



# Oranga Tamariki Update for Providers and Partners: COVID-19 edition #3

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Kia ora ano

This update provides more detailed information about what constitutes an essential 'social service' and what this means for you. This information relates to both Oranga Tamariki and Ministry of Social Development (MSD) funded services. It also provides more information on the combined approach that the Government's social sector funding agencies will take to funding services and managing contracts during this time.

We are also creating a page on our website where we will provide regular information updates and responses to frequently asked questions. If you have a question or require further information you will be able to check this page first as it may provide an answer. You can still make contact with your Partnering for Outcomes (PfO) Advisor, contract or relationship manager, as your primary point of contact with Oranga Tamariki.

### What is an essential social service?

Under the Government's COVID-19 response plan, Alert Level 4 allows for 'essential businesses and those that support them' to continue to provide the necessities of life for everyone in New Zealand.

For social services, four categories of essential services have been identified. The table below provides more detail on which contracted services fit within each of the four categories of essential services.

- **Category 1:** Where the social service is the only way for people to access food and other goods they need to live day-to-day (e.g. money management services (where an organisation manages living expenses on a client's behalf), food banks, and delivery of essential goods).
- **Category 2:** A social service that provides and supports a place for someone to live (e.g. Supported Accommodation, Housing First, Residences, Bail Hostels, Night Shelters, Family

Homes, Remand Homes, foster carers of children in state care, resettlement services for recent migrants and refugees).

- **Category 3:** A social service that supports disabled people to maintain critical wellbeing (e.g. disability services for those with high needs or very high needs – excluding disability employment services).
- **Category 4:** Crisis support for people who are unsafe (e.g. funded helplines, refuges and family violence crisis services, elder abuse services, foster carer support services, sexual violence crisis services, other social services for people and families in crisis, including youth).

A more detailed list of social services that sit under these categories is provided at the end of this update. In compiling this list, Oranga Tamariki and MSD have needed to strike the right balance between meeting the essential needs of the vulnerable people in our communities, and the need to stop the spread of COVID-19 and reduce contact between people. We have deliberately kept the list of essential services tight to help protect the well-being of all New Zealanders. It is an initial list that we expect to update over time.

We have identified those social service providers that we know will be delivering these essential services. These providers will be contacted directly with further information about what is required of them. We will need them to reply immediately to let us know the extent to which they are currently able to perform the essential services identified, and that they understand the restrictions under which they will need to operate.

If you have not been contacted by 12 noon on 26 March 2020, and you believe that you do deliver one or more of the identified essential social services, let us know by email at [Community\\_information@msd.govt.nz](mailto:Community_information@msd.govt.nz)

Please tell us:

- how you provide the 'essential social services' we have described, or meet an essential need in your communities during this time
- that you understand and can operate within the significant restrictions on how essential services need to be delivered at Alert Level 4
- about your current capacity and how you propose to operate the service.

## What does it mean if I provide an 'essential social service'?

The expectation is that, to the extent possible and without compromising the safety and wellbeing of those you are working with, you will deliver these essential services in keeping with the restrictions that come with Alert Level 4.

The overriding requirement will be to:

- use the minimum viable workforce
- have maximum hygiene protocols in place

This means that face to face contact will only be used in those circumstances where it is most needed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those you are working with. In all other circumstances you will find other ways of providing support to tamariki and whānau, and those caring for and supporting them.

You will need to establish alternative ways of working to keep employees and the people you are working with safe. This means communicating at a distance using online methods (e.g. Zoom, Skype) and by phone. For your people who do need to continue to engage face to face, you will need to make arrangements that support safety, such as physical distancing, use of personal

protective equipment, shift-based working, staggered meal breaks and flexible leave arrangements. The number of people having close contact with each other will need to be kept to the minimum possible.

We advise you to work through the processes you currently use to undertake your contracted services, identify any that would usually require face to face engagement and plan for these in the context of COVID-19 Response Alert Level 4.

If you have questions or feel you cannot provide a service at the level required, please contact your PfO Advisor, contract or relationship manager. We will work with you to address the issues you face.

## **What does this mean for other providers?**

As a sector, we have a shared commitment to meeting the needs of vulnerable tamariki and their whānau. We want to collaborate with you to ensure the people we work with get through COVID-19.

- We want to facilitate the sharing of resources to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

We ask that you let your PfO Advisor, contract or relationship manager know about staff in non-essential services that could be made available to meet the needs of other priority tamariki and whānau. We will then facilitate connections with other service providers in your area who may need to call on this capacity, including Oranga Tamariki service teams. You may already be sharing resources in this way and you should continue to do this without involving us if it is not necessary.

- We want to ensure capacity is retained within the sector for when the alert levels drop.

It is essential that we sustain the capacity of the social sector workforce during this time so that we can reactivate existing services, and provide responses to the emerging needs, as the alert levels drop. If you have capacity after considering the opportunities to share resources, please remember that non-essential services should continue to be provided where they can be done safely and in keeping with the requirements of each alert level.

