



15<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## **EMS & Accessable Service COVID-19 Update Auckland Region: ADHB, CMDHB, WDHB**

We are taking the opportunity to update you on the EMS services we will be providing under the current Level 3 response to COVID-19.

Our response will be very familiar to those of you who worked through Level 3 with us last year. To reassure you, we continue to work closely with the Ministry of Health and Accessable is designated an essential service.

If you are an Assessor working with NDHB outside the Auckland region, please refer to today's communication updating you on current Level 2 arrangements. You can find this [here](#).

Here's a reminder about our services during Level 3.

### **COVID-19 Status**

You must let us know if a request is associated with any known risk related to COVID-19 status. We have added two new risk types in our alert field in aSAP which you need to action if appropriate:

- COVID-19 Positive
- COVID-19 Self-isolating

In addition, **please call Customer Service (0508 001 002)** to let them know about the COVID-19 status. Any application that has a COVID-19 risk identified will be actively managed by Customer Service and the Professional Advisory Teams. We have a process to actively manage COVID-19 positive/self-isolating clients across our organisation.

### **Essential equipment**

Requests for 'essential' equipment will be prioritised and delivered during Level 3. So, you need to advise us if your request is essential. This is not the usual essential need related to disability (although that still needs to be demonstrated!) but the definition of 'essential' that the MOH requires of us during the COVID-19 Level 3. Principles underpinning the definition of essential service include:

- Keep people at home living safely
- Keep people out of hospital where we can
- Where possible get people home from hospital quickly
- Respond to crisis / urgent / acute physical and mental health needs
- Assist in avoiding harm to people's mental wellbeing.

### **Please indicate essential service requests in the summary of need in aSAP**

To help us help you get the right equipment to the right people as quickly as possible during Level 3, please ensure you indicate your request is essential and urgent in the summary of need field in aSAP. Please use your judgement to indicate 'essential & urgent' where your client is at risk of hospitalisation, delayed discharge or being unsafe at home (above). Please use the Summary of Need space to provide the reason for it being essential and urgent eg Summary: Urgent – hospital discharge

### **Non-Essential equipment**

We are allowed to deliver some non-essential equipment. The overriding principle governing these deliveries is whether the equipment can be delivered without contact with the client and set up



independently or with minimal support from an Assessor or sub-contractor. There also needs to be an urgency associated with the client's need for the equipment.

We are prioritising your non-essential requests based on information you give us. Please tell us if your request is:

- **Non-essential but urgent**, by using the Summary of Need field as outlined above
- **With Accessable**: this means you are happy for Accessable to action the request as the Alert Level allows without getting your further input – we will notify you when actioned
- **With Assessor**: this means we must contact you PRIOR to actioning
- **A contact or non-contact delivery** – to clarify, this is the delivery to **the client**. If you are delivering to yourselves or another organisation then it is always a non-contact delivery with appropriate PPE and distancing practices in place (please see Delivery of Equipment section below).

If the request is non-essential, requires contact with the client and is not urgent, it will be put on hold.

We are working through requests already submitted, using the above processes, and will be in touch with you as we triage your requests.

### **Delivery of equipment**

- Assessors retain the responsibility for ensuring clients can use the equipment safely.
- If the equipment is being delivered directly to the client, where possible this will be by a non-contact delivery. That is, the courier will leave the equipment at the door without contact with the client. Couriers are operating contact-less deliveries and are not currently requiring signatures.
- Where it is not possible to leave a piece of equipment on the doorstep, and contact is required, this will only be progressed if the client need is determined to be essential or urgent.
- Where an essential piece of equipment requires support and set up by an Assessor or sub-contractor, these requests will be managed on a case by case basis to determine the safest way forward and will only be approved for delivery when it is deemed safe to do so. Suppliers, delivery sub-contractors and Assessors will then organise a plan for delivery and set up.
- If the equipment is being delivered to you to pass on to your client, we ask that you align with your organisation's practice around contact with clients and follow your agreed infection prevention protocols. Our contractors and suppliers are following rigorous infection control and PPE protocols.
- Any physical interactions between sub-contractors or Assessors and clients should be recorded on our template (please see Contact Tracing section below), or your own organisation's record sheet, for contact tracing purposes.
- If you have specific requirements around delivery for your clients who may be particularly vulnerable please advise us through the delivery instruction field in aSAP, the summary field, give us a call or drop us an email. We have already organised customised deliveries and want to support you and your clients and others in their bubbles to feel reassured that we are aware of their concerns and responding appropriately.
- A reminder that to assist Assessors and clients to set up equipment at home, we have made information sheets available on our [website](#). Please do contact the suppliers if you need specific information on their products.



### **NASC**

NASC staff members are all available and able to help with co-ordination of services.

### **EMS advice requests**

Our Professional Advisory service is functioning as normal, although remote work may change an individual Advisor's availability at times.

### **EMS Portal**

You still need to come through the EMS portal and provide your clinical rationale. Please ensure the information is robust and sufficient and includes the additional Essential/COVID-19 risk/prioritisation information required (above). This will enable our teams to understand your request without further communication with you and process it more quickly.

### **Managing new trial requests**

We will move your trial request directly to purchase to simplify the process if appropriate and agreed to by you. If the equipment is later determined to be 'not fit for purpose' for your client's needs **it can be returned** and you can choose another option just as if the item had been trialled. If in doubt or your request is for a 'weird and wonderful' one-off customised product, give us a ring to discuss the best approach.

