

Mid/Far North Office

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For regular updates please go to our website "NEWS" page - www.homesupport.co.nz/page/news.html

COVID-19 – Alert Level 3 update @ Tuesday 28th April 2020

Safety reminder

ask at the door before entering – is the Client well?

If not, please phone the office for further instructions.

This update is just for Support Workers – changes in green 😊

1. "Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Claim Form"

Claiming unworked Covid-19-related hours on the "COVID-19 WAGE SUBSIDY CLAIM FORM"

- Please don't claim for exited Clients.
- Please don't claim if you have been given replacement or relief work.
- Please only put UNWORKED hours on your claim form.
- Don't put SNC on your claim form – notify the Co-ordinator Support and note on your timesheet.
- **YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST** put all info including Client ID & hours & reason on the claim form, or else we might not be able to pay you. We are trying to process a considerably more complex pay with fewer staff, so things are pretty frantic in the payroll office and if you haven't completed the form properly we might not get the chance to contact you to fix it before the pay needs to be processed.
- And finally, please write clearly.

Check the 'Types of Leave Q&A' for information on what you can and cannot claim for. You need to be using the sheet that says "updated 24/04/20" at the top, to correctly complete your "Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Claim Form".

We are looking at what your normal fortnight would look like, and will try to make sure you get at least this much pay (excluding ACC and private hours). Don't forget, if the hours you have actually worked are more than what you usually would do, you don't need to fill in the Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Claim Form because there will be no top-up for you. **The 'Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Claim Form' is to top-up your pay to your normal hours if you have worked less than usual.**

Special request from Payroll staff

Please can you complete your "Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Claim Forms" as soon as you can (for each week), for hours not being worked, and send them in to the office straight away (early). That helps streamline the job of processing the pay and trying to get everything right for you. A big thank you from the payroll staff to those of you who send in your forms early. Keep them coming in. 😊

2. Last pay (fortnight ended 19/04/20 – paid Thursday 23 April)

Well that was a bit of a nightmare. So sorry to those of you whose pay was incorrect – hopefully we have fixed it up today. Call us next week if there is anything we can clarify or fix for you.

We would like to acknowledge the awesome efforts of our Payroll Team this fortnight. This pay was extremely complicated with all of the changes we have had to make for COVID-19 plus the public holiday calculations and on top of this we had a payroll system crash which meant the Payroll Team were working until 8pm on Thursday to make sure that you all received your pay as usual. This did not leave them time to add in the credit alternative days for any work carried out on public holidays – but don't worry, this will be added to your pay next fortnight.

3. Essential Worker Leave payment

On 9th April 2020 we applied for Essential Worker Leave payment for approximately 50 staff. We applied under the following criteria:

- a. Support Workers that were at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19, and Ministry of Health guidelines recommend they stay at home while we're in lockdown (and potentially longer).
- b. Support Worker lives with household members who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19 and Ministry of Health recommend the worker also remains at home to reduce the risk to them.

Our Support Workers who are self-isolating under criteria a. have been asked to use their sick leave to cover the period of their absence. We have reassured them that once we receive the Essential Worker Leave payment we will reinstate their leave.

Our application has not been processed at this time due to heavy workloads at Ministry of Social Development. We will update staff once we hear.

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (and forms/timesheets etc)

We think we have enough masks for this week, but gowns and hand sanitiser are still in short supply. (Gloves, aprons and booties are available as normal.) Debra will be placing another order with the NDHB tomorrow – and we are confident the supplies will keep coming now. Please make arrangements to collect your supplies.

As of last Friday 24th April) the new PPE guidelines are as below -

- a. A standard surgical mask and pair of disposable gloves will be provided at a maximum of one of each per Client visit
- b. Where the mask and gloves are used, they should be disposed of at the end of providing care for the Client, with the disposal occurring at the Client's residence
- c. Only one mask and pair of gloves will be provided per Client per visit, and it will be up to the Support Worker to determine whether they themselves wear the PPE or alternatively they request the Client to wear them
- d. Normal infection control procedures will continue such as using aprons when showering Clients. These can be reused for the same Client by the same Support Worker.

Supplies are only for Support Workers that are currently working.

Gowns - These are now being allocated for suspected or positive COVID-19 patient care only, along with other advanced PPE items (goggles/face shields /N95 masks)

Remember to bring a small container for us to decant a 50ml supply of hand sanitiser into for you (we only have 500ml bottles). Please bring your own bag for carrying supplies.

