

Mid/Far North Office

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**Home Support
North**
Charitable Trust

Whangarei Office

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

COVID-19 – Lockdown update @ 3rd April 2020

1. Essential Services

We continue to provide essential services. Thank you to all our Clients for being understanding in these difficult times. To our Staff, thank you all so much for caring and being willing to do whatever is required. With the ceasing of non-essential services, daily visits have dropped by more than 100. But we are still providing more than 600 essential visits a day, with 100 fewer Support Workers working.

Essential Services – which we will keep providing wherever possible:

- Personal Care (including showering supervision and medication supervision)
- Most Meal Preparation
- Some essential Shopping (see number 9)

Non-essential services – not provided during the lockdown:

- Household Management (Home Care) will not be provided
- Supervision (attendant care of a Client, where the spouse/partner is relieved from being the sole carer and can have a rest, go shopping, go out, etc) will not be provided during the lockdown
- Most Shopping will not be provided during the lockdown. Alternative arrangements have been made or discussed with Clients or family.

To our Support Workers - Call us if you are unsure whether to go to work or not.

To our Clients - Call us if you are unsure about your service.

2. Staff Wages

Thank you to Support Workers who continue to work. Keep sending in timesheets for work done. If you need to self-isolate and want to be paid you need to talk to us about why. Contact the Healthline (0800 358 5453) if you need advice about self-isolation. You will most likely have less work because some Clients don't want support at this time, and we have stopped non-essential support. Please don't worry – just as our funding will continue at current levels, we will work with you to make sure your wages (excluding private Clients and maybe ACC funded Clients) continue at your expected level. Sharon has created a form that you will need to complete and return to us **each fortnight**, detailing your daily normal pre-COVID-19 hours that you haven't been able to work, and why. This is available from the office and on our website. "COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Claim Form"

We still haven't had funding details confirmed, so are not quite certain what we can pay from Special Leave and when you may need to use your leave allocation. Its likely that we'll just have to do the best we can paying you next week and fix up any adjustments the following pay. Once the details are sorted we will put something on our website in the private Support Worker accessible area.

3. ACC funding

As far as we know as at today (Friday 3rd of April), ACC will only pay for hours actually worked. Our national association has been working with all concerned to encourage ACC to take the same approach as DHBs and MoH Disability – which is to continue funding Providers at pre- Covid-19 levels. So to our Clients who are funded by ACC, don't worry we will continue to provide essential services wherever possible. To our Support Workers, if you work for ACC funded Clients you should be continuing with that work, sending us your timesheets and getting paid as normal. If you have had to self-isolate I'm not sure how we can handle your payment – you should ring and talk to us about this.

4. Preserving and sustaining the workforce

To all our Staff, please, everyone, be assured that your employment will continue and we will do our best to support you through this unsettled period. You are a vital part of the health system and your work is crucial. The community will once again rely on you to resume normal duties once this lockdown and isolation period is over.

5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Well, I bet you were all pleased to get that text this morning! We received a small supply of surgical masks from the NDHB, as well as single use gowns and five litres of hand sanitiser. Unfortunately not even enough to cover the number of visits we do in just one day, so until we know when the next supply will come we will need to ration based on your schedule.

Debra, Jo and Chrissy will have your individualised allocation sorted today so they are thinking that if you want these items as soon as possible they will come into the **Whangarei** office tomorrow morning (Saturday the 4th April) between 10am and noon and be able to hand them out to you using both doors - the main reception door on First Ave, and the back door that used to be the main reception years ago. (Using both doors to try and maintain social distancing.) If you aren't working on the weekend please leave coming in until Monday, when the office will be open again as normal. **(Supplies are only for Support Workers that are currently working, though.)**

If you would like some hand sanitiser, we could give you a few squirts out of the big bottles we have – you would just have to bring along a suitable small container – 50ml or less

We'll have **Kerikeri** office's supply up there on Monday 6th April, so you can come in to the office any time Monday afternoon or later to get your allocation.

Fiona is heading up to **Kaitaia** on Monday 6th April to collect timesheets, so if you want your masks & Hand sanitiser allocation she will be outside the People Centre from midday to about 2pm with your supply in her car.

We haven't yet arranged the pick-ups for **Kaikohe, Paihia, Doubtless Bay and Russell**. Give us a call on Monday and we can make plans with you for collection.

REMEMBER

For Support Workers going to Clients – PPE as usual (gloves, booties and aprons – plus hand hygiene - known as “Standard Precautions”).

Ministry of Health guidance regarding PPE to be used by community care providers for prevention of COVID-19.

For people who do not have COVID-19 and are not in 14-day isolation – standard precautions are still required as per normal practice.

- a) for people caring for others who are confirmed or suspected COVID-19, in addition to standard precautions, apply contact and droplet precautions (includes surgical mask and eye protection).
- b) for people in self isolation due to recent travel or contact with someone with confirmed, probably or suspected COVID-19, standard precautions (PPE and hand hygiene as usual).

