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**22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022**

## **Individualised Funding Client update**

### **Update on the Omicron COVID-19 situation**

We have tucked into this envelope a couple of COVID-19 flyers that provide you with more information to help you prepare for the possibility of you, or someone in your household, getting COVID-19.

Currently the period of self-isolation for people who test positive for COVID-19 (including household members) is 10 days. Day eight test for household members.

Self-isolation for close contacts is seven days.

### **There are a few things you need to remember:**

#### **Vaccinations are mandatory for Support Workers and Respite Carers**

All IF Support Workers and Respite Carers need to be fully vaccinated and have had their boosters when eligible (within six months of their second jab).

There is a 'Service Disruption Exemption' application process available if you want to apply to be able to employ non-boosted/vaccinated workers. None of our Clients have gone down this route, the process looks quite complicated.

#### **Information for Disabled People who employ their own workforce**

Attached is some information for IF Employers, on how to register for the Close Contact Exemption Scheme if you need your close-contact isolating Support Worker to continue, using RATs. It is quite a process, and we have asked the MoH if it would be possible for IF Clients to access RATs through their Host. Will let you know if we are successful.

#### **Close contact Support Workers**

Asymptomatic close contacts of a COVID-19 case will be able to continue to work if they return a negative rapid antigen test (RAT) at the beginning of each day of their isolation period. They will only be allowed to go to work, not anywhere else. Their household will still need to continue to isolate.

Just so you know, we have a supply of RATs that are to ensure essential cares continue for our MoH and NDHB funded Clients, where we employ the Support Workers. Currently the rules do not allow for them to be used for surveillance, so they can only be used in the above situation – where a close contact Support Worker needs to continue working to provide essential cares. We've had four Support Workers use them so far and they managed it easily.

In each situation where we ask close contact Support Workers to continue working, we will assess the PPE requirement.

## **PPE**

As noted above, we have a supply of RATs, and we have requested the Ministry of Health if these can be available to our IF Clients under the same criteria (close contact isolating of worker who provides essential care) as our formal funded Clients where we supply the workers. We may be able to supply some PPE for you (for collection from the office) please to give us a call to discuss.

We anticipate receiving a further supply of N95 masks, goggles, face shields and disinfection wipes. Currently these have only been used in the case of both of our close contact isolating high-needs Clients and their close contact isolating Support Workers, who needed to continue with care. The recommendation is N95 masks need to be fit-tested.

It is important that Support Workers continue with current PPE best practice of wearing a fresh medical mask at each visit, sanitising and distancing where possible. In determining close contact we have found that the Covid Advice Line asks questions around the size of the room, ventilation, and length of time within close distance to the Client.

If you are questioned, you'll want to be able to say that your Support Worker wore their mask at all times and kept their distance (1.5metres or more) in situations where it was possible.

You should let your Support Worker know, before they enter your home, that you and your household members are well and you haven't had anyone visiting that may have been in contact with COVID-19. If this is not the case you may want to make alternative arrangements and suspend your care for a period. Always seek advice from your GP or call Healthline (0800 611 116)

## **Contact us**

Feel free to phone us (or email) if there is anything we may be able to help with.

Phone: 0800 832 383 (Marie – ext 803, Leanne – ext 900, Natasha – ext 712).

Email: [officewhg@homesupport.co.nz](mailto:officewhg@homesupport.co.nz)

Stay safe,

**The Management Team**  
**Home Support North Charitable Trust**