

15 December 2025

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 24 November 2025, requesting policies and guidelines relating to Accommodation Supplement and the treatment of a vacant former home.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on your request set out below.

#### **Cash assets**

How the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) treats a property not used as a home is set out on MAP, here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/property-not-used-as-home-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/property-not-used-as-home-01.html)

A variety of factors are considered when assessing whether a property is a realisable asset, such as:

- What was the property originally bought for?
- What is the client's intention with the property?
- Is the property on the market?
- Is the asking price realistic?
- Is the property listed with a real estate agent?
- Location of property

In the case of a former family home, the Ministry will not include the net equity in the home as an asset until either:

- A decision on the sale of the home is made or
- There is a Relationship Property Settlement under a Property Agreement or Property Order

You can read more about this here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/net-equity-in-former-family-home-non-beneficiaries-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/net-equity-in-former-family-home-non-beneficiaries-01.html)

#### **Accommodation Supplement**

For information on Accommodation Supplement, please see the following page: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/index.html)

The asset limit for Accommodation Supplement comes from regulation 15 of the Social Security Regulations 2018:

[www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2018/0202/latest/LMS96256.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2018/0202/latest/LMS96256.html) .

What is considered a cash asset under this regulation is expanded on here, specifically including property that is not used as a home:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/cash-assets-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/accommodation-supplement/cash-assets-01.html)

### **Moving costs**

Please see the following link for the types of moving costs available to clients:  
[www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/moving-costs-grant/types-of-moving-costs.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/moving-costs-grant/types-of-moving-costs.html)

When assessing a moving costs grant, clients may be eligible for moving costs as long as they meet the qualifications:

- meet the residency qualifications
- meet the income and asset limits
- be considered to be likely to obtain and retain accommodation
- be entering accommodation that is not excluded from receiving a Moving Costs Grant **and**
- have moving costs

You can read more about this here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/moving-costs-grant/assessing-a-moving-cost-grant.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/housing-support-products/moving-costs-grant/assessing-a-moving-cost-grant.html)

While a client may qualify, the approval of a Moving Costs Grant is discretionary and should be considered according to each client's specific situation and need.

### **Any definitions, criteria, or tests used to determine whether a client "can return to the home"**

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) does not have any policies or criteria to determine whether a client can or cannot return to the home. Relocation is a decision made by a client. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as this information does not exist.

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, 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

pp.



Anna Graham

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