MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Families Package Final Report 2023

Findings for Māori

Key Findings

In our work to monitor and evaluate the Families Package, we produced results for Māori wherever possible. This final report draws together our findings looking at the difference the Families Package made, either on its own, or in combination with reforms introduced since the Families Package. It includes findings for Māori, and more general findings that may be of interest to Māori readers.

The Families Package increased income for 71% of all families with children with a Māori parent or caregiver. Māori mothers with pēpē who were qualified for the new Best Start tax credit had the largest gains.

Looking at the combined effect of the Families Package and other 2018-2022 income support changes, in real terms, **total incomes after housing costs of people in all ethnic groups supported by main benefits were, on average, 43% higher in 2022 than in 2018.**

Child poverty measures for tamariki Māori fell. This continued a longer period of decline in the proportion of tamariki Māori in poverty and experiencing material hardship.

These positive effects on economic wellbeing occurred without notable impacts on employment and earnings overall. There was also **no evidence that the increase in the maximum Accommodation Supplement led to a notable increase in rents charged to Māori tenants** receiving Accommodation Supplement.

Our findings indicate that income adequacy and indexation of payments are areas for continued focus. These findings are informing policy reviews and service delivery improvements. New research projects getting underway are building the evidence base on income adequacy and costs for whānau affected by health conditions and/or disability.

Other areas for continued focus include improving take-up and awareness of income support payments, and improving people's experiences of claiming payments. These are current areas of focus for MSD and Inland Revenue.

The Families Package was introduced in 2018 to help improve incomes for low and middle-income families with children

The Families Package was made up of the following changes:

Boosting incomes of low- and middle-income families by increasing the **Family Tax Credit by up to $26.81** and raising the **Working for Families** abatement threshold on 1 July 2018.

Helping older New Zealanders and people receiving a main benefit heat their homes by introducing a **Winter Energy Payment of up to $31.82 on 1 July 2018 of up to $31.82 on 1 July 2018.**

Helping families in a child's early years and providing more choice around working and caring in a child's first three years of life by introducing a **Best Start tax credit of $60 a week** (replacing the Parental Tax Credit) and increasing **paid parental leave** from 18 to 26 weeks from 1 July 2018.

Increasing the **Accommodation Supplement by up to $80** and **Accommodation Benefit by $20 from 1 April 2018,** by implementing changes that had been announced in the 2017 Budget.

Increasing financial assistance for carers by increasing the rate of **Orphan's Benefit, Unsupported Child's Benefit** and **Foster Care Allowance by $20.31 a week on 1 July 2018.**

Reinstating the **Independent Earner Tax Credit. This provides up to** $520 a year to people earning between $24,000 and $48,000 who do not benefit from Working for Families tax credits or other income support payments.

Since 2018, other income support reforms have been introduced with the aim of increasing incomes, reducing child poverty, and improving wellbeing. These have included increases to main benefits, increases to the income thresholds above which benefits begin to abate, and removal of section 192 deductions (formerly section 70A) that had applied to the benefits of sole parents who did not identify the other parent of their child and apply for child support.

Work looking at reforms since the Families Package is ongoing.

The Families Package helped lift incomes for Māori

However, the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns (2020 and 2021), rising costs of living, and the 2023 cyclones, have made achieving some of the Families Package's goals more challenging.

While whānau are the cornerstone of Māori society, families and individuals tend to be the primary focus for public policy, including income support policy. For this reason, most of our work to date looks at families and individuals as they are defined for income support purposes (single people with and without children under 18, and couples with and without children under 18). Upcoming projects will be looking at whānau, and whānau wellbeing.

In its first year, an estimated

71%

of families with children with a Māori parent or caregiver received Families Package payments.

In comparison, the proportion who received Families Package payments was:

71%

for families with a Pacific parent or caregiver.

47%

for families without a Māori or Pacific parent or caregiver.

54%

overall.

More detailed findings are available here and here.

On average, families with a Māori parent or caregiver who received the Families Package in its first year received

$59p/w

more in Families Package payments.

In comparison, the average increase in Families Package payments for receiving families was:

$66p/w for families with a Pacific parent or caregiver.

$51p/w for families without a Māori or Pacific parent or caregiver.

$55p/w overall.

Across all families, three quarters of the increase in average Families Package payments came from Family Tax Credit and Accommodation Supplement.

In the winter months of 2022, the Winter Energy Payment helped around

166,000

Māori receiving a main benefit, New Zealand Superannuation or Veteran's Pension.

There were extra income gains for families with pēpē

Early-years changes in the Families Package:

- a new Best Start tax credit of $60p/w for each new pēpē born after July 2018 until they turn one. Best Start is then available to low- and middle-income families on an income-tested basis until the child turns three
- a four-week extension to the maximum length of paid parental leave for parents with pēpē born after July 2018, and another four-week extension in July 2020 (taking the maximum paid parental leave period from 18 weeks to 26 weeks).

Māori mothers with pēpē who qualified for the early-years changes, gained an additional

$9,600

in the period from six months before their child's birth to their child's third birthday, on average.

This is equivalent to an extra 13% increase in financial assistance, when compared to mothers with pēpē born before the Families Package changes.

The average gains were larger for Māori and Pacific mothers than for non-Māori, non-Pacific mothers

$8,800 for Pacific

$5,100 for non-Māori non-Pacific

$6,600 overall

More detailed findings from this study will likely be published in **Policy Quarterly** in November 2023.

Looking at the first six months after the birth, for Māori mothers around half the increase in financial assistance came from increased paid parental leave income and half came from the new Best Start tax credit. Most of the additional financial assistance for non-Māori, non-Pacific mothers/first parents came from increases in paid parental leave income, and this was the group that appeared to have a small increase in time off work and at home as a result of the early-years changes.

