



# Guidance for social services shifting to COVID-19 Alert Level 3

21 April 2020

As the Government's funders of social services, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Oranga Tamariki, the Department of Corrections, the Accident Compensation Corporation, Te Puni Kokiri and the Ministries of Justice, Health and Education would like to collectively provide you with the following information around the shift to Alert Level 3.

The Government has provided a detailed table on how the COVID-19 Alert Levels apply in different contexts

[Detailed table of New Zealand COVID-19 Alert Levels on the Unite Against COVID-19 website](#)

We have applied these requirements to the social services context and can provide you with the following additional guidance on what the shift to Alert Level 3 means for different activities and contexts. It is the expectation that the shift to Alert Level 3 will not mean a significant change from Alert Level 4 for most social service providers.

| Social Service Activities / Context                                   | Alert Level 3   | Alert Level 4   |
|---|---|---|
| Provision of services   | Services delivered remotely and people required to work from home where possible.   |   |
| Operating a refuge, residential facility or home                      | Considered essential services and so remain open with strict visitor policies.  |   |
| Operating a foodbank or delivery of food or essential goods           | Considered essential services and so remain open with strict visitor policies (e.g. one in / one out in foodbanks, contactless delivery etc.).                            |   |
| Opening and operating from workplaces                                 | Workplaces can only open if workers cannot work from home, <i>and</i> workplaces are operating safely (see below), <i>and</i> <b>clients are not allowed on premises.</b> | Organisations <b>on the essential services list</b> can open workplaces if workers cannot work from home, <i>and</i> workplaces are operating safely (see below), <i>and</i> <b>clients are not allowed on premises.</b><br><br>Organisations not on the essential services lists can only access workplaces for security reasons and / or to carry out activities (e.g. ICT maintenance) that enable people to work at home. |
| Home visiting and face to face interactions                           | Any social service organisation can visit people in exceptional circumstances (i.e. a time of crisis) but must take steps to protect bubbles (see below).                 | Organisations <b>on the essential services list</b> can visit people in exceptional circumstances (i.e. a time of crisis).  |
| Group sessions (e.g. group therapy) and other work-related gatherings | Can take place at a distance using technology. Cannot take place face to face.  |   |
| Delivery of items to homes and institutions                           | Any social service organisation can deliver items, but this must be done without physical contact with other people.  |   |