

COVID-19 Alert Level 2

What happened in the District Court since Alert Level 3

During Alert Level 2 of COVID-19¹, New Zealand's busiest court, the District Court, continued to operate as an essential service. It conducted priority proceedings in the criminal, family and civil jurisdictions as it had during Alert Levels 3 and 4. As outlined in the judicial protocols,² the Court aimed to undertake as much additional work as possible within the significant restraints imposed by COVID-19. Jury trials remained suspended during this period. Compared to COVID-19 Alert Levels 3 and 4, during Alert Level 2, more court events were completed, and the number of non-jury trial active cases within the District Court reduced.

This summary compares data for Alert Level 2 with data for Alert Level 3.³ The data was extracted from a live dataset used for operational purposes; it may differ to data extracted on a different date.⁴

For a full, up-to-date picture of the impact of COVID-19 on court operations, this summary should be read in conjunction with the previously published [Alert Level 4](#) and [Alert Level 3](#) and data summaries.⁵

The operation of the Court expanded during Alert Level 2

The District Court further expanded its operation during Alert Level 2, increasing the number of court events completed per day compared to Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 4. However, some court events continued to be adjourned or rescheduled.

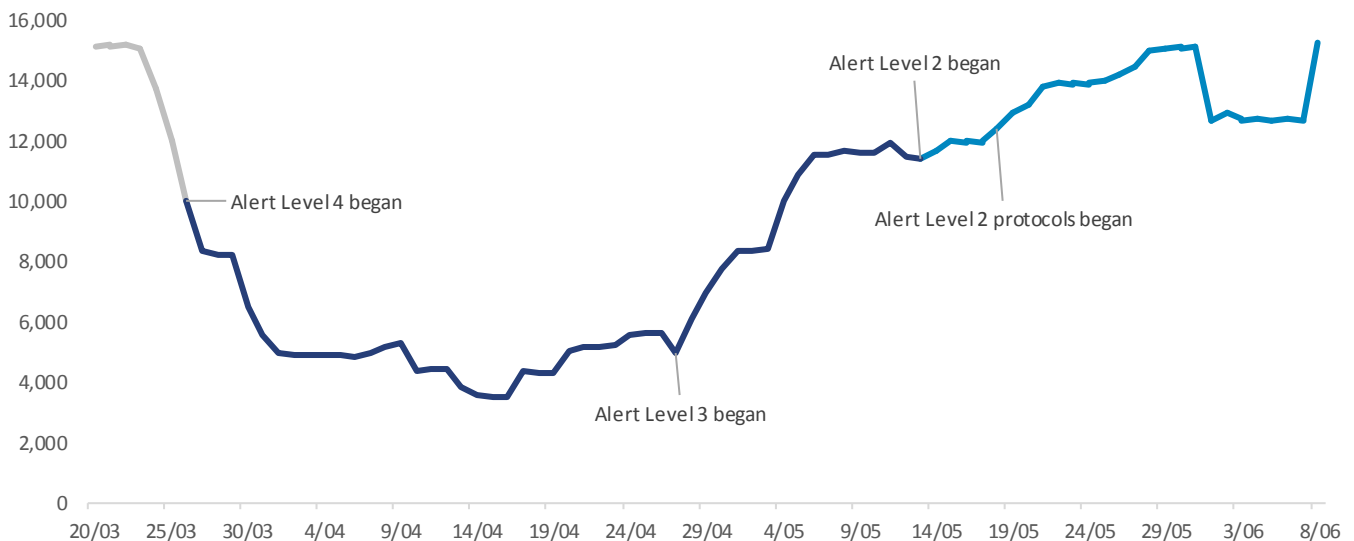
An increasing number of court events were completed

During Alert Level 4, the number of completed court events (excluding events completed on the papers,

adjourned for any reason, no longer required, or where a warrant to arrest was issued due to non-appearance of a defendant) decreased substantially compared to pre-COVID-19 ending with 4,965⁶ completed events over the last 7 days of Level 4 (Figure 1).

Once Alert Level 3 began on 28 April, the number of completed events increased significantly. Alert Level 2 ended on 8 June with 15,291 completed events in the last 7 days, 34% more completed court events than in the last week of Alert Level 3 (when there were 11,442 completed events). Note that the apparent decrease in events between Monday 1 and

Figure 1: The rolling 7-day total of completed court events increased in Alert Level 2



Sunday 7 June 2020 is due to the Queen's Birthday holiday on 1 June, when only arrest lists were held.

