

COVID-19

Omicron Update 5: Disability providers

31 March 2022

This is the fifth in a series of Omicron related updates to Disability providers. Updates provide new or updated information as it becomes available and is current at the time of publishing.

Omicron response strategy – Phase 3

We remain in Phase 3 of the Omicron Response strategy. During this phase health and social services will focus on those who need the most support. As the situation evolves so does the response to Omicron.

Key points

Since the last written update for providers (Omicron Update 4) the following updates have been made to the nation's COVID response:

- The Covid Protection Framework settings have been updated to reduce some of the restrictions on daily life but still protect our population from COVID-19.
- Rapid antigen tests (RATs) can now be used for surveillance of the workforce in residential care settings.
- Providers are now able to order RATs for the people they support, provided those people meet the eligibility criteria and cannot access a collection centre themselves.
- PPE guidance videos are now available for Home Care and Residential Care workers:

[PPE guidance for Home Care workers in New Zealand | Ministry of Health NZ - YouTube](#)

[PPE guidance for Residential Care workers in New Zealand | Ministry of Health NZ - YouTube](#)

PPE and RAT supply has improved – many providers now have adequate provisions.

Work currently underway

The Disability Directorate is currently working on initiatives for the disability sector and community including:

- Developing a free 0800 Telehealth support line for disabled people and their carers, inclusive of a triage service for people needing urgent carer support

- Collaborating with other agencies to set up an online COVID information hub for people with disabilities and the organisations that support them
- A free RAT delivery service for those unable to access a collection point
- Administering supervised RATs in the home for those unable to self-administer their test
- Finalising information for disabled people “What happens if me or my Carer gets COVID-19”

Important Updates

Covid Protection Framework Update	<p>A new and simplified COVID Protection Framework (CPF) came into effect from 11.59pm Friday, 25 March.</p> <p>Key changes to the CPF</p> <p>The key changes to the CPF – or traffic light setting framework – are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At RED, people will be required to wear masks in all the indoor venues they are now, and capacity limits increase to 200 people. Outdoor capacity limits are removed, and face masks are no longer required at outdoor settings.• At ORANGE, the capacity limits are removed, but face masks are still required in many indoor settings.• At GREEN, there will be no requirements, but we want people to keep up good health habits and look after those of us more vulnerable to COVID-19. <p>Currently New Zealand is at RED.</p> <p>Testing and isolation</p> <p>At all levels, the testing and isolation requirements remain as they are now. If you have symptoms or someone in your household tests positive, isolate and get tested. The isolation period for both positive cases and household contacts will remain at 7 days and will be kept under regular review.</p> <p>Scanning QR codes</p> <p>There will be no requirement on organisations to ensure customers scan in anymore and QR codes will no longer need to be displayed. As Omicron is now widespread, we no longer need to contact trace individual cases. This system may need to return if another variant of concern arrives in New Zealand.</p> <p>My Vaccine Pass</p> <p>From 4 April, use of My Vaccine Pass will no longer be mandatory.</p>
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	<p>Vaccine Mandates remain in place for health and care workers.</p> <p>Vaccine Mandates remain in place for health and care workers. This is because health and care workers and prison staff come into contact with a lot of people who are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19.</p> <p>Recommended public health measures</p> <p>Please note that the following public health measures continue to be strongly recommended, though they are no longer required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• visitor sign-in registers and records for contact tracing• mask wearing outside where physical distancing cannot be maintained. <p>Guidance for disability providers</p> <p>Revised guidance for disability providers can be found here:</p> <p>COVID-19: Aged care, disability and hospice care providers Ministry of Health NZ</p>
<p>Rapid antigen tests</p>	<p>Testing in Residential Care Settings</p> <p>Following changes to the COVID Protection Framework, the Ministry has reviewed its guidelines on the use of rapid antigen testing in residential care services.</p> <p>To better protect disabled people and the workforce in residential care services, surveillance testing of asymptomatic staff members before they start a shift is recommended whilst COVID-19 is prevalent in the local community.</p> <p>The purpose of testing in residential care settings is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• keep residents safe and connected to family and whānau• keep community residential care homes operating by enabling their workers to return to work• prevent or minimise the spread of COVID-19 in residential care services. <p>Testing other Critical Workers</p> <p>Surveillance testing of in-home care workers is not currently advised. Although many who receive in-home care may be more vulnerable to the impact of Omicron, the risk that is posed to them by non-symptomatic in-home care workers, who are not household contacts of COVID-19 positive cases, is no greater than the risk posed by family members visiting and through contact with others in the community.</p> <p>There are a range of existing infection prevention control measures, including the use of PPE, to minimise the risk of transmission between workers and clients.</p>

RATs are available to critical workers who:

- are asymptomatic and
- are fully vaccinated and
- are identified as a household contact and
- need a test to go to work.

