



**ALL NEW
ZEALANDERS
WELL-HOUSED**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Covid-19 Community Housing Sector Update 1 April 2020](#)

[April 1 MSD Guidance: Pausing Non-Essential Placements in Transitional and Public Housing](#)

[Support for community housing providers](#)

[Website offering support, and info about food banks](#)

[CHA's role during the pandemic](#)

[Issues requiring clarification](#)

[Praise for providers' efforts during this difficult time](#)

[Government protections for tenants](#)

[Covid-19: Information for community housing providers](#)

[Importance of having a home](#)

Covid-19 Community Housing Sector Update 1 April 2020

Welcome to a special newsletter from Community Housing Aotearoa *Nga Wharerau o Aotearoa*.

In this issue - MSD guidance on move-ins under Level 4, upcoming meetings to discuss issues affecting your work, appreciation for the work you're all doing, new website offers support, essential goods now available for sale, clarifying CHA's role during the pandemic, and free job listings.

April 1 MSD Guidance: Pausing Non-Essential Placements in Transitional and Public Housing

The Ministry of Social Development is asking transitional and community housing providers to pause all non-essential housing placements or moves for both transitional and public housing tenants while COVID-19 Alert Level 4 is in place.

We need to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and keep our clients, tenants, staff and providers safe. No one should be moving house at this time unless it's absolutely essential to keep them safe and housed. Read the full message on our website under [Housing Information](#).

Support for community housing providers

Colleagues, CHA is really keen to offer support both for you and for you to be able to support each other as we navigate our way through this pandemic.

We're setting up a series of regular online Zoom meetings for us all to stay connected and to share the issues that need clarifying, resolving

[Interview with economist Shamubeel Eaqub](#)

[Housing in the recovery](#)

[Free job listings](#)

[News](#)

or just additional attention to work through. The CHA team will help synthesise and collate that information so that we can produce notes back to you all as well as being able to convey the key points to key people within the government agencies you're working with; in particular, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

These online meetings are for housing providers but you do not need to be a CHA member to take part.

For those unfamiliar with Zoom, you do not need to download anything – you just need an internet connection in order to click on the Zoom meeting link that you'll be sent, and then be able to hear and speak to other participants via your laptop or other device.

If you're interested in attending or wish to find out more, please contact either CHA Senior Programme Manager [David Zussman](#) or CHA Deputy Chief Executive [Chris Glaudel](#), who will send you the meeting links.

Upcoming Zoom meetings:

- **11am, THURSDAY 2 APRIL** – focus group on vacant units/properties. This group will look at what's required to get empty units/properties ready for occupation and how we would need to manage the process of allocation and moving in. Join this group to start identifying the key issues and finding practical solutions.
- **2pm, FRIDAY 3 APRIL** – general discussion.
- **2pm, WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL** - general discussion
- **2pm, FRIDAY 10 APRIL** - general discussion

Scott Figenshow
CHA Chief Executive

Website offering support, and info about food banks

IHC and Carers NZ have developed a website - [wecare.kiwi](#) - to support people living on their own or caring for others who are vulnerable during the Covid-19 lockdown. It aims to offer a helping hand and a listening ear for those who need support.

Also - information about food banks operating in all regions is [available here](#).

Both of these might be useful resources for your organisation and tenants, so please feel free to share the information widely.

CHA's role during the pandemic

CHA is working very closely with Te Matapihi and government agencies to make sure you get the information and answers you need in order to maintain essential services during this period. As a

result of a CHA Council discussion, we've been able to clarify the following support roles for CHA:

- Supporting community housing, emergency, transitional and Housing First providers, including Pacific and Iwi Māori housing providers with the sectoral response to Covid-19.
- Supporting strategies to safely maintain essential housing services during the crisis and ensure the most vulnerable are adequately housed.
- Supporting government agencies (HUD, MSD, others) by reviewing information, key messages and advice being prepared for housing providers prior to release.
- Assisting in the dissemination of information directly to affected providers.
- Collating and communicating the key concerns and issues being experienced by frontline providers and whānau to government agencies for urgent response.
- Acting as a conduit of information between government agencies and providers.
- Working closely with Te Matapihi to ensure that our messaging is consistent and our response is coordinated.
- Assisting response efforts by sharing examples of good practice and offering direct support to housing providers where we have the capacity/capability.

CHA has engaged Clare Aspinall to assist with some of this work. She has a public health background and is on the Board of Wellington's Dwell Housing Trust. She has previously worked for Regional Public Health Wellington as a public health advisor specialising in housing and homelessness. Clare will be developing guidance for providers and practical applications based on Ministry of Health advice.

Issues requiring clarification

Members have raised a number of issues with CHA requiring clarification from government agencies. We have passed these on to HUD and will report back when we have more information. We are also keeping a log of issues so please forward any matters requiring clarification to either [David Zussman](#) or [Chris Glaudel](#).

