



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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COVID-19: A Whole of System Welfare Approach Under the COVID-19 Protection Framework

Portfolio **Social Development and Employment**

On 22 November 2021, following reference from the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that a revised approach to welfare and community-based supports, including food and other essential wellbeing provisions will be required to support Aotearoa New Zealand's transition to the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF);
- 2 **agreed** that the welfare system approach will be demand driven and support a broader cohort than the health response, focusing on two groups who may need welfare support to keep safe while self-isolating at home:
 - 2.1 people who are COVID-19 positive and their households;
 - 2.2 other people who are required by government to self-isolate;
- 3 **noted** that locally-led delivery through a range of existing providers, including Māori and Pacific providers, will promote equity and responsiveness by connecting people in self-isolation to the service that best suits their needs;
- 4 **agreed** to build on existing locally-led delivery infrastructure that will be enabled by existing regional leadership and centrally supported by agencies;
- 5 **agreed** that the Ministry of Social Development will lead the coordination of the welfare approach, working closely with key agencies across the health, housing, and economic approaches, and iwi/Māori;
- 6 **agreed** to mandate the Regional Public Service Commissioners with leading the regional alignment and coordination of the public service contribution, including the welfare approach, to the CPF;

7 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

8 s 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 9 **noted** that to enable the whole of system welfare approach to effectively support the COVID-19 Protection Framework, it requires immediate investment to plan, prepare for an unknown level of demand and continuing delivery in affected areas;
- 10 **directed** officials to report back to the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Social Development and Employment in December 2021 on the reporting, governance and accountability systems to support the welfare approach, which will include:
- 10.1 assessment criteria and parameters of support for the welfare approach, including appropriate performance metrics and how it aligns with and supports the health response;
 - 10.2 information gathering processes established to report on the numbers of individuals and families receiving support, including information to support an assessment of spend effectiveness;
 - 10.3 governance processes established to ensure the welfare system approach continues to be fit for purpose;
- 11 **invited** the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Social Development and Employment, in line with the reporting, governance and accountability systems to be established in paragraph 10 above, to report back to Cabinet in March 2022 to show how the funding has been allocated to meet costs to support people who are self-isolating under the COVID-19 Protection Framework, including appropriate metrics;
- 12 **noted** that the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment will require \$0.50 million to temporarily increase capacity to work with relevant government agencies to establish a service (outsourced service provision) and additional funding of \$5.0 million would be required to enable an alternative accommodation option for six months;
- 13 **noted** that the total cost of the proposed whole of system welfare approach is estimated to be **s 9(2)(f)(iv)** comprising:
- 13.1 appropriated funding - \$152.1 million;
 - 13.2 contingency funding - \$52.0 million;
 - 13.3 **s 9(2)(f)(iv)**
- 14 **agreed** to provide \$152.1 million in funding for the following until 30 June 2023:
- 14.1 locally-led delivery - **s 9(2)(f)(iv)**
 - 14.2 regional leadership - **s 9(2)(f)(iv)**
 - 14.3 co-ordinated assessment and referral - **s 9(2)(f)(iv)**

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s 9(2)(f)(iv)

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s 9(2)(f)(iv)

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agreed that the changes to appropriations for 2021/22 above be included in the 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest Supply;

17 **agreed** that the expenses incurred above be charged against the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund established as part of Budget 2020;

18 **agreed** to establish a tagged operating contingency of up to the following amounts in Vote Social Development to provide for a revised approach to welfare and community-based supports:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 & outyears
For food and other essential wellbeing items – Tagged Operating Contingency	52.000	-	-	-	-

19 **authorised** the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Social Development and Employment jointly to draw down the tagged operating contingency funding in paragraph 18 above subject to a report to Ministers:

19.1 outlining how funding has been allocated to meet costs to support the transition to the COVID-19 Protection Framework;

19.2 outlining any update to the underpinning costing model and assumptions for additional funding that relates to this transition;

20 **agreed** that the tagged operating contingency in paragraph 18 above be charged against the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund established as part of Budget 2020;

21 s 9(2)(f)(iv) 

22 **authorised** the Minister for Social Development and Employment, in consultation with other Ministers as appropriate, to make decisions on related minor policy and technical matters.

Martin Bell
for Secretary of the Cabinet