



Alzheimers Otago Covid-19 Policy Protection Framework

(V3.2 Traffic Light system - updated 02/05/22)

Purpose / Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to Alzheimers Otago staff and clients about the procedures, guidelines and obligations that Alzheimers Otago

Policy Statement:

Alzheimers Otago has a responsibility under the Ministry of Health legislation and the Covid-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 to maintain its duty of care for all its staff (including volunteers) and clients or anyone accessing our services.

Alzheimers Otago is classified as an aged care provider (non-residential care) of supports for older people under the Covid-19 Protection Public Health (Protection Framework) Order 2021 as we fall within the broad definition of health that is being used under the Order **and we cannot mandate vaccination certification for access to our services**. The MoH COVID-19 Protection Framework states that prior to every interaction a 'risk-assessment' (Appendix D) including health questionnaire must be completed. The vaccination status of the person, whānau and/or carer informs planning for safe delivery of supports but will not otherwise affect the decision to provide support.

Our clients will not be denied access to our services however, some alternative options will be offered to those who cannot attend.

We have assessed our clients at Alzheimers Otago as being vulnerable and at risk from Covid and/or supporting someone in that situation. We have recognized the situation has significantly changed our work environment and that our work practices must respond to a situation where Covid is in local communities.

Scope:

Alzheimers Otago must manage the complexity of balancing the need for people to connect with their communities and receive care and limiting the risk of transmission. We have considered our role in the NZ health system, the health of the older people sector, our obligations to provide a safe and healthy environment for people living with dementia, our clients, our team, our commitment to an inclusive service and the various employment arrangements we have in place.

The COVID-19 Protection Framework applies to older people and their whānau and carers, the same as it does for everyone else. Some older people may have underlying conditions that make them at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Even with vaccinated staff, advice is for providers to ensure they protect that person appropriately.

The COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 requires anyone conducting high-risk work in the health and disability sector to be fully vaccinated and referred to as a vaccination mandated worker. This applies to roles performed by employees, contractors or volunteers who work closely with our clients, but it also applies to employees who have frequent contact/engagement with other employees providing health services and is considered tied to a role within a healthcare setting. We assessed all our roles to determine whether they are roles that will require vaccination mandate or not. All variations/updates to the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 will be applicable to the roles assessed. All our roles fall within the criteria of the Order and these roles mandated to be performed by staff fully vaccinated.

(Appendix A– Vaccination Risk Assessment)

Alzheimers Otago can continue to operate under the new framework with several requirements – i.e., mask wearing, social distance, display QR codes and maintain contact tracing (Appendix B – Services Framework Table). If risk assessment and infection control requirements prevent someone using our services, alternative ways of providing support for these clients will need to be found. Infection prevention control measures <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/infection-prevention-and-control> are the primary mechanism to protect staff and people using the service regardless of the premises where the service is held. (Appendix B - Alzheimers Otago Services with Protection Framework Table).

All our services and supports continue to operate throughout all traffic lights of the COVID-19 Protection Framework and we follow the guidelines below to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19:

- All our staff are fully vaccinated (Appendix C – Vaccination Policy)
- Practice mask wearing and physical distancing – when close contact is required, minimise the length of the interaction
- Log all visitors and clients using the NZ Covid Tracer app or a manual sign in register for contract tracing
- Alternative options should be considered and offered for those who cannot attend
- Consider deferring the visit if a person has new onset of clinical symptoms or they are COVID-19 positive
- Determine if a virtual appointment is possible, or delay care until no longer infectious
- Perform regular hand hygiene
- If home visiting, where possible, open the windows to improve ventilation before and during visit or meet outside, if possible
- If occurring in a community healthcare facility, open the windows to improve ventilation if possible.

For each of our services provided at the different traffic light setting, a risk assessment is undertaken to determine

- Vaccination rates
- Community transmission
- Mask wearing and/or social distance requirements
- The method of service delivery, and
- Consideration of staff movements to factor in the location if case numbers are high
- Consideration of the risk assessment around recent Covid contacts and health of the person to ascertain if they are a “High Risk Person”

Our framework and Vaccination policy are just two of the health and safety controls Alzheimers Otago has in place for keeping our clients, staff, and volunteers safe. This policy supersedes our previous Covid-19 Safety Plan.

