

First progress report on the Aotearoa/New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan

The Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020-2023) was publicly released in February 2020 to deliver on the Government's vision that *homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring*. It is based on a commitment to partner with Iwi, hapū, marae and Māori organisations, local authorities, providers, and people with lived experience of homelessness to prevent and reduce homelessness.

The action plan sets out an overarching framework to improve the wellbeing and housing outcomes of individuals and whānau who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. The plan comprises the vision, guiding principles, and action areas across prevention, supply, support and system enablers. The plan has 18 immediate actions to be put in place in 2020, backed by over \$300 million of funding, and a further 18 longer-term actions to be developed for implementation over 2020-2023.

The action plan is supported by Te Maihi o Te Whare Māori: Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation (MAIHI) framework, an approach for addressing Māori housing across all needs and aspirations. MAIHI focuses work around both urgent actions to reduce homelessness for Māori, and the deeper system changes needed to improve Māori housing. The MAIHI Framework for Action has been implemented from the start of 2020, including supporting whānau through COVID-19 Level 3 and 4, partnering with Iwi and Māori housing providers through the MAIHI Partnership Programme and establishing funding opportunities. MAIHI was formally launched on 11 August. For more information on MAIHI visit [our website](#)

Reporting on the action plan and efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness will be published every 6 months. This first update presents an overview of the progress made to date.

The second public report is expected to be published in early 2021 and will present a baseline for future reporting.

Immediate actions are largely underway

Most of the 18 new immediate actions in the action plan are now underway. Some areas of work were also adapted or accelerated to meet urgent needs or expected demand. Actions that were paused, or impacted by COVID-19, have now started back up.

Since the launch of the action plan, the Government has:

- **accelerated immediate actions to respond to Māori homelessness**, including working at pace to provide financial support to Māori providers and working with Iwi and Māori partners on projects to increase housing supply.
- **opened the He Taupua fund**, which will allow whānau Trusts and Ahuwhenua Trusts, hapū, iwi, and registered Māori housing providers to build capability and initiate community housing projects so they can respond to emergency housing needs and end homelessness.
- **opened the Local Innovation and Partnership Fund**, which will support the development and implementation of local initiatives to respond to and prevent homelessness. The fund opened on 21 August.
- **continued to increase transitional housing with a pre COVID-19 target of 1,000 new places by the end of 2020**. COVID-19 restrictions on provider capacity and on construction and purchasing of additional supply have impacted delivery timeframes.

However, delivery has started again, with over 560 places so far secured, and of those, 280 are ready to be occupied by households.

- **increased the number of Sustaining Tenancies places in the short term.** This is our primary prevention intervention and provides practical support for people to keep their tenancies. Due to increased demand, from July 2020, 2,150 places/households will now be supported, up from 1,550 places.
- **expanded supports to more people in emergency housing.** MSD has implemented all new roles (Intensive Case Managers, Navigators and Housing Brokers) to support people in emergency housing. These roles assisted clients during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Demand for this support continues to increase.

Budget 2020 investment will support the impact of the action plan

Budget 2020 investment will support people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. Key investment includes:

- \$570 million to deliver 8,000 new public and transitional housing places. This is in addition to the 6,400 public housing to be delivered by June 2022, and the 1,000 transitional homes as part of the action plan.
- \$40 million appropriated for MAIHI, which will be used for Māori housing supply. While this is not directly part of the action plan, increasing housing for low-income Māori whānau will help prevent homelessness, at the same time as increasing the connection of whānau Māori on Māori land.
- \$41.3 million secured by the Ministry of Pacific Peoples to improve housing for Pacific families and communities.

The development of longer-term actions has been brought forward to respond to increased pressure from COVID-19

The action plan identified key areas for further work to be undertaken in 2020-23, to build on and improve existing responses and support local work already underway around New Zealand.

In response to emerging impacts of COVID-19, officials have brought forward the development of six of these longer-term actions:

- further early intervention and prevention responses to help stop people from becoming homeless
- further responses for cohorts at-risk of homelessness with an initial focus on rangatahi/young people
- enhancing assessment processes and referral and information processes as part of the wider data and evidence initiative which is one of the immediate actions
- supporting the capability and capacity of providers
- ensuring that kaupapa Māori approaches are applied to all existing homelessness responses
- enhancing the way that agencies have worked with providers during the COVID-19 initial response.

