# Ministry of Social Development logo. Black on white background, with New Zealand crest, and the words Ministry of Social Development Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora



# Changes to how we assess board payments

From 2 March 2026, there'll be changes to the way we assess board payments you receive, including for housing subsidies and public (social) housing.

## Summary of changes

From 2 March 2026, all board payments you receive will be included when we:

* calculate how much you can get for housing subsidies (e.g. Accommodation Supplement or Temporary Additional Support), and
* calculate how much rent you'll pay for Income Related Rent (IRR) in a public housing property.

Currently, we only include board payments you get from 3 or more boarders (unless it's your main source of income).

This change means you may get paid less for your housing subsidy, or pay more for Income Related Rent.

We're also changing the way we calculate how board payments are counted as income. This means in some situations part of your board payments may be counted as income.

Board payments are either:

* payments for accommodation and food, where food is not easily separated out from what you pay. It could also include other services, e.g. power, or
* payments from someone living in public housing who is not on the tenancy agreement and is not the tenant's partner or dependent child.

We're collecting board payment information from August 2025. This is so we have the information we need to pay people correctly from 2 March 2026.

## Collecting board payment information

From August 2025, we’ll send an email or letter to some people who get a housing subsidy from us or live in public housing.

Housing subsidies include:

* Accommodation Supplement (<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/accommodation-supplement.html>) (<https://tinyurl.com/3nse48yr>)
* Temporary Additional Support (<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/temporary-additional-support.html>) (<https://tinyurl.com/mvnj5zna>)
* Special Benefit (<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/payment-errors/special-benefit.html>) (<https://tinyurl.com/4bj37a6m>)
* Accommodation Benefit for students who are sole parents (<https://www.studylink.govt.nz/products/a-z-products/accommodation-benefit.html>) (<https://tinyurl.com/36bxv59h>), and
* Away from Home Allowance (<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/away-from-home-allowance.html>) (<https://tinyurl.com/mr88ybn2>).

If you get board payments, you'll be able to tell us about this online through MyMSD or by filling out a paper form.

### Information we'll collect

We'll ask for your:

* name and address,
* accommodation costs information,
* boarder's name,
* boarder's date of birth, if known,
* boarder's contact details, and
* board payment amount.

#### Information we'll hold about boarders who are not our clients

If your boarder is not one of our clients, we will only hold minimal information about them. We'll hold their first name, the first initial of their last name and the amount of board they pay.

This will make it easier for you to update us on who is in your household and the board payments you get.

### We'll check if board payment amounts match

If your boarder is also getting a housing subsidy from us, we'll check if the board amount you declare matches what your boarder has told us they pay.

If the amounts don't match, we may get in touch with you and the boarder to confirm the correct amount.

If you pay board and the amount of board you've told us you pay changes due to the matching we've done, it may affect your housing subsidy.

### We'll let you know what your payments will be early next year

If you receive board payments, we'll check your payments and let you know in January/February2026 what your new rate will be (if it's changing).

Your payments won't change until March 2026.

### We'll make changes to payments from March 2026

If you receive board payments:

* you may get paid less for your housing subsidy. If so, this will take effect from 2 March 2026.
* you may pay more for Income Related Rent. If so, this will take effect after 2 March 2026, either from your next annual rent review or when you have a change in circumstances.

## Why we're making these changes

This change was announced as part of Budget 2024. It reduces the possibility of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) paying towards the same accommodation costs more than once. That is, where the tenant (or homeowner) and the boarder both receive a housing subsidy for the same accommodation costs.

It also aims to address the inconsistency between the treatment of renters and boarders when we calculate how much you can get for housing subsidies and how much rent you pay if you live in public housing.

## Details of these changes

Select the relevant heading below to find out details of the changes.

### Housing subsidies

When we work out housing subsidies, one of the things we look at is whether you get any board payments.

Currently, we only include board payments you get from 3 or more boarders in the calculation (unless it's your main source of income).

