WELL HOMES

Wellington Housing Coordination Service

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Quarterly Newsletter

APRIL - JUNE 2018

Well Homes is a housing coordination service for the greater Wellington region that supports whānau to live in a **warm, dry and safe home.**

WINTER ENERGY PAYMENT

From 1 July 2018, a Winter Energy Payment will be available to help with the cost of heating homes during the winter. Eligible clients do not need to do anything to get this payment, it should be paid to them automatically.

- The Winter Energy Payment is available to people on Jobseeker Support, Jobseeker Support Student Hardship, Sole Parent Support, Supported Living Payment, Youth Payment, Young Parent Payment, Emergency Benefit (including Emergency Maintenance Allowance), NZ Super and Veteran's Pension
- It will start from 1 July 2018 (for 13 weeks), and from 1 May 2019 onwards (for 22 weeks).
- Single people with no dependent children will get $20.46 a week, and couples or those with dependent children will get $31.82 (or $15.91 each). It does not need to be paid back.
- The Winter Energy Payment will be the largest supplementary payment, with over one million clients receiving it. MSD will communicate with people to make sure they're aware and have a good understanding of the payment.

For further information please visit the Work and Income site: workandincome.govt.nz

If you're a homeowner with a community services card you're also eligible for discounted insulation under the new government programme Warmer Kiwi Homes. Call Sustainability Trust on 0508 787824 or visit www.sustaintrust.org.nz for further details.

INTERVENTION NUMBERS

For the period April - June 2018

160 Visits completed

450 Total number of family members (223 of those being children)

Interventions identified	No. of referrals
Beds and bedding	143
Curtains	184
Financial assistance	4
Floor coverings	8
Health referral	11
Heating sources	137
Insulation	28
Key messages on creating a warmer, drier and healthier home	112
Minor repairs	161
Mould kit	114
Other	142
Private/community housing relocation	3
Social housing relocation	26
Social referral	19
Support with power bills	3
Ventilation	26
Total	**1121**

CHECK YOUR SMOKE ALARMS!

A smoke alarm has one job – to alert you to fire so you can get out of your home safely. Recent Consumer NZ testing found that not all smoke alarms are created equal. Consumer NZ tested photoelectric and ionisation alarms to see which respond fastest to smouldering and flaming fires.

Findings support the Fire Emergency New Zealand recommendations that **you install long-life photoelectric type smoke alarms in your home.** Ionisation alarms give much less warning of smouldering fires, such as those caused by faulty electrical wiring, curtains draped over a heater, or a hot ember igniting upholstery foam, making it less likely you can get out of your home safely. Photoelectric alarms may cost a little more but the benefits are huge.

- They provide up to 10 years smoke detection.
- They remove the frustration of fixing the 'flat battery beep'.
- Because you're not paying for replacement batteries, long-life alarms effectively pay for themselves over their lifetime.
- You don't have to climb ladders every year to replace batteries.

People should check which type of smoke alarm they have in their homes and rental properties. "You can identify an ionisation alarm from a ☢ radioactive symbol somewhere on the alarm body – it may be underneath, so you might need to remove it to check."

Consumer NZ advises people not to remove working ionisation alarms – any alarm is better than no alarm. Instead discuss this with your landlord and ask for alternative alarms. If only ionisation alarms are fitted, you should also fit photoelectric models at least in hallways and escape routes. For rental properties landlords have to ensure working smoke alarms are installed at the start of a tenancy. Existing ionisation alarms can stay where they are, but all new smoke alarms must be photoelectric models with a long-life battery. Tenants must not remove smoke alarms, and are responsible for replacing dead batteries.

For further information visit: https://www.consumer.org.nz/products/smoke-alarms-and-batteries/overview, www.fireandemergency.nz/at-home/smoke-alarms or contact your local Fire Station if want help finding the best locations for smoke alarms. They'll be happy to assist, free of charge.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

A change in your living arrangements or income could affect your place on the social housing register and your eligibility for income-related rent.

If your circumstances change while you are waiting for a Housing New Zealand house, or when you are already living in one, you need to notify the Ministry of Social Development right away by calling:

- **Work and Income on 0800 559 009 or**
- **Senior Services on 0800 552 002 if you're over 65.**

A change in circumstances means anything that alters the number of people living in your household, or any changes to the household income. For example, if a family member moves out, or if the money you receive from work, a benefit or board changes. This is of particular importance for parents with new babies as having them on the tenancy may help you to be prioritised for a bigger home.

If you are on the social housing register and you find a house to move to, please let the Ministry of Social Development know immediately so you can be taken off the register.

You can look at the information held about you at any time. If it's wrong, you can ask for it to be changed.

https://hnzc.co.nz/for-our-tenants-and-their-communities/our-tenants/change-of-circumstances/

ASSESSOR'S TOP TIP FOR THE MONTH!

Shirley Pierce, Public Health Nurse, Regional Public Health

Don't forget to get your flu vax!

> Influenza

What is the flu?

