

Information sheet: Rent debt

- Most Kāinga Ora tenants – almost 90 percent – pay their rent on time and are up to date with their rent payments. When tenants do fall behind on their rent, we work quickly to address it and help get them back on track.
- In February 2025, Kāinga Ora announced changes to its approach to managing rent debt to speed up repayment and address historic issues.
- We are focused on reducing rent debt by taking a firmer approach with tenants who are behind on their rent. We will be fair and reasonable – but rent must be paid.
- Kāinga Ora will continue to support tenants who fall behind on their rent and are making genuine efforts to get back on track with what they owe. This includes working with tenants to understand and resolve the root causes of the debt and get a reasonable repayment arrangement in place. Kāinga Ora also refers tenants to specialist financial and budgeting support services where possible – and where the tenant agrees.
- We are taking firmer action with tenants who regularly skip payments and refuse to work with us. In those cases, we will take steps to end the tenancy.
- Our new approach seeks to ensure that tenants will not have accumulated more than 12 weeks' worth of rent debt when their tenancy is ended. This means we will begin the process of ending a tenancy earlier than in the past.

Partial rent debt forgiveness

- A small number of Kāinga Ora tenants – less than 3 percent – accumulated more than 12 weeks' worth of debt before our new rent debt policy was introduced.
- There are a range of reasons for this, including social and economic events over the past five years and the steps Kāinga Ora took to respond to government policy, particularly during the pandemic.
- Kāinga Ora is taking a pragmatic approach to helping these tenants with significant rent debt get on top of what they owe faster by reducing the amount owed down to 12 weeks' worth of rent. This is an amount that is more realistic for tenants to repay in full, with the right payment arrangement in place.
- Tenants will only be eligible to receive this reduction if they had more than 12 weeks' worth of rent debt at the start of February 2025, are consistently paying their rent and making reasonable payments to reduce what they owe. In return for this one-off help, tenants must continue reducing their debt.
- This provides a clear incentive to tenants who are not currently meeting their obligations to change their behaviour and speed up repaying what they owe. If they consistently do this, they will be eligible to have part of their rent debt forgiven. But if they do not, we will take steps to end their tenancy.