More detailed findings are available **here**
off work and at home as a result of the early-years changes.

These income gains offer opportunities for researchers to generate new evidence on the causal effects of increased financial assistance in children's early years on inequalities, and on lifecourse outcomes for tamariki.

The total incomes received by people supported by main benefits have increased

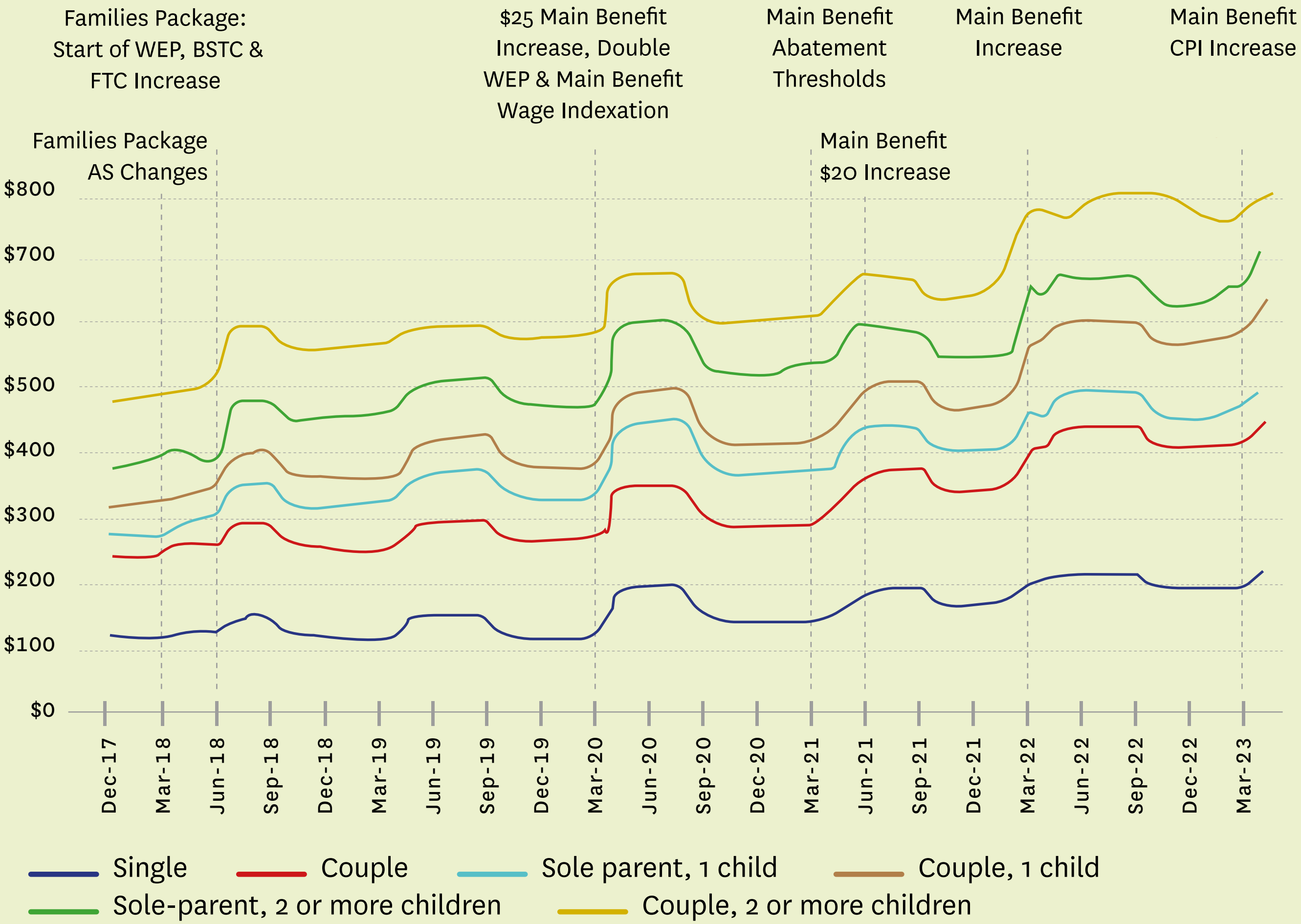
MSD has begun to report annually on these trends. Total incomes include benefit payments, Working for Families tax credits, and earned and other income.

The first annual report shows how the 2018 Families Package and 2020-2023 reforms increased the average incomes of different family types supported by main benefits.
The income gains were largest and occurred earliest for families with children.

In real terms, total incomes after housing costs of people supported by main benefits were, on average, 48% higher in 2023 than at the end of 2017.

More detailed findings are available [here.]

Average total incomes of people receiving main benefits after housing costs, not inflation adjusted.



Comparing 2023 total incomes by ethnic group shows that among families with children receiving main benefits, families with a Māori or Pacific caregiver tend to have higher total incomes after housing costs. This may reflect factors such as larger family sizes. Single Māori clients have lower total incomes after housing costs compared to other ethnic groups, which could reflect regional trends, population demographics relating to age and benefit type, and different levels of take-up for different main benefits, and for supplementary and hardship assistance. Further analysis is required to understand the drivers of these differences.

Child poverty measures fell in the three years that followed the Families Package

This continued a longer period of decline.

Steps towards reducing child poverty continue.

The 2021 Budget increased the weekly main benefit rates by $32 to 55 per adult, bringing them in-line with a key recommendation of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group. Some of this increase was introduced in July 2021 and the rest took effect in April 2022.