A shortlist of key issues raised so far includes:

- Move-ins during Level 4, procedural issues and safety protocols
- Rent arrears resulting from no evictions approach and issues of cash flow support for providers
- Communal/shared facilities and ability to follow self-isolation protocols
- Contractors for essential services and resource-sharing across providers and Kāinga Ora
- Availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and appropriate use of information.

It is worth noting the article above regarding MSD guidance on move-ins and also that the Government has since decided to allow the sale

of essential goods such as heaters and whiteware during the lockdown. [More information is available on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment website.](#)

Praise for providers' efforts during this difficult time

From the State Services Commission's LinkedIn page:

"I overheard a brief conversation from a couple we put in a motel. The husband said to his wife 'Wow, I haven't sat on a bed for over 6 months. This room is beautiful, I love you babe'. He was emotional and thankful to have a place to sleep for the next 4 weeks." - a community housing provider.

Thank you to the community housing providers, our NGOs and those from the Ministries of Housing and Urban Development, Social Development, Business and Innovation, Kāinga Ora and the National Emergency Management Agency who are working at pace to get temporary accommodation in place for our homeless and other vulnerable NZers. We're proud of the way you're all pitching in to keep people safe during the war against Covid-19.

Government protections for tenants

A reminder that details of the Government's rent freeze and protections for tenants during the lock-down period are [available on the HUD website.](#)

As HUD says, it is more important than ever to ensure tenancies are sustained and tenants do not have to face the prospect of homelessness during a global pandemic.

It's also critical from a public health perspective that people self-isolate in their own homes by ensuring that they can remain in their rental properties for the duration of this crisis.

The main points:

- There is now a freeze on rent increases.
- A rent-increase notice from a landlord will not have the effect of increasing a tenant's rent, unless the rent increase has already taken effect.
- Tenancies will not be terminated during the lock-down period, unless the parties agree, or in limited circumstances, regardless of when notice was provided.
- Tenants will still be able to terminate their tenancy as normal, if they wish
- Tenants will have the ability to revoke termination notices that they have already given, in case they need to stay in the tenancy during the lock-down period.

The rent freeze applies for an initial period of six months. The protections against terminations will apply for an initial period of three months.

At the end of both initial periods, the Government will evaluate whether they need to be extended.

A [Q&A document about the measures](#) is also available on the Beehive website.

Covid-19: Information for community housing providers

Always check the Government's dedicated [Covid-19 website](#) and the [Ministry of Health website](#) for the latest information and advice.

CHA is also including best practice information for community housing providers on our website, [under the 'Best Practice' tab in the 'Members' section](#).

Importance of having a home

Having a home is crucial to our ability to care for ourselves and our whānau during the Covid-19 lockdown, writes CHA Deputy Chief Executive Chris Glaudel for the Comvoices network.

Unfortunately not all New Zealanders have this, and the difference between having a good home, right now, and not having one is stark.

Our sector's immediate focus is to quickly get all of our houseless whānau into homes, but when this pandemic has passed, we will need to ensure we don't place anyone into this situation ever again.

The full article is [available here](#).

Interview with economist Shamubeel Eaqub

One of New Zealand's leading economists, Shamubeel Eaqub, talks about the Covid-19 crisis - what effect it might have on the economy, what it reveals about us as humans, and what it is that we might build the future on. Hint: it involves resilience, cooperation, learning from each other and taking care of the most vulnerable.

The podcast interview is [available here](#).

More information about Shamubeel Eaqub is [available here](#).

Housing in the recovery

CHA has been contacted through our colleagues at the Construction Industry Council about the infrastructure industry reference group so that we can all start thinking about the role of social and affordable housing in New Zealand's recovery.

Obviously at the moment everyone is head down working out how to maintain services and stay safe and well, but there's no doubt that our sector will make a significant contribution to the country's recovery.

We'll keep you updated as this work gets underway alongside the response to this pandemic.

[The Government announced today](#) that work is underway looking at measures to speed up consents for development and infrastructure projects during the recovery to provide jobs and stimulate our economy.

Free job listings

The Do Good Jobs website advises in a recent newsletter that all job listings that are on the frontlines responding to the Covid-19 crisis - from medical workers to direct community support - can now be posted for free on Do Good Jobs until further notice. Just use the voucher code "COVID-hero" at dogoodjobs.co.nz/submit.

And of course, send CHA your job listings as well and we'll post them in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

News

- [Why shouldn't landlords take a financial hit? Everyone else is.](#)
- [Collaboration providing shelter for Wellington's homeless](#)
- [Housing First Christchurch working with police to find safe accommodation for people still living on the streets](#)
- [Salvation Army emergency services, including housing support, continuing to serve the vulnerable during lockdown](#)
- [House opened for homeless in Tairāwhiti during lockdown](#)
- [South Auckland food bank demand more than doubles.](#)