Information guide

Special Needs Grants for dental treatment

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MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

New Zealand Dental Assoc.

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand

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Introduction

In this guide, we cover information about accessing help with dental treatment through MSD, to support your mahi as a dentist. For more information, please go to our webpage: **Dental treatment - Work and Income**

Special Needs Grants (SNG) for dental treatment

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). People don't have to pay this money back.

1 December 2022 changes

Changes came into effect for Special Needs Grants for dental treatment from 1 December 2022.

The treatment criteria changed from 'emergency' to 'immediate and essential'

People can now apply to receive a Special Needs Grant when they or their dependent child have an immediate need for essential dental treatment (instead of it needing to be an emergency).

Increased 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 2022, the maximum available amount for this grant increased 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.

Multiple applications can be made within a 52-week period

People can now 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 makes it easier for people to get the help they need, when they need it.

Deeper Dive

Assistance is income and asset tested

Assistance for immediate and essential dental treatment is income and asset tested. This means people need to have income and assets under certain levels as one part of qualifying for support.

Below are the income and asset limits as at 1 April 2025:

Income limits

If you are:	Weekly income before tax is less than
Single and 16 to 17 years old	$854.30
Single and 18 years old or over	$981.83
Couple (with or without children)	$1,426.10
Sole parent with 1 child	$1,191.41
Sole parent with 2 or more children	$1,255.22

Asset limits

If you are:	Your assets are worth less than
Single	$1,368.68
Couple (with or without children) or sole parent	$2,280.58

Note – assets don't include what you need for day-to-day living, eg your home or your car. They do include money in the bank, or things like a second property.

Immediate needs for essential dental treatment

This criteria 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?	What treatments are not 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.	• Regular dental check-ups. • Cosmetic treatments. • Clean, scale and polish.[1] • Cast restorations. • Orthodontic treatment. • Molar root canal treatment.[2] • Dentures.[3] • Treatments that are co-paid by ACC.

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.

Exceptional circumstances

If a person has exceptional circumstances, they may be eligible for extra assistance over and above the $1,000 limit for a dental 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 'comment' 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 is available in our Manuals and Procedures:
Essential dental treatment - Map (workandincome.govt.nz)

Extra information about help with dentures

Dentures are not included in the non-recoverable assistance that immediate and essential treatment can be covered by.

People may qualify and apply for a payment to help with the financial cost of dentures. This would need to be paid back to Work and Income.

How-to

Dental Treatment Information form

Our application process for immediate and essential dental treatment 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.

If you have a patient requesting help with dentures (and this support is recoverable) – a standard quote is suitable.

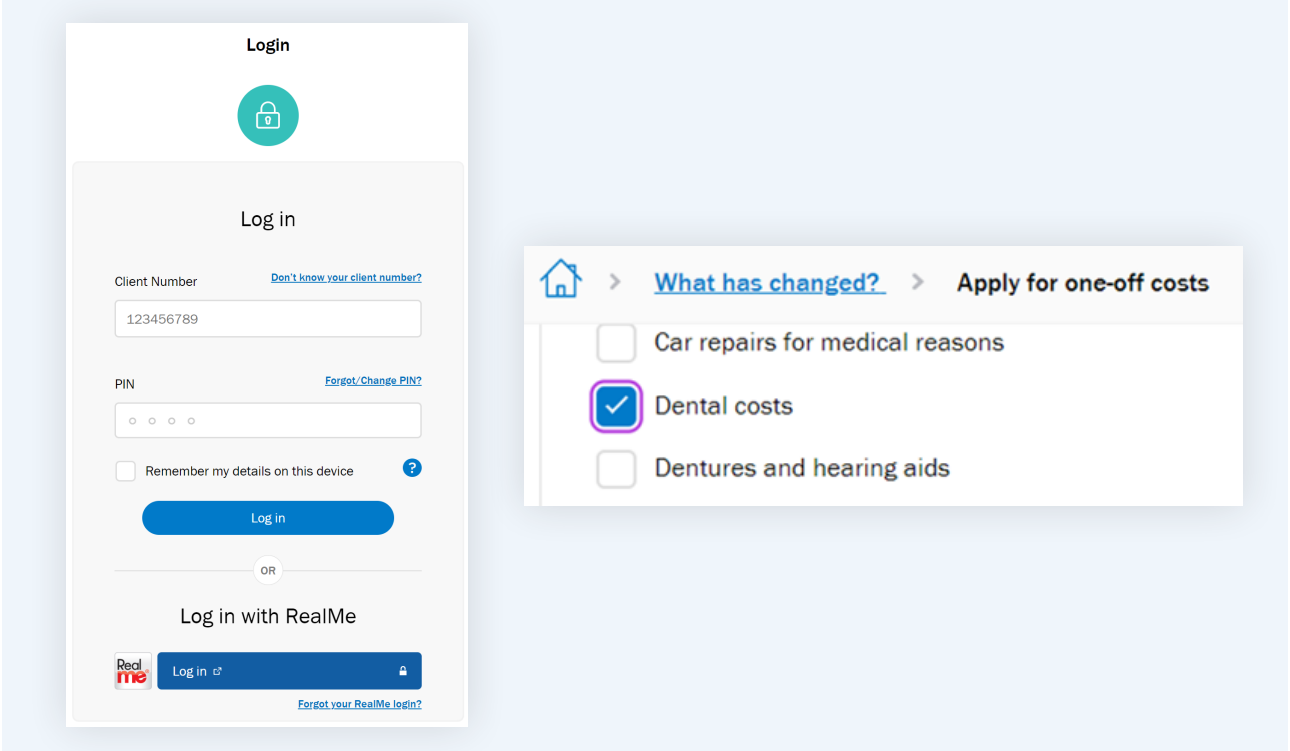
Application process

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

Patients apply for SNG in MyMSD

The easiest way for current Work and Income clients to apply is online through MyMSD under 'One-off cost'. Patients can upload a photo of their Dental Treatment Information form through the MyMSD application. Once the application is completed, patients will need to check MyMSD again to see if it's been approved.
This usually takes up to 45 minutes, but may take up to one working day.

If your patient is unsure about eligibility, they can call us first and we can help them with MyMSD.



Read the steps on how to upload documents in MyMSD

Other ways to apply

People can also:

- call us to apply over the phone. We'll set them up with a MyMSD login (if they don't have one) and help them upload their form through MyMSD, or
- drop off or post the form to a service centre. Then call us so we can process it over the phone. Please allow enough time for us to get the form and add it to the person's file before calling
- visit their local Work and Income service centre with their Dental Treatment form to start their application.

More information about the criteria and application process is on our website:
Dental treatment - Work and Income

'Cheap as' data

People can use our website and online services, MyMSD and MyStudyLink at little or no cost from their mobile phones or digital devices if they are on Spark, Vodafone, 2degrees or Skinny mobile networks. They need to make sure their mobile data is turned on.

Read more about this on our website: **'Cheap as' data - Work and Income**

Facilitating payments

We facilitate payments by loading them onto 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 on a case-by-case basis.

Getting and staying in touch

Practitioners and health agencies providing treatment need to be registered as a supplier with MSD and keep us updated with any change of business details. For more information, go to:
Register as a Work and Income supplier - Work and Income

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** (say 'supplier' when our phone system asks you what you're calling about) to get connected.

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