

Ministry of Social Development email to Scott Figenshow 1 April 2020
RE: Pausing Non-Essential Placements in Transitional and Public Housing

Tēnā koe Scott,

We've received a number of enquiries about the placement of people in transitional and public housing during the COVID-19 Level 4 Alert. While we are still working through the practical details, we want to give you and your members some clarity around placement activity.

We're 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.

We won't be stopping matching through the Business On-line Services system at this time, but we are asking Kainga Ora and Community Housing Providers not to place people from the register for now.

However, providers can still identify potential tenants who may be ready to move when that's possible again.

We're also asking MSD staff at emergency housing appointments to only refer people to transitional housing when it's essential.

It is only essential to move or place a person or household when:

- **they can't safely self-isolate in their current accommodation or they're homeless** and they can move to more suitable accommodation to safely self-isolate
 - o e.g. moving a family from communal accommodation into a self-contained property, or moving a homeless person off the street into appropriate accommodation
- **they're in over-crowded housing** and they can move to more suitable accommodation to safely self-isolate,
 - o e.g. an existing public housing tenant in an over-crowded property
- **there's a serious risk to their health, safety and security** in their current accommodation and they can move to safer accommodation
 - o e.g. people who may be at risk of family violence

If people don't have the essentials to live safely and independently in a new property (e.g. whiteware, beds, utilities), we'll emergency housing instead. We must limit the number of people and organisations (e.g. delivery drivers) involved in the move.

In all cases, providers must ensure their staff can manage the move in a way that complies with the health and safety requirements of Level-4 Alert. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is developing guidance on this.

We appreciate the impact these changes have on you, and we're working details and processes as quickly as we can so we can continue to support people when moving properties is essential.

I'm happy to answer any questions you or your team have, acknowledging that we will need to work through some of that detail together, and will be joining tomorrow's zoom conference with your members.

Nga mihi nui,
Ed

Ed Ablett-Hampson

Principal Advisor | Housing | Ministry of Social Development