For equipment that does still need to be trialled, in the current environment the 20 day trial turnaround timeframe will be more flexible.

### **Finalising current trial requests**

Accessible wants to support Assessors to finalise current trials. Please go ahead and review and finalise your current trials and contact us if you need to discuss these clients so we respond to your workload priorities.

### **Refurbished stock**

Depending on availability, we will supply items from refurbished stock as a priority before purchasing new. This protects supplies of new products for use only when needed, which makes even more sense than usual given the current uncertain environment.

Our cleaning and infection control processes of all equipment are of a reliably high standard. You and your clients can have confidence that refurbished equipment meets appropriate hygiene standards.

### **Equipment Repairs**

All repairs are allowed under Level 3 if they are able to be carried out safely.

The Accessable team and sub-contractors are all following rigorous pre-visit, on-site and post-visit infection control processes and physical distancing practices.

If the repair cannot be carried out safely, we will need to assess these instances on a case by case basis. We may be able to support a carer or support person to carry out a repair, or we can focus on replacement rather than repair.

Regular annual checks of equipment will not take place during Level 3.

### **Housing Modifications**



We are currently reviewing all modifications currently underway to decide what action to take to ensure we adhere to Level 3 requirements.

The same core request process described above applies to new housing requests and essential modifications will be given priority. However, we will also action non-essential housing modifications as long as safety protocols are observed:

- External modifications, grabrails and basic modifications will be approved to proceed during Level 3 as long as safety measures including minimal physical interactions, 2 metre physical distancing, sound hygiene practices and the recording of interactions for contact tracing purposes are in place.

The construction industry has also issued standards contractors are required to adhere to (see below).

Where internal access is required, the following processes will be followed by our sub-contractors to ensure they are carried out safely:

- Contractors are issued with letters detailing the sites they are approved to work on.
- A pre-visit checklist will be carried out to determine the health status of the household and prepare for the visit. Where there is no identified risk of COVID-19 and the modification can continue safely it will go ahead with safety procedures in place including minimal physical interactions, 2 metre physical distancing, sound hygiene practices and the recording of interactions for contact tracing purposes.
- In addition, all contractors must employ the protocols required by CHASNZ. CHASNZ is an accredited charitable trust that has been developed to raise the standard of health and safety across the whole of the construction industry. (<https://www.chasnz.org>).
- Accessable will be auditing sites to ensure that contractors are employing the required safety protocols.
- Complex modifications will be reviewed on a case by case basis to ensure the safety of those involved. We will work with Assessors and contractors to determine the safest way to proceed with each job during this time.

### **Vehicle Modifications**

Vehicle modification requests are considered non-essential and will be processed through our system as far as safety allows in collaboration with the Assessors and modifiers. Any modification requests that cannot be carried out safely as per government guidelines will remain in our system until such time as they can commence safely.

### **ACCESS Clinic**

Our ACCESS Clinics have been postponed in collaboration with Assessors, Clients and Advisors.

You can still refer your clients to the ACCESS Clinic and we will process the request through as far as we can, however, we will then put the process on hold until the Alert Levels allow the clinics to take place safely.

### **Collections**

Our collections service is up and running.

Where possible, equipment will be picked up from the doorstep, or with minimal interaction with the household. Where contactless pickups are not possible, we will work on a case by case basis to determine



the safest way to proceed. Measures such as physical distancing, appropriate use of PPE, sound hygiene practices and keeping a record of all interactions for contact tracing purposes will be followed.

Once alert levels allow, we will review all collection requests put on hold during Level 3 and be in touch with clients to action these.

### **Client agreement**

At all times during equipment, housing and vehicle service delivery, there should be agreement between disabled people, family and whānau and all providers on who is in their extended bubble and how the bubble will be protected. The client can decline services at any time.

### **Contact tracing requirements**

It is necessary to record all instances where people have been in close contact with others during service provision so contact tracing can be carried out if necessary.

You must record any contacts made whenever you carry out work on behalf of Accessable. Please follow your organisation's Contact Tracing recording requirements or, for your convenience, we have created a template which you can use. You can find the template [here](#):

## **Communication**

### **Website**

We are once again operating in a fast-paced and constantly changing environment. We will post any updates on our website.

### **Key Contacts**

If you have any questions about a request for a specific client you are working with, please contact the Professional Advisor who is managing this.

If you have a general enquiry, the following people are your key contacts and they will facilitate a response to your query:

Customer Service Team

[moh@accessible.co.nz](mailto:moh@accessible.co.nz)

Genevieve Simati for  
Professional Advisory Team

[patadmin@accessible.co.nz](mailto:patadmin@accessible.co.nz)

Penny Bavage for  
Specialist Assessment Services

[pbavage@accessible.co.nz](mailto:pbavage@accessible.co.nz)

### **Connection with Accessable**

We continue to be strongly committed to supporting you to ensure your clients remain safely in their home and avoid hospitalisation during Level 3.

We really appreciated your understanding and cooperation earlier this year and thank you for adhering to the processes we are required to implement as we head into Level 3 again.

Please be aware that the information contained in this document may be constantly updated as the situation evolves.  
Please keep an eye on our website for updates.



Solutions for better living  
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