

26 AUGUST 2021

Covid-19 Update

Kia ora,

Following the extension of COVID-19 Alert Level 4 the AYA Key Workers are sending this letter out to all young people across the country who are currently undergoing cancer treatment and those who have recently completed treatment. We wanted to reach out to let you know the supports available to you during this time.

What hasn't changed under Alert Level 4?

- We want to reassure you that essential cancer treatment will continue to be available and delivered throughout the COVID Alert Levels. If you feel that your treatment is being impacted please get in touch with your AYA Key Worker.
- Please continue to attend your appointments and treatment as planned. There are a lot of precautions in place at the hospital to minimise your risk of infection from COVID-19. However, if you are showing any COVID-19 related symptoms please do not come in. Contact your health care team for advice.
- If you require essential treatment to be delivered outside of the town or city that you live in, supports such as accommodation and travel will still be made available and put in place for you.
- Pharmacies and selected labs are still open to pick up prescriptions and complete blood tests. Before leaving home do check online to find the closest lab open to you.
- If you develop a new cancer symptom or side effect from your treatment please inform your health care team right away. Do not delay accessing support and help during this time. We promise your health care team will want to know.
- Your health care team should have given you information about what you should do if you develop a temperature or feel unwell – if this has not occurred then please ask them. We can't stress enough how important it is to not delay contacting your medical team if unwell. If you are unwell, the hospital is the safest place to be.

AYA Key Workers Contact details

Auckland and Northern Region
The greater Auckland area and the
Northland district



Tracey Vincent

AYA Cancer Keyworker

021 784 485

traceyv@adhb.govt.nz



Simone McMillan

AYA Cancer Keyworker

021 945 452

SMcMillan@adhb.govt.nz

Midland Region
Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Lakes/
Tauriko and Tairāwhiti districts



Ellyn Proffit

AYA Keyworker

021 223 6145

ellyn.proffit@waikatodhb.health.nz

Things that may look a little different in the way that care is delivered under Alert Levels 3 and 4

- Mask wearing is mandatory and you will be screened before entering health care environments. If you do have any COVID-like symptoms please notify your health care team before attending and we strongly encourage you to get tested.
- Some of your face-to-face consultations or home visits from non-essential health care services may move to virtual consultations via phone or video conference – you will be notified if this is the case.
- Depending on your age and situation the presence of whānau or a support person to attend appointments or treatment in person with you might be restricted. We know this may cause you distress so please discuss your individual circumstances with your Key Worker.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am currently receiving cancer treatment?

Yes. This is strongly encouraged. Please talk to your health care team first, as depending on what treatment you are on, they may want to time the vaccine to be delivered at a certain point in your treatment cycle.

The AYA Cancer Key Worker Service – we're here to help during these times

Most of you will be familiar with the service that the Key Workers provide. We are health professionals employed to provide care co-ordination and oversight for young people aged 12 to 24 years who are diagnosed with cancer.

We can help during these times by:

- Providing advice and support – we're a text away
- Helping to access practical supports like transport when required
- Sign posting and directing you to the right people for any concerns or issues that may arise
- Advocating for your needs if you feel that you aren't being listened to

"I was lucky to have the care of an incredible AYA Key Worker who made it more than her personal mission to ensure that I was well looked after.. she stepped in and took action with my day to day stableness" AYA

The Key Workers are an essential service and we are all working and available during this time. Even if you have never had contact from one of us in the past please reach out if we can be of help. In some regions we can attend appointments or visit you in hospital even when your whānau cannot.

Mid Central Region Wanganui, Taranaki, Manawatu and Hawkes Bay



Telesia Brown

AYA Keyworker
027 432 7771

Telesia.Brown@midcentraldhb.govt.nz

Capital and Coast Region Wellington, Kapiti Coast, the Hutt Valley and Wairarapa districts

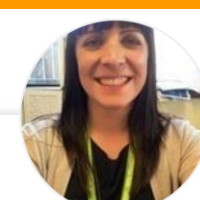


Jayde Kawana

AYA Keyworker
027 217 6256

Jayde.Kawana@ccdhb.org.nz

Canterbury Region Canterbury, South Canterbury, West Coast and Nelson/Marlborough districts

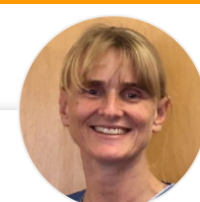


Louise Sue

AYA Keyworker
027 382 6584

louise.sue@cdhb.health.nz

Southern Region Dunedin, Invercargil and Queenstown districts



Val Waugh

AYA Keyworker
027 269 9383

val.waugh@southernndhb.govt.nz

AYA Key Workers – Contact Details

The Key Workers are based in six regions to provide support for young people across the country. Our contact details can be found on the right-hand side of this letter and days and times of work. Text or call us – whatever works best for you. There will be times when you may hear from a Key Worker from another region. This may be related to availability. However, please remember we are not an emergency service and do not work evenings and weekends. Please contact your health care team if you have immediate concerns or Ill if it is an emergency. If you have tried to get hold of us and not had a reply then please send an email to AYAcancer@adhb.govt.nz and we will ensure this is followed up by one of the team.

