

# home

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TRUST HOUSE RENTAL HOUSING NEWSLETTER



## New Healthy Home Standards good news for tenants

Seasons Greetings to all and welcome to this edition of HOME, a newsletter from Trust House Rental Housing.

Many of you will be aware of new legislation passed earlier this year aimed at increasing the quality of rental homes.

The Residential Standards Healthy Homes Regulations 2019 sets new minimum standards for heating, insulation, and ventilation, and addresses issues with moisture ingress and drainage and draught stopping.

Research shows a link between cold, damp and mouldy homes and negative health outcomes, particularly for illnesses such as asthma and cardiovascular conditions. By improving the quality of all rental homes, New Zealanders who rent will experience improved health.

With 483 rental properties we are one of the largest community housing providers in New Zealand. We fully support the new standards, taking seriously our responsibility of ensuring that all of our tenants live in a healthy home.

We have invested millions of dollars in maintaining and improving our rental homes over the last 20 years. Many of our rental properties already comply with the new standards.

We are well on the way to ensuring that all of our rental properties meet the new requirements, estimating that it will cost more than \$2 million.

As a registered Community Housing Provider, we have until 1 July 2023 to comply with the new Healthy Homes standards.

*"We fully support the new standards, taking seriously our responsibility of ensuring that all of our tenants live in a healthy home."*



### HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Under the new Healthy Homes Standards all rental homes will be required to:

- Have a heater that can heat the main living area to 18 degrees Celsius.
- Have ceiling and underfloor insulation that either meets the 2008 Building Code insulation standard, or (for existing ceiling insulation) has a minimum thickness of 120 millimetres.

- Kitchens and bathrooms will be required to have extraction fans or rangehood.
- Install a ground moisture barrier to stop moisture rising into the home where there is an enclosed subfloor space.

- Have adequate drainage and guttering to prevent water entering the home.
- Block draughts that make a home harder to heat.



# RENT INCREASES TO COVER RISING COSTS

*From March 2020 there will be a rent increase across all of our rental properties.*

On average, rents will go up \$20 per week for one and two bedroom houses; \$25 for three, four and five bedroom houses.

Despite the increases, our rents continue to remain among the lowest in New Zealand. The rents that we currently charge are on average consistently in the lowest-to-mid quartile of a survey of rents carried out by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

As a trusted community landlord for 20 years we put people first, providing affordable rental homes to low income individuals and families who need them most. For this reason, any decision to increase rents is one that we give careful consideration to.

However, there are across-the-board hikes in costs with council rates continuing to rise, as are insurance costs and contractor rates. It is worth noting that Trust House is the biggest ratepayer in Masterton.

The rent increases, which will take place in the last week of March, only relate to those who are not on an Income Related Rent subsidy. If this affects you, the letter outlining your increase will be enclosed with this newsletter.

We are keen to give our tenants early notice of the March increases to allow plenty of time to follow up with the Ministry of Social Development on whether they qualify for the income-related rent subsidy (IRR).

Currently 108 of our residential rental properties are covered by IRR.

Under the IRR scheme a qualifying tenant generally pays 25 per cent of their income as rent.

*“ Our rents continue to remain among the lowest in New Zealand.”*



## about the IRR subsidy

*To find out more about Income Related Rent and whether or not you qualify, contact Work and Income on 0800 559 009 or visit their website: [workandincome.govt.nz](http://workandincome.govt.nz).*



## PLANS TO BUILD MORE RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

*We are thrilled to announce that we have plans to increase our housing stock in Masterton and Featherston.*

*Currently we have plans to build new units, seven two-bedroom units in Masterton and three or four one-bedroom units in Featherston.*

*The new units will be built on land where we have two existing properties which will be demolished, as happened with a previous redevelopment in Kuripuni, Masterton. At 83 Kuripuni St, one existing three-bedroom house on a quarter acre section was replaced with six one-bedroom and two two-bedroom units.*

*The new units will be covered by income-related rent (IRR) subsidies.*

# FEEDBACK SOUGHT ON DOG POLICY

*Currently it is our policy to not allow dogs at our properties. We recognise that dogs can be great companions and we are considering a change of policy with dogs.*

Some of our tenants have been allowed dogs, for many reasons including service dogs etc. This has been written into their specific Tenancy Agreements.

We are aware that a number of tenants have dogs at their homes that have not been agreed to and are not on the Tenancy Agreements. This is a breach of your agreement and could lead to a Tenancy Tribunal application.

We are, however, potentially looking to change this policy to allow dogs at your home and are seeking your feedback as to a suggested policy.

The policy suggestions are:

- If you currently have a dog not listed on your Tenancy Agreement, or want a dog that is not listed on your Tenancy Agreement, you will need to inform us.
- We will need to collect some information about your dog.

- The first part of the process will be that you need to ensure that the dog is registered with the Local Authority for your area (local council). This is a legal requirement that you must do. See your local authority website for details. <https://mstn.govt.nz/services/animal-control/dog-registration/> or <https://www.tararua.govt.nz/Services/Animals/Dog-Registration> are the two main councils in our area.
- Unless your dog is registered we will not allow you to have a dog at your property.
- We'll also ask you to sign a Pet Information Form, and agree to be a great pet owner. Just give us a call and we will get this all sorted for you.
- So long as your pet does not cause a nuisance to your neighbours or harm anyone, there's nothing more you need to do.