## **What flexibility and security do I have around my funding from government agencies?**

Government agencies that fund the provision of social services have been meeting to align how they will support and work with their provider partners. This has included representatives from MSD, Oranga Tamariki, ACC, the Ministry of Justice, Corrections, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and others.

In principle, we have agreed the following approach:

1. **We will pay NGOs until the end of June as if service delivery had continued at current levels**

(except for ACC services where this is not permitted within the law). We will not hold back funding because of under-delivery against contracts for the next 4 months (at least). For existing social service contracts paid on a fee for service basis, which COVID-19 will prevent being delivered in the coming months, we will pay based on current trends (e.g. payment for next 4 months at same level as average of the previous 4 months, or same period last year).

2. **We will give as much certainty on future funding as possible**

We want to give our partners and their staff as much certainty as possible. We will provide clarity on the situation post-June 2020 as soon as possible. Where possible, funding levels will

be maintained, although services may need to change (e.g. employment services may be reshaped to reflect the changing economic picture).

3. **We commit to working smartly** with NGO social service partners so that we are (a) increasingly joined-up across funding agencies; and, (b) our interactions are balanced equally between information gathering and seeking the views of community organisations about any help they need to better support their communities.
4. **We commit to supporting NGOs to be flexible** to the needs of their communities (i.e. working outside their contracts for a period). We want to enable partners to play their part in the wider community response to COVID-19.
5. **We will actively support collaborative efforts** at a community level – e.g. Community Assessment Hubs, collective impact models etc. Let us know how we can help.
6. **We will support NGOs wherever possible to remove barriers to people receiving assistance** (e.g. people having to prove they have been to Work and Income before being able to access support).

The application of these principles will vary between agencies and their providers in response to their specific circumstances. Further information will be provided by your funder around how these principles apply to the contracts you have with them.

## List of 'essential social services' developed for the national response to COVID-19

### Care and related services:

- Care and permanency work for children and young people whose custody is transferred from Oranga Tamariki to an Iwi Social Service or Child and Family Support Service.
- Provision of long-term care for children and young people by approved Iwi Social Services, or Child and Family Support Services, for referrals that have had their custody transfer to the provider from Oranga Tamariki
- Provision of care for children and young people referred for Family Group Conference under S19 by approved Iwi Social Services or Child and Family Support Services
- Shared care provided by an Iwi Social Services or Child and Family Support Service for Oranga Tamariki referrals
- Permanent Caregiver Support Service co-ordination and administration of post permanency support to families
- Provision of service to ensure a rangatahi can remain or return to living with a caregiver
- Support for Oranga Tamariki approved caregivers including advocacy, training, advice, best practice and promotional initiatives to recruit and retain quality/safe caregivers

### Transition support and related services for young people:

- Transition to Independence Housing and Urban Development Residential Services
- Residential supported living services to assist young people to successfully transition from care to independence

### Youth Justice and related services:

- Services to implement the whānau service plans developed at or after a Youth Justice Family Group Conference
- Youth Court Supervised Programmes for young offenders
- Day programmes for the Teaching Family model
- Provision of Treatment Foster Care Oregon model (TFCO)

**Other support and services for young people:**

- Permanency Establishment & Social Work Support
- 24 hour resource workers for Children and Young People (and supporting services, e.g. transport services)
- Transport Services for children and young people
- Residential placements for young people who are perpetrators of sexual violence
- Provision of Care under the Teaching Family Model.
- Wraparound Services for Children & Young People with Disabilities
- External Provider Family Group Conference Co-ordination
- Provision of support to family, whānau, kin carers and caregivers to prevent entry into care and support stable placements
- Post investigation support services for children, young people and their families

**Family Violence services:**

We have deemed 'essential services' as services to support the imminent safety of women and children/whānau, including:

- Refuges and crisis services to include face to face response/services i.e. responding to notifications from Police and Health Workers and providing safe accommodation
- Perpetrator services to include responding to notifications from Police and Health Workers to support individuals to de-escalate risk including accommodation for perpetrators in order for women and children/whānau to remain safe in their homes
- Helplines – to provide advice and guidance and referral to essential services

**Sexual Violence services:**

We have deemed sexual violence crisis providers as 'essential' services which include:

- 24/7 call out services (where available)
- Emergency face-to-face sessions (including crisis counselling)
- Crisis social work support
- Kaupapa Māori crisis providers
- Safe to talk 24/7 helpline service (phone, text, email, online chat)

**Building Financial Capability**

We have deemed BFC providers as 'essential' services where they provide;

- Total Money Management - clients have agreed for a BFC provider to receive all their income, pay their bills and distribute to them a living allowance (clients are often vulnerable due to disabilities and mental health issues)
- Moneytalks helpline service (phone, text, email, online chat) - access to immediate assistance, advice and advocacy as well as key referrals

We acknowledge the other services that Oranga Tamariki and MSD fund are crucial to your communities during this time. We still want these services to be operating, in different ways (where it's necessary) to protect your communities from risk. This must be within the restrictions relating to the current COVID-19 Response Alert Level in the area and at the time your service is being delivered.