

Email sent to stakeholders, July 2020

Kia ora

Increased assistance for people with rent arrears from 6 July

In November last year we let you know about a new option to help people keep their homes when overdue rent has put their tenancy at risk, the Rent Arrears Assistance Housing Support Product.

The impact of COVID-19 on the current economic climate means households in rented accommodation in particular are more vulnerable to losing their homes, with greater likelihood of getting into difficulty with rent arrears.

That's why the Government has allocated funding as part their response to COVID-19 to enable some temporary changes to be made to the existing Rent Arrears Assistance payment. This is to make it easier for more people to access it and to increase the amount people can get.

These temporary changes mean we can help more people to keep their homes if they get behind on their rent. The changes are available between 6 July to 31 December 2020 after which the previous RAA policy will apply.

If people need help before 6 July, they can still come to MSD for support for rent arrears assistance under the current payment process.

The changes include:

- Increasing the maximum amount payable from \$2,000 to \$4,000
- Making the RAA payment a first option to provide support for rent arrears, for both qualifying beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries – previously it was only an option after all other recoverable payment options had been considered

Eligibility for the payment remains the same, and it's still a one-off, income-tested payment which needs to be paid back.

We want people to call us if overdue rent has put their tenancy at risk and they have no other way to pay it.

If you or your organisation are working with people in this situation, they can contact us on 0800 559 009 to see if we can help.

[Link to joint ministers' press release](#)