Other initiatives have been introduced to address material hardship and directly help children and their families in areas such as housing, employment, and direct services like food in schools and the Care in the Community welfare response to COVID-19.

The Government has made reducing child poverty a priority. In the Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018, the Government sets out three primary measures of child poverty and six supplementary measures. These measures are considered together because no single measure tells a complete story of child poverty.

The primary measures are:

The number of children in households with incomes much lower than a typical ('fixed line') 2018 household, **after they pay for housing costs.**

in 2021/22

15.4%

of all children were living in poverty on this measure, down from 22.8% in 2017/18.

The number of children in households with much lower incomes than a typical household, **before they pay for housing costs.**

in 2021/22

12.0%

of all children were living in poverty on this measure, down from 16.5% in 2017/18.

A measure of lack of access to the essential items for living – **material hardship.**

in 2021/22

10.3%

of all children were living in poverty on this measure, down from 13.3% in 2017/18.

8 of the 9 measures of child poverty for all children had statistically significant decreases over the four years from 2017/18 – the baseline year – to 2021/22. Child poverty rates for all children were unchanged between 2020/21 and 2022/21. **Most of the fall in income-based measures occurred between 2017/18 and 2018/19.**

The size of the survey tracking child poverty rates was smaller than usual in 2021/22 because of Covid-19. Estimates for Pacific children were subject to greater levels of uncertainty due to a particularly small number of surveyed households.

Child poverty statistics now include effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (up until June 2021). The longer-term economic impacts of the pandemic and the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, together with rising accommodation costs and costs of living, have increased financial pressure on families in the period since June 2021.

More detailed findings are available **here.**

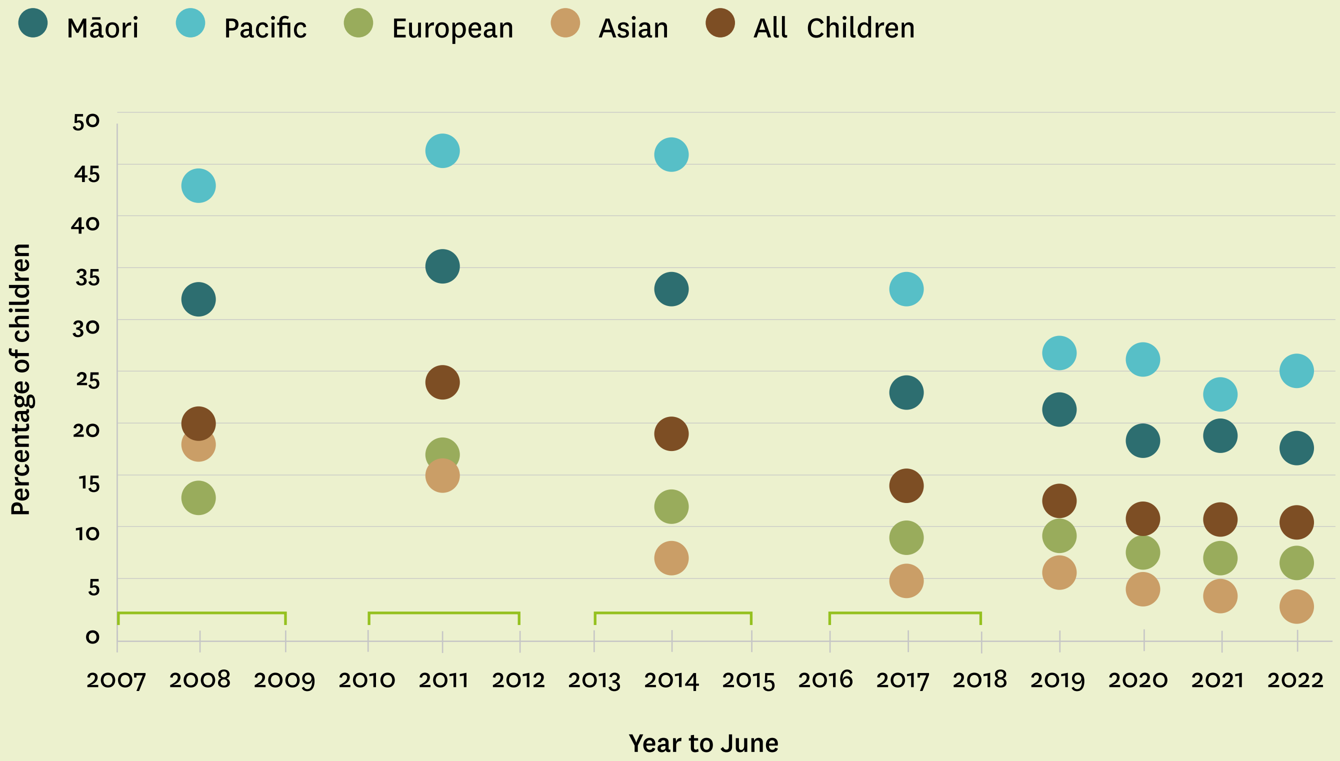
The percentage of tamariki Māori experiencing material hardship has declined over time

Stats NZ reporting has included ethnic groups for the last four years and disability status for the last three. This means we are unable to see how the fall in child poverty between 2017/18 and 2018/19 following the introduction of the Families Package affected these different groups in Stats NZ's monitoring. However between 2018/19 and 2021/22 there was a statistically significant fall in child poverty rates for tamariki Māori on the after-housing-costs measure.

Longer-term series from MSD's child poverty monitoring show **continuation of a longer period of decline in the percentages of tamariki Māori in poverty and experiencing material hardship.**

Children in households with at least one disabled person are three times more likely to experience material hardship than children in households with no disabled people. More research is needed to understand how these disparities affect tamariki Māori.

