



Muscular Dystrophy  
New Zealand

## **Update to Disability Support line**

COVID-19 has put additional pressure on disabled people, whānau and the home and community workforce. This means that people are worried that support workers may not be available, and they will be left without support.

Whakarongorau is a telehealth provider that manages several support phone lines including Healthline. A Disability specific 0800 line was set up to provide information around vaccines, applying for face mask exemptions, advice on COVID testing, and guidance with managing COVID at home.

This Disability 0800 service has been extended to provide a response for disabled people who require urgent support and whose support workers are unavailable through their home and community support provider during COVID-19.

On the rare occasions that a support worker is unavailable to provide for a person's urgent needs, the 0800 11 12 13 (disability line) will offer an essential backup service by connecting people to appropriate assistance where possible.

The 0800 11 12 13 service is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. From 8am-8pm a person with experience or knowledge of disability will answer the call and assess the urgency of your situation and provide advice or assistance. After 8pm calls will be answered by a trained member of the Healthline team.

The Call Centre will work with the person/whānau to determine what needs to happen, how urgent the situation is and if medical or other emergency services are needed.

People are always encouraged to contact their service provider directly in the first instance to confirm when they will arrive. However, in urgent cases that do not require medical intervention, the Call Centre can also help the person follow up with their service provider if they have been unable to contact them.

Whakarongorau has a service directory of Provider support numbers to call. If it is determined that medical intervention may be required, this will be discussed with the caller, and transferred to a Healthline clinician to manage.

<https://whakarongorau.nz/telehealth-services>