



17 March 2022

Tēnā koe

On 31 January 2022, you emailed the Minister for Social Development and Employment, Hon Carmel Sepuloni, requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *All official advice you have received since 1 June 2021 about income support payments, benefit payments or any other specific financial support for COVID-19 cases or contacts who are self-isolating.*
- *I am interested to know what, if any, proactive support is provided by the Ministry of Social Development to those self-isolating (due to COVID-19) and if there's any particular support or arrangements for those self-isolating in remote/rural areas.*

The second part of your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) as the information to which your request relates is operational.

On 1 March 2022, the Ministry contacted you to advise that more time was required to make a decision on your request. You were advised that a decision would be with you on or before 18 March 2022.

In support of the COVID-19 Protection Framework, the Government is implementing a Care in the Community model to support people with COVID-19 who are required to self-isolate at home.

We know many New Zealanders will be able to manage their situation themselves and may just need some information and know who to call if they need help. Others will require a variety of supports to meet their individual or whānau needs, particularly where those needs are complex.

The Ministry is leading the coordination of the welfare approach which includes access to food, accommodation costs, power, gas, heating or water bills, senior services and other urgent costs.

This is designed to support New Zealand's health response, to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and protect New Zealanders while they and their whānau self-isolate.

Our coordination of the welfare approach is not replacing existing systems for delivering welfare. Nationally, we already fund services from approximately 1800 providers and community groups, including community support services, and Māori and Pacific partnerships.

Our regions are working locally with other partners to plan and coordinate the welfare system response for people and their whānau who are self-isolating within their region. This involves partnering with existing iwi, community providers and leaders, councils and government agencies. Māori, Pacific and ethnic communities and the disability sector will be actively engaged with to ensure people and their whānau can be supported to self-isolate.

Coordinating the response at a regional level ensures the welfare response is tailored to local needs, and people/whānau are linked with trusted local providers who know their community and best suit their needs.

As part of our support for the regional response we are running a dedicated 0800 COVID-19 welfare support helpline for people and their whānau who have to self-isolate. Other agencies, councils and providers will also play key roles, based on what a region/community has decided will work best for them.

More information about supporting people isolating with COVID-19 and the Care in the Community welfare response can be found on the Ministry's website at the following links:

- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2021/covid-19/2021/supporting-people-with-covid-19-isolating-at-home.html
- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/covid-19/care-in-the-community-welfare-response/index.html

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Ministry's support for people self-isolating due to COVID-19, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Saunders

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**Manager, Issue Resolution
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