Ordering RATs through the PPE Portal

For providers that have an existing account to access PPE at either [Health Care Logistics](#) (HCL) or [Onelink](#) and meet the eligibility criteria, RATs will have been added to your ordering templates.

If RATs are not a visible option on an existing provider account, and eligibility criteria is met, contact Covid.healthsupplychain@health.govt.nz

Providers not already registered on the PPE portal will need to open an account and register. More information including written guidance for Community Providers, is available here: [Rapid antigen testing for Priority Populations and Community Providers | Ministry of Health](#)

Providers are now able to order RATs to deliver to the people they support, provided the person meets the standard eligibility criteria of either being symptomatic or a household contact.

Registering RAT results

It is important that the results of RATs are reported. Individual results can be reported online via My Covid Record or by calling 0800 222 478 for assistance.

[My Covid Record | Mycovidrecord.health.nz](#)

Providers can also upload bulk RATs results by compiling and emailing the following information in a password encrypted Excel spread sheet to inbound@cbg.co.nz

- First name
- Last name
- Date of Birth
- NHI number (if known)
- Personal address
- Contact number
- RAT test result

Once the results are entered, these will show up in the individual's My Covid Record. Where a person's result is positive, the positive case Self Service Tool will be automatically activated and sent to the person for completion.

	<p>It is important to clarify with support workers whether they should be uploading their own results or whether the provider will do it on their behalf.</p> <p>Keep up to date with RATs</p> <p>For the most up to date information on RATs please check out the dedicated webpage: Rapid antigen testing Health.govt.nz</p>																					
<p>PPE updates</p>	<p>The Ministry's Infection Prevention and Control team has produced two personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance videos for home and residential health care staff working in New Zealand, to show the best approach to putting on, taking off and disposing of PPE in those workplace settings.</p> <p>PPE guidance for Home Care workers in New Zealand Ministry of Health NZ - YouTube</p> <p>PPE guidance for Residential Care workers in New Zealand Ministry of Health NZ - YouTube</p>																					
<p>PPE supply chain</p>	<p>Providers are asked to be efficient with ordering (ie, placing carton-sized orders weekly or fortnightly rather than split packs, daily) and only escalate delivery delays when genuinely urgent.</p> <p>Though there will be delivery delays in some instances as distribution networks are impacted by Omicron, all orders placed will be delivered.</p> <p>Follow Up Request for PPE</p> <p>The Ministry can escalate urgent PPE supply issues internally. Please email your Portfolio Manager with the following information in the first instance:</p>																					
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Product</th> <th>Qty in EACH</th> <th>Account Number</th> <th>Order Number</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Address Line 1</th> <th>Suburb</th> <th>City</th> <th>Postcode</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>RAT Self Tests</td> <td rowspan="4">*Enter quantity in each, it will be rounded to carton based on available product at the time</td> <td rowspan="4">*enter account number used to place orders through the OL or HCL portal</td> <td rowspan="4">*If you have recently placed an order for the required products and want express delivery then enter the order reference.</td> <td rowspan="4">Name of customer</td> <td rowspan="4">Street address</td> <td rowspan="4">Suburb</td> <td rowspan="4">City</td> <td rowspan="4">Postcode</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PPE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N95 (Masks)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Product	Qty in EACH	Account Number	Order Number	Name	Address Line 1	Suburb	City	Postcode	RAT Self Tests	*Enter quantity in each, it will be rounded to carton based on available product at the time	*enter account number used to place orders through the OL or HCL portal	*If you have recently placed an order for the required products and want express delivery then enter the order reference.	Name of customer	Street address	Suburb	City	Postcode	PPE	N95 (Masks)	Other	
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<p>Hands Up database update</p>	<p>The Hands Up database is a workforce candidate database created by the Ministry of Health to support the COVID-19 workforce with clinical and non-clinical roles. You can request a candidate search to help you fill any staff shortages.</p>																					

