


## Close to Home articles: March 2014

HOUSING NEW ZEALAND NEWSLETTER  
ISSN 1175-8058

# Close to Home<sup>®</sup>

Issue 36 April 2014



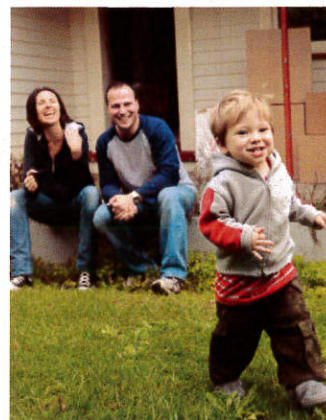
- 2 Rent calculation
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## Changes for you on April 14



Over the past year we've shared information about changes the Government is making to how social housing operates. Social housing includes both housing provided by Housing New Zealand and housing provided by community housing organisations.

From 14 April 2014, some of the services currently delivered by Housing New Zealand will be delivered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the government department that includes Work and Income, Senior Services and StudyLink. MSD will be responsible for assessing eligibility for housing and for calculating your income-related rent.



### Here's what will change for you on 14 April:

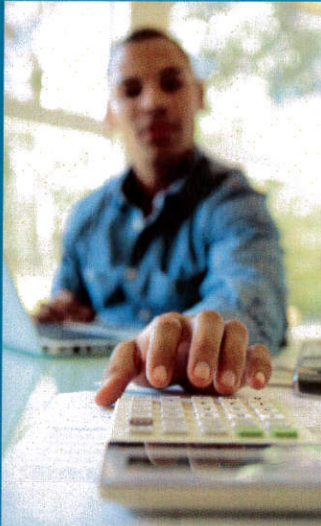
- **Income-related rent calculation and reviews will be done by MSD**
  - If your annual income-related rent review is done after 14 April, it will be done by MSD. You will be contacted about this when the time comes. Until then you do not need to do anything.
  - If you have a change of circumstances you'll need to let MSD know of this change so they can work out your income-related rent.
  - To report a change in circumstances after 14 April, if you are 65 or over call Senior Services on 0800 552 002. Everyone else should call Work and Income on 0800 559 009.
  - MSD will tell you if your income-related rent has changed. MSD will also tell Housing New Zealand.
  - Housing New Zealand will then let you know the rent you need to pay, and the date you will need to start paying it from.
  - Usually this will be 61 days after your change in circumstances. We will give you at least two weeks' notice of the change to your rent.
- **Working with an agent**
  - You can have an agent to act on your behalf with MSD. If you already have an agent or want an agent you'll need to complete an Appointment of Agent form for them to be able to act for you on housing matters with MSD.

### Housing New Zealand is still your landlord

Housing New Zealand will still be your landlord and will continue to provide social housing and manage tenancies. Call Housing New Zealand on 0800 801 601 between 8am and 8pm if you have questions, need maintenance or repairs or want to talk about any other matter relating to your tenancy. You'll still be visited by your Housing New Zealand tenancy manager.

**We have been working closely with MSD to ensure these changes happen smoothly with no disruption of service for you or for applicants.**

**Housing New Zealand**  
Housing New Zealand Corporation



## Rent calculation from 14 April 2014

From 14 April tenants paying an income-related rent will need to tell the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), not Housing New Zealand, about changes to your circumstances that might affect the amount of income-related rent you pay, for example if your or your partner's income changes.

MSD will tell you if your income-related rent has changed, and they will also tell us. We will then let you know the rent you need to pay us, and the date you will need to start paying it from.

### Letting you know about increases to rent

New rules mean you'll no longer receive 60 days' notice of an increase

in income-related rent based on a change of circumstance. Instead:

- the date your rent changes will now not be earlier than 61 days after your change of circumstance
- we will give you at least two weeks' notice of the date of increase
- Housing New Zealand will let you know the amount you must pay, and how often.

Note, if you do not tell MSD promptly about a change of circumstance, you may end up owing a debt to MSD.

To report a change in circumstances after 14 April call **Work and Income** on 0800 559 009 or **Senior Services** on 0800 552 002.

## Tenancy reviews coming in stages from 1 July 2014

In future all tenants will have regular tenancy reviews, but only around 800 in the first year paying market rent or near market rent.

Over the past year we have provided you with information about the upcoming introduction of reviewable tenancies. The Government wants to make sure social housing is made available for people and families most in need, for the time they need it. Tenancy reviews will help make sure people living in Housing New Zealand or other social houses are still eligible to be there and that the house still meets their needs.

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) will be responsible for carrying out tenancy reviews from 1 July this year.

All tenants may be reviewed from 1 July 2014. However, in the first year MSD will review around 800 tenancies – these tenants will be paying market

rent or near market rent and live in areas where other housing is available. If you are in this group MSD will be in contact with you before 1 July.

The full review process will be done over a number of months. The information covered in the review will be very similar to when you apply for social housing.

If a review finds that a tenant is no longer eligible for social housing and can move, MSD will work closely with them to help them make the move. If a review finds that a tenant remains eligible, they will be able to stay in social housing.

You don't need to do anything now. MSD will be in contact with tenants who are to be reviewed in the first year to discuss their tenancy review.





## Who to contact?

After 14 April 2014 tenants will need to talk to both Housing New Zealand and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) on housing issues.

Housing New Zealand continues to be your landlord, and MSD will be responsible for calculating your income-related rent and assessing your eligibility for housing.

There are a few areas where you'll need to contact one or the other, and some where you need to contact both agencies.



**CALL WORK AND INCOME ON 0800 559 009  
OR SENIOR SERVICES ON 0800 552 002.  
TO CONTACT HOUSING NEW ZEALAND  
CALL 0800 801 601.**

Issue	Call HNZ	Call MSD
<b>Change in contact details for example:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New phone number</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes
<b>Change in number of people living in the household for example:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New partner moving in</li> <li>• New baby</li> <li>• Other family members moving in</li> <li>• Absence from property</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes
<b>Change of income for example:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it goes up or down</li> </ul>	No	Yes
<b>Maintenance for example:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaky tap</li> <li>• Oven not working</li> <li>• Broken window latch</li> <li>• Fence problems</li> </ul>	Yes	No
<b>Neighbourhood disputes</b>	Yes	No
<b>Rent: Income-related rent assessment</b>	No	Yes
<b>Rent: Problems paying your rent at this time</b>	Yes	Yes, if you need assistance or wish to check your level of income related rent.
<b>Tenancy reviews</b>	No	Yes
<b>Your tenancy agreement</b>	Yes	No

## New terms we'll use quite a lot

### SOCIAL HOUSING

This includes both housing provided by both Housing New Zealand (state housing) and community housing groups.

### TENANCY REVIEW

This is when MSD assesses whether you are still eligible for social housing and also that the house you are in still meets your needs.

### MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (MSD)

MSD is the government agency that covers all of these services:

- Work and Income
- Students (StudyLink)
- Senior Services
- Integrity Services
- Child, Youth and Family
- Family and Community Services.

### MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND EMPLOYMENT (MBIE)

MBIE looks after rent and bond issues for tenants. In the past this was handled by the Department of Building and Housing. MBIE now contains a Building and Housing Group that manages this area. They also provide mediation services between landlords and tenants.