Percentage of children living in households experiencing material hardship.



Note: Data for these and after-housing-costs trends are on pages 91 and 112 of [MSD's child poverty monitoring](#) and [here.](#)

In 2020/21,

1 in 5 tamariki Māori

1 in 4 Pacific children

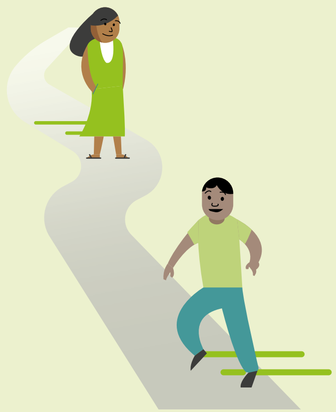
and

1 in 5 children impacted by disability

lived in households experiencing material hardship

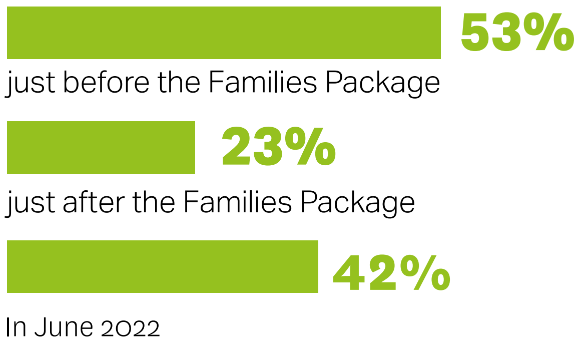
These rates compared with

1 in 10 for all children



Increases to the Accommodation Supplement led to increases in Māori recipients' after-rent income

The proportion of Māori Accommodation Supplement recipients receiving the maximum payment for their area was:



The rebound tells us that some of the income gains have been offset by increased accommodation costs since the Families Package was introduced.

From 1 April 2018, the maximum Accommodation Supplement rates were increased across all areas, and more places were zoned as areas qualifying for higher possible maximum rates.

An important question is:

Did the Accommodation Supplement changes contribute to the increase in accommodation costs?

We commissioned Motu Economic and Public Policy Research to look at this question. They used unevenness in the size of the 2018 increase in maximum payments across different areas as the basis for their study. They looked at what happened to total accommodation support and what happened to rents paid by Accommodation Supplement recipients on each side of the boundaries between areas that got larger increases in maximum rates and areas that got smaller increases.

Their results suggest **the 2018 increases did not lead to a notable extra increase in rents, on top of rent increases that were occurring anyway.** Overall, around 90% of the extra increase in assistance was captured by Accommodation Supplement recipients as an extra increase in after-rent income.

This broad finding held for Māori Accommodation Supplement recipients – 87% of the extra increase in assistance for Māori was captured by Accommodation Supplement recipients as an extra increase in after-rent income.

Although recipients on the side with larger increases in maximum rates were estimated to have average 'raw' rent increases relative to recipients on the other side, once changes in the composition of recipients and the boundary areas were controlled for, these increases were very small. There was no evidence of any effect on the rent of recipients who didn't move house.

A summary of findings is **here.**
More detailed findings are available **here.**

Increases to the Accommodation Supplement did not cause notable rent increases

Taken together with the new findings from the Motu study, longer-term trends suggest Accommodation Supplement increases are not an important driver of the growth in rents that is occurring.

This plot shows long-term trends based on:

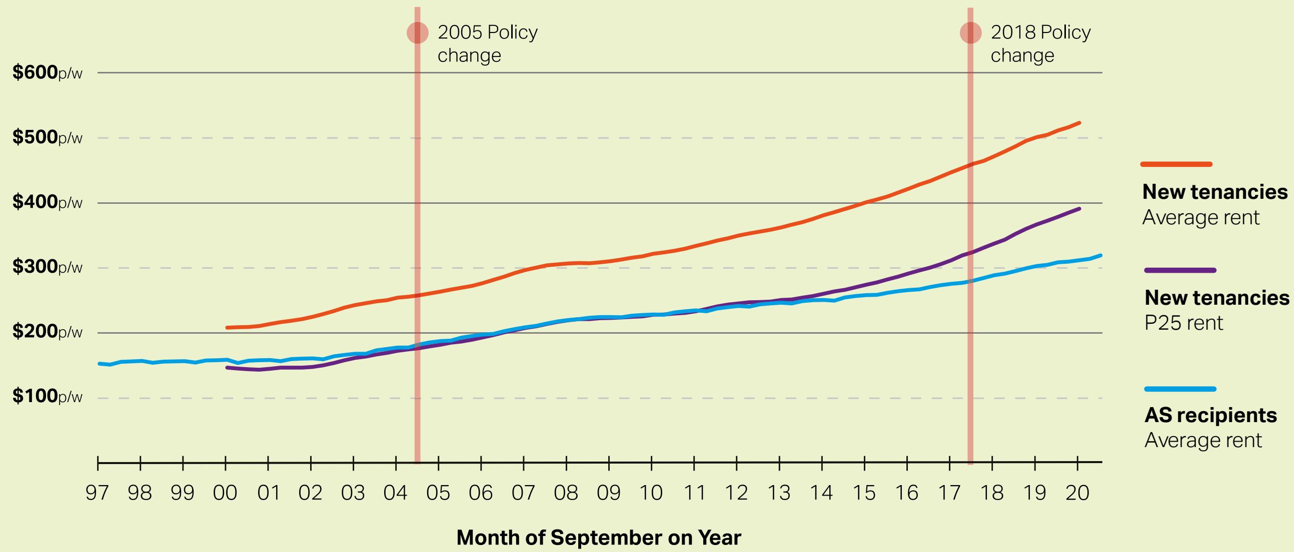
- rents paid by Accommodation Supplement (AS) recipients
- rents paid in new tenancies, from Tenancy Bonds data – the 25th percentile (P25) marks the top of the bottom quarter of new tenancy rents.