*We are looking for feedback on this potential policy. If you wish to give feedback please email [housing@trusthouse.co.nz](mailto:housing@trusthouse.co.nz) or write to Housing, Trust House Ltd, PO Box 135, Masterton.*

*Once we have received and reviewed any feedback we will review the policy.*

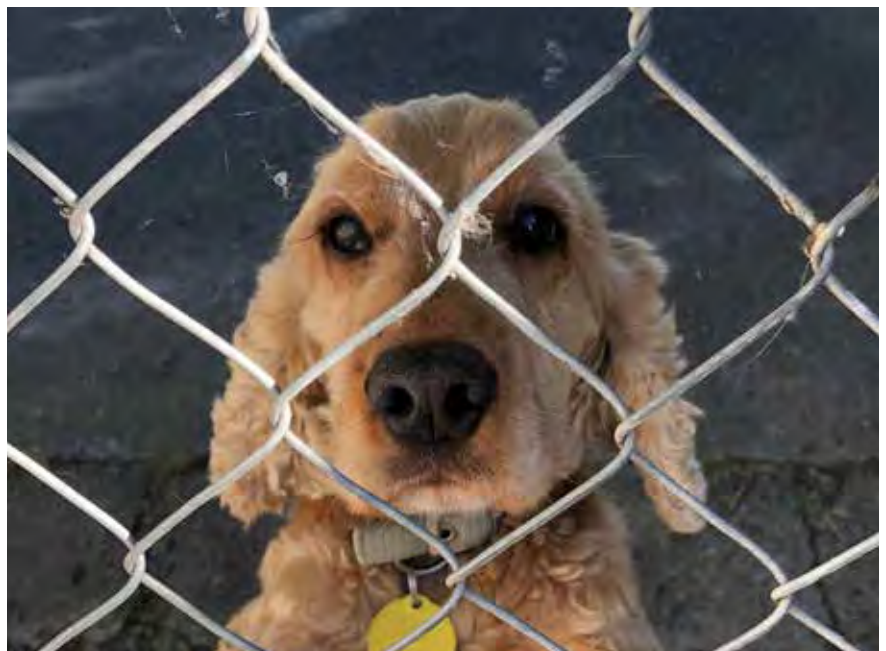


## **The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2019 has legislated that new Tenancy Agreements have to include information about insurance of our premises.**

For those who signed a Tenancy Agreement prior to 27 August 2019 our insurance statement is as follows:

Trust House is insured under a collective agreement through AON Insurance. This policy is for repairs, damage and reinstatement of their residential properties. The excess of this policy is \$5,000. This means that Trust House has to pay the first \$5,000 of any claim. Under this Act where damage was as a result of an act or omission of a tenant (or someone for whom the tenant is responsible) we can claim up to 4 week's rent for each claim. This does not include willful damage.

**A copy of the policy is available on request.**





## Healthy eating for a healthy price

*Healthy eating has got a whole lot cheaper - and easier - thanks to the Wellington Region Fruit and Vege Co-op.*



Available in Masterton and Featherston, customers typically receive about 7kg of produce for \$12. That same produce might cost about \$20 in a supermarket.

A partnership between Wellington-based Wesley Community Action and Regional Public Health (RPH) it is New Zealand's largest community fruit and vegetable co-op delivering up to 9 tonnes of fresh produce to 1400 households every week.

The co-op began as a pilot programme in Cannons Creek, Porirua in 2014 as a way of

providing cheap, healthy produce to people living in an area with no local supermarket. It now has 12 packing hubs throughout the greater Wellington region, including Featherston with delivery as far north as Masterton.

Last year the co-op introduced re-usable cloth bags, saving about 114,000 plastic ones a year.

### How does it work?

You place your order at least one week in advance and you can order as many packs as you like, whenever you like. There is no commitment to order every week.

The order consists of two bags - one of seasonal fruit (3-4 varieties) and one of seasonal vegetables (3-5 varieties) and there is no limit to how many orders you place. The estimated retail value of each individual order is between \$20 and \$40 (season dependent).

Every week, the Fruit and Vegetable Coordinator purchases bulk supplies of

seasonal fruit and vegetables. The produce is delivered the following Tuesday or Thursday to the packing hubs. The volunteers help pack the orders ready for pickup or to be delivered to the distribution hubs. The families that placed their orders the previous week are able to pick up their produce packs.

There's often free cooking lessons on offer, and RPHs nutrition team provides a weekly meal plan based on what's in each co-op delivery

### How to join?

Have a look at the following link for more information: [rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/nutrition/fruit-and-vege-co-ops](http://rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/nutrition/fruit-and-vege-co-ops) or search on Facebook: Fruit & Vege Co-Ops Wellington



## Merry Christmas

We will close at 12 noon on Tuesday 24 December 2019 and reopen at 8:00am on Monday 6 January 2020.

Our phone number for emergencies is 06 370 0522 and will be directed to the on-call Housing Staff member.

**We're a TOLL FREE call away \***

Masterton, 370 0522. Sth Wairarapa, 304 9548. Pahiatua, 376 6009. Dannevirke, 374 5240

\* Calls are a free local call from a land line. A charge may apply if you call these numbers from a mobile phone.