Officials will engage with sector experts, Iwi, hapū, marae and Māori organisations, local authorities, providers and people with lived experience of homelessness as this work progresses. Officials will report back to Ministers by the end of 2020 with detailed advice and proposals, including funding needs or additional resourcing where appropriate.

COVID-19 has brought additional challenges in our work and opportunities to support people rough-sleeping into permanent housing

During COVID-19 Level 4 lockdown, the urgent priority was finding accommodation for people sleeping rough or in unsuitable accommodation with shared facilities including where overcrowding caused further stress. The focus was on supporting Iwi, Māori organisations and providers to meet immediate housing and support needs.

Motel places for people sleeping rough or living in vulnerable accommodation were urgently acquired, with 1200 places made available. Following the push to get rough sleepers in accommodation, providers noted very limited numbers of people sleeping rough during the COVID-19 level 4 lockdown. We know from providers that many people in COVID-19 motel facilities have established a sense of community and support. Over 1,000 households are currently tenanted through the COVID-19 motel places. We recently committed \$106 million to ensure these people can stay housed with support while long-term housing supply is identified. Motel places have been secured until April 2021.

Agencies are working closely with the sector to move from the immediate crisis response to a planned place-based response that is responsive to local needs. The aim is to support people into permanent housing with the wraparound support they need, including kaupapa Māori approaches, to ensure holistic and cultural wellbeing is maintained.


It is expected that the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 will exacerbate existing inequalities for disadvantaged groups who already experience high rates of homelessness. Homelessness is driven by structural issues and system failures (such as poverty, a lack of affordable housing and limited supply, discrimination, welfare support issues, and a lack of employment opportunities). Pathways into homelessness are further influenced by pressures such as a change in relationship status, loss of income, serious illness or mental health and addiction needs. There is an active programme of work across government to mitigate the social impacts of COVID-19.

Future monitoring and evaluation of the action plan

The next public report will be more detailed and will be published in early 2021. It will be followed by a regular cycle of reporting every six months. This report will provide information on the driving forces of homelessness and measures to monitor these. The report will also measure outcomes of the Homelessness Action Plan's implementation.

STATUS OF HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN'S 18 IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

An immediate 18 actions will support over 10,000 individuals and whānau with an investment of over \$300 million. This is in addition to the significant investment in increasing public housing and the continued roll out of Housing First. The plan also includes longer-term actions to be developed over the next three years. The table below summarises the status of the 18 immediate actions in the Homelessness Action Plan.

 <h3>PREVENTION</h3>		
<p>Individuals, families and whānau receive the support they need so that homelessness stops happening in the first place</p> <p>Prevention actions work to ensure individuals and whānau receive the support they need so that homelessness stops happening in the first place. Pathways into homelessness are varied, and there are many touch points where people are interacting with other government agencies or other organisations in their communities.</p> <p>Support at the right time can prevent someone from becoming homeless or needing emergency housing. Immediate actions will help people address issues that put their tenancies at risk and support people at points where they are at risk of homelessness. In the longer-term, agencies will continue to embed prevention responses and work to better coordinate services so that no one falls through gaps in support.</p>		
Action (and responsible Agency)	Description and expected impact	Status update August 2020
<p>Partner with Māori, Iwi, hapū and marae to prevent homelessness (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>Working with Māori, Iwi and Marae to prevent homelessness through whenua-based initiatives. It will identify and reduce system barriers at the local level to enable further housing delivery to support whānau Māori into housing solutions (including on Māori freehold land).</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>HUD has worked with a number of Iwi and hapū groups who have access to whenua Māori, or own whenua Māori. For example, we have provided funding to Whakaatu Whanaunga Trust in Ōpōtiki who own land and have three whare on whenua Māori. They are also looking to build three further whare to provide social housing as Ōpōtiki has no supply.</p> <p>HUD has also provided funding to Te Whānau a Maruhaeremuri based in Raukokore to trial relocatable cabins on whenua, reconnecting whānau with ancestral land. This trial aligns to housing whānau who will have employment as part of the Provincial Growth Fund approved project. We are also supporting Iwi groups to assist them to develop housing strategies for their rohe.</p>
<p>Redesign and expand Sustaining Tenancies (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>Sustaining Tenancies is HUD's primary prevention intervention. It funds community-based providers to deliver individualised support for up to 12 months for individuals and whānau who are currently housed but are at risk at of losing their tenancies. People most likely to engage in the service include Māori and Pacific, young people, people with mental health and addiction needs, disabled people, women who have experienced domestic violence, single parents and large families.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>Due to increased demand, 2,150 places/households are now due to be supported through the Sustaining Tenancies programme for 2020/2021 (the original initiative was for 1,550). HUD has advised successful providers of the number of places and funding they have been allocated. The re-designed Sustaining Tenancies service will be in place in 11 regions across Aotearoa. By December, we expect that 410 households will be engaged in the programme.</p>
<p>Expand housing support for young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care (Oranga Tamariki)</p>	<p>Sustainable supported accommodation options for young people (additional 168 placements). This action extends supported accommodation placements to eligible young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care or youth justice to support a more gradual transition into adulthood. An additional 34 placements will be available by the end of June 2020.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>Oranga Tamariki is focused on ensuring that young people transitioning out of their care are well supported, including accessing emergency housing placements through MSD. Twenty-nine placements had been confirmed at the end July 2020.</p> <p>Oranga Tamariki is continuing to procure places for this initiative.</p>