The average rent of AS recipients corresponds closely to the 25th percentile of new tenancy rents until about 2013. After that the 25th percentile of new tenancy rents increased faster than the average rent of AS recipients.

Over the 20 years to September 2020, the average annual increase in rents for AS recipients was 3.4%, compared to 5.0% for the 25th percentile of new tenancy rents, and 4.7% for the average new tenancy rents.

Accommodation Supplement increases do not appear to be an important driver of the long-term growth in rents that is occurring. There is no noticeable change around the time of 2018 changes, or around the time of the previous 2005 adjustment to Accommodation Supplement maxima. Instead, it appears trend increases in rents started 2-3 years before each of these dates.

Average Weekly Accommodation Supplement and New Tenancy Rents - All areas



A summary of findings is here.
More detailed findings are available here.

The Winter Energy Payment had some positive effects

Another study by the Motu researchers estimated the impact of the Winter Energy Payment on a range of outcomes. The Winter Energy Payment is payable to people receiving New Zealand Superannuation (NZS), Veteran's Pension (VP), or a working-age main benefit.

It is relatively small ($20–$32 pw in winter months) and might therefore be expected to have small effects. Because the sample sizes in the surveys available for estimation of effects were also small, it proved challenging to detect statistically significant effects.

Although only a few of the estimated effects were statistically significant, the direction of results suggest that during the winter months recipients spent more on energy, required less hardship assistance, and experienced improvements in some health and wellbeing outcomes.

It is not clear whether these results also hold for Māori. The Motu researchers were not able to estimate impacts because of additional estimation challenges due to small sample sizes.

Estimated effects in 2018 and 2019 (statistically significant results in **bold**)	Where at least one household member received NZS or VP	Where at least one household member received a working-age main benefit
The share of household spending that went on energy	Up	Up
% saying they put up with feeling cold	Down	Up
% saying their house was damp and mouldy	Down	**Up**
% saying their house was cold	Up	**Up**
% saying they had difficulty paying utility bills	Up	Down
% saying they would struggle with an unexpected bill	Down	**Down**
% saying they had not enough income to meet their needs	Down	**Down**
Overall life satisfaction	Up	Down
% that received hardship assistance	Down	**Down**
% with a hospitalisation that could be related to housing conditions	Down	Down
Length of these hospital stays	Up	Mixed
Cost of these hospital stays	Up	Down
Rate of moving onto a main benefit	n/a	Up
Rate of moving off a main benefit	n/a	Down
$ Earned income from wages and salaries	Down	Down

The Winter Energy Payment changed financial incentives by reducing the gap between income on benefit and in work in the winter months. The direction of results suggests people responded with higher rates of benefit receipt and lower earnings in winter, but none of the effects were statistically significant.

A separate study prepared by researchers from the Social Wellbeing Agency has estimated the effect of being eligible for the the Winter Energy Payment in 2020, when the payment was doubled as part of the intital response to COVID-19. Results from that study show statistically significant positive impacts on the percentage saying they had enough income to meet their needs, and how people rated their family's wellbeing.

More detailed findings are available here and here.

The increased abatement threshold for Working for Families had no impact on earnings

Understanding people's responsiveness to different financial incentives in income support settings is important for policy development.

We commissioned Motu Economic and Public Policy Research to look at whether parents responded to changed work incentives that resulted from increasing the abatement threshold for Working for Families as part of the Families Package.

The study focused on only one aspect of the changes in financial incentives that occurred with the Families Package.

This is because with no evidence that people responded overall, it is unlikely that any effect would be found for sub-groups.

The Families Package increased the abatement threshold at which Working for Families tax credits begin to reduce

from $36,350 to $42,700,

and increased the abatement rate

from 22.5% to 25%

It also increased payment rates. These changes were effective from 1 July 2018.

The change in the threshold allowed parents to earn more before the maximum Family Tax Credit began to be reduced. The increased abatement rate also reduced the value of each dollar earned beyond the threshold, making it more costly to cross the threshold.

If parents responded to these changes in 'effective marginal tax rates', we would expect to see a bunching of incomes around abatement thresholds and a shift in this bunching from old to new thresholds.

The study found no evidence of this occurring, or any indication of responsiveness to other Working for Families thresholds. This held for both wage and salary earners and those with self-employment income, and for both sole and two-parent families.

In contrast to the lack of bunching at the Working for Families thresholds, there was clear evidence of bunching in parents' incomes around the top two personal income tax rate thresholds. This suggests the method used by the researchers was able to identify labour supply responses if they existed. Effects were not estimated by ethnic group due to the absence of any indication of effects in the overall analysis.

Results from this study differ from findings from the United States, where there is evidence of bunching around Earned Income Tax Credit thresholds, especially for self-employed parents.

Evidence of bunching tends to be found for high visibility and easily understood thresholds which have large impacts on disposable incomes. The Working for Families thresholds may not share these characteristics. This might be in part because of the relative complexity of the system of payments, making it difficult for parents to identify the effective marginal tax rates they face.

People may respond more to other changes in financial incentives to work.

More detailed findings are available **here**.

Working for Families eligibility has decreased over the longer term. Take-up rates were relatively stable

If take-up rates are low, efforts to use income support payments to reduce child poverty and hardship and promote parents' employment may be less effective.

Because poverty, hardship, and employment affect wellbeing, low take-up can undermine broader outcomes too.