We intend to continue with these same time/place routines each week. (Including being able to get your supplies at the Kerikeri and Whangarei offices.)

Kaitaia – Thursdays, with our Trainer Fiona from her work car in the carpark behind the Chaplin’s office (located at the rear of the Kaitaia Hospital) from 12.30pm to 2.30pm for PPE and forms.

Russell - Medical Centre – Tuesdays, between 11am – 12noon with our Co-ordinator Julie for supply of masks, gowns and hand sanitiser. Any weekday between 10am – 4pm for other PPE needed.

Kaikohe - Broadway Health (including Ohaeawai & Okaihau) – Tuesday’s between 11am – 12noon for supply of masks, gowns and hand sanitiser. Look for our Co-ordinator Kerri-Rae in the Blue Mitsubishi Lancer over by the tree away from the covered walkway.

Paihia - text Pamela 0276153757 for your supplies – she will provide you with collection details

Doubtless Bay/Coopers Beach area - text Lynn 027 441 0968 for your supplies – she will provide you with collection details

Reminder – PPE is in high demand and short supply. These are allocated to those currently working.

5. ACC hours not worked

As we have been saying in previous updates, ACC will only pay for hours worked so we are unable to pay you ‘Special Leave’ for any unworked hours. Contact Robert or the Employee Support Team (Liz, Leonie and Lee) if you want to discuss your situation. You may have other leave (Annual Leave, Sick Leave or Alt Days) that you can claim. Our national association is still in negotiation with ACC to fund un-worked hours (if the Client has self-isolated or has had their non-essential hours stopped) so we are ever hopeful. If it turns out that way, and ACC retrospectively funds un-worked hours, then we can change the category of payment to ‘Special Leave’ and re-instate your leave entitlement.

6. Phoning the office

If you call us on our 0800 numbers, and the call might be a bit complicated and take some time, can you please let us know when you call. It may be best if we call you back. Calls that are made from the offices are free, whereas we pay for every 0800 call received. That is normally approx. \$700 each month, but as you can imagine there has been a massive increase over the last month (more than 60%). Anything that we can do to reduce this cost will be useful to the Service’s ongoing sustainability.

7. What changes from today with the drop to Alert Level 3?

- a) Non-essential supports for Clients (with a few exceptions) won’t be re-instated until Alert Level 2. We’ll contact the Client then you if we are going to re-start anyone’s support.
- b) People at higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19 (older people and those with existing medical conditions) will be contacted by EST and advised whether it is appropriate to return to work – most likely not for now.

- c) What can we do for Support Workers with no childcare? Please contact us if this is you – decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Official advice is that you need to access home-based child care via the Ministry of Education scheme. See the info on our website.
- d) Support Workers who live with health-compromised people and still want to self-isolate thru Alert Level 3 will need to phone Robert, Liz, Leonie or Lee.

Some of you may be returning to work from today as the Alert Level has changed to 3. Please be mindful that this has not changed the service we are delivering. You may not have the same Clients to return to. Please check with the office before contacting any Clients to avoid creating any confusion or anxiety.

8. A few positive facts from Dr Nick Chamberlain, Chief Executive of the Northland District Health Board

- In the last week there have been nine new mobile testing services start with local Maori Health Providers, going out to rural and remote communities to test, vaccinate and care for patients who haven't accessed health services.
- The NDHB have audited their Public Health Unit team's 'Contact Tracing' service and it is gold standard.
- In Northland 46 percent of tests have been on Maori, and less than 30 percent of Northland's Covid-19 patients have been Maori. This compares very well with the last pandemic where Maori fared terribly and had many times the death rate.

We also have a webinar from the Disability sector available that may interest you or someone else you know on "Self care for Families". You will need to register via this link – enjoy 😊

[Self care for families](#)

Also checkout the following links for regular updates:

[MOH COVID-19 Info - \(www.health.govt.nz\)](http://www.health.govt.nz)

[Government Website - All info related to COVID-19 – \(www.covid19.govt.nz\)](http://www.covid19.govt.nz)

[Home Support North Website COVID-19 Page \(www.homesupport.co.nz/page/covid-19\)](http://www.homesupport.co.nz/page/covid-19)

Stay safe and keep in touch.

The Management Team

Home Support North Charitable Trust