

Changes announced to COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme

Some changes are being introduced to the COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme in order to expand the number of workers who will be eligible to apply and therefore to help break the chain of transmission.

Changes are in force from Monday 28 September 2020 and include:

- Changing the payment length from four weeks to two weeks in order to better match the recommended isolation period;
- Allowing employers to reapply every two weeks for the same employee if they are still meeting the criteria; and
- Expanding the criteria of eligibility to include close contacts, parents or caregivers with a dependent who must self-isolate and anyone that meets the Ministry of Health's Higher Index of Suspicion.

Some of the reasons quoted for the changes are that the scheme will likely be needed for longer than previously envisioned and by expanding the criteria, the scheme can allow for employees to receive an income while still taking appropriate measures to keep themselves and others safe.

Resources:

Eligibility expanded for COVID-19 leave support <<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/eligibility-expanded-covid-19-leave-support>> 22 September 2020

Work and Income: Changes to the COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme <<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/news/2020/leave-support-scheme-changes.html>> 22 September 2020