Some court events continued to be adjourned or rescheduled in Alert Level 2

By the end of Alert Level 3, 41,795⁷ District Court events (across the criminal, family and civil jurisdictions and including Disputes Tribunal) had been adjourned or rescheduled due to COVID-19.⁸

By the end of Alert Level 2 this increased by a further 4,444 events (+11%) (Table 1) to a total of 46,239 adjourned or rescheduled events over Alert Levels 2, 3 and 4. The Alert Level 2 increase was made up of a further 3,492 rescheduled court events and 952 court events that were adjourned. These events will now occur at a future date.

Most of the impacted events were in the criminal jurisdiction, where 2,971 court events were rescheduled and 895 were adjourned during Alert Level 2.

The family jurisdiction had 410 court events and the civil jurisdiction 169 court events rescheduled or adjourned due to COVID-19 during Alert Level 2.

The number of events rescheduled or adjourned in each jurisdiction proportionally reflects the number of events normally scheduled for each jurisdiction.

Table 1: The majority of the rescheduled or adjourned events in Alert Level 2 occurred in the criminal jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Adjourned	Rescheduled	Total
Criminal	895	2,971	3,866
Family	40	370	410
Civil	18	151	169
Total	952	3,492	4,444

The number of new and disposed criminal cases in the District Court increased

A criminal case is a group of charges, related to one or more people, that go through the court process together. The majority go through the District Court.

More criminal cases entered courts than at Alert Level 3

During Alert Level 2, an average of 2,167 new criminal cases (new business) entered the District Court each week (Table 2). This was 16% higher than the weekly average during Alert Level 3 (of 1,861 cases a week), however this was still 14% lower than the pre-lockdown baseline period of 2,515 new cases a week.

There were some differences between justice service areas, although most had increases in the average number of cases each week compared to Alert Level 3.

Table 2: Most justice services areas had increases in criminal new business and all had increases in disposals, compared to Alert Level 3

Justice service area	New business			Disposed		
	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from AL3	% difference	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from AL3	% difference
Taitokerau	110	21	24%	165	95	137%
Waitematā	161	24	17%	171	64	60%
Auckland	162	23	17%	235	90	62%
South Auckland	319	102	47%	315	163	108%
Waikato	196	44	29%	189	53	39%
Bay of Plenty	151	13	10%	188	39	26%
Wairariki	120	20	20%	123	67	119%
East Coast	154	26	20%	217	108	99%
Taranaki/Whanganui	99	10	11%	112	35	46%
Manawatū/Wairarapa	104	14	15%	122	34	39%
Northern Wellington	135	-15	-10%	152	43	40%
Wellington	49	6	13%	78	18	30%
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	89	2	2%	91	22	33%
Canterbury	184	-3	-1%	220	82	59%
Otago	78	15	23%	102	23	29%
Southland	55	4	7%	70	23	48%
Total	2,167	305	16%	2,550	960	60%

The largest increase in the number and percentage of cases was in South Auckland (+102 cases a week; +47%), followed by Waikato (+44 cases a week; +29%). Whereas, there was a small decrease in Northern Wellington (-15 cases a week; -10%). There were a similar number of cases each week in Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3 in Canterbury (-3 cases; -1%), Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast (+2 cases; +2%) and Southland (+4 cases; +7%).

The number of cases disposed of each week increased since Alert Level 3

During Alert Level 2, an average of 2,550 criminal cases were disposed each week in the District Court (Table 2). This was 60% more disposed than in Alert Level 3 when there were 1,590 cases a week. The average number disposed each week was similar to the pre-lockdown baseline period (2% lower).

The largest count and percentage increases were in the South Auckland justice service area, with 163 (108%) more cases disposed of each week, followed by East Coast (+108 cases; +99%) and Taitokerau (+95 cases; +137%). Waiariki also had a large percentage increase (+67 cases; +119%).

Active criminal workload decreased since Alert Level 3, but was still higher than before lockdown

The active criminal workload decreased 4% from the end of Alert Level 3 to the end of Alert Level 2 (from 41,687 to 39,893 active cases) (Table 3).

There were decreases across almost all justice service areas with the largest decreases in East Coast (-319 cases; -11%) and Taitokerau (-262 cases; -13%). In Waikato, there were a similar number of active cases in Alert Level 2 than Alert Level 3 (+28 cases; +1%).

