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The Office for Seniors is working hard to keep you up to date and informed throughout the COVID -19 pandemic.

This issue contains useful information from the Ministry for Social Development (MSD) about your entitlements, how to get help and some changes at Work and Income offices.

Getting help from MSD

While New Zealand is at Alert Level 4, your regular payments will continue as normal.

Work and Income has changed the way they operate, to give you the help you need, while also keeping staff safe.

To do this they've closed their walk in service centres and are focusing on helping you online and over the phone.

Now's the time to try MyMSD

If you're not already signed up to MyMSD, now is the time to register.

You can do lots of things yourself using MyMSD on your smartphone, tablet or computer. Such as:

- apply for a food grant or payment
- view your letters
- update your contact details
- check your payments.

If you do need to talk to MSD

Many New Zealanders are relying on Work and Income's help. This means their contact centres are experiencing very high demand.

You can help by only calling if you need urgent help: ring MSD Senior Service line on **0800 552 002**.

Were you planning on going overseas?

We know a lot of Kiwi's travel plans have changed because of COVID-19. If you called Work and Income to tell them you were going overseas, you don't need to call back to let them know you aren't going anymore.

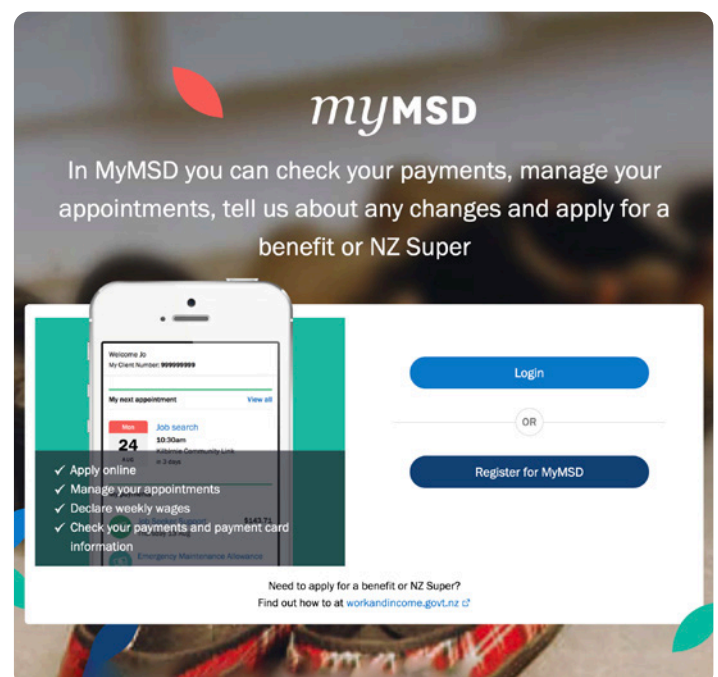
Travel related changes to your payments are triggered when Work and Income and Customs information matches, so your payments will remain the same if you have not left the country.

What they're doing to make things easier

For the time being Work and Income won't need anyone to renew their medical certificate, or review anyone's Disability Allowance payments.

They will also be extending Temporary Additional Support payments for people already getting it, and new grants will be made for a longer period.

There won't be any annual reviews for things like income or Income Related Rent either.



NZ Superannuation or Veteran's Pension payments

Annual Adjustments

NZ Super and Veteran's Pension payments are adjusted each year to reflect increases in the cost of living, inflation and the average wage.

From 1 April payments will increase to:

- \$744.54 each before tax or \$652.04 each after 'M' tax for a married couple who both qualify
- \$981.46 before tax or \$847.66 after 'M' tax for a single person living alone
- \$902.58 before tax or \$782.44 after 'M' tax for a single person sharing accommodation.

The first full payment at the new rate will be on Tuesday April 14.

For a full summary of the new rates go to www.workandincome.govt.nz and search for 'benefit rates 2020.'



Winter Energy Payment

In response to COVID-19, the Government has announced that in 2020 the Winter Energy Payment will be doubled.

If you get NZ Super or Veteran's Pension, you will be entitled to get the Winter Energy Payment from 1 May until 1 October. The payment is made automatically, you don't need to apply.

Couples and people with dependent children will now get \$63.64 a week and single people will now get \$40.91 a week.

The payment is made to help with the cost of keeping the home warm and dry over winter, so you won't need to worry when you turn the heater on.



Your health and wellbeing

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 or Healthline as normal. Don't put this off.



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Keep up to date

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

A lot of work is underway to help older people across New Zealand through this difficult time, so keep an eye out for more details coming soon.

The COVID-19 website is updated daily.

Please share this Newsletter with others, especially those that do not use the internet. If they live nearby, print it out and pop it in their letterbox. You can even 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**
- Make sure all your details are correct through your MyMSD Account at **www.my.msd.govt.nz**
- If you are unable to find what you need online, and are not sure who to contact for help, call the free government helpline on **0800 779 997** or on **0800 22 66 57** (8am–1am, 7 days a week).



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

New Zealand Government



Office for Seniors
Te Tari Kaumātua

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development