

Information guide for Dental Special Needs Grants

Changes effective from 1 December 2022



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



**New Zealand
Dental Assoc.**



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Dental - Special Needs Grant (SNG)

If a person meets all qualifications, they may be able to get financial assistance for dental treatment through a Special Needs Grant (SNG), paid by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Changes will come into effect for dental SNGs from 1 December 2022.

From 1 December, we're:

Changing the treatment criteria from 'emergency' to 'immediate and essential'

People can apply to receive a Special Needs Grant when they or their dependent child have an immediate need for essential dental treatment. This change recognises that not all dental treatment needs arise from an emergency, which is the pre-1 December criteria in place for this grant.

Increasing the maximum available amount from \$300 to \$1,000 over a 52-week period

If someone receives a Special Needs Grant for essential dental treatment, they don't need to pay this money back. From 1 December, the maximum available amount is increasing from \$300 to \$1,000 in a 52-week period (except where exceptional circumstances exist). We've made this change to better support people in low-income households to meet their oral health needs.

Making multiple applications possible within a 52-week period

From 1 December 2022, people will be able to apply to receive more than one Special Needs Grant for essential dental treatment, up to a maximum of \$1,000 in a 52-week period. This will make it easier for people to get a Special Needs Grant for immediate and essential dental treatment when they need it.

Immediate needs for essential dental treatment

This means dental treatment is required immediately to treat an oral health issue that:

- has deteriorated or would begin to deteriorate if left untreated, and
- is having, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the person's oral health and/or wider physical health.

For example, where a person has active and open tooth decay, there would be an immediate need for essential dental treatment to prevent further deterioration.

What treatments are included?

- Consultations (including x-rays) which result in immediate and essential treatment
- Extractions (not for orthodontic purposes)
- Fillings (tooth restorations)
- Root canal treatment (excluding molars, unless exceptional circumstances exist)
- Treating infections, including antibiotics and any temporary measures needed to enable permanent treatment.

What treatments are not included?

- Regular dental check-ups
- Cosmetic treatments
- Clean, scale and polish¹
- Cast restorations
- Orthodontic treatment
- Molar root canal treatment²
- Dentures³
- Treatments that are co-paid by ACC.

Extra details

- 1 The cost of teeth cleaning can be included if it's required to treat a gum infection.
- 2 Unless there are exceptional circumstances that mean a molar root canal is essential for the person, eg, because they've had previous radiation therapy in the area.
- 3 People may be eligible for recoverable assistance for dentures.

Dental Treatment Information form

Our application process involves a Dental Treatment Information form. The form needs to be completed by the practitioner providing the treatment.

You can find this form on our website:

Forms - Work and Income.

Physical copies of the form are available at all Work and Income sites, and you can also order copies through your local MSD Health and Disability Coordinator.

Exceptional circumstances

If a person has exceptional circumstances, they may be eligible for extra assistance over and above the \$1,000 limit for a Special Needs Grant in a 52-week period. These may include situations where:

- the person has any special or unusual reasons for their oral health issue (eg, an underlying health condition that has contributed to the issue)
- the person has a health condition that could be severely impacted by their oral health issue (eg, rheumatic heart disease).

If either of these apply to your patient, please let us know in the 'comments' field of the Dental Treatment Information form. This information will help us determine if they are eligible for extra assistance, alongside other exceptional circumstances.

Policy details

The policy for dental Special Needs Grants is available in our Manuals and Procedures:

Special Needs Grants: Contents - Map (workandincome.govt.nz)

Note – changes will be available from 1 December 2022.

Application process

Once a person has completed the Dental Treatment Information form, they can apply for a grant from MSD.

More information about the criteria and application process is on our website:

Dental treatment - Work and Income

Note – changes will be available from 1 December 2022.

Facilitating payments

We facilitate payments by loading them to a Payment Card. People can use their Payment Card like a regular Eftpos card at the location of their treatment. We usually give people seven days to complete their payment.

Where using a Payment Card isn't possible, we might be able to pay a supplier by Direct Credit. These situations are facilitated on a case-by-case basis.

Registering as an MSD supplier

Practitioners and health agencies providing treatment need to be registered as a supplier with MSD.

More information about this is on our website:

Register as a Work and Income supplier - Work and Income

Getting in touch

Please get in touch with your local MSD Health and Disability Coordinator if you have queries, or to order physical copies of the Dental Treatment Information form.

You can give us a call on **0800 559 009** or visit your local Work and Income site if you're not already connected.