While the total number of active cases at the end of Alert Level 2 was 10% higher than at the end of the pre-lockdown baseline period (when there were 36,204 active cases), in several justice services areas the number of active cases were similar. This included Manawatū/Wairarapa (-3 cases), Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast (+2 cases) and East Coast (+9 cases).

Table 3: East Coast and Taitokerau had the largest decreases in active criminal cases

Justice service area	AL2 count	Difference from AL3	% difference
Taitokerau	1,755	-262	-13%
Waitematā	3,629	-130	-3%
Auckland	4,642	-156	-3%
South Auckland	6,729	-48	-1%
Waikato	3,073	28	1%
Bay of Plenty	1,856	-110	-6%
Waiariki	1,614	-133	-8%
East Coast	2,629	-319	-11%
Taranaki/Whanganui	1,654	-47	-3%
Manawatū/Wairarapa	1,874	-111	-6%
Northern Wellington	2,069	-94	-4%
Wellington	1,217	-81	-6%
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	1,474	-43	-3%
Canterbury	3,457	-147	-4%
Otago	1,305	-81	-6%
Southland	916	-60	-6%
Total	39,893	-1794	-4%

The average number of charges filed in the District Court during Alert Level 2 was similar to during Alert Level 3

A charge relates to a single criminal offence (e.g. burglary). A person may be charged with more than one offence at the same time, which would be grouped together into a court case.

This data does not include information on the outcome or imposed sentence of charges filed during these periods; for many charges this will not have been determined yet.⁹

The number of charges filed each week in Alert Level 2 and 3 was similar, but was still lower than prior to the lockdown

In total over Alert Level 2 there were 13,848 charges filed in the District Court for category 1, 2 and 3 offences.¹⁰ The weekly average (3,728 charges) was similar to the during Alert Level 3 (3,700 charges a week).¹¹

About half the justice service areas had little change in the number of charges filed each week during Alert Level 2, compared to Alert Level 3 (Table 4). Waikato had the largest increase with 59 more charges a week (+22%), followed by South Auckland (+47 charges a week; +10%) and Waiariki (+31 charges a

Table 4: About half the justice service areas had little change in the number of charges filed each week during Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3, but most had fewer than during the baseline period

Justice service area	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from Alert Level 3		Difference from baseline	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Taitokerau	212	-1	-1%	18	9%
Waitematā	257	-1	>-1%	-99	-28%
Auckland	285	13	5%	9	3%
South Auckland	510	47	10%	-87	-15%
Waikato	324	59	22%	-24	-7%
Bay of Plenty	252	5	2%	-60	-19%
Waiariki	219	31	17%	-43	-16%
East Coast	269	16	6%	-111	-29%
Taranaki/Whanganui	182	-13	-7%	-19	-9%
Manawatū/Wairarapa	181	10	6%	-54	-23%
Northern Wellington	225	-29	-11%	27	14%
Wellington	90	0	0%	-14	-14%
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	149	-2	-2%	-45	-23%
Canterbury	340	-75	-18%	-76	-18%
Otago	129	-2	-2%	-6	-5%
Southland	105	-29	-22%	-8	-7%
Total	3,728	29	1%	-591	-14%

week; +17%). The largest decreases were in Canterbury (-75 charges a week; -18%), Southland (-29 charges a week; -22%) and Northern Wellington (-29 charges a week; -11%).

However, the number of charges per week in Alert Level 2 was 14% lower than the number of charges filed per week in the pre-lockdown baseline period.

Most justice service areas had fewer charges filed each week in Alert Level 2 than during the pre-lockdown baseline. Northern Wellington was an exception, with 14% more charges (+27 charges a week). Taitokerau and Auckland also had small increases compared to the pre-lockdown baseline (+18 and +9 charges a week respectively).

Charges for breaching COVID-19 restrictions reduced substantially in Alert Level 2

In total, since Alert Level 4 began there were 989 charges filed in the District Court for breaching Alert restrictions. Of these, 60 charges (6%) were filed during Alert Level 2 (an average of 16 charges each week). In comparison, there were 140 charges a week during Alert Level 3 and 129 charges a week during Alert Level 4.