As part of our work to monitor and evaluate the income support reforms, we are estimating rates of eligibility for and take-up of different payments in the Aotearoa New Zealand income support system.

Our estimates should be viewed as approximations. We don't have all the information needed to accurately calculate eligibility and take-up rates.

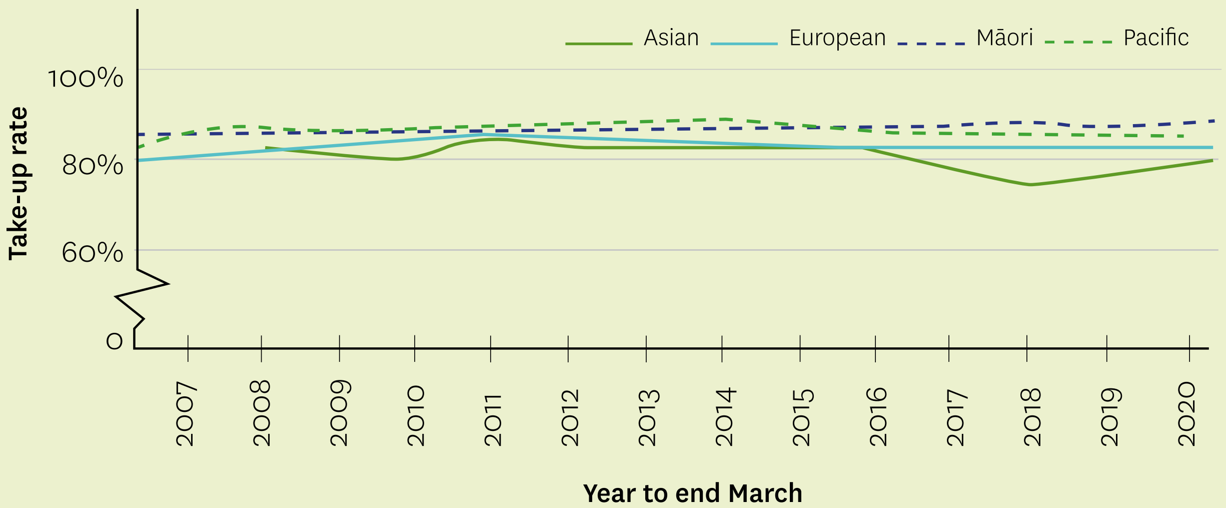
The estimated proportion of families eligible for Family Tax Credit and/or In-work Tax Credit fell from 72% in the 2010 tax year to 49% in the 2020 tax year.

This fall occurred as income from employment grew, more forms of income became assessable for determining entitlement, and Working for Families payments became more targeted to families on lower incomes. The exception to the downward trend was the 2019 tax year. In July 2018, the Families Package increased Working for Families payment levels and increased the abatement threshold and abatement rates. These changes increased the number of families eligible, and the eligibility rate temporarily rebounded.

The estimated proportion of eligible families who takeup the payments appears to have been relatively stable over time. Take-up rate estimates range between 83% and 90% overall. These estimates are within the range found for comparable payments in other countries.

Families with a Pacific or Māori parent or caregiver had the highest estimated eligibility and take-up rates, reflecting the larger family size on average, and lower average income levels. Take-up was close to 100% for eligible families with main benefit income, and ranged between 75% and 85% for eligible families without main benefit income.

Estimated take-up over time by ethnic group(s) of parents and caregivers.



More detailed findings are available **here**.

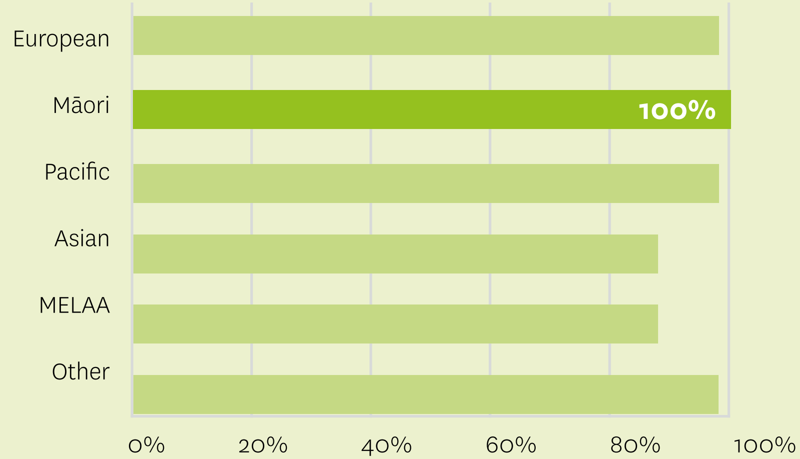
Eligibility and take-up rates are high for the Best Start tax credit

All families with children born or due on or after 1 July 2018 who meet residence requirements can receive Best Start for some time.

An estimated 100% of pepe Maori born in the first 15 months from 1 July 2018 were eligible for Best Start. This compares with an estimated eligibility rate of 96.5% for children overall. Families of the remaining 3.5% were estimated to be ineligible on residence grounds.

There were lower than average eligibility rates for children of Middle Eastern, Latin American or African (MELAA) ethnicity or from 'Other' ethnic groups. This reflected higher proportions not meeting residency requirements.

