

# COVID-19

## Information for disabled people who employ their own support workers in Omicron response Phase 3

7 March 2022

During Phase 3 of the Omicron response, critical workers who provide a health or emergency service, or are critical workers of a registered critical service provider, and who are vaccinated and asymptomatic are eligible for the Close (Household) Contact Exemption Scheme or CCES.

This means that if your support worker(s) become a household contact, they may continue to work for you, provided they return a negative Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) before each day or time they are at work during their isolation period and follow specific health protocols.

To qualify, a support worker must be:

- deemed critical by their employer
- asymptomatic
- vaccinated.

Support workers will only be allowed to go to their place of work with you – not anywhere else.

You can read more about the CCES here: [Close Contact Exemption Scheme | Biz.govt.nz](#)

Simple worker guidance on accessing and using RATs, including eligibility under the CCES can be downloaded here: [Rapid antigen testing guide for critical workers | Ministry of Health](#)

Before your support worker employees can access RATs under the CCES, you need to register as an employer under the CCES. You can have someone you trust support you with this process.

### How to register under the CCES

Before you can access the Business Connect portal to create an account where you will register under the CCES, you will first be prompted to create a RealMe account or log in to RealMe using your existing RealMe account details.

# COVID-19

## Step 1: Log in to Business Connect via RealMe

- Visit the Biz.govt page on the CCES here: [Close Contact Exemption Scheme | Biz.govt.nz](#)
- On that webpage is a link to register for the CCES: [Register for Close Contact Exemption Scheme | BusinessConnect.govt.nz](#) Click that link.
- Once clicked, you will be redirected to RealMe so you can log in to Business Connect after creating a RealMe account, or logging in using your existing RealMe account details.

If you need to create a RealMe login, you will need to:

- provide an email address (you will be prompted to confirm your email address by entering a six-digit confirmation code)
- decide on a username and password
- provide your contact details and
- decide on three security questions which will be used by you if you forget your password or username, to help you regain access.

You can read about the identification needed to create a RealMe account here: [How to apply | RealMe](#)

**Important note:** you do not need to create a Verified RealMe account to register under the CCES. So, no photo identification or birth certificate is required to create a standard RealMe account and register under the CCES.

Now that you have logged in to RealMe, you can set up your account with Business Connect.

## Step 2: Register for CCES at Business Connect

- You will be prompted to verify your account with a series of questions.
- Now select the Covid-19 Close Contact Exemption Scheme Register.
  - If you have an NZBN (New Zealand Business Number) then enter that or select the “sole trader” option and click “No” for NZBN.
  - Now, select “Health” as the category.
  - You will be prompted to answer a series of questions, after which you will receive an email with your CCES registration number.
- You can provide your support workers with a copy of this CCES registration email to show that you are registered under the CCES.

# COVID-19

So that your support workers can access RATs, in addition to registering under the CCES, you will need to prepare a “critical workforce authorisation” letter for them. A template “critical workforce authorisation” letter is provided below.

### Step 3: Prepare a Critical Workforce Authorisation Letter

Here is sample text you can use to create your own “critical workforce authorisation” letter for your support workers, so they can gain access to RATs. You are welcome to copy the text, completing the five blank fields denoted by [...] with your own information, before completing the letter by signing it.

Sample text for a “critical workforce authorisation” letter:

Date: [...]  
Employee Name: [...]  
Job Title: [...]

#### Confirmation of Critical Worker

The purpose of this letter is to confirm that the above-mentioned employee is deemed a critical disability support worker in the context of the Omicron. That is:

A health and disability service that provides direct, hands-on care and support that maintains a person’s necessities of life AND enables the delivery of equitable care to those people most vulnerable to ill health.

The person named above has been identified as a household contact and as their employer I wish them to take a ‘Test to Return’ approach to support work with me whilst they are asymptomatic. I have registered for the Close Contact Exemption Scheme and my registration number is [...].

The processes we are using to try and stop the transmission of COVID-19 are:

- Good infection control processes
- Keeping records for contact tracing purposes
- Wearing PPE correctly including the use of approved masks.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Name: [...]

## How workers access RATs under the CCES

Support workers who are household contacts can access RATs under the CCES. Here is what they must do.

### **Step one: Complete contact tracing form**

If your support worker is a household contact, they need to complete the COVID-19 contact tracing form found at: [COVID-19 contact tracing form | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

Once complete they will get a text message confirming them as a household contact. Your worker will need to use this text confirmation when collecting RATs from a Collection Site.

### **Step two: Notify employer and obtain a “critical workforce authorisation letter”**

Your worker(s) must contact you as their employer and explain that they are a household contact. You will give them a letter confirming that your support is critical service and that they are a fully vaccinated critical worker.

### **Step three: Order RATs from the Ministry of Health**

Your worker(s) complete a web form to request RATs: [Request RATs | Covid-19.govt.nz](#). They follow the prompts in the form and make a note of the order number. If they cannot access the form, they can call 0800 222 478 and follow the voice prompts.

### **Step four: Collect RATs from the nearest collection site**

Your worker(s) find their nearest RATs collection site online and go to the site in person to pick up their RATs. To find the nearest collection site visit: [COVID-19 Testing | Healthpoint](#)

At the collection site, they will be asked to provide the following for verification:

- Their verification letter for the CCES programme (the “critical workforce authorisation letter” signed by you, as their employer)
- Their household contact verification text message (the text message they will have received from Contact Tracing).

### **Step five: Workers self-administer their RATs and report result**

Simple worker guidance on accessing and using RATs can be downloaded here: [Rapid antigen testing - a guide for critical workers | Ministry of Health](#)

Your support worker(s) need to test before each working day or shift. After testing they need to record their result in My Covid Record at: [My Covid Record RAT Reporter | My Covid Record.health.nz](#)

Your worker(s) must also report their result(s) to you before starting work each day or shift.

If workers cannot access My Covid Record online, they can call 0800 222 478 for additional support recording their results. Calling the contact centre may take more time so they will need to plan accordingly.

If your worker gets a **negative test** result and do not have symptoms, they can come into work.

However, if they get a **positive test result**, they must self-isolate immediately and get a PCR test. They are not permitted to come and provide you with support services and you should activate alternative care arrangements.

If a result is **failed or indeterminate**, they must take another RAT. If their second test fails or is indeterminate, they must self-isolate and get a PCR test.

More guidance on rapid antigen testing under the CCES can be found here: [Rapid antigen testing | Ministry of Health](#)

## Prepare and stay safe

People with disabilities and their households need to prepare in case they or a member of their household or their care support network is affected by COVID-19.

The first step in planning is to prepare for self-isolating at home. Visit [Prepare for COVID-19 | Covid-19.govt.nz](#) and use the COVID-19 Readiness Checklist to formulate a household plan: [COVID-19 Readiness Checklist | Covid-19.govt.nz](#)

It is also important that anyone who is care dependent has a written care plan in place so that if their carer becomes unwell and emergency alternate care is required, the care plan can easily be shared with a new carer. This will help enable the safe continuity of care, regardless of the carer or the care setting.

Care plans could be developed with the person's Care Provider or people with disabilities and their families can use the excellent Emergency Care Planning tools available on the Carers NZ website: [Emergency Care Planning tools | Carers.net.nz](#)