

Newsletter – 31st August 2021

COVID-19 Update

The Government has confirmed that all areas of New Zealand, outside of Auckland and Northland, will be moving to COVID-19 Alert Level 3 from 11.59pm tonight, 31 August. Auckland and Northland will be staying at Alert Level 4 for the time being (up to two weeks for Auckland and a week for Northland, depending on tests around Warkworth).

49 new cases today after evidence of a slowing in yesterday's total is good news and shows that the pain of lockdown is working.

There continue to be some issues with exemption letters and essential staff needing to travel. The problem is not with staff or disabled people, but with other agencies and their awareness of these exemption letters. We are working with MoH and others to resolve this.

Auckland Floods

On top of the COVID lockdown, parts of Auckland have suffered severe flooding following a torrential downpour of rain overnight and this morning mainly affecting western centres. The flooding has led to over 60 people being evacuated and many homes and businesses being flooded.

Of concern is the impact of the flooding on services and their clients, and on staff whose own homes may have been affected by the flooding. We are aware of one staff member of a residential service whose lower floor and garage of a two-story home has been flooded out.

We have reached out to Auckland services to ensure they are OK. Most appear to be so, thankfully.

Funding – surety payments

The Ministry of Health (MoH) distributed a letter and Annex late Monday offering certainty around payments for services suspended or otherwise adversely affected under the COVID lockdown.

The communication is meant to signal invoicing and payment is occurring along business-as-usual lines with the only exception being that if a service is undeliverable, providers will still be paid. We are grateful to the MoH for seeking to resolve this matter, compared to the experience of the last lockdown process, but (as at least one provider has commented), it does seem to be an over complicated communication that left lines to be read between?

Extraordinary payments

The most obvious issue with the publication of Monday's surety payment process is the absence of any recognition regarding extraordinary costs. We have previously expressed concern that the MoH may separate these issues and leave the matter of extraordinary costs off the list. As a sector, we need to keep the pressure up on this to ensure resolution over the next few days. You can help by telling us how much of a problem the exclusion of funding for extraordinary costs will be for you. Let us know at admin@nzdsn.org.nz

PPE

Concerns about delays to PPE order continue to feature.

The Ministry advises they are experiencing a high volume of orders through their warehousing facilities currently and are focusing their efforts on responding to the immediate needs of the Health and Disability sector and COVID-19 vaccination sites. They have asked providers to allow up to five working days from order acknowledgement to receipt of their PPE. The Ministry would expect that providers have sufficient contingency supplies to support their immediate PPE requirements under raised Alert Levels.

The MoH has the ability to provide updates on individual orders, so providers can email the MoH with their order details if they would like to be updated.

Again, let us know of your experience if it varies from the MoH's outline above – to admin@nzdsn.org.nz

Supporting those managing anxiety and stress around the COVID-19 vaccination

Extra support for disabled and autistic people wanting to get the COVID-19 vaccination is now available, thanks to a partnership between Explore and the Ministry of Health.

Many people may experience anxiety and distress when it comes to injections, needles, and the COVID-19 vaccination. Thankfully, there are many techniques we can use to remain calm and make the whole experience much more tolerable.

Free e-learning modules from Explore

Explore has developed a set of free e-learning modules for Support Workers, whānau, and vaccinators assisting disabled and autistic people. To access the e-learning module and associated resources, go to: <https://www.healthcarenz.co.nz/service/explore-specialist-advice/preparing-for-the-covid-19-vaccination/>

Free 1-on-1 virtual support from Explore

Explore now also provides free 1-on-1 virtual support for disabled and autistic people, their whānau, and Support Workers, through video conferencing or phone.

To talk with one of our specialists virtually and find out how best to support someone to manage anxiety and distress related to the COVID-19 vaccination, phone our 0800 number any time Monday to Friday between 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. When you phone our 0800 number, you will connect with an administrator to book you an appointment with one of our specialists.

To access this individual support, call: 0800 000 421

Election Voting is open until the 15th

The NZDSN Annual General Meeting is set for 23rd September. Voting for vacancies on the Board has commenced. Voting for the NZDSN Board closes Wednesday 15th September and must be on the official NZDSN Voting Form. Votes are to be emailed to (admin@nzdsn.org.nz) so they arrive by 5:00pm **Wednesday 15th September 2021.** Please note your organisation must be a full financial member to cast votes. If you are in any doubt of your financial status, or to obtain a voting form, please contact us – call Sue Eastwood 04 473 4678 / 027 534 6471 or email admin@nzdsn.org.nz

Kia Noho Rangatira Ai Tātou, Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Webinar, starting next week.

Due to popular demand Te Pou has added another webinar:

This is an exciting education programme that builds understanding of disabled people's rights and self-determination, from the unique cultural context of Aotearoa.

This workshop will be useful for disabled people, family/whānau and those working with disabled people either in the sector or wider community. Join us for a workshop led by disabled people

Location: Online Webinar

Dates: 7th, 9th, 14th & 16th September 2021

Time: 9.30am - 12:00pm

Register: Please [click here](#) to register your attendance through our website www.tepou.co.nz

Contact: For more information please contact Ally Steenhuis at Ally.Steenhuis@tepou.co.nz

The programme is funded by the Ministry of Health. For those with a Disability Support Service (DSS) contract, it is free to attend a workshop. For those who do not have a DSS contract, there is a charge per participant. Please contact our team for further information on costs.