

# Housing Broker and Ready to Rent Initiatives: Process Evaluation

## Overview

In 2022, MSD commissioned an evaluation of the Housing Broker and Ready to Rent initiatives which were respectively set up or expanded in 2020 in response to the **Homelessness Action Plan**. The evaluation was carried out by the **Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit**.

The **aim of the evaluation** was to confirm formally that the Housing Broker and Ready to Rent initiatives are helping people to find accommodation in the private rental market and to understand whether the initiatives are being implemented as intended.



## The Housing Broker service aims to:

- Build connections with local property owners, property managers and investors
- Match people in receipt of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants or on the Public Housing Register with private rental housing opportunities
- Build confidence in MSD clients as tenants
- Establish links to key stakeholders in the community

## The Ready to Rent programme aims to:

- Prepare people for the private rental market
- Build readiness for interviews and meeting property owners
- Build awareness of rights and responsibilities
- Help participants to learn about:
  - Managing budget, rent and costs
  - Keeping a house warm and dry
  - Where support is available.

## The Housing Broker and Ready to Rent programmes are proving valuable for their clients.

The **Housing Broker** programme began in 2020. From over 2,500 referrals in the 2021/22 financial year, the 23 brokers successfully placed over 1,300 households in long term, sustainable, private rental accommodation across all regions, with others continuing to work with brokers, finding accommodation themselves or accessing relevant support services. Over 950 of the successfully placed households were in emergency housing and 430 were prevented from needing emergency housing.

In FY 2021/22, contracted community providers offered 68 **Ready to Rent** courses. The programme began in four regions in 2020 and is now available nationally.

## The evaluators interviewed and conducted hui and fono with:



Clients



Property Managers and Landlords



Housing Brokers



Course Providers



**Family Centre Social Policy  
Research Unit**



## Housing Broker findings

### Key findings

Housing Broker service clients trusted their broker's knowledge of the housing/tenancy sector and were confident in their ability to match them to the right opportunity, the right type of property and the appropriate stakeholders when necessary.

The Housing Broker service is successfully linking MSD clients with the private sector. Many landlords and property managers interviewed are keen to work with MSD to find tenants for their properties because of the level of support and preparation of clients provided by the service.

There is an opportunity to strengthen understanding of the housing broker role amongst frontline staff and managers and to update some internal processes to support this.

There are also opportunities to strengthen support for Māori and Pasifika clients through further professional development for housing brokers, including cultural capability.

### How MSD is responding to findings

- Continue strengthening staff learning on best practice, including supporting Māori and Pasifika engagement, sharing achievements and challenges, and clarifying the scope of the housing broker role
- Providing options for staff induction which may include existing cultural capability learning resources and whānau-centred approaches
- Using meetings between Regional Housing Managers and housing brokers to support a greater understanding of the work across regional housing teams.

## Ready to Rent findings

### Key findings

Ready to Rent clients consistently stated they were prepared well for the private rental market with information on landlord/property manager expectations, budgeting and managing rental costs, their legal rights, ensuring homes were warm and dry, their responsibilities as tenants, and where to gain support when they needed it.

The providers were confident they supplied clients with a much greater awareness of their rights, responsibilities, and entitlements in renting. Landlords and property managers agreed that the partnerships with course providers have focused on creating a safe, learning environment that was warm, comfortable, and educational.

Some providers recommended that Ready to Rent programmes consider developing youth-centred content and delivery, and that the Ministry investigate the potential to provide Ready to Rent youth initiatives.

The evaluation also identified that it would be beneficial if providers were informed of participant outcomes (e.g., securing a private rental).

### How MSD is responding to findings

- Providing additional Ready to Rent programmes that are tailored for youth and/or delivered by kaupapa Māori providers
- Updating guidelines for the Ready to Rent programme including the use of a participant survey and consideration for cultural capability where appropriate.