<p>Improve transitions from acute mental health and addiction inpatient units (Ministry of Health)</p>	<p>Funding will go to a pilot programme to help approximately 100 people transition from acute mental health and addiction inpatient units into the community, with housing and other wraparound support.</p>	<p>Under Development</p> <p>This action was paused due to the Ministry of Health, DHBs and NGOs not having the capacity to deliver during the COVID-19 response. The development of this pilot is now underway, but further delays could be expected as DHBs will be continuing to co-ordinate and lead the provision of psychosocial support services in response to COVID-19. The Ministry of Health will continue to re-evaluate timeframes on a monthly basis and will report back with any significant delays to establishing this pilot.</p>
<p>Support for women who are leaving prison (Corrections)</p>	<p>Providing safe and stable accommodation with reintegration support services for up to 24 women/wāhine leaving prison per year. This programme will enable long-term sustainable outcomes for women/wāhine, their children and wider whānau.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>This service has commenced. Women/wāhine are utilising this service as they transition from prison to the community. The provider in Waikato has started work to expand their accommodation to support an additional 20 women/wāhine per annum.</p>
<p>Support for returned overseas offenders who are homeless (Corrections, Kāinga Ora)</p>	<p>Provide accommodation and support to assist reintegration back into a New Zealand community environment for up to 30 people a year (90 people in total). The support will enable them to better reintegrate back into a New Zealand community environment and reduce the reliance on motel and hotel accommodation that is currently being used.</p>	<p>Under development</p> <p>Australia has resumed deportations to New Zealand and support returning offenders who are homeless will be needed. Planning for this service has begun. Negotiations are underway to allow a provider in Auckland to have the service in place by Sept/Oct 2020. Discussions have begun in other regions.</p>



SUPPLY

All New Zealanders have a place to call home, the use of motels for emergency housing is reduced

There needs to be enough houses for people to call home. Increasing public housing and affordable housing is a key part of any response to homelessness, and crucial to the success of the plan. Despite the significant investment already made, demand for public housing is increasing faster than new supply and, in some locations, new supply is needed urgently.

Action is needed now to reduce the number of individuals and whānau currently staying in emergency accommodation. Immediate and longer-term actions will focus on increasing our supply of different types of housing, with a focus on working with Māori Community Housing providers and other Māori and Iwi providers.

Action	Description and expected impact	Status update August 2020
<p>Urgently increasing supply (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Kāinga Ora)</p>	<p>This action was to deliver 1000 new transitional housing places by end of 2020 to reduce demand for emergency motel accommodation. These places will be focused on high demand locations and wherever possible targeted to priority groups such as families with children. Transitional housing provides families and individuals with a warm, dry, safe place to live and wraparound services while they are supported in finding longer-term accommodation.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>Delivery is progressing, with over 560 places so far secured, and 280 are ready to be occupied by households. Restrictions on provider capacity and on the construction and purchasing of additional supply due to COVID-19 has resulted in some delays to bringing new Transitional Housing places online.</p> <p>Work underway to transition those housed in motels during COVID-19 into more permanent housing with the support they need is being delivered in parallel to this initiative.</p>

<p>Support Māori Community Housing Providers and other Māori and Iwi providers to expand supply (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>This action will assist Māori Community Housing Providers and other Māori and Iwi providers to build organisational capability, such as property management of large community housing portfolios. It will also assist them to understand and work with legislation, regulations and planning rules, organisational development; and navigating consent processes under the RMA and Building Acts.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>HUD significantly accelerated actions to provide emergency accommodation and wrap-around support services to Māori. We have also worked at pace to provide financial support to Māori providers, Iwi and Māori partners on projects to increase housing supply. These projects aim to prevent new homelessness due to COVID-19, related financial pressures and to provide housing for individuals and whānau as they move out of motels and other accommodation. We are also working with Iwi and Māori housing providers who have indicated that they are looking at registering as Community Housing Providers.</p>
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SUPPORT



Individuals and whānau experiencing homelessness move quickly into stable accommodation and access wider social support to address needs.

