



24 May 2022

Tēnā koe

On 10 February 2022, your request was transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. Details on what families and individuals are offered by the government when they are forced to isolate at home due to Covid.*
- 2. Are families and individuals offered food parcels and are they offered "support animals" from the government.*
- 3. What is the total budget per individual and family that is isolated.*

On 10 March 2022, the Ministry emailed you to advise you that more time was required for necessary consultations. In accordance with section 15(1) and 15A of the Act, you were advised that the Ministry's decision would be with you no later than 18 April 2022.

On 14 April 2022, the Ministry advised you that the Ministry had decided to grant your request in part, however, required more time to prepare this information for release. You were advised that this information would be sent to you on or before 31 May 2022.

Unfortunately, the Ministry is not able to provide you an all-of-Government response on what support is offered to those in self-isolation, however, we are able to outline in this response the support the Ministry provides to those self-isolating.

The Ministry has been assisting New Zealanders that are self-isolating by assisting with the Leave Support Scheme and Short-Term Absence Payments. The COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme and Short-Term Absence Payments provided financial assistance from 28 April 2020 to businesses (including self-employed people) during the COVID-19 public health restrictions to:

- encourage employees to self-isolate (stay at home) when they need to, in line with public health guidelines, and

- support employees unable to work from home, with an income while they cannot work

You can find more information regarding the Leave Support Scheme and Short-Term Absence Payments, at the following links:

- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/covid-19-leave-support-scheme/introduction.html.
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/covid-19-short-term-absence-payment/introduction.html.

In Addition to COVID-19 specific support, the Ministry provides financial assistance through Main Benefits, supplementary support products (e.g. Accommodation Supplement, Temporary Additional Support), and one-off recoverable and non-recoverable assistance such as Special Needs Grants and Recoverable Assistance Payments. More information about these types of assistance can be found on the Ministry's website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/.

For the sake of clarity, the Ministry will address your questions in turn.

1. *Details on what families and individuals are offered by the government when they are forced to isolate at home due to Covid.*

Under the COVID-19 Protection Framework, most people with COVID-19 will isolate in the community. The Ministry coordinates the welfare side of Care in the Community, allowing the Ministry of Health to focus on health support as case numbers increase. This will help ensure people receive the support they need to isolate and avoid spreading COVID-19.

Most people are able to look after themselves with help from friends and whānau. Others will require a variety of support to meet their individual or whānau needs, particularly where those needs are complex.

You can find more information regarding the Ministry's Care in the Community Welfare Response, at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/covid-19/care-in-the-community-welfare-response/index.html#Alocallyledresponse1.

As part of our support for the welfare response, we have set up dedicated:

- teams of experienced people in each region, and
- COVID-19 welfare support helpline teams.

Under the Care and Community Welfare response, the Ministry also offers the Community Connection Service and Food Secure Communities.

The Ministry Community Connection service takes an active approach to ensuring people needing help are able to access information, support and services across multiple government agencies and service providers. The Community Connectors support the welfare needs of individuals and whānau to keep them safe while isolating at home / in the community. You can find more information regarding the Ministry's Community Connection Service, at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/community-connection-service/index.html.

Funding has been allocated to community food providers and for food provision to support whānau and households self-isolating in the community due to COVID-19. You can find more information regarding Food Secure Communities, at the following link: www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/food-secure-communities/food-support.html.

2. Are families and individuals offered food parcels and are they offered "support animals" from the government.

Support is tailored to people and their whānau needs. This includes, and is not limited to, financial support to pay for things like food, rent or extra data.

If a whānau was not eligible for financial support from the Ministry, the whānau is connected to a Community Connector and/or Food Provider to access wider services and resources that support their wellbeing.

In regard to "support animals", whānau are able to discuss with a Community Connector their needs and can then navigate through agencies to find the right support.

3. What is the total budget per individual and family that is isolated.

This part of your request has been refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is already publicly available. You can find this information at the following link:

www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/cabinet-papers/2022/welfare-response-to-omicron.html.

Care in the Community welfare response after the peak of Omicron is due to be published shortly.

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 support offered to those who have to self-isolate 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



Serena Curtis
General Manager
Pacific and Community Capability Programmes