

# Ethical Guidance for a Pandemic

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New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services

Contact Name:	Nikki Hurst Rachel Mackay
Organisation Name:	New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS)
Ko wai au   Who we are:	<p>The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on Ethical Guidance for a Pandemic.</p> <p>NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.</p> <p>Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 250 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. We believe in working to achieve a just and compassionate society for all, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website <a href="http://www.nzccss.org.nz">www.nzccss.org.nz</a>.</p>

## Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

We support the focus on the ethical guidelines to pandemic management being based on readiness and culturally appropriate foundations. We find these to be appropriate contextual underpinnings for a healthcare system even when not in crisis, which will support best practice when strained as per pandemic settings.

We agree with a strong focus on intersectionality of healthcare provision is warmly received, as we are strongly aware of the way in which the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted and exacerbated the current inequity in our social and healthcare systems. We also appreciate the contextualisation of the principles contained in this framework within collective responsibility, especially in terms of Liberty and Tika. Healthcare, access to it, and protection from harm in the context of a pandemic should not be impeded by individualism or misinformation.

Our main points are:

**Item One – Readiness and comprehensive healthcare reform will support the nation towards healthcare equity as well as pandemic preparedness**

We view the best preparedness for a pandemic and the ethical decisions that occur alongside one to be a sturdy foundation in the context of business-as-usual healthcare management.

**Item Two – Key foundational elements provide a unique and appropriate framework for Aotearoa New Zealand**

The seven foundational elements provide the appropriate cultural context for an Aotearoa-centred framework.

**Item Three – Collective Rights also carry collective responsibility towards collective outcomes**

Ensuring the framing of Liberty and Tika within the context of ensuring that collective wellbeing is factored into the infringement of individual rights, including the expectation of truth and trust, is critical for social cohesion.

### Taunakitanga | Recommendations

We raise the following points and recommendations for consideration:

**Item One – Readiness and comprehensive healthcare reform will support the nation towards healthcare equity as well as pandemic preparedness**

We have specific concern for the way that the Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately affected, and continues to affect, demographics of our population that were already systemically disenfranchised. The pandemic further exacerbated extant inequities, and a framework for pandemic management that initially focuses on the comprehensive reform of the health system as a whole to ensure equitable access to healthcare for core at-risk groups (namely Māori and Pacific citizens, the over-65 cohort, disabled citizens, low-income communities, and the inevitable intersections between these groups that further amplifies inequality) will serve our country and communities beyond pandemic readiness and into healthcare equity.

We strongly support the concept that overall healthcare reform to produce better business-as-usual healthcare outcomes, both in terms of quality and equity, is the best foundation for improvements in outcome when the system is strained by an event such as a pandemic. Our healthcare system is already struggling, both from the ongoing issues associated with moving into the 'living with Covid-19' phase of virus management, but also from systemic underfunding and under prioritisation by sequential governments. This issue cannot be fixed immediately but adding to the impetus to correct the failings in the system by framing it as pandemic preparedness can only help.

Addressing the inequities that disenfranchised groups experience within a healthcare setting, especially those with intersecting identities that lead to disproportionate health outcomes, in the overall context of healthcare will allow these individuals to already have appropriate frameworks for care and support available to them when the system is under increased strain during a pandemic. Healthcare equity as a readiness precaution can only produce better health outcomes universally for individuals, both in the midst of and in the absence of a pandemic.

**Recommendation Proposal 1:** We support overall healthcare reform as a key part of both pandemic preparedness and a functional step towards healthcare equity.

**Item Two – Key foundational elements provide a unique and appropriate framework for Aotearoa New Zealand**

We strongly support the seven foundational elements of this document. Specifically, we tautoko the specific references to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the adoption of Te Whare Tapa Whā, and the embedding of mātauranga Māori into responsiveness. The inclusion of these sets this framework firmly within an appropriate cultural framework, making it suitable to respond to the needs of the citizenry of Aotearoa. The further support of integration of cultural and social identity by ensuring that an intersectional approach is foundational to decision making furthers this.

**Recommendation Proposal 2:** We support the seven foundational elements of this framework.

**Item Three – Collective Rights also carry collective responsibility towards collective outcomes**

Social cohesion is a critical element for maintenance of a functioning society. The preservation of social cohesion requires the wide understanding of collective responsibility being the basis for individual rights. We cannot maintain our individual rights if the fabric of society is not supported by our collective responsibility to one another.

We appreciate the framing of the principle of Liberty being framed in terms of collective responsibility, as it is often popularly conflated specifically with individualism. In addition, we applaud the specific reference to the importance of trust to Tika, and the way that misinformation causes harm to communities. We have seen how the spread of misinformation has deeply divided communities in recent years, with the pandemic at the centre of much of the tension. Establishing trust and truth as core principles of pandemic management will assist in the preservation of social cohesion during trying times.

**Recommendation Proposal 3:** We support the focus on collective responsibility.