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From Minister for Seniors, Tracey Martin



I'm sure you're reading this with some relief and maybe even excitement as we spend our first couple of days in Level 2.

This has been a very strange time in everyone's lives and like you I'm hoping this is the start of us having rather more normal relationships. It will certainly be great to get out a bit more and see a few more people. I was lucky enough to spend lockdown with most of my family, but now I also get to catch up with my oldest son.

Again I need to thank you for helping us get this far. Our decision at cabinet was made a lot easier by the fact that our new cases continue to be so low, and that's due to everyone being careful about physical distancing and hygiene – washing our hands. Just a reminder that those are things we're going to have to be careful about for some time.

Calls to over 70's

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has been coordinating calls to our over 70's to check in, provide support and link those needing help to appropriate provider groups, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

So far, the volunteers involved have made well over 125,000 calls since Alert Level 4 began. Some of the people the volunteers have spoken to have needed help getting things like groceries and medicine, but it's great to hear that most are coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks.

We have received excellent feedback about the positive impact this calling campaign is having on those that have been called, as well as the volunteers themselves.

One volunteer said, "Giving our time to the community has been really powerful, not only for achieving real benefit to those we spoke with but also to be thanked so much for something so simple as a phone call."

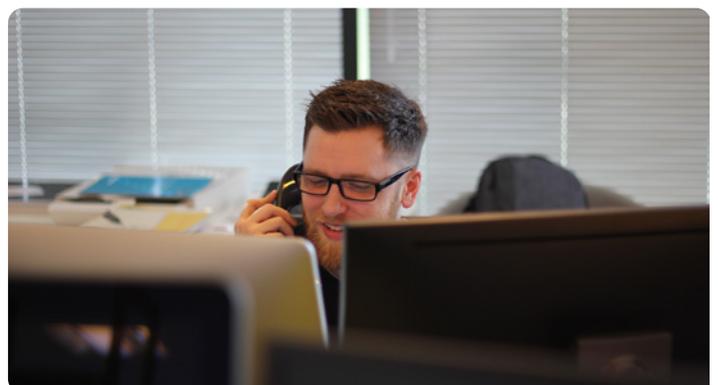
The priority for the calling was to get in touch with those who are registered with MSD as living alone, who don't have email addresses listed, as they are the most at risk of being isolated and not knowing where to get help.

They are now working their way through calling other people over 70. So, if you haven't already received

a call, you may get one soon. Don't wait for a call if you have immediate concerns, there is a list of useful contact numbers at the end of this Newsletter.

All the volunteers involved in this service come from established and reputable community-based providers, many are employed by community groups, local councils or government agencies. Some are even local librarians that have been redeployed while the libraries have been closed.

The contact details that these volunteers have been provided for this calling has been done in a secure manner, acting in the best interests of supporting those over 70 and is expressly allowed under emergency declarations. Those calling from this service will never ask for money or any personal information like your bank account or passwords.



Alert Level 2 guidance

We are now officially at Alert Level 2. We all have a part to play in keeping each other safe and need to continue to behave like the virus is still amongst us, especially when in public.

People at higher risk, such as people over 70 or with underlying health conditions, have the same rules as everyone else, but they should remain vigilant, be very cautious and aware of how to protect themselves.

The most important things you can do to stay safe at Alert Level 2 are:

- Keep your distance from other people in public
- If you're sick, stay home. Don't go to work or school. Don't socialise
- If you have symptoms of cold or flu call your doctor or Healthline and get tested
- Wash your hands, always sneeze and cough into your elbow and regularly disinfect surfaces
- If you have been told to self-isolate you must do so immediately
- Keep a track of where you've been and who you've seen.

There is a staggered approach to Alert Level 2. As of Thursday 14 May, you have been able to connect with friends and family that were not in your bubble and have them over to your home, but gatherings are limited to up to 10 people, or the people who usually live in your house.