	<p>How do I request a candidate search?</p> <p>If you need additional staff due to the Omicron outbreak, please email handsup@health.govt.nz with the candidate search criteria listed below. The Ministry will conduct a database search and provide you with potential leads for you to contact.</p> <p>The information we require to run a candidate search for you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Region• Role required for a site (i.e vaccinator, admin support, Registered Nurse)• Current APC needed?• Previously held and APC or APC lapsed• Previous experience• Days/hours available (part time, full time)• Other languages spoken• Ethnicity <p>Please note the Hands Up database provides a channel to workforce candidates. Your normal recruitment process including validating qualifications, conducting police and reference checks still needs to be completed if you choose to contact a candidate or proceed with employment.</p> <p>How do candidates register their availability for work?</p> <p>Candidates register their availability for work by completing the form on the Ministry of Health website. This information loads into the Hands Up database for both clinical and non-clinical roles.</p> <p>COVID-19 Hands Up Database – Register to join the database Ministry of Health NZ</p>
<p>Support available for people who test positive</p>	<p>Information on what to do, and how to get assistance if you test positive for, or are exposed to COVID-19, is available from the COVID-19 Health Hub.</p> <p>COVID-19 Health Hub covid19.health.nz</p> <p>We understand that some people, including disabled people and their whānau, will have additional support requirements if exposed to COVID-19. Support is available for people based on their individual needs.</p> <p>In addition to the information available from the COVID-19 Health Hub – if people are concerned about their health, or that of their family – they can call Healthline on 0800 358 5453. If urgent medical help is needed, call 111 and tell them you have COVID-19.</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) can co-ordinate extra support for people who are self-isolating because they have COVID-19 or are identified as a household close contact. People will be referred to a provider if required.</p>

	<p>People can apply online for support here:</p> <p>Help while you're self-isolating Work and Income</p> <p>People can also call the COVID-19 Welfare phone line on 0800 512 337, seven days a week.</p> <p>Those who need extra support can request help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• getting access to food and essential items• mobile data to keep in contact with essential services, friends and whānau• getting support for personal care or daily tasks• talking to an employer if there are concerns about leave or pay• getting mental health support, or support with family or sexual violence. <p>This support could be from a community provider or organisation, a government agency, a marae-based service or support established by iwi.</p> <p>MSD has published an updated list of Community Connectors and Food Providers to help with COVID-19 referrals:</p> <p>Care in the Community welfare response - Ministry of Social Development</p> <p>Other links that may be useful:</p> <p>Student Volunteer Army – Delivering essential groceries Student Volunteer Army</p> <p>Online Supermarket: Priority Assistance Service Countdown.co.nz</p>
Vaccination Update	<p>The COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 has been amended to expand the recognised list of COVID-19 vaccines under Schedule 3.</p> <p>Novavax has been added to the schedule as a recognised primary course vaccine. It is currently only approved for the primary vaccination course (two vaccination doses) in New Zealand, not as a booster vaccination. However, the Novavax vaccine is available as a booster on prescription from an authorised prescriber.</p> <p>Additional vaccines are recognised under the Vaccinations Order, which may be of interest to employers with staff vaccinated overseas.</p> <p>Details can be found in Schedule 3 of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021:</p>

[COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Vaccinations\) Amendment Order \(No 3\) 2022 | Legislation.govt.nz](https://legislation.govt.nz/COVID-19%20Public%20Health%20Response%20(Vaccinations)%20Amendment%20Order%20(No%203)%202022)

If you have workers who have received COVID-19 vaccinations overseas they will need to contact the My Covid Record team for information on how to upload and register their vaccinations against their New Zealand health record.

Phone: [0800 222 478](tel:0800222478)

Email: help@mycovidrecord.min.health.nz

COVID Care in the Community Hubs

The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development have updated the framework for health and welfare providers caring for people with COVID-19 in the community. This interim update reflects how the high volume of cases is being managed now in the current Omicron outbreak.

The Framework sets expectations and provides central guidance for those providing regionally co-ordinated, locally led services, recognising that local health and welfare providers know their communities best.

