

Alert Level 1 guidance for disability support service providers

11 JUNE 2020

At Alert Level 1 COVID-19 is contained in New Zealand, but still uncontrolled overseas. There is a risk isolated household transmission could still occur, and we all must continue to be vigilant.

This information sheet guides what Alert Level 1 means for disability support service providers.

Balancing equity with safety

While there are no physical distancing requirements under Alert Level 1, the Government continues to promote a high level of public health control measures. As providers, the safety and well-being of your staff and the disabled people you support is paramount.

For Alert Level 1, we want to make sure the same approach applies to disabled people and whānau as they do for everyone else. Everyone will be subject to Alert Level 1 safety guidelines meaning they can go out for a walk, visit a café or shopping mall, and see/keep in contact with close family and friends so long as they do so safely. Some disabled people may have underlying health conditions that mean they are at high risk of becoming very unwell from COVID-19. In these cases, Government advice is for the person to take extra precautions to keep safe. Any precautions need to balance both safety and the need for community and social integration.

It is also vital disabled people have access to information about COVID-19 and the alert levels in a way they understand. There is a range of resources in different accessible formats you can share with disabled people such as in New Zealand Sign Language, Easy Read, Large Print and audio, and animated videos. You can find these resources here: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-resources-and-tools/covid-19-accessible-information>

Overview of changes at Alert Level 1

All services can operate with Alert Level 1 safety considerations in place.

All disability support services can operate so long as they have the following Alert Level 1 public health control measures in place.

- Have COVID-19 risk screening in place, this means checking that staff, disabled people or visitors:
 - have not had contact with anyone who has been overseas within the previous 14 days
 - have not had contact with anyone with confirmed, suspected or probable COVID-19 within the last 14 days
 - do not have acute respiratory symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat or running nose).
- Practising good hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Maintaining high cleaning standards, including disinfecting frequently used surfaces such as doorknobs and handrails.

- Keep a register of contacts; this includes writing down who it is that staff support, what time the client was supported, who has visited the facility and when and which residents stay at your facility. As part of usual record-keeping, this will support contact tracing if required.
- Ensuring staff or visitors with cold or flu-like symptoms stay at home.
- Take extra precautions for those who are at high risk of becoming very unwell from COVID-19.

People who are more at risk may need to take extra precautions.

Some people, such as those with underlying health conditions, are more at risk of becoming very unwell from COVID-19. Under all alert levels, they need to take extra precautions to protect themselves from COVID-19; this may include:

- discussing with their doctor about what they think they should do in their situation.
- considering getting a flu vaccine to protect themselves during the winter and flu season.

There is more advice for those at higher risk here: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-higher-risk-people>

Alert Level 1 allows for usual community participation and movement.

Under Alert Level 1, disabled people can reaccess the community (e.g. sports, recreational and leisure activities), as long as this can be done safely; this means everyone should practice good hygiene and follow the golden rules. More information about the Golden Rules at Alert Level 1 can be found here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-general-public/protecting-yourself-and-others-covid-19>

Contact tracing records

At Alert Level 1, venues or premises that have visitors and customers no longer need to record or hold records of people's movement on their premises.

While it is not a legal requirement, we are asking everybody to voluntarily keep their own record of where they have been, when they were there and who they met. It is expected that providers will do this alongside the people they support as part of record-keeping.

The Ministry of Health has created a tracing app — NZ COVID Tracer. This app works by scanning a poster with the Ministry of Health generated QR code. The app then keeps track of where people have scanned, so they know where they have been.

Disability providers are encouraged to get the Ministry of Health's QR code and display it at the entranceway to their premises so attendees can use the contact tracing app to record their movements.

More information on the NZ COVID Tracer app and how to apply for a QR code can be found here.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-general-public/contact-tracing-covid-19>

For more information see: <https://uniteforrecovery.govt.nz/business/get-your-qr-code-poster/#how-contact-tracing-helps>

Advice and guidance on PPE

For up to date information on PPE and infection prevention and control please see:

www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-workers-including-personal-protective-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-use-health-care

More information

Please get in touch with your Ministry of Health portfolio manager if you have any further questions.