is eligible for flexible funding assistance under this programme if they were or would be granted an emergency housing grant under clause 14A.3 of the Special Needs Grants Programme.

10 Matters to be applied in exercise of discretion to grant assistance

In exercising its discretion to grant flexible funding assistance under clause 7, MSD must have regard to—

- (a) the purpose of the programme under clause 4; and
- (b) the extent to which a decision to grant or not grant flexible funding assistance would:
 - (i) cause serious hardship to the applicant or their immediate family; and
 - (ii) impact the applicant or their immediate family's ability to secure suitable alternative housing; and

- (c) whether the applicant or their spouse or partner (if any) could reasonably be expected to have made provision for the need; and
- (d) the amount of money appropriated by Parliament for the purpose of granting assistance under this programme.

11 Payment of assistance

MSD may, in its discretion, pay flexible funding assistance:—

- (a) to a provider engaged by MSD to provide goods or services for which the grant was made; or
- (b) to a person facilitating the provision of goods or services approved by MSD for the purposes of this programme.



Minister for Social Development

At Wellington this 3rd day of August 2020

Explanatory Note

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

This programme, which comes into effect on 2 November 2020, provides non-recoverable financial assistance to families with children who are staying in an Emergency Housing and who have immediate needs arising from living in that accommodation.