Almost all (98%; 59 charges) of the charges in Alert Level 2 continued to be for obstructing/hindering a

Medical Officer of Health or a person assisting a Medical Officer (section 72 Health Act 1956). The COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020 introduced several additional offences in mid-May, of which only one had charges filed; for failing to comply with a direction/prohibition/restriction.

Of the 60 breach charges filed, the highest number were in Northern Wellington (11 charges) (Figure 2). All other areas had fewer than 10 charges, except for Waiariki which had zero charges.

Figure 2: Northern Wellington had the highest number of charges for COVID-19 breach offences during Alert Level 2

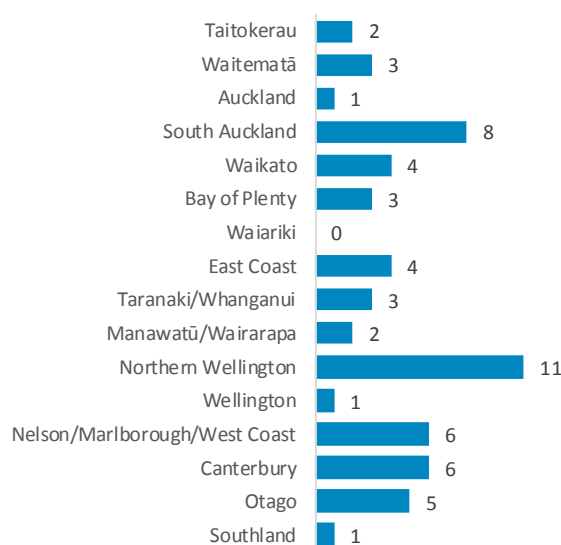


Table 5: Offences against justice had the largest increase in the average number of charges filed per week in Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3, but is still lower than the during the baseline period

Offence type (ANZSOC division)	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from Alert Level 3		Difference from baseline	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
01: Homicide and related offences	3	2	126%	2	137%
02: Acts intended to cause injury	436	-47	-10%	-66	-13%
03: Sexual assault and related offences	159	41	34%	35	29%
04: Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	204	21	11%	-29	-13%
05: Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person	113	-18	-14%	-16	-12%
06: Robbery, extortion and related offences	21	1	8%	-7	-24%
07: Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	124	1	1%	7	6%
08: Theft and related offences	322	-18	-5%	-260	-45%
09: Fraud, deception and related offences	179	-28	-14%	-32	-15%
10: Illicit drug offences	379	12	3%	119	46%
11: Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	144	-11	-7%	-10	-6%
12: Property damage and environmental pollution	141	-20	-13%	0	0%
13: Public order offences	110	-1	-1%	-17	-14%
14: Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	751	27	4%	-23	-3%
15: Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	608	93	18%	-288	-32%
16: Miscellaneous offences	35	-23	-40%	-6	-15%
Total	3728	29	1%	-591	-14%

There were differences in the number of charges across offence types

Offences can be categorised into 16 ANZSOC divisions.^{12,13} The number of charges filed on average each week during Alert Level 2 differed for some ANZSOC divisions compared to Alert Level 3 (Table 5).

Offences against justice (which includes offences for breaching community sentences, breach of protection order and people on bail not attending scheduled court appearances) had the largest increase in Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3 in the average number of charges filed per week (+93 charges; +18%). However, this was still 32% lower (-288 charges a week) than the pre-lockdown baseline period.

There were also more charges filed for sexual offences in Alert Level 2 (+41 charges a week; +34%). This was also higher than in the pre-lockdown baseline period (+35 charges a week; +29%). These increases followed a very low number of charges filed during Alert Level 4.

There were also more charges per week during Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3 for traffic offences

(+27 charges a week; +4%) and dangerous or negligent act offences (+21 charges a week; +11%).

Assault offences (acts intended to cause injury) had the largest decrease in the average number of charges filed each week in Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3 (-47 charges a week; -10%). This was also lower than the pre-lockdown baseline period (-66 charges a week; -13%).

While the average number of charges for drug offences per week in Alert Level 2 was similar to Alert Level 3, it was 46% higher (119 charges more a week) than during the pre-lockdown baseline period.

The number of charges for theft offences remained lower in Alert Level 2 than during the pre-lockdown baseline period (-260 charges a week; -45%).

