

24 March 2020

To: all clients receiving Home and Community Support Services (Canterbury)
Changes to Home and Community Support Services in response to COVID-19

Good afternoon

We wanted to share with you some of the changes that will be happening as the Canterbury Health System responds to COVID-19.

With the increases in the alert levels for New Zealand announced by the Prime Minister today, the way we provide home and community support services (HCSS) will be affected. These are the services provided by support workers in your home, and may include helping with showering and dressing, medication oversight, and domestic assistance (e.g. cleaning).

Your health is our priority. We want to assure you that our providers of HCSS are practising a high level of caution in order to protect your health. Any support worker who has any cough or cold symptoms must stay home from work. This means there will be fewer support workers available to provide our usual services, and we anticipate this shortage to increase as we move to the next alert level.

Given our support workers receive appropriate training and experience, we are not able to easily fill the roles if staff are not available. As such, our providers must prioritise urgent services in order to care for our most vulnerable people.

From today, Monday 23 March, some services will be limited to allow services to be redirected to those who need them most.

This may include reducing the provision of domestic assistance. If you ONLY receive domestic assistance, this will no longer be provided. If you receive separate visits for domestic assistance and other services, these visits may be merged. There may be other changes, for example, showers may be reduced or be replaced by sponge baths.

We are working through what the changes will be and how they will impact you.

Please be assured that our providers will carefully monitor anyone who may be put at risk because of any changes. Your health and wellbeing, and the health and wellbeing of our community, are our top priorities. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we work through the finer details.

If you have any questions or concerns, particularly if you feel you or someone you know will be put at risk if services change, please contact your service provider.

Yours sincerely,



Mardi Postill
Emergency Control Centre
Canterbury District Health Board