The flu is another name for influenza and it can be a serious illness that is sometimes fatal. Those at greatest risk are the very young, elderly or those people with a suppressed immune system. The flu is caused by a virus and spreads through the air (droplets) when people sneeze, cough or touch with dirty hands. The incubation period is 2-5 days and symptoms include high fevers 38°C lasting several days, coughing and a sore chest, severe exhaustion and aches and pains.

How to tell the difference between the flu and a cold:

FLU	COLD
Sudden onset moderate to severe illness	Mild illness
Fever usually very high	Mild fever
Headaches (may be severe)	Mild headache, congested sinus's
Dry cough - may become moist	Sometimes a cough
Muscle aches and shivering	Muscle aches are uncommon
Bed rest is needed	Runny nose
Severe complications such as pneumonia	

Preventing the flu is a community responsibility

- Stay at home if you are unwell.
- Hand washing especially after handling tissues, before preparing food, smoking and eating.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing.
- Get the flu vaccine (the immunisation will be available at your GP or ask your work place).

DON'T LET THE FLU BUG YOU IN 2018.

WE can all help in preventing the flu.

CATCH IT: Cover your face when you cough or sneeze.

BIN IT: Throw away used tissues straight away.

KILL IT: Clean your hands thoroughly and often.

Annual vaccinations reduce the risk of flu, speak to your GP now.

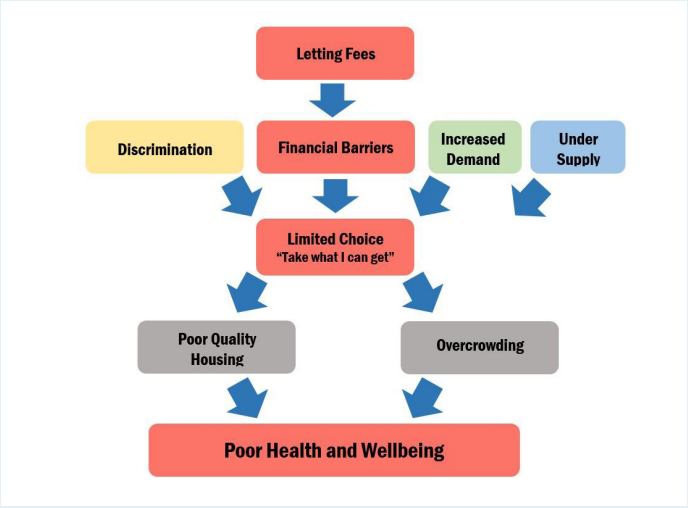
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (PROHIBITING LETTING FEES) AMENDMENT BILL

In May, Regional Public Health (RPH) made a submission to the government on the Residential Tenancies (Prohibiting Letting Fees) Amendment Bill. This bill seeks to ban letting agents and property managers from charging new tenants letting fees, (usually charged at one week's rent). This payment is intended to cover the costs of advertising the property, holding open homes, and vetting tenants. While it is the tenant who pays these fees, it is the landlord who gets the benefit of the services provided by letting agents. Letting fees are charged on top of up to two weeks' rent in advance and two weeks' rent as bond.

For many, given our extremely tight rental market, these significant upfront costs create an additional barrier to finding safe, secure and healthy accommodation.

Upfront costs (such as letting fees) can force would-be tenants out of the market for an appropriate home, resulting in families being compelled to accept "what they can get". This may mean living in substandard conditions. It is well established that substandard housing conditions contribute to poor health and wellbeing.

RPH are hopeful that the Prohibiting Letting Fees Bill will be passed and that the government will undertake a further review of the Residential Tenancies Act in order to address quality and tenure issues in the residential property sector.



MEET OUR SUPPORTER

Megan Ramji, Accounts Administrator, Sustainability Trust

Megan has worked at the Sustainability Trust for just over four years. She manages the accounts, coordinates the office work and assists with the insulation referrals.

Megan is the fantastic lady who makes sure our invoices are paid and our insulation referrals are progressed.

USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT WELL HOMES

Time frames that Well Homes works to:

1 – 2 WEEKS	4 – 6 WEEKS	3 – 9 MONTHS
REFER	**VISIT**	**FEEDBACK**
Referral received: • Receipt of referral sent. Whānau phoned: • Agree to visit (yes/no). • If no, referrer is advised by letter.	Assessment booked: • Visit completed by assessor. • Referrers are contacted by letter if we are not able to make a time with whānau.	• When all housing interventions are finished a report is sent to the referrer, medical centre, whānau and put into medical records. • Interim feedback is available at any time. Phone 0800 675 675, or email wellhomes@huttvalleydhb.org.nz

The referral form/information about our service is available online: www.rph.org.nz/housing

Well Homes | Wellington Housing Coordination Service
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HOUSING & HEALTH HE KAINGA ORANGA

Regional Public Health
HAUORA Ā IWI KI TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI
Better health for the greater Wellington region

SUSTAINABILITY TRUST

Tu Kotahi Māori Asthma Trust