From 2 March 2026, we'll include 62% of all board payments in the calculation (the other 38% is not included as we see it being for food and other services). This means you may get less for your housing subsidy, as we recognise all board payments are covering some of your accommodation costs.

Housing subsidies include:

* Accommodation Supplement,
* Temporary Additional Support,
* Special Benefit,
* Accommodation Benefit for students who are sole parents, and
* Away from Home Allowance.

#### For example

Kingi is paying $600 a week in rent. He has 2 boarders who are paying him $150 and $200 a week.

Currently, we wouldn't include the first 2 board payments when assessing his accommodation costs. This means he would be paying $600 accommodation costs.

From 2 March 2026, we will take all board payments into account.

* We will add all the board payments together ($150 + $200 = $350).
* We will calculate 62% of the total board payment, which is $217.
* We will reduce the accommodation costs by that amount ($600 minus $217 is $383).
* Kingi will be paying $383 a week for accommodation costs.
* As Kingi's accommodation costs have reduced from $600 to $383, he may receive less for his housing subsidy.

### Income Related Rent calculation

To calculate your Income Related Rent (IRR), we work out your weekly household income. Currently, we only consider board payments as income when:

* they're your main source of income (we use the total amount you get each week as your weekly income), or
* you're getting money from 3 or more boarders (we don't include the 2 highest board payments and only use 62% to contribute to your total weekly income).

[Calculating your rent payments](https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/live-in-home/live-in-public-housing/calculating-rent-payments.html) (<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/housing/live-in-home/live-in-public-housing/calculating-rent-payments.html>) (<https://tinyurl.com/mryfdxry>)

From 2 March 2026, we will include 62% of all board payments you receive and add this when calculating the amount of IRR you need to pay. This means you may pay more for IRR.

If the IRR amount we work out for you is more than the actual market rent price for the property, you'll only pay the market rent amount.

Any changes to your Income Related Rent will take effect after 2 March 2026, either from:

* your next annual rent review, or
* when your circumstances change.

#### Example from 2 March 2026

Vanessa is living in public housing and pays IRR of $400 a week. She has 2 boarders who are paying $150 and $250 each week.

So from 2 March 2026 we will:

* add all the board payments together ($150 + $250 = $400), and
* calculate 62% of the total board payment, which is $248.

We'll then add this amount to the calculation of her Income Related Rent. This means her IRR will increase from $400 to $648.

If the IRR payment is more than the actual market rent price for the property, she'll only pay the market rent amount.

### When your board payments are counted as income

There are times when some of the board payment you receive may be counted as income for most payments you get from us.

It may be that 62% of the total amount of board you receive is more than your accommodation costs. If so, the excess amount will be counted as income for most payments you get from us, unless you're living in public housing.

If you're living in public housing, we check if 62% of the total amount of board you receive is more than the market rent price for the property. If so, the excess amount will be counted as income for most payments you get from us.

#### For example - not living in public housing

Your accommodation costs are $300 a week. You have 2 boarders and get a total board payment of $600 a week. 62% of the total board payment you receive is $372. The excess amount is $72.

This means $72 is counted as income for most payments you get from us.

#### For example - living in public housing

You're living in public housing and the market rent for your property is $500 a week. You have 3 boarders and get a total board payment of $900 a week. 62% of the total board payment you receive is $558. The excess amount is $58.

This means $58 is counted as income for most payments you get from us.

## Related

Beehive website (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/fixing-double-dips-boarder-and-rent-payments>) (<https://tinyurl.com/3dt99vhm>)

## Contact us

* You can contact our general enquiries team from Monday-Friday 7am-6pm, and Saturday 8am-1pm on 0800 559 009.
	+ If you’re Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, have a speech impairment or find it hard to talk, you can use the New Zealand Relay Service [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz)
* If you’re deaf, hard of hearing or find it hard to communicate by phone you can contact us on:
	+ Text: 4206
	+ Email: MSD\_Deaf\_Services@msd.govt.nz

**End of information: Changes to how we assess board payments**

This Large Print document is adapted by Blind Citizens NZ from the standard document provided by the Ministry of Social Development