Through the action plan more support will be provided for individuals and whānau experiencing homelessness to move as quickly as possible into stable accommodation and access wider social agencies. Some individuals and whānau require more support to navigate through the system of organisations and services designed to help. Support provided should involve identifying and addressing a range of individuals' needs, including any need for on-going assistance. The approach to working with people will be culturally appropriated and tailored to individuals and whānau.

Housing First will continue to be the core response to chronic homelessness.

Action	Description and expected impact	Status update August 2020
<p>Pilot a rapid rehousing approach (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>To help individuals and whānau quickly exit homelessness, return to permanent housing in the community, and maintain tenancies (340 permanent places over two years). Rapid Rehousing will be a two-year trial starting in mid-2020. This trial service will follow the same principles of Housing First, however it is targeted towards individuals and whānau who have a low to medium complexity of social service needs.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>The timeframe to implement Rapid Rehousing was shortened by the COVID-19 Level 4 response due to providers having to support those housed in motels and ensure they received appropriate wraparound services. HUD is working to incorporate the Rapid Rehousing service funding into the whole of COVID-19 response to include those housed in motels. This response has been scaled up to deliver a total of 549 places. All providers have been advised of the number of places and funding they have been allocated, and service agreements were sent out in mid-August.</p>
<p>Expand supports to all people in emergency housing (Ministry of Social Development)</p>	<p>Intensive case managers are employed by MSD and take a holistic approach to people's needs and wellbeing. Where more intensive support is needed, navigators from a local community organisation will wrap support around the person or whānau. Navigators co-ordinate with community, health and government services so people get the wrap-around help they need. MSD will increase numbers of intensive case managers and navigators so all people living in emergency housing for more than one week can access these services.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>MSD completed recruitment and contracting for the Intensive Case Managers and Navigator support services in May 2020, for both tranches of funding previously received. Many of these roles were in place earlier than this and could support clients through the COVID period. Under the action plan, MSD committed to extending these services to anyone in emergency housing. Given the increase in the number of people in emergency housing, this support is prioritised based on the level of client need.</p>
<p>Introduce housing broker roles to increase access to private rental housing (Ministry of Social Development)</p>	<p>MSD housing brokers will build connections with local landlords and property managers, promote MSD clients as potential tenants, and match people with housing opportunities in the private rental market. The service is targeted at people in emergency housing or on the public housing register who are likely to be able to sustain a private market tenancy, with the right support. The housing broker service will give MSD clients a better chance of securing tenancies and gaining homes in the private rental market.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>Housing Broker roles were all implemented by May 2020, and they are working to find properties for clients.</p>

<p>Better prepare people for private rental (ready to rent programmes) (Ministry of Social Development)</p>	<p>MSD will fund local programmes to help people gain the skills, knowledge and credibility they need to be chosen as tenants and gain a home in the private rental market. The programmes are for people in emergency housing or on the public housing register.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>MSD assessed regional capacity and capability to deliver this service after the first wave of COVID-19, and is implementing the Ready to Rent programme as a phased approach piloted by four regions first; Auckland, Hawkes Bay, Nelson and Southern. MSD has contracted community providers in each of these regions who have organised the programme and its content. They are set to deliver their first Ready to Rent programmes by 31 August 2020, supported by other agencies and stakeholders. Given the programme is run as an in-person session however, there may be some changes or delays due to COVID-19. MSD will bring Ready to Rent to other regions later in the year and in the new financial year and is working with these regions now, preparing them for the expansion of Ready to Rent.</p>
<p>Flexible funding package for whānau with children in emergency housing (Ministry of Social Development)</p>	<p>A flexible funding package will assist whānau with children with the extra stresses and costs of living in emergency housing, where other support is not available. It will be used to support the wellbeing and education needs of the children, to minimise disruption to their lives and keep them connected with school, early childhood education and other activities.</p>	<p>Under development</p> <p>Implementation of the flexible fund was deferred as a part of MSD's response to COVID-19 to enable staff to focus on responding to immediate need. Officials are currently working through the implementation model for the flexible fund and it is expected to be in place by the end of 2020.</p>

SYSTEM ENABLERS



The system supports and enables our vision and together we can address homelessness

Preventing and reducing homelessness, requires everyone to work together to respond to the different challenges faced in communities around New Zealand. The system needs to support and enable our vision and together we can address homelessness.