Percent of children estimated to be eligible by ethnic group(s) of child

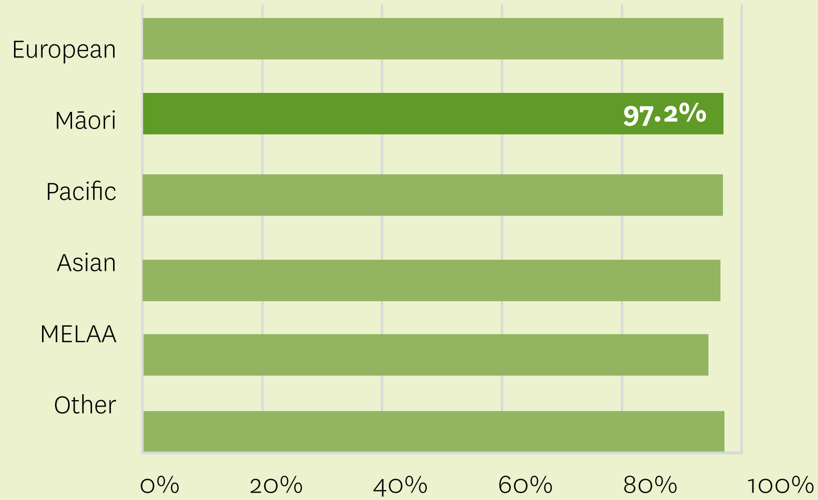


Best Start appeared to be taken up for 97.2% of pēpē Māori in eligible families and 96.9% of children in eligible families overall.

The estimated take-up rate was slightly lower than average for children with a parent or caregiver who had migrated from China or had refugee status, and for children of MELAA ethnicity.

The high take-up overall is likely to be due to the near-universal nature of the payment and the ease of the application process. Parents and caregivers were invited to apply for Best Start as they registered the birth of their child through a new 'SmartStart' online tool.

Percent of eligible children with take-up by ethnic group(s) of child



Income adequacy for example families improved but adequacy remains an area for focus

We updated the 'Example Families and Budgets' analysis prepared by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group to 2022.

Incomes and costs were calculated for six example families of different types. Several different work and housing scenarios were considered for each family.

The work scenarios included the adults not working, working part time, or working full time. The housing scenarios included living in public housing, private rental housing, or shared rental housing.

The families' estimated core living costs, and participation costs that include some social participation such as holidays to see family and low-cost activities for children, were compared to their income in each scenario.

More detailed findings are available **here**.

Between 2018 (after the Families Package) and 2022:

Incomes increased by around $150 - $160 for single person example families and by $190 - $300 for example families with children. As a result, all example families saw a reduction in the level of their income deficits, or an increase in their income surplus relative to costs, and some shifted from deficit to surplus.

Sole parent example families saw particularly large gains in income because they had a child under 3 years old – this meant they received an additional $65 a week through the Best Start payment tax credit.

However, incomes remain below the level needed to meet core costs for most example families when on benefit

Sole parent families could meet core costs in most scenarios and participation costs when working.

Couples with children had the largest deficits of all family types and could only meet core costs when one or both parents were working. They could not cover participation costs in any scenario.

Single people without children could not cover their core costs, except when living in public housing or working full time.

And, benefit incomes after housing costs continue to be below after-housing-cost poverty lines

One commonly used poverty threshold is 50 percent of median after-housing-cost income. The incomes of the example families receiving benefits were below this poverty threshold.

The incomes needed to cover the example families' costs are around the same level as current after-housing-costs measures of poverty.

Costs, wages, and payment rates are as of April 2022

Where available, costs for this analysis are calculated using the same approach as used by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group. Where updated information is not available, the costs used in that analysis are adjusted for inflation, using either the Beneficiary Household Living-cost price Index, or the Consumer Price Index, to bring them up to date.

The gap between incomes on benefit and in work narrowed, but remained higher than in 2003

Poor financial incentives to work can result in poverty 'traps', preventing people from moving into work and increasing their income. They can also affect the incentives to increase the level of hours worked or decisions to exit work, particularly for those in low-paid or precarious work. Providing financial incentives that support employment is therefore an important poverty alleviation tool.

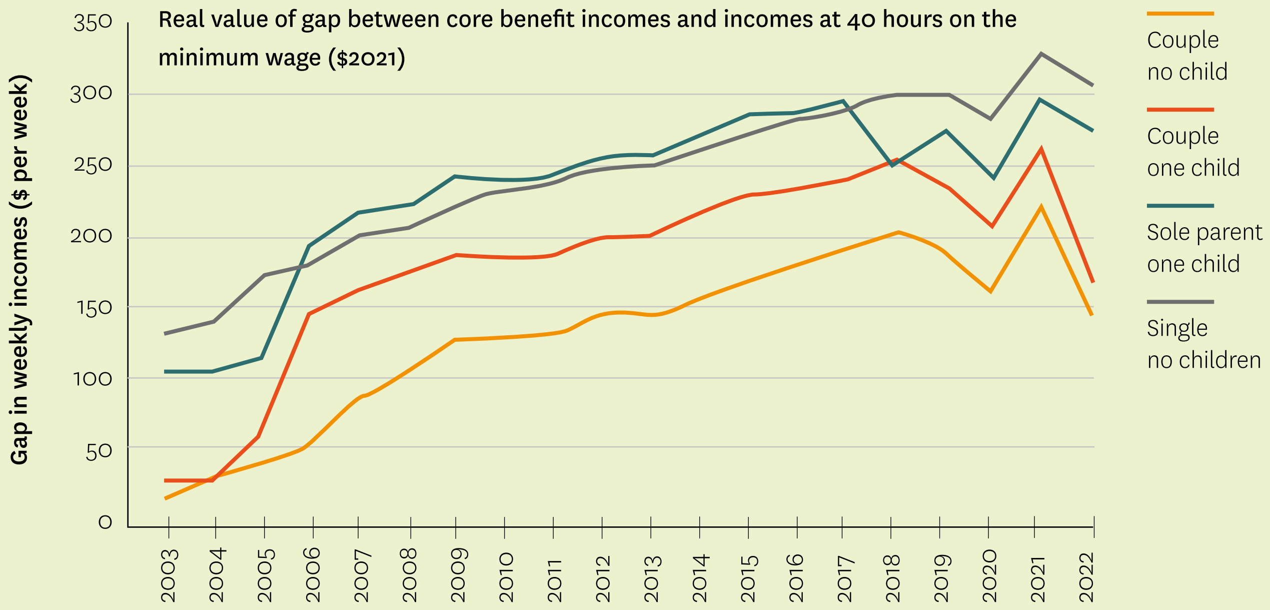
We compared the incomes of people on benefit with those in low-wage work (i.e. the gap between benefit and work) between 2003 and 2022 to demonstrate how this aspect of the financial incentives to work has changed over time. We also considered how housing and childcare costs affect the financial incentives to work and compared trends with other OECD countries.

