

Updates from the Ministry of Health Disability

Covers the following topics:

Possible move to Alert Level 3

Guidance for essential movement of individuals into community residential care

Reminder to seek financial assistance as required using the available schemes



17 April 2020

To

Disabled people and their family members, Carers, DPOs, NZDSN

Copy to: EGL Providers Mid Central / Mana Whaikaha

Kia ora koutou

Possible move to Alert Level 3

Yesterday the Prime Minister announced the possibility of New Zealand moving to Alert Level 3. A decision about whether New Zealand will move to Alert Level 3 will be announced on Monday 20 April.

For now, **we are still in Alert Level 4.**

In the meantime, the Disability Directorate is busy working out what Alert Level 3 will mean for disabled people, their families, whānau and aiga, and the supports you receive.

Once we know when New Zealand is moving to Alert Level 3, we will contact you with information and advice about what you need to do to keep happy, healthy and safe under Alert Level 3 restrictions.

Information for disabled people, and their family and whānau on the website

On the Ministry of Health website, under COVID-19, we have set up a section mainly for disabled people, their families, whānau and aiga. In this section you will find lots of information and tools to help you keep happy, healthy and safe during COVID-19. Here is a list of some of the information you will find there:

- What we need to do during Alert Level 4
- Building your bubble
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for disabled people

- Getting medicines and food during COVID-19
- Looking after your wellbeing
- What to do if you do not feel safe
- Getting tested for COVID-19
- Getting supports during COVID-19
- Changes to your funding that make it easier to get the things you need
- Links to Easy Read, NZSL and audio

You can find all this information and more by clicking on this link:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-information-disabled-people-and-their-family-and-whanau>

Another way you can get to the section for disabled people and their families, whānau and aiga is

- Go to www.health.govt.nz
- Click on '**COVID-19**' (under Popular topics)
- Go to the box titled '**Information For**', and
- Clicking on the '**Disabled people**' link

Kā mihi - kind regards

Adri Isbister
Deputy Director-General
Disability
Ministry of Health

Guidance for essential movement of individuals into community residential care

15 APRIL 2020

This document provides disability support service providers with guidance on essential movements of individuals into or out of community residential care during the COVID-19 response.

Essential moves under COVID-19

Under COVID-19 Alert Level 4 restrictions, people in community residential care services are required to stay there for the full duration of the lock down period.

There are, however, some situations in which a person may be required to move. These 'essential moves' may include:

1. When a person is being discharged from hospital
2. Managing a situation or risk to ensure the ongoing safety of a disabled person
3. A court ordered assessment for a person going through a criminal justice process who may require placement under the High and Complex Framework. This will only impact on Regional Intellectual Disability Supported Accommodation Services (RIDSAS) that are required to maintain access to assessment beds. RIDSAS providers need to be prepared for possible referrals to assessment beds. For more detailed information, please refer to the previous communication "Advice for Providers regarding individuals who are struggling to meet the quarantine requirements" (3 April 2020)
4. Where there are concerns the disabled person has been abused or likely to be abused if the disabled person remains in any situation. In this example, a move may be required supported by the Regional NASC and the Disability Directorate to an alternative setting
5. Where a person does not understand and is challenged by the requirements of COVID-19 Alert Level 4 restrictions. This may lead to behaviours that make it difficult for providers to make sure Alert Level 4 restrictions are maintained
6. Where a person has become deeply distressed by the disruption to their usual routine or support, and their behaviour challenges the ability of their family or paid carers to sustain the support they provide.

It is important for providers, NASCs and the Ministry of Health to work together to ensure any proposed move is warranted and appropriate for the individual concerned.

Determining the appropriateness of a potential move

During COVID-19 restrictions there are many challenges for individuals, families and services. In making decisions about movements, the health and safety of other people in the person's home and support staff is paramount.

Any potential movement of an individual would be reviewed to ensure that:

- The expected benefits of the move outweigh any transmission risk that may be incurred
- Any transmission risks have been minimised in the plan for a proposed move, including minimising the encroachment on other people's 'bubbles'.

Any decisions about the movement of individuals into or out of community residential care services should be the joint responsibility **of the provider, the NASC and the Ministry of Health.**

During COVID-19, your local NASC is your regional coordination hub. When assessing the potential movement of an individual they are able to provide critical information on:

- The individual and their support needs
- Providers who have vacancies and sufficient staffing to meet the person's needs.

