

Next stage in plan to manage Omicron peak

- Only confirmed cases and their household contacts required to isolate
- All other contacts now asked to monitor symptoms but do not have to isolate
- Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) will become the primary form of testing in the community with availability from thousands of sites around the country including pharmacies and GP practices over coming days
- Approved RATs able to be sold to the public through retail outlets from March

Ministers have confirmed a move to the next phase of the Government's Omicron response from midnight 24 February), COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins has [announced](#).

"With daily case numbers in the thousands and forecast to rise sharply during the next few weeks, now is the time to implement the next stage in our plan that will keep New Zealand going throughout the Omicron peak.

"These changes will ease some of the pressure on our testing and contact tracing services over the next three to six weeks, while helping to ensure critical services and supply chains remain operational and our economy keeps moving."

"Community providers are resourced to provide care in the community, especially to vulnerable populations, and wraparound health and welfare support services alongside clinical care will focus on those with high needs.

"From now on the number of hospitalisations will replace case numbers as our key metric."

Source [Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz)

New COVID-19 Support Payment from 28 February 2022

A new targeted COVID-19 Support Payment (CSP) was announced on 21 February 2022 and amended on 25 February 2022 for businesses struggling with revenue during the Omicron outbreak.

The [CSP](#) is a payment to help support viable and ongoing businesses or organisations which have experienced a 40% or more drop in revenue as a result of 1 or more of the following COVID-19 circumstances:

- the widespread presence of COVID-19 in the New Zealand community
- the legislative public health measures taken in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the New Zealand community
- any business circumstances that are, or are reasonably likely to be, a consequence of the circumstances described above.

Three fortnightly CSPs will be available with applications opening for the first payment at 8am on 28 February 2022 for the period starting from 16 February 2022. Each CSP will be \$4,000 per business plus \$400 per full-time employee (FTE), capped at 50 FTEs or \$24,000.

The maximum size of the CSP your business or organisation may be eligible to apply for, depends on the number of FTEs you have, and your level of revenue. Businesses or organisations with low revenue will have their payment capped at 8 times their actual decline in revenue.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the CSP a business or organisation must:

- have experienced the revenue decline of 40% or more as a result of 1 or more COVID-19 circumstances (as detailed above)
- have been operating the business or organisation for a period of at least 1 month before 16 February 2022 - if you have acquired a business or organisation after 16 January 2022, you may still be eligible for the CSP
- have taken all reasonably practicable steps (if any) to minimise revenue losses
- been operating in compliance with the COVID-19 Vaccine Certificate requirements (pursuant to COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021), for both the comparator period and the affected revenue period
- not have received, have an application pending for, or apply for or receive in future, a grant under the Cultural Sector Emergency Relief Fund: Grant for Self- Employed Individuals administered by Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage (further details on this will be provided soon)
- be living, or (if a non-natural person) registered or otherwise established in New Zealand.

See [details about drop in revenue](#).

See [details about recently acquired businesses](#).

See [details about pre-revenue businesses or organisations](#).

Source [IRD](#)

Guidance for workplaces with staff impacted by COVID-19

The Ministry of Health has published [processes to follow](#) if an employee, customer or visitor becomes a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case or an employee is identified as a household contact of a person with COVID-19. A few important elements of the guidance follow in edited form.

If the case is an employee

If an employee becomes a confirmed (or probable) COVID-19 case and has been at your workplace while infectious, there are standard processes that will be followed. You will be told by your employee directly and then you should:

- inform any Health and Safety Managers and/or Occupational Health Managers within the organisation if you have them;
- isolate spaces that this person may have spent significant time in and ensure cleaning is undertaken before they are able to be used (see [General cleaning](#) for more information)
- follow the advice in the document "[Step-by-step guide for managing COVID-19 in your business or workplace](#)"

It is important to protect the privacy of your employee. Their name must not be shared.

Step-by-step guide for managing COVID-19 in your business or workplace

The starting place is to review the detailed guide on steps to take.

- [Guidance for businesses: What to do if an employee tests positive for COVID-19 \(Word, 547 KB\)](#)
- [Guidance for businesses: What to do if an employee tests positive for COVID-19 \(PDF, 522 KB\)](#)

Contact tracing

Employers are now responsible for contact tracing in respect of their staff. If one of your staff with COVID-19 was at your business premises during their infectious period, then anyone who was there at the same time may be considered a contact if they were in the same space as your staff member with COVID-19. This includes other staff, contractors, visitors and customers.

You must now identify, assess and inform contacts by the business. Two of the spreadsheets available are particularly time-saving -

- [COVID-19 Contact tracing template \(Excel, 41 KB\)](#)
- [Contact categorisation spreadsheet \(Excel, 36 KB\)](#)

Source [MOH](#)

This article is brought to you by AdviceWise People, who provide WGANZ's free employment helpline 0800 692 384. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the article, please call Philip or Anthony.