More detailed findings are available [here.]()

The gap between benefit and in-work incomes, and the financial incentives to work, increased for most of the 2003-2022 period, particularly for single people without children. The Families Package and recent main benefit increases reduced the gap, and for couples with children the gap went back to 2006/07 levels due to main benefit rates increasing by more for couples. A large reason for the increases in incentives to work between 2003 and 2022 is that wages outpaced inflation, with main benefits only increasing by inflation between 2003 and 2016.

While financial incentives to work have increased since 2003, there are still reasonably poor financial incentives to increase the level of hours worked for many low-income families. This is because when earnings increase, their income support payments are withdrawn relatively quickly.

High childcare costs and low take-up of in-work assistance can also have a negative impact on financial incentives to increase hours of work.



The 'replacement rate' trends observed in NZ are broadly comparable with the average trend across OECD countries. Replacement rates show the level of out-of-work incomes relative to the level of in-work incomes.

MSD is working to improve the experiences of Māori clients

Findings from our 'baseline synthesis' of client experience research from before the Families Package of client experience research were similar to themes from MSD's 'Voices' consultations in 2018 and 2019, and from the Welfare Expert Advisory Group's 2018 consultations.

Lack of awareness of entitlements, the complexity of the application process, lack of alignment with Māori and Pacific values and culture, and the inadequacy of assistance provided by the income support system emerged as key issues for recipients before the Families Package.

These findings affirm the importance of **MSD's Te Pae Tawhiti shifts and Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity, our Māori and Pacific Strategies and Action Plans.**

More detailed findings are available here and here.

Te Pae Tawhiti and the Te Pae Tata Strategy and Action Plan set a new direction for MSD.

In the years since the Families Package was introduced, MSD has developed and implemented our strategic direction, Te Pae Tawhiti – Our Future, which is supported by Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity, our Māori and Pacific Strategies and Action Plans. These sit at the heart of the work we need to do to help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent.

The Ministry's Statement of Intent refers to three key shifts, which we collectively refer to as **Te Pae Tawhiti – Our Future.**

Te Pae Tawhiti signals the strategic intentions and the direction the organisation is heading towards to achieve better outcomes for all New Zealanders.

Te Pae Tata, our Māori Strategy and Action Plan, contributes to Te Pae Tawhiti by setting out how we intend to achieve better outcomes specifically for Māori.

Te Pae Tata embraces the same key shifts, however each shift is defined for Māori in accordance with what whānau, hapū and iwi have told us we need to be better at.

Key shift 1

Mana manaaki

A positive experience every time

We will respect Māori

Key shift 2

Kotahitanga

Partnering for greater impact

We will trust Māori

Key shift 3

Kia Takatū Tātou

Supporting long-term social and economic development

We will help Māori to succeed.

Measures of success for Te Pae Tata are whānau-centred. We want all Māori to experience good health, success, aroha, economic security, and connectedness. Implementing the Families Package and other income support changes contributes to these outcomes.

Next steps

Our next work-programme update will be released in early 2024.

We are working to understand how different groups of people experienced the income support changes.

A small, in-depth qualitative study has been listening to **young Māori and Pacific mothers** talk about their experiences.

A nationally representative survey is asking low-and middle-income people about their awareness, understanding, take-up, and experience of income support payments. This is a joint MSD-Inland Revenue study. It has a focus on producing robust evidence, including for Māori.

In 2023, we will be gathering results from these and other studies together in a second synthesis of client experience research covering the period since the Families Package. This synthesis will include the experiences of Māori clients.

New projects are looking at the relationship between income support reforms, incomes, and wellbeing.

In 2024, work will start on an evaluation of the **Child Support pass on policy** that will be implemented in July 2023.

We have commissioned a study that will **explore the use of the 2018 Stats NZ Te Kupenga survey** to understand the relationship between income and wellbeing for Māori. Te Kupenga is an important survey resource that can help us to look at measures relevant to whānau wellbeing. It can help us establish a baseline for assessing changes in wellbeing when a repeat Te Kupenga survey is available after the 2028 Census.

Other projects underway include more research on financial incentives, take-up, and understanding the circumstances of people with health conditions and disabled people.

Work is underway looking at how responsive people on main benefits were to the **changes in financial incentives that occurred when main benefit abatement thresholds were raised** in 2020 and 2021.

Work is also underway to estimate **eligibility and take-up rates for Accommodation Supplement.**

Child poverty monitoring shows that we need to better understand the circumstances of **people with health conditions and disabled people**, and **families with children with health conditions or disabilities.**

Over the course of 2023 and 2024 we will use survey and administrative data, and in depth interviews with those impacted by health conditions and/or disabilities, to help fill some evidence gaps. These studies will include insights for Māori.

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