Immediate and long-term actions will focus on building the capability and capacity of the workforce is a crucial component of any response, along with collaboration and better data and information on homelessness.

Action	Description and expected impact	Status update August 2020
<p>Local innovation and partnership fund (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>A fund to support the development and implementation of local initiatives to respond to and prevent homelessness. It will enable agencies and community organisations, Māori providers, hapū, Iwi and not for profit organisations to work together on initiatives to address system gaps and improve support or prevention tailored to needs in that area.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>The fund opened on August 21. The opening date of the fund was delayed as providers were focussed on the immediate COVID-19 homelessness response and did not have the capacity to develop applications in this time period.</p>
<p>Build capacity and capability of Māori providers (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>Māori housing providers – Housing First providers, Community Housing Providers and other Māori community groups housing and providing support to people experiencing homelessness – are a key element of an effective homelessness response. Initiatives are in development to build capacity and capability of Māori providers and services working with Māori experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>HUD is currently calling for applications to He Taupua fund. The fund was launched on 4 August and is open until 29 September 2020. The fund will contribute to successful applications that seek to support the implementation of MAIHI by strengthening the delivery of kaupapa Māori approaches and building the capability of Whānau Trusts and Ahuwhenua Trusts, hapū, iwi, and registered Māori housing providers.</p> <p>\$3 million is available for the current funding round 2020/2021. Successful applicants meeting criteria and requirements will receive grant funds in December 2020.</p>

<p>Enable and support Kaupapa Māori approaches to homelessness (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>The action plan's approach to reducing Māori homelessness is situated in kaupapa Māori, a Māori world view in which Māori values, tikanga and te reo Māori anchor all action. To reduce Māori homelessness, organisations must be supported to take kaupapa Māori approaches to develop and deliver services to achieve Māori housing and wellbeing outcomes.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>HUD is continuing to work with other agencies to ensure kaupapa Māori principles continue to be integrated into all actions.</p> <p>Prior to COVID-19, HUD recognised through MAIHI the housing crisis and impacts on many Māori whānau. This has been exacerbated by COVID-19 which has highlighted the vulnerability of Māori whānau and the ongoing need for kaupapa Māori approaches. It is essential that agencies and the providers are able to provide services in ways that meet Māori needs.</p> <p>Funding available through He Taupua will offer opportunities for Māori housing providers to build capability and strengthen their delivery of kaupapa Māori focussed initiatives.</p> <p>The MAIHI Framework for Action has been implemented from the start of 2020, including supporting whānau through COVID-19 Level 3 and 4, partnering with Iwi and Māori housing providers through the MAIHI Partnership Programme and establishing funding opportunities. MAIHI was formally launched on 11 August.</p>
<p>Ongoing involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>This initiative is to set up meaningful ongoing engagement of people with lived experience of homelessness. An ongoing platform of engagement with people with lived experience will provide insight and voice within our policy, evaluation, design and delivery work on homelessness and will ultimately help to deliver a more effective response to homelessness.</p>	<p>Under development</p> <p>This initiative is set to be delivered through the newly established Homelessness Sector Services. Work is underway to establish a regular engagement mechanism that is framed around kaupapa Māori principles, and will build upon engagement with people with lived experience that took place during the initial development of the action plan.</p>
<p>Improve evidence and data on homelessness (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)</p>	<p>To build a stronger evidence base for informing responses and funding decisions based on New Zealand information. Actions implemented as part of the action plan will be monitored, reviewed, evaluations and reported on regularly to understand if and where progress is being made.</p>	<p>Underway</p> <p>This work is continuing, with an added focus on using information and data that arises from the current context to increase our understanding of homelessness in New Zealand. HUD has focussed on longer term planning for this initiative and is beginning to collate the data that is available to monitor the state, driving forces and pressures that lead to homelessness. This will be reported in the second public update and progress report in early 2021.</p>