[Caring for people with COVID-19 in the community | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

COVID Care in the Community Hub contact details

The following is a list of the COVID Care in the Community Hubs and their contact details. Please use this if you have any queries:

COVID Care in the Community Hubs			
	Hubs/Spokes/Localities	Email	Number
Northland	Northland Clinical Hub Regional Support Hub Te Hiku Mid North 'Rautaki Matua' Lower Mid North / Whangarei Ngāti Whatua		
Auckland Metro	Whānau HQ Coordination Hub Whānau HQ Coordination Hub Māori Whānau HQ Coordination Hub Pacific	WhanauHQ@adhb.govt.nz	0800 687 647
Taranaki District Health Board	Taranaki Hub	Covidhub@tdhb.govt.nz	0508 436 374
Waikato District Health Board	Tākina Hauraki Covid in the Community Hub (Thames) Taumarutanga	CSIQService@waikatodhb.health.nz	0800 220 250

COVID Care in the Community Hubs			
	Hubs/Spokes/Localities	Email	Number
	Pūtiki Kawhia Moana Pookekatia Waikato Kirikiriroa Pacific South Waikato Waikato Ethnic Whaingaroa Ngaati Hauaa		
Lakes District Health Board	Northern Lakes Hub Te Arawa Whānau Ora Southern Lakes Hub	covidresponse@tearawa-whanauora.org.nz	0800 664 554
	Tuwhareora	Clinical.tuwhareora@tuwharetoa.iwi.nz	0800 473 672
Bay of Plenty District Health Board	Community Co-ordination Hub – East Covid-19 Primary Response Team	ebopcovid@bopdhhb.govt.nz	0800 633 277
	Community Co-ordination Hub – West	welfare.referral@bopdhhb.govt.nz	0800 798 729
Tairāwhiti District Health Board	Takatu Hub	manaaki@tdh.org.nz	0800 886 24482
Whanganui District Health Board	Whanganui/Ngāa Rauru Kīitahi/Whanganui Awa		
	Waimarino	covid19@ngatirangi.com	0800 672 622
	North Rangitikei	covid@thl.org.nz	06 388 1156
	South Rangitikei		
MidCentral District Health Board	Covid Coordination Hub Palmerston North Manawatu Horowhenua Tararua Otaki	Covid.CommunityHub@midcentraldhhb.govt.nz	
Hawkes Bay District Health Board	Hawkes Bay Hub	covidcoordination@hb.dhb.govt.nz	0800 211 024
Wairarapa District Health Board	Wairarapa Hub	siq@wairarapa.dhb.org.nz	0800 829924
2 District Health Board	Capital Coast/Hutt Valley Covid Response Hub	CSIQ@ccdhhb.org.nz	0800 935 747
	Te Pou Manaaki/Wellington City	referrals@tepoumanaki.org.nz	0800 450977
	Ti Aki (Porirua)	info@tiakiporirua.co.nz	0800 842 547

COVID Care in the Community Hubs			
	Hubs/Spokes/Localities	Email	Number
	Kōkiri Marae		0800 935 747
	Tamaiti Whāngai	Covid19@atiawa.com	0800 123 VAX
	Te Awakairangi Spoke	huttspoke@teahn.org.nz	0800 HUTT CARE
Nelson Marlborough District Health Board	Nelson Marlborough Covid Hub	NMHwelfare@nmdhb.govt.nz	0800 268 366
West Coast District Health Board	West Coast Care in the Community Hub	covidhub@wcdhb.health.nz	0800 268 434
Canterbury District Health Board	Canterbury Hauora Coordination Hub	covidhub@cdhb.health.nz	0800CANVAX
South Canterbury District Health Board	Covid-19 Coordination Centre	ccc@scdhb.health.nz	0800 111 880
Southern District Health Board	SDHB Community Care Hub	communitycarehub@southerndhb.govt.nz	0800 477 116

Stay up to date

For latest information refer to the official COVID-19 websites:

[COVID-19: Aged care, disability and hospice care providers | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

[Unite Against COVID-19 | covid19.govt.nz](https://covid19.govt.nz)

Download the Āwhina app for alerts and information for health and disability workers:

[Āwhina App for health and disability workers | Ministry of Health](#)

Subscribe to COVID-19 key health messages:

[COVID-19 health key messages newsletter | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

Questions

If you have questions, please continue to liaise with your Portfolio manager or email disability@health.govt.nz