6. Communication

Offices / phones

The offices now have less people/reduced staffing. Please phone if essential – otherwise email would be great. Or text this number **0277 030 448** and we will call you back when we are free.

(Please call or text this number during office hours ONLY for a quick response Mon to Fri 7am to 5pm.)

If you have any payroll enquiries you can still send texts to **027 408 0196**.

COVID-19 queries need to be made to the office during working hours.

As you can imagine, our After Hours staff have been busy. 66 calls in one day has been the peak so far. Please only call the after hours number (0800 11 22 10) if you need **urgent assistance** out of office hours.

If you don't need us urgently please call the office 0800 832 383 during office hours or email officewhg@homesupport.co.nz and we will be pleased to talk to you. Busiest day so far 205 incoming calls not counting those made to our mobiles and 430 2090 number.

Emails

We have set up a new email address mailouts@homesupport.co.nz – you will see the email will be from “HSN Mailout” in your inbox. (You may need to check your junkmail?)

This is to keep all of our communications to you consistent. Please let us know at this email if you would like us to update your email address – we are also using any Next of Kin contacts to try to keep our Clients updated as quickly as possible as regular mail is too slow for the everchanging nature of COVID-19 information and advice.

7. Gloves and forms, and timesheets as usual

To our Far North Support Workers, the Kaitaia People Centre, who we use as a pick-up point for gloves and forms, has closed. The Kaitaia Hospital has kindly offered to act as a pick-up point. First day was yesterday Thursday 2nd April 2020, with our trainer Fiona Barrett at the Chaplin's office (located at the rear of the Kaitaia Hospital) from 12.30pm to 2.30pm. We intend to

continue this every Thursday, same time and place, for PPE and forms. Look for the HSNCT sign. I'm sure there will be a distancing process to follow – Fiona will organise that with you as you arrive. BUT – still continue to drop your timesheets off in the post box at the People Centre and we'll collect them as usual at 12noon on Monday the 6th of April.

Kaikohe Support Workers should still be able to access supplies at Broadway Health Clinic as normal.

Russell Support Workers will be able to collect supplies at the Russell Medical Centre between 10am and 4pm daily from the afternoon of Tuesday the 7th of April.

Lynn (our Doubtless Bay-based Co-ordinator) has communicated with all the Cable Bay/Coopers Beach Support Workers regarding texting her when they need restocking, and she will bundle/name them up and leave them in her letterbox at the end of her drive for non-contact collection.

From Tuesday the 7th April, Pamela (our BOI-based Co-ordinator) will provide stocks in Paihia – text Pamela on 027 615 3757 with your requirements and she will bundle/name them up and text you details for collection.

The Kerikeri office is open normal hours – 8am to 4pm – for usual collection and drop-off.

The Whangarei office is open normal hours – 7am to 5pm – for usual collection and drop-off.

8. SW Identification badges

To our Support Workers, remember to carry your Identification badge in case you are stopped and questioned, while driving to provide an essential service. We are working on providing replacement identification badges to Support Workers who have requested them. We emailed letters to Support Workers that have an email address registered with us, advising that you are required to work and should be permitted to travel to Clients and for approved necessary shopping. If you haven't received one or would like one posted out please contact Sam – sam@homesupport.co.nz. Some supermarkets are offering priority access when you are shopping for a Client. NB: If you do get stuck in a queue and you run over time - talk to your Co-ordinator about this. (Apparently Kerikeri and Kaikohe New World give priority place in line if you are wearing your ID/t-shirt.)

9. Appreciation

We have been talking to hundreds of Clients over the last week, and overwhelmingly they are very grateful for the Support Workers who have continued to work at this time. And our office staff are even more grateful to those Support Workers who offer to take on more work, as we try to find someone to go in at short notice to some complex cases. We especially appreciate your patience and understanding when we make a little mistake – never intentional but we are trying really hard to accommodate everyone as best we can in this confusing situation.

10. Keeping yourself safe

Debra has loaded a section onto our website about best practice at this time – have a look here:-

[Our Welfare/Behaviour](#)

11. To our Clients who are vulnerable (over 70, underlying medical conditions, compromised immunity) - you need to take more precautions to protect yourself against all infections, including COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people with cold or flu-like illnesses.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with water and soap and dry them thoroughly:
 - before eating or handling food
 - after using the toilet
 - after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or wiping children's noses
 - after caring for sick people.

On top of the normal self-isolation that we are all practicing (staying within our bubbles at home, etc) - additional measures that you and your whānau and friends can take include:

- Stay at home, and ask others to pick up supplies for you. You just need to ask them to leave these at the door, rather than come in. Drop-offs at the door, rather than coming in, will protect vulnerable people from exposure to COVID-19.
- Stay at least 2 metres away from people who are unwell.
- If you're unwell, avoid contact with someone who is immune-compromised.
- If your health care provider advises you to wear a mask when in public areas because you have a particularly vulnerable immune system, follow that advice.
- If you are taking immunosuppressive drugs we advise that you do not stop this medication without first consulting your GP or specialist.

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