Challenges and Stressors to undergoing treatment during this time

- It is really important to let us (your Key Worker) or health care team know any issues you may be experiencing in attending appointments or treatments such as transport or child care arrangements for any children you may have. There are supports available that can be accessed in these situations please notify us (your keyworker)/health care team early so they can explore options for you.
- Now we are in lockdown it is more important than ever you have access to a phone with data/credit on it so that you can keep in touch with your health care team. In addition many of the supports you may normally access are now delivered virtually. Again please let us know if accessing credit, data or internet access is an issue for you.

Updates

The AYA Cancer Network website <https://ayacancernetwork.org.nz/> can also direct you to resources and supports. There is now a dedicated COVID-19 page where the Network will post updates and information for you. There is also an opportunity to post any questions you might have and for us to answer them. Please also follow our social media sites for updates.

AYA Key Workers availability

**Monday to Friday
9:00am to 5:00pm**

**Tracey Vincent
Simon McMillan
Ellyn Proffit**

**Monday to Friday
9:00am to 2:00pm**

Telesia Brown

**Monday to Friday
9:00am to 11:00am**

Val Waugh

**Monday, Tuesday
and Thursday
9:00am to 3:00pm**

Louise Sue

**Monday to Friday
alternative weeks
9:00am to 4:30pm**

Jayde Kawana

Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/ayacancernetwork>

LinkedIn



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/aya-cancer-network-aotearoa>

Instagram



<https://www.instagram.com/ayacancernetwork/>

Twitter



<https://twitter.com/NZayacancer>

Emotional wellbeing

We want to acknowledge that lockdown can bring with it a range of feelings and emotions. Some young people told us last year that they preferred lockdowns because their families could be at home with them and they weren't missing out on socialising with friends because nobody was going out! For others challenges with hospital visits or the impact of not being able to be with loved ones placed them under additional stress. Taking care of your emotional wellbeing is so important during these times so below we've shared some tips, resources and services to help support you.

Here are some helpful suggestions from young people who attended treatment or were admitted during last years' lockdown

- "I couldn't bring my whānau to my appointment but my Key Worker suggested that I use Face Time or messenger so that they could still hear everything my oncologist was telling me"
- "I'm not a fan of hospital food and Uber wasn't delivering. So bring a whole lot of your favourite foods and snacks with you if you have to come into hospital."
- "Bring lots to do – and don't forget your chargers."

Support services available

A number of the services you may already be familiar with are still open and are there for you such as CanTeen, Child Cancer Foundation, Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand and Cancer Society. Most of their face to face support and programmes are on hold but they continue to provide support via phone, video calls and online. We encourage you to reach out to your support workers and if not already a member and wanting assistance you would also be welcomed.

CanTeen NZ has online peer support network and counsellors available – that are ready to chat, listen and support when you need it. You can find more information by following the link below:

<https://www.canteen.org.au/new-zealand-support/>

There are also other dedicated self-help tools and supports that you may find useful listed below:

- **SPARX** is a computerised self-help programme intended to help people aged 12-19 who may be feeling down
- **Mental Wealth** by Le Va provides online resources to help young people look after their mental health, and includes online counselling
- **The Lowdown** provides videos and articles about anxiety and depression and also includes support through a free 24/7 helpline, text and webchat
- **Aroha** is a chatbot to help young people cope with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Youthline** provides support for young people via the fee call service, text and webchat
- **Melon Health** provides online tools and resources to help people manage stressful times, and also has an app available for download
- **1737** is a free service for any New Zealander, including young people, that may be feeling down, anxious, a bit overwhelmed or just need to chat to someone. People can call or text for free 24/7.



We expect there may be many more changes ahead. Hopefully one of those is a reduction in lockdown levels in the near future. In the meantime reach out to us if there is anything you need – we are here throughout.

Noho ora mai (Stay well and look after yourselves)

He waka eke noa (We are all in this together!)

Ngā mihi,

The AYA Key Workers

Ellyn Proffit, Tracey Vincent, Simone McMillan, Louise Sue, Val Waugh, Telesia Brown and Jayde Kawana.