

Mid/Far North Office

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**Home Support
North**
Charitable Trust

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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 @ Monday 20th April 2020

Safety reminder from the Northern Regional HCSS Clinical Managers meeting, regarding Support Workers making home visits.

Sharon Mildon (Quality Nurse Leader, Auckland and Waitemata DHBs)
reminds Support Workers to

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

If not, please phone the office for further instructions.

Today's changes and new items in green.

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.

We have 326 Clients whose support is suspended during the Lockdown.

And there are 109 Support Workers not working (for various reasons).

Still more than six hundred visits a day happening though. Amazing effort by all staff to keep this Service running, thank you all.

Essential Services – which we will keep providing wherever possible:

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

Non-essential services – not prioritised during the lockdown:

- Household Management (Home Care) will not be prioritised and may 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 most likely 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

We have committed to maintain the pay of our Support Workers at expected/normal levels wherever possible for the duration of the Government's current four-week Covid-19 lockdown.

For Support Workers to receive your usual pay, you need to be available to carry out work as requested by the office. Some Support Workers may be requested to assist with other related work.

See the Support Worker section of our website for the current schedule of types of “COVID-19” leave and how we propose to pay them for the fortnight ended 19^h April.

If you are over 70 and we have asked you not to work (29 Support Workers), or have compromised immunity (24 Support Workers), we hope to be able to pay you as normal, and claim under the new ‘Essential Workers Leave Support’ category. If we are successful with our application, and we’ve asked you to take sick leave or annual leave or alternative days for the last fortnight (ended 5th April), we will correct that next pay.

We will endeavour to be as fair and reasonable as possible with our expectations, and we are relying on you to be the same in return.

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

Sharon noted from the pay last week that there are some things you can do to make sure you get paid correctly, and to help make this massive job a little more manageable for payroll staff.

- 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.
- MUST put all info including Client ID & hours & reason – 6a or 6b.
- Please write clearly.

We have made some changes to the ‘Types of Leave Q&A’, clarifying what you can and cannot claim for. Sam has substituted this updated form into the Support Worker section of the Website. You need to be working from this Q&A form for the current pay, checking that you are using the sheet that says “updated 17/04/20” at the top, to correctly complete your “Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Claim Form”.

Thank you all for everything over the last four weeks. Amazing response from everyone, and we are proud to have been able to provide close-to-normal service to most of our Clients. I know it has been a terrible upheaval, and you have had to cope with the unprecedented challenges of working while in lockdown, but know that we are all grateful.

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. Big thank you from the payroll staff – lots of you sent in your forms over the last weekend so they are flat out processing them right now. Keep them coming in. 😊

3. Shopping

Shopping continues to be problematic, with different supermarkets having a range of responses when Support Workers identify themselves as Essential Workers. Sorry if you have to wait in a queue. The Northland Welfare Group is aware of the varied response and are escalating the issue, as has our local MP Dr Shane Reti. Call us if we can help with anything.

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

We received our first supply of PPE from the NDHB on Friday 3rd April, then another on Thursday 9th, again on Saturday 11th and a random additional shipment last Wednesday. **Still waiting for further shipments that we expected to receive late last week. We are still having to ration masks, gowns and hand sanitiser. There are new guidelines for Support Worker use of PPE – [See our website](#). We will provide a copy of this to everyone who collects PPE.**

Supplies are only for Support Workers that are currently working.

Gowns - It is recommended that a full sleeve gown is worn for close personal contact cares - like for masks. Please enquire with your distribution person about collecting these in your area. Continue to use aprons if appropriate to do so.

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 at 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 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. Please apply the ration of use guidelines - i.e only used for close contact cares.

5. Kaitaia timesheet drop-off/pick-up

Far North (Kaitaia) Support Workers - Please continue to drop your timesheets off in the post box at the People Centre and we'll collect them as usual at 12noon after the next pay period end, on Monday the 4th of May.

6. Flu vaccinations

To our Support Workers - remember, you have priority to receive an early flu vaccination because you are an aged/disability care worker. You should be vaccinated early (from 18 March) to enable you to keep working over winter and stop you getting sick and adding to the demand that Covid-19 will place on our health system. On the 20th of March we sent all Support Workers the recommendation to get the vaccination and advised of the form (on our website) to be completed to

claim your reimbursement (up to \$45). We strongly encourage you to get this shot asap. (You may even get it for free – we have had one lucky Support Worker encounter this.)

7. ACC hours not worked

For Support Workers - 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.

8. 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.

9. What changes if the Alert Level goes down?

We are working on what might change for Clients and Support Workers as the Alert Levels drop. We need to decide –

- a) When to re-instate non-essential supports for Clients**
- b) When we can safely allow people at higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19 to come back to work (older people and those with existing medical conditions)**
- c) What can we do for Support Workers with no childcare**
- d) What can we do for Support Workers who live with compromised people**

Once we have had time to consider the Governments latest update today we will be contacting staff to clarify their situation. Please be aware a change to Alert Level 3 may result in only minimal change

10. 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