Other changes include:

- You can go in-store at local businesses
- You can travel between regions
- Venues, such as museums, cinemas, libraries and markets, will be open again
- You can attend gatherings in controlled settings outside of your home such as weddings, funerals, religious services, birthdays, limited to up to 10 people, for up to 2 hours.

The next stages of Alert Level 2 are that from Monday 18 May tertiary education facilities, schools and early learning centres will re-open and from Thursday 21 May bars can re-open.

For more information about Alert Level 2 go to www.covid19.govt.nz

Getting help from MSD:

In most cases, MSD will be able to help you through their online and phone services. You can use MyMSD to apply online for help with things like one-off costs for food, update your personal details and check your payments. You can also update your tax code for your NZ Super through a form on the MSD website. If you are unable to get the help through MyMSD then you should call the contact centre.

- MyMSD: my.msd.govt.nz
- Change tax code: www.workandincome.govt.nz
- Phone: **0800 552 002**

At Alert Level 2, MSD has a small number of face-to-face appointments available at their service centres for people who need to see them in person. The appointments must be booked in advance, so rather than popping in, please give them a call.



Your health

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 like a cough, fever, shortness of breath call your GP (doctor) or the COVID-19 Healthline

0800 358 5453

If you cannot get through and are severely unwell, for example having trouble breathing, contact emergency services (**dial 111**).

For other health issues, you should still call your doctor as normal. Doctors, medical centres and hospitals are still open at all alert levels.

Minor health issues can become more serious if ignored and it is important that you have the treatments and medications you need.



Budget announcement on Elder Abuse

The Government has announced a significant investment in New Zealand's family violence services in this year's budget, with \$25m allocated to provide support for victims of elder abuse.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a lot of stress on people across the country and it has meant that victims are more likely to be isolated. Crisis services, refuges and helplines, including the elder abuse helpline, have been critical throughout the COVID-19 lockdown. This funding will ensure continued access to this specialist service.

Elder abuse is often hidden and those who experience the abuse are frequently afraid to talk about it. It can be psychological, financial, physical or sexual. The abuser is often someone close to their victim, family members, friends and even neighbours. Abusers are often someone they depend on for support or care.

The elder abuse helpline is free, and completely confidential. It helps callers work through the

problems they are facing and puts them in touch with support services in their area. If you feel scared, frightened or at risk, or if you have concerns about how someone is being treated you can call **0800 32 668 65 (0800 EA NOT OK)**, Text: **5032** or Email: **support@elderabuse.nz**

For more information on elder abuse go to **www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz**

ELDER ABUSE

IT'S NOT OK

SPEAK OUT

CALL 0800 EA NOT OK

0800 32 668 65

Text: 5032 | Email: support@elderabuse.nz

superseniors.msd.govt.nz/elderabuse

Keep up to date

You can find out all the most recent information at the special website: **covid19.govt.nz** which is updated daily.

The Office for Seniors is working hard to keep you up to date and informed throughout the COVID -19 pandemic. Please share this Newsletter with others. Forward it to your friends and make sure their email address is correct through their MYMSD account, so they receive our updates.

If you know someone who doesn't have the internet you can read it out to them over the phone!

Covid19.govt.nz

Everything you
need to know
in one place

**Unite
against
COVID-19**

New Zealand Government



Key telephone numbers

- COVID-19 Healthline **0800 358 5453**
- For general health issues, phone your doctor
- For emergencies **dial 111**
- If you are feeling anxious or just need someone to talk to call or text **1737**
- Elder Abuse Helpline **0800 32 668 65**
- If you need to discuss your entitlements phone the MSD Senior Services line **0800 552 002**

- Money Talks free and confidential budgeting advice **0800 345 123**
- Make sure all your details are correct through your MyMSD Account at **www.my.msd.govt.nz**
- If you're not sure what assistance may be available, don't know who to contact for help, call the free government helpline on **0800 779 997** (8am to 10pm, 7 days a week).
- For advice, support and general enquiries call **0800 22 66 57** 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 8am to 5pm, Saturday to Sunday.



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

New Zealand Government



Office for Seniors
Te Tari Kaumātua

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development