



1 February 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 14 December 2023, requesting information about emergency housing and benefits from the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

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.

#### ***What is the type of benefits eligible to receive emergency housing if a individual qualifies as having a need for emergency housing***

A client does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify for an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG); however, they must meet all qualifications, including an income and asset test.

Further information about the qualifications for emergency housing is available here:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/qualifications-for-emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/qualifications-for-emergency-housing.html).

Further information about the income and asset limits for emergency housing can be found at the links below:

- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/income-limit.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/income-limit.html).
- [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/cash-asset-limits.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/cash-asset-limits.html).

Before I respond to your next question, you may find the following information about Emergency Housing and the Accommodation Supplement (AS) useful.

### **Emergency Housing**

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing and many people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing driving up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

EH SNG is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended dependant on individual circumstances.

After these seven nights Work and Income arrange another appointment with the client to discuss their housing situation and if another grant is required. The Ministry works hard to support people in emergency housing to secure a long-term housing solution, either through public housing or private rental accommodation. Other options including transitional housing can also be explored as an option depending on availability and the individual's circumstances.

The Ministry recognises that motels are not a long-term solution or the solution that we want to deliver for people who are potentially in a vulnerable situation. They provide a short-term solution while more sustainable options are progressed. More information about EH SNGs is available at the following link:

[www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/nowhere-to-stay/emergency-housing.html)

Some people may struggle to access suitable housing due to a lack of available supply or they simply may not be able to meet the high cost of housing which may result in them receiving EH SNG support for an extended period of time.

For people with high and complex needs, it can sometimes be challenging to identify suitable long-term housing, which can lead to longer stays in emergency housing. Work and Income work closely with these people to see what can be done to ensure that once they have a home of their own, they have the skills to sustain it, and the support they need to keep it.

The entry threshold and maximum rates for AS is available on the Ministry's website and can be viewed at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/accommodation-supplement-tables/jobseeker-support-current-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/accommodation-supplement-tables/jobseeker-support-current-01.html).

### **Accommodation Supplement**

AS which replaced the Accommodation Benefit from 1 July 1993, is a non-taxable payment to assist people with limited income and limited cash assets to meet their accommodation costs. Assistance is available to help pay rent, board or costs of home ownership. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to be assessed to qualify for AS. It is calculated using a formula that considers geographical location, family size, accommodation costs, income and tenure type (renting, boarding or home ownership).

### ***What is the average rate of area 1 in Auckland for individuals who receive job seeker support with no children and also accommodation supplement under the emergency housing scheme***

EH SNG is last resort assistance for clients with an immediate emergency housing need.

Clients staying in emergency housing are not eligible to receive AS, and the Ministry therefore cannot respond to this part of your request. However, we have interpreted this part of your request to be for the average weekly payment for AS

for an individual beneficiary on Jobseeker Support in the Auckland Region Territorial Local Authorities (TLA) as at year end 2023, broken down by quarter.

Please see the table immediately below which shows this information.

**Table: Average weekly payment for Accommodation Supplement for an individual beneficiary on Jobseeker Support in the Auckland Region Territorial Local Authorities as at year 2023, broken down by quarter.**

Quarter Ending	Average Weekly Rate
March 2023	\$115.60
June 2023	\$116.18
September 2023	\$116.66
December 2023	\$116.39

**Tables Notes:**

- AS is paid weekly for rent, mortgage or board costs.
- Territorial local authority is estimated based on the client's address.

***What is the average rate of rent required to pay from a individual on a benefit after the initial 7 days under the emergency housing scheme on job seeker support***

Clients must pay 25% of their net income or 25% of the appropriate Jobseeker Support rate (whichever is higher) from their eighth night in emergency housing.

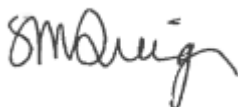
You can find more information on emergency housing contribution and calculations at the following link: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/emergency-housing-contribution.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/emergency-housing/emergency-housing-contribution.html).

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](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request regarding emergency housing and benefits, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
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