Failure to answer bail became the most frequent offence during Alert Level 2

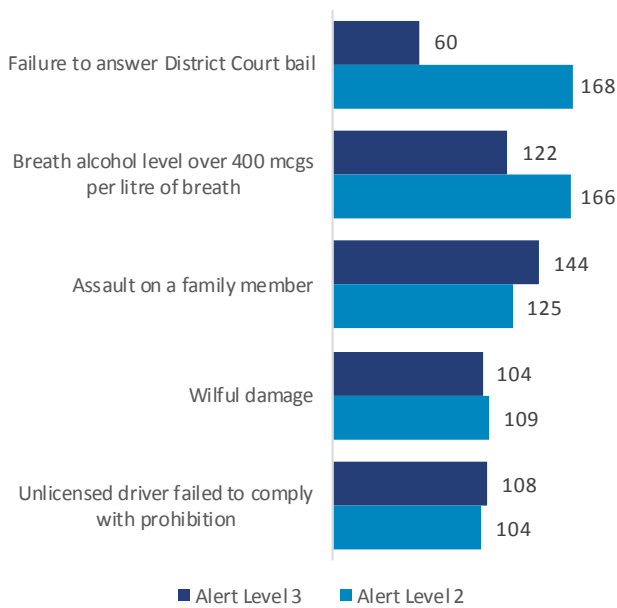
For the most part during Alert Level 2, the most frequently charged offence types were similar to during Alert Level 3 (Figure 3) and Alert Level 4. However, there were two notable exceptions:

- failure to answer District Court bail (used when people on bail don't attend scheduled court

appearances) was the most frequent offence type during Alert Level 2 (168 charges a week). This is usually the most frequent offence (average of 240 charges per week in the pre-lockdown baseline period) but the number of charges was substantially lower during Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 4.

- obstruct/hinder Medical Officer of Health or person assisting Medical Officer was no longer one of the most frequent offences, as it had been during Alert Level 4 and Level 3.

Figure 3: In Alert Level 2 and Alert Level 3, the most common offence types each week were similar, except for failure to answer bail



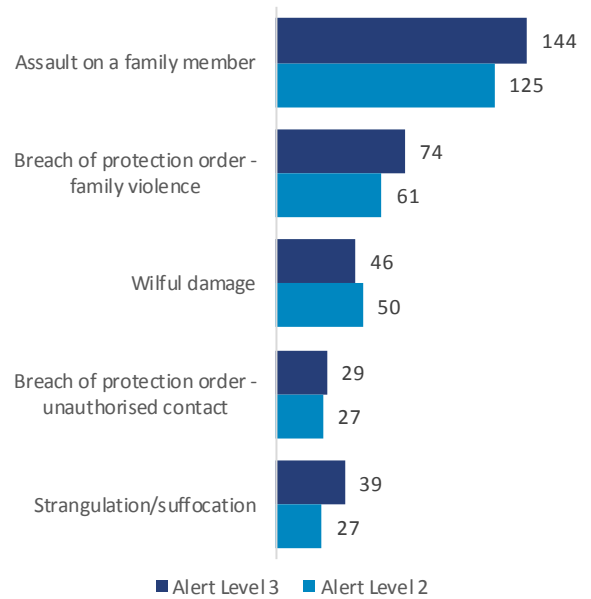
Family violence-related charges were slightly lower than during Alert Level 3 and the pre-lockdown baseline period

There was an average of 608 charges per week for family violence-related offences¹⁴ in Alert Level 2. This was 8% lower (-54 charges a week) than in Alert Level 3. This was also 8% lower than the pre-lockdown baseline period.

The most frequent family violence-related offence types were the same during Alert Level 2, Level 3 (Figure 4) and Level 4, as well as during the pre-lockdown baseline period.

The most common family violence-related offence in Alert Level 2 was for assault on a family member (125 charges a week); this was 13% lower than during Alert Level 3.

Figure 4: The most common family violence-related offences are consistently the same, although the frequency each week varies slightly



The number of Family Court applications filed per week in Alert Level 2 was lower than in Alert Level 3

Family Court statistics are reported by applications, rather than by cases.

During Alert Level 2, the number of substantive Family Court applications filed decreased slightly, from an average of 1,241 applications a week in Alert Level 3 to 1,092 applications a week in Alert Level 2 (a decrease of 12%). This was also 13% lower per week than the pre-lockdown baseline period.

However, as shown below, there were some differences in the types of applications filed.

The proportion of Family Court applications filed without notice returned to pre-lockdown levels

Applications needing urgent attention (such as those for a Protection Order where urgent protection is being sought) are generally filed without notice, whereas all other applications (usually the majority) are filed on notice.