In making a decision about a potential move, the provider, NASC and Ministry of Health need to ensure the individual being moved:

- ***Has not had contact with anyone who has been overseas in the last 14 days or been overseas themselves;***
- ***Has not been in contact with anyone with confirmed, suspected or probable COVID-19; and***
- ***Is not awaiting a COVID-19 test result and does not have any acute respiratory symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, sneezing or runny nose, temporary loss of sense of smell, shortness of breath).***

Where the individual has been hospitalised for a non-COVID-19 condition, the treating physician should establish the safety of a return home or a move to another service.

No permanent new placements are being considered during the Alert Level 4 restrictions. However, the Ministry of Health may make exceptions on a case by case basis.

Safely managing a move into a residential home

Where the individual being moved is:

- ***entering for emergency respite,***
- ***returning after respite with family, or***
- ***has to access a placement urgently,***

then the person's primary physician should first establish and confirm their physical health status.

Where COVID-19 is confirmed or suspected

If there is any suspicion of COVID-19 infection, alternative support will be discussed with the Ministry of Health, NASC and the provider in collaboration with the individual and their family.

Where COVID-19 is not suspected

Where the person is not suspected of having COVID-19 they should:

- ***Be supported to have 14 days of physical distancing from others sharing the residential home in case the person subsequently develops COVID-19***
- ***Be monitored daily for 14 days in virtual consultation with the General Practitioner or Practice Nurse known to the person for new or worsening symptoms, for example respiratory symptoms. If symptoms develop, then the individual should be isolated, with isolation protocols observed and medical assessment sought. .***
- ***Not share a room or a bathroom with others***
- ***Have meals in their own room***
- ***Not visit common areas such as the dining room.***
- Be supported to access the outside environment daily while maintaining physical distancing.
- If symptoms develop, the person should be medically assessed, tested for COVID and continue isolation without going outside until the results come through.

Where these measures cannot be safely put in place due to unsuitable accommodation or lack of capacity, an alternative option will be sought.

Staff who are working with an individual who has moved should:

- ***Maintain hand hygiene***
- ***Maintain physical distancing where possible***

- Explain to other people in the home what is happening and why isolation of the new person is essential while reinforcing the hygiene messages for safety
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when undertaking essential personal care. This includes visiting essential service providers. PPE is not required by staff or for visits from essential services for asymptomatic residents other than that required for standard precautions when providing other cares.
- Strictly follow all infection and prevention protocols.

Guidance on use of PPE

There is clear advice for health and disability support workers about when and how to use PPE to stay safe at:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-essential-workers-including-personal-protective-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-use-health-care>

Keeping you updated

As we progress through the different COVID-19 Alert Levels, we will be providing further advice.

17 April 2020

To
Disability Service Providers / NASCs

Dear Provider

Reminder to seek financial assistance as required using the available schemes

I'd like to thank you for continuing to provide health and disability services and ongoing support for our communities through these challenging times.

As you know, the Ministry of Health agreed an approach to managing community health and disability services contracts which may be impacted by COVID-19.

To provide confidence of funding, current funding arrangements for disability service providers are being extended. This means the Ministry will renew contracts expiring before 31 December 2020 for a minimum of twelve (12) months unless previously extended for longer.

In addition, where service delivery is adversely impacted by COVID-19, the Ministry will not seek to recover funding or reduce payment if services are under-delivered or unable to be delivered between now and September 2020, provided that the terms and conditions of the variation are met.

- Providers paid at a standard rate each payment period will continue to be paid as per the standard invoice cycle. Please continue to invoice the Ministry according to your contract payment schedule.
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- Providers paid on a fee for service basis will be paid a standard monthly amount paid in advance. You do not need to submit an invoice for this calculated amount.

The monthly payments will be based on services delivered in February 2020 calculated to 31 days and paid as a lump sum. The first lump sum payment will be made the week commencing 20 April 2020. Payments for May 2020 and June 2020 will be made at the beginning of each month. We will review this arrangement for the period July to September 2020. There will also be a separate lump sum payment for the period 26 March to 31 March 2020. This will be calculated as a six day pro rata of the February calculated payment.

Please do not submit any further fee for service invoice or PPS claims from the date of this notification.

There may be providers who are still requiring financial assistance despite the support provided through your contracts. Where you are experiencing costs not covered by your contract, or significant loss of revenue, please ensure you investigate the other Government financial support schemes offered at this time. More information on these schemes, including the Essential Workers Leave Scheme, can be found on the covid19 website:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/individuals-and-households/financial-support/>

It is important to note that where your Ministry's COVID-19 contract variation states you are not to seek further Government subsidy for wage costs funded by the contract, this does not preclude you from seeking assistance for costs not covered by the contract.

Please contact your Ministry Portfolio Manager directly via email if you have any queries about your contract(s).

Ngâ mihi

Adri Isbister
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Disability Directorate

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