

PANDEMIC COMMUNICATION: COVID-19 PROVIDER BRIEFING - ARC

August 20 2021

PROTECTING VULNERABLE STAFF

In light of the evolving situation with community transmission of COVID-19 in New Zealand, Hutt Valley DHB and Capital and Coast DHB are working to ensure we keep our staff safe by implementing our community transmission rosters. We are confident that you have clear plans in place in this scenario and you will be working to ensure that health services are kept running at this time in line with the relevant protocols for service delivery at this alert level. Further information on this can be found at <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-health-professionals>

We recognise that the presence of community transmission will increase the risk for vulnerable staff and may increase the stress for workforce.

We are reviewing our processes for protecting vulnerable DHBs staff during COVID-19. Key points to note at this time are:

- New strains of COVID-19 such as the Delta-strain are more infectious and increase the risk of transmission in a common workspace. For that reason mask wearing in shared workspaces is essential
- It is very important that staff who are unwell or have any symptoms do not come to the workplace and get tested if symptomatic
- Immunity from vaccination or previous infection greatly reduces the risk of infection, requirement for hospital or ICU admission, disease severity and mortality. We are increasing the pace of our vaccination campaign and staff working in the health and social care sector are prioritised for vaccination. Further details on availability of vaccination will be circulated shortly.
- The advice on pregnancy has changed. All pregnant workers, regardless of vaccination status, should avoid caring for people with known or suspected coronavirus infection. Pregnant workers who are more than 28 weeks pregnant or have underlying health conditions (at any gestation) should not generally work in patient facing roles. This is regardless of vaccination status

We need to be able to rapidly identify areas where there is a risk to maintaining service delivery due to staff having to isolate, or unable to work due to their personal vulnerability or personal circumstances such as caring responsibilities.

If any essential services are at risk due to workforce or other issues please liaise with your contract manager in the DHBs or just reply to this email and your query will be forwarded to the relevant person.