Normally (during the pre-lockdown baseline period), about two-thirds of Family Court applications are filed on notice (65%) and one-third are filed without notice

(35%). During Alert Level 4, about half were filed on notice (53%) and half were filed without notice (47%). In Alert Level 3, with the expansion of the District Court protocols, the proportion filed on notice increased to 71%.

In Alert Level 2, the types of filing method returned to pre-lockdown levels, with 65% of applications filed on notice and 35% filed without notice.

In Alert Level 2, there was an average of 712 on notice applications filed a week; a decrease of 19% compared to Alert Level 3 (Table 6). But, there were 6% more without notice applications filed a week in Alert Level 2 (when there were 381 applications a week) than in Alert Level 3. The number of on notice applications and without notice applications filed per week were lower than the pre-lockdown baseline period (both were 13% lower).

Some Family Court case types were impacted more than others

There were some differences in the case types of applications filed during Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3 (Table 7).

During Alert Level 4, some case types related to priority proceedings (such as mental health, guardianship and family violence) continued to have applications filed. Other case types, such as dissolutions, had zero applications. Subsequently, in Alert Level 3, there were large increases in Oranga Tamariki applications and guardianship applications (which includes applications for parenting orders).

In Alert Level 2, the number of applications filed for Oranga Tamariki cases decreased compared to Alert Level 3 (-139 applications a week; -41%), as did mental health applications (-17 applications a week; -11%). The number of applications for guardianship cases remained stable (-10 applications a week; -3%). There was a small increase in Alert Level 2 in the number of dissolution applications filed per week (+14 applications a week; +15%).

However, compared to the pre-lockdown baseline period, in Alert Level 2 there were a similar number of applications per week for all case types, except for substantially fewer dissolution applications (-84 applications a week; -45%) and fewer guardianship applications (-43 applications a week; -11%).

Table 6: More Family Court applications were filed without notice per week in Alert Level 2 than in Alert Level 3, but there were fewer applications filed than during the baseline period

Filing method	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from Alert Level 3		Difference from baseline	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Without notice	381	22	6%	-55	-13%
On notice	712	-170	-19%	-107	-13%
Total	1,092	-148	-12%	-162	-13%

Table 7: The number of applications for Oranga Tamariki cases per week decreased in Alert Level 2 to baseline levels

Case type	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from Alert Level 3		Difference from baseline	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Adoption	5	-2	-31%	<1	2%
Child support	2	1	115%	-1	-31%
Dissolution	103	14	15%	-84	-45%
Estates	3	1	35%	>-1	-9%
Family proceedings	8	-2	-22%	-3	-29%
Family violence	170	2	1%	-13	-7%
Guardianship	330	-10	-3%	-43	-11%
Hague	1	-7	-90%	-2	-68%
Mental health	134	-17	-11%	-7	-5%
Oranga Tamariki	203	-139	-41%	-7	-3%
Property	33	5	16%	6	23%
Protection of personal and property rights	95	6	6%	-7	-7%
Substance addiction	1	1	0%	<1	8%
Miscellaneous	3	1	48%	-2	-41%
Total	1,092	-148	-12%	-162	-13%

The number of Family Court applications filed per week in Alert Level 2 varied across justice services areas

In the majority of justice service areas there were only small changes in the average number of Family Court applications filed per week in Alert Level 2 compared to Alert Level 3 (Table 8).

There were more applications filed per week in the Bay of Plenty (+24 applications a week; +38%) and Waiariki (+14 applications a week; +30%). There were fewer applications filed per week in Taitokerau (-60 applications a week; -52%), Waitematā (-26 applications a week; -26%), South Auckland (-24 applications a week; -17%) and Canterbury (-21 applications a week; -16%).

Compared to the pre-lockdown baseline period, there were fewer applications filed in most justice services per week in Alert Level 2. The largest increase was in

Bay of Plenty, with 21 more applications a week (+31%).

The number of Protection Order applications per week was similar in Alert Level 2 and Alert Level 3

For most of the Protection Order applications filed during Alert Level 2, whether a final Protection Order is ultimately granted is still being determined. However, the majority of applications were filed without notice (76%) where urgent protection was being sought; these usually result in a temporary Order being granted.