Other general controls include:

- staying home if you are sick
- calling your doctor or Healthline if you have cold or flu symptoms, however mild, and isolate at home until after a negative test and 48 hours after symptoms resolve
- self-isolate if needed to or told to by authorities
- physical distancing in the office where possible and practical
- wearing a mask when physical distancing is not possible
- washing hands regularly
- practicing respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- providing gloves, hand sanitiser and cleaning products for workstations.
- getting vaccinated

Procedure:

The below information sets out our responsibilities on how we will operate safely within the traffic light system either face-to-face or online for all our services (Home visits, CST, Day Programmes, Carer Support Groups, Education Sessions, Coffee groups).

1. Appendix A - Alzheimers Otago Covid Vaccination Risk Assessment
2. Appendix B - Alzheimers Otago Services with Protection Framework Table
3. Appendix C - Alzheimers Vaccination Policy
4. Appendix D - Pre-visit health checklist “high risk assessment”
5. Appendix D.2 – Procedure for operating in Orange setting
6. Appendix D.3 – Covid 19 Health questionnaire
7. Appendix E - Procedure for when staff get Covid-19 or Isolating
8. Client Information Guidelines – Being Prepared

<https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-health-professionals/covid-19-aged-care-disability-and-hospice-care-providers/aged-care-providers-non-residential/aged-care-providers-non-residential-orange>

The following is developed as a guide to what services can be provided at each Framework level dependent on the premise where the service is provided. Because our services are exempt under the Framework, decisions about service provision need to be based on where the service is provided (the premises), and the risk assessment undertaken.

Service	Green	Orange	Red
General restrictions	Services can operate with adherence to public health measures No limits on staff movement All workplaces are open Face coverings encouraged indoors	Services can operate with adherence to public health measures based on 1 metre distancing OR appropriate levels of PPE must be worn. Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.	Services can operate with adherence to public health measures. Maintain 1 metre distance AND PPE must be worn. Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.
Day Programmes/ Carer Support Groups, CST, Social Groups (carer and/or people with dementia), Educations (client, community, public)			
-in own facility	Services can operate with general Green measures and “high risk person” risk assessment	Can operate with general Orange restrictions and “high risk person” risk assessment. Alternative ways of supporting people if local case numbers are high/vaccination rates low. Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.	Can operate with general Red restrictions and “high risk person” risk assessment. Consider alternative ways of supporting people if local case numbers are high/vaccination rates low. Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.
-in community non-health facility (e.g., community hall)	Can operate but will depend on risk assessment. If unable to attend due to risk assessment, then alternative options should be considered for those who cannot attend.	Can operate with general Orange restrictions but will depend on risk assessment. Alternative ways of supporting people if local case numbers are high/vaccination rates low. Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.	Can operate with general Red restrictions and “high risk person” risk assessment. Consider alternative ways of supporting people if local case numbers are high/vaccination rates low. Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.
-in community health facility (e.g., rest home)	Can operate but will depend on facility requirements. If unable to attend due to risk assessment, then alternative options should be considered for those who cannot attend.	Can operate with general Orange restrictions but will depend on facility requirements. considered for those who cannot attend. Alternative ways of supporting people if local case numbers are high/vaccination rates low.	Can operate with general Red restrictions and “high risk person” risk assessment. Consider alternative ways of supporting people if local case numbers are high/vaccination rates low.

		Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.	Alternate options should be considered for those who cannot attend due to health reasons or “high risk person” risk assessment.
Home Visits (close contacts)			
	Services can operate with appropriate PPE and distancing requirements and after “high risk person” assessment.	Can operate with appropriate PPE or distancing and after “high risk person” assessment. Consideration of staff movements to factor in the location of your service if case numbers are high, or if vaccination rates are low and if concerns phone, email and or zoom used for interactions. Consideration of staff discretion considering the safety of both parties.	Can operate only, if necessary, with appropriate PPE and distancing and after “high risk person” assessment. Consideration of staff movements to factor in the location of your service if case numbers are high, or if vaccination rates are low and if concerns phone, email and or zoom used for interactions.
Carer Social Groups (gathering)			
	Services can operate with appropriate PPE and distancing requirements and after “high risk person” assessment	Can operate with appropriate PPE or distancing requirements and after “high risk person” assessment and at the organization’s discretion depending on local case numbers and vaccinations status. If not possible use other means of social engagement are made available.	Can operate with appropriate PPE and distancing requirements and after “high risk person” assessment and at the organization’s discretion depending on local case numbers and vaccinations status. If not possible ensure other means of social engagement are made available. On case-by-case assessment.

References:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-response-planning/covid-19-community-response-framework>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-response-planning/covid-19-public-health-response-amendment-act-no-2-2021>

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2021/0094/latest/LMS487853.html>