



28 July 2022

Tēnā koe

On 6 July 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*Can I please have the total debt accrued for the following Housing Support Products below for the end of every quarter from the quarter ending June 2017 to June 2022 (or since the start of the product) and the number of distinct clients who owe this debt.*

- *Tenancy cost cover*
- *Moving Assistance*
- *Rent arrears assistance*

*Could you also provide a regional breakdown of the above information.*

Housing Support Products (HSP) have been designed to support clients to access or retain housing. This includes people who are on the Social Housing register, in public housing or have otherwise contacted the Ministry for housing support. HSP provide additional assistance where the client's needs can't be met by existing products and services the Ministry currently offers. For example, Accommodation Supplement, Advance Payment of Benefit, Special Needs Grants, or Recoverable Assistance Payment.

HSP are discretionary and are based on a client's situation, their needs, and what will make a difference for their household. The Ministry works with the client to explore which of these products and services may be appropriate to their circumstances.

Tenancy Costs Cover is granted to a tenant so that if there are costs owing at the end of a tenancy that exceeds what was lodged as bond, these additional costs will be paid directly to the landlord by the Ministry.

When people need to move, the one-off costs of moving to a new house can be a major barrier. Moving Assistance helps with the cost of moving

household furniture, appliances, and personal effects. It has to be paid back, however repayment rates are set at a level that will not cause undue hardship to clients.

If a client is going to lose their housing because they can't pay their overdue rent, they may be able to get Rent Arrears Assistance

- The client doesn't need to be on a benefit to qualify for this help.
- It depends on their income and assets.
- It's a one-off payment.
- The client needs to pay the money back to the Ministry at a rate that will not cause them undue hardship.

Please see the attached excel spreadsheet containing **Table One** which shows the number of Recoverable Special Needs Grants and amounts granted for the requested HSP assistance from June 2017 to June 2022 broken down by region. You'll notice that HSP Rent Arrears does not appear on the data sheet until December 2019. as HSP Rent Arrears was not introduced until November 2019.

More information about HSP can be found here: [Housing Support Products - Map \(workandincome.govt.nz\)](https://www.workandincome.govt.nz)

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

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 this response regarding HSP, 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.

Ngā mihi nui

*Bridget Saunders*

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**Manager**  
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