There was an average of 117 applications filed a week during Alert Level 2 (Table 9). This was almost the same as in Alert Level 3 (-2 applications a week; -2%) and slightly lower than the pre-lockdown baseline period (-13 applications a week; -10%).

Table 8: In Alert Level 2, the Bay of Plenty justice service area had the largest increase in the number of applications filed per week compared to Alert Level 3 and the baseline period

Justice service area	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from Alert Level 3		Difference from baseline	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Taitokerau	55	-60	-52%	-16	-22%
Waitematā	75	-26	-26%	-36	-32%
Auckland	91	-9	-9%	-4	-4%
South Auckland	115	-24	-17%	-19	-14%
Waikato	98	-4	-4%	-5	-5%
Bay of Plenty	90	24	38%	21	31%
Waiariki	58	14	30%	9	19%
East Coast	62	-13	-17%	-9	-12%
Taranaki/Whanganui	53	8	18%	-11	-17%
Manawatū/Wairarapa	67	>-1	-1%	-18	-21%
Northern Wellington	53	-18	-26%	-22	-30%
Wellington	39	7	23%	5	14%
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	42	-10	-20%	-7	-14%
Canterbury	112	-21	-16%	-31	-21%
Otago	41	-16	-28%	-8	-17%
Southland	30	1	4%	-9	-24%
Central Registry	13	-2	-10%	-3	-19%
Total	1,092	-148	-12%	-162	-13%

Table 9: There was a similar number of Protection Order applications filed per week in Alert Level 2 and Alert Level 3

Application type	Alert Level 2 weekly average	Difference from Alert Level 3		Difference from baseline	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
On notice	4	>-1	-11%	-1	-22%
Without notice	89	2	2%	-19	-17%
Sentencing Act	23	-2	-8%	6	35%
Breach of Police Safety Order	1	-2	-62%	<1	8%
Total	117	-2	-2%	-13	-10%

The distribution of application types was consistent between Alert Level 2 and Alert Level 3. In addition to without notice applications, 19% in Alert Level 2 were related to the Sentencing Act, 3% were on notice and 1% resulted from breaching a Police Safety Order.

However, the distribution of application types did differ slightly to the pre-lockdown baseline period. In Alert Level 2 there were 19 fewer without notice applications a week (-17%) and six more Sentencing Act applications a week (+35%).

Parenting Order applications increased slightly compared to Alert Level 3, but were lower than the baseline period

During Alert Level 2, there was an average of 170 Parenting Order applications a week. This was 13 applications (8%) more a week than during Alert Level 3, but 20 applications (10%) fewer than the pre-lockdown baseline period.

Usually (during the pre-lockdown baseline period), 75% of parenting order applications are filed without notice. During Alert Level 4, when Parenting Order applications were prioritised where safety was a concern, this increased to 92%, before dropping to 67% in Alert Level 3. However, during Alert Level 2, the proportion of applications filed without notice returned to baseline levels, with 76% of Parenting Order applications filed without notice and 24% filed on notice.

Family Court active workload continued to increase slightly

The number of active Family Court applications increased 1% from the end of Alert Level 3 to the end of Alert Level 2 (from 28,777 to 29,053 active substantive applications). The active workload was 4% higher than the end of the pre-lockdown baseline period.

However, it is still possible an unseen backlog is developing, as parties who delayed filing applications during earlier alert levels file their applications over the coming weeks or months.

Civil new business increased in Alert Level 2, yet active workload decreased slightly

During Alert Level 2, an average of 521 new civil (including Disputes Tribunal) cases entered the District Court each week. This was 178% higher than the weekly average during Alert Level 3 (of 188 cases a week), but 18% lower than the weekly average during the pre-lockdown baseline period (of 635 cases a week).¹⁵

The active civil workload (which included Disputes Tribunal) decreased 3% from the end of Alert Level 3 to the end of Alert Level 2 (from 11,541 to 11,239 active cases with substantive applications).

