

Hi all,

As you all know, given the vulnerability (underlying health conditions) of our residents and day programme participants, protecting them and our staff from the Covid-19 virus remains a key priority for us. However, we are also acutely aware that families/ whanau and guardians are keen to spend some quality time with the residents of our homes too.

Update on our evolving response to the Covid-19 pandemic

With a move to Alert Level 3 on Monday at 11:59pm, our organisation has settled on the following approach.

1. **Residents:** If those residents who have spent the last 4.5 weeks during Level 4 with their families out in the community would like to return to our homes, they are welcome to re-join their house bubble, as long as they are able to commit to remaining in that bubble long term. *In this way, we meet the Government's requirement that people 'only move once, and in one direction'.ⁱ*
2. **Visitors:** With our clients' vulnerabilities and the continuing possibility of infection, we would also prefer, where possible, to continue to keep our homes visitor-free until at least Monday 11th May (i.e. no visits from family members, guardians or any other visitors). *In this way, we meet the Government's requirement to 'always keep your bubble exclusive, and keep it small'.ⁱⁱ*

We will continue to monitor this with our Leadership team and continue to discuss with family /whanau members. We will review this decision each week and, as before, advise of any changes to this plan by email.

Depending on individual circumstances in the specific house, its bubble size and the health status of the family, guardian and residents' bubbles concerned, we may be able to as an exception, set up a physically-distanced meeting if this is requested. (e.g. Balcony meetings, where resident is on a balcony and family is seated below maintaining physical distance of no less than 2 metres)

1. If families, guardians, or residents would like to arrange an urgent visit (with one dedicated member of the family where possible) with their loved ones earlier than Monday 11th May, please speak first with your appropriate House Leader.
2. The residents and their House Leader will decide with you, who is in the extended bubble for each service and the House Leader will discuss this with the family/whanau concerned. (see survey/questionnaire overleaf)
3. This process will be managed by the provider in consultation with the family/whanau involved, to ensure that no extended bubble becomes too big and/or bubbles become mixed and/or it increases the potential risk of infection in any house.
4. If an agreement cannot be made between the Family/ Whanau and the House Leader then, as GM, I will become part of the relevant discussions until an agreement is reached.

We fully understand that this decision may not be what everyone was hoping for, however, we are confident that it meets the requirements of Alert Level 3, and balances the needs of individuals, and households and the health and safety of our staff and importantly it is in line with the decisive, yet cautious approach the NZ Government/ MoH has taken so far, which we are fully in agreement with.

Finally, I would like to say how much we appreciate your continued understanding and kindness in your interactions with our staff and House Leaders. We are proud and thankful for their tireless efforts to keep everyone safe for the last 4 weeks.

^{i & ii} <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-system/alert-level-3/#personal-movement>

Family/ Whanau Questionnaire: (Please bear in mind some of these questions may be confidential/ and we respect your privacy, but it is important we ask them, in order to maintain the integrity of our Residential Bubbles as they increase in size and are extended)

1. How many people have been in your family/whanau bubble for the last 4.5 weeks at Alert Level 4?
2. Will this bubble increase in size during Level 3 for the next 2-4 weeks or longer?
3. Do you have any people over 70 years of age or with underlying health conditions in your bubble?
4. Please name 1 person that will represent your family when visiting our residential service? Please can you give me your contact Details Name, Cell and email address please.?
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5. Have you got a family/ whanau self-isolation plan in case of a Covid-19 outbreak at your own home, have you used it?
6. Have you or any of your family members returned from overseas in the last 4-6 weeks?
7. Has anyone in the family been tested positive for Covid-19?
8. Did they self-isolate? If yes, For how may weeks / days?
9. Is anyone in your Family bubble showing any cold and flu symptoms? (If yes, no visit until 48hrs after the time you become symptom free). Alternative name/ contact details if necessary.....
10. Have you come into contact with any probable cases or those that have tested positive for Covid-19 or people who have had Covid-19 symptoms?
11. Are you aware of all the Physical Distancing protocols (2 metres) and Infection Control and precautionary measures at our residential service? (e.g. our staff and residents may be using PPE during your visit.) We would also like you to know that we will be disinfecting surfaces before and after your visit etc. If not known, run through these with the family member before their visit.