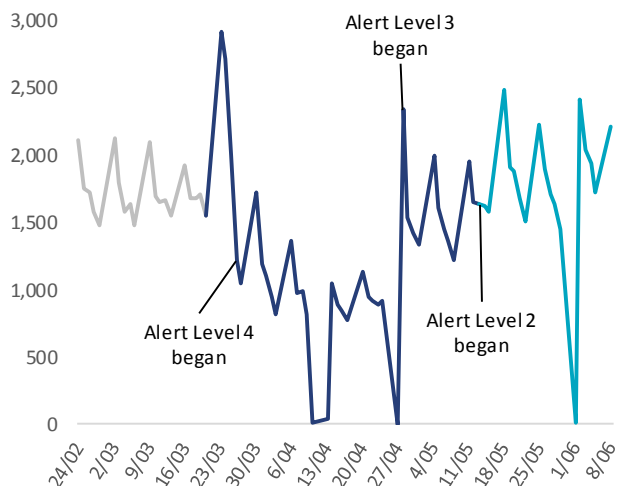
However, it is still possible an unseen backlog is developing, as parties who delayed filing applications during earlier alert levels file their applications over the coming weeks or months.

Contact centre calls were higher during Alert Level 2

The number of calls to the Ministry's 0800 COURTS contact centre usually ranges between about 1,300 and 2,100 calls each day. Following an initial spike in calls immediately prior to Alert Level 4, the number of calls dropped substantially throughout Alert Level 4 (with 40% fewer than normal).

In total, 31,985 calls were received during Alert Level 2 (an average of 1,777 calls a day). Despite Alert Level 2 including Queen's Birthday Monday, the number of calls was 9% higher than the average week in Alert Level 3 and was 3% higher than the average week during the pre-lockdown baseline period (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The number of calls to 0800 COURTS increased in Alert Level 2¹⁶



¹ Alert Level 4 occurred from Thursday 26 March to Monday 27 April 2020. This was followed by Alert Level 3 from Tuesday 28 April to Wednesday 13 May 2020 and Alert Level 2 from Thursday 14 May to Monday 8 June. However, note that the District Court protocols for Alert Level 2 were not effective until Monday 18 May 2020.

² <https://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/publications/announcements/covid-19/court-protocols/district-court>

³ Alert Level 2 was 26 days, Alert Level 3 was 14 days, and Alert Level 4 was 33 days. Data relating to cases is extracted weekly, meaning case data for Alert Level 2 covers the period Monday 18 May to Sunday 7 June 2020, while data for Alert Level 3 covers the period Monday 27 April to Sunday 17 May 2020. Charge and application data used average weeks to compare an average 7-day period in Alert Level 2 with an average 7 days in Alert Level 3 and average 7 days in the baseline period prior to Alert Level 4 (Monday 24 February to Sunday 22 March 2020).

⁴ All data was extracted on 15 May 2020. Application and charge data use the date the application or charge was created in the Ministry's Case Management System.

⁵ Published on the Ministry of Justice website: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/30xzvk7r2r-COVID19-Alert-Level-4-in-the-District-Court-data-summary-v1.0.pdf>

<https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/lu5g1pa9s9-COVID19-Alert-Level-3-in-the-District-Court-data-summary-v1.0.pdf>

⁶ This figure differs to that published in the Alert Level 3 and Level 4 data summaries due to different extraction dates.

⁷ This figure differs to that published in the Alert Level 3 data summary due to different extraction dates and late data entry.

⁸ This includes events where information related to COVID-19 was recorded in the Ministry's Case Management

System. It does not include events that would have been scheduled over that period but were not, due to COVID-19.

⁹ For charges finalised by 30 June 2020, charge outcome and sentence information will be available with the next official release of financial year statistics in September 2020.

¹⁰ Offences can be categorised on the basis of maximum penalty. Category 1 offences are non-imprisonable, category 2 offences have a maximum penalty of less than 2 years imprisonment and category 3 offences have a maximum penalty of 2 years or more imprisonment. Category 4 offences include very serious offences such as murder and are not included in this data.

¹¹ Due to rounding, the difference between these average values is 29 charges a week, not 28 charges a week.

¹² Using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1234.0>).

¹³ The homicide charges are for driving causing death and aiding suicide offences; other homicide offences are category 4 offences and heard in the High Court.

¹⁴ Family violence-related offences include specific family violence offence types (breach of protection order, assault on a family member, common assault (domestic) and coercion to marry), offence types usually associated with family violence although not family violence-specific (male assaults female and strangulation/suffocation) and charges for other offence types with the Police family violence flag.

¹⁵ These figures differ to those published in the Alert Level 3 and Level 4 data summaries due to different extraction dates.

¹⁶ The contact centre operates Monday to Friday. The days with zero calls (Friday 10 April, Monday 13 April, Monday 27 April and Monday 1 June) were public holidays.