NDS: Safer and Stronger – Disability Services and COVID-19 webinar

Friday 14th August 2020, 10:00am – 11:00am (AEDST)

VICTORIA State Government | Health and Human Services

NDS National Disability Services

Welcome and Introductions

Sarah Fordyce – Victorian State Manager (Acting), NDS

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Agenda

- **DHHS update – Focus on Prevention**
  - **James MacIsaac**, Executive Director Disability, Disability and Communities Branch, Children, Families, Communities and Disability Division, Department of Health and Human Services
- **Public Health update – Key messages**
  - **Professor John Catford,** Senior Medical Adviser, DHHS
- **NDIS Commission update**
  - **Simon Christopher**, State Director Victoria, NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission
  - **Madeleine Boulton,** COVID response team lead and Principal Advisor, Royal Commission, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- **NDIA update**
  - **Stephen Broadfoot**, Branch Manager, Provider Engagement Branch, NDIA
- **Provider perspective**
  - Craig Ballingall, Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Aruma
- **Q&A and evaluation poll**
  - Facilitated by Sarah Fordyce, NDS

DHHS Update – COVIDSafe Plans and Disability Update 14 August 2020

James MacIsaac

Director, Disability, Disability and Communities Branch,

Children, Families, Communities and Disability Division,

Department of Health and Human Services

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NDS National Disability Services

NDSV Safer and Stronger Webinar
COVID-19 and Disability

COVIDSafe Plans and Disability Update 14 August 2020
James MacIsaac, Executive Director, Disability

Visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

COVID-19 hotline 1800 675 398

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Overview

➢ Current situation

- Stage 4 restrictions in place across metropolitan Melbourne
- Disability residential and support services are permitted services
- Providers required to enact a COVID-19 Safe Plan
- A total of 48 facility based sites are currently affected (out of total ~1400 sites)

➢ Key priorities

- Supporting and responding to outbreaks via Disability Rapid Response Group
- Building surge capacity and reducing workforce mobility
- Establishing isolation models, including alternative accommodation
- Ensuring clinical in-reach along a care continuum for COVID positive residents

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Impact of Stage 4 on disability services

Changes for disability service providers

- Providers must issue workers with Permitted Worker Permits
- Providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure workers wear face coverings at all times in the workplace
- Where possible, providers should reduce the number of worksites a worker attends
- Providers must notify the department, WorkSafe and their Health and Safety Representative as soon as possible after becoming aware of a positive case

Changes for disability workers

- Workers must carry their worker permits at all times
- Workers must notify a provider, as soon as possible after they have received a positive test for coronavirus, where they have worked in the 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or when they were tested

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COVID-19 outbreaks in disability settings

There are 148 active cases of COVID-19 in disability and community settings

Net increase over past 7 days in residential settings = 12

- **87 cases are in facility based settings**
  - 66 staff members and 21 residents / participants
- **61 cases are in community based settings (including SRSs)**
  - 41 staff members and 20 participants

A total of 48 facility based sites are currently affected.

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COVIDSafe Plans for disability services

- Under Stage 4 restrictions all businesses must enact a COVIDSafe Plan. Plans must focus on safety, prevention and response if coronavirus is linked to the workplace
- Providers with multiple premises must have COVIDSafe plans in place for each workplace. An organisation's pandemic plan provides an overview and organisation level guidance.
- Service level planning needs to detail and address considerations about the differing requirements across settings. These differences need to be explained and reflected in site level COVID Safe plans.
- Keep plans ready and up to date as public health advice changes.
- Plans may be requested by the department or WorkSafe. There will be random spot checks for COVIDSafe Plans by the Victorian Government.

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COVIDSafe Plans

Your COVIDSafe Plan must set out, at a minimum:

- Your process to keep records of all workers or visitors who attend the work premises
- Your actions to mitigate the introduction of COVID-19 in your workplace
- The level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for your workforce
- How you will prepare for, and respond to, a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your workplace
- Evidence you understand your obligations under the Workplace Directions.
- What systems/changes have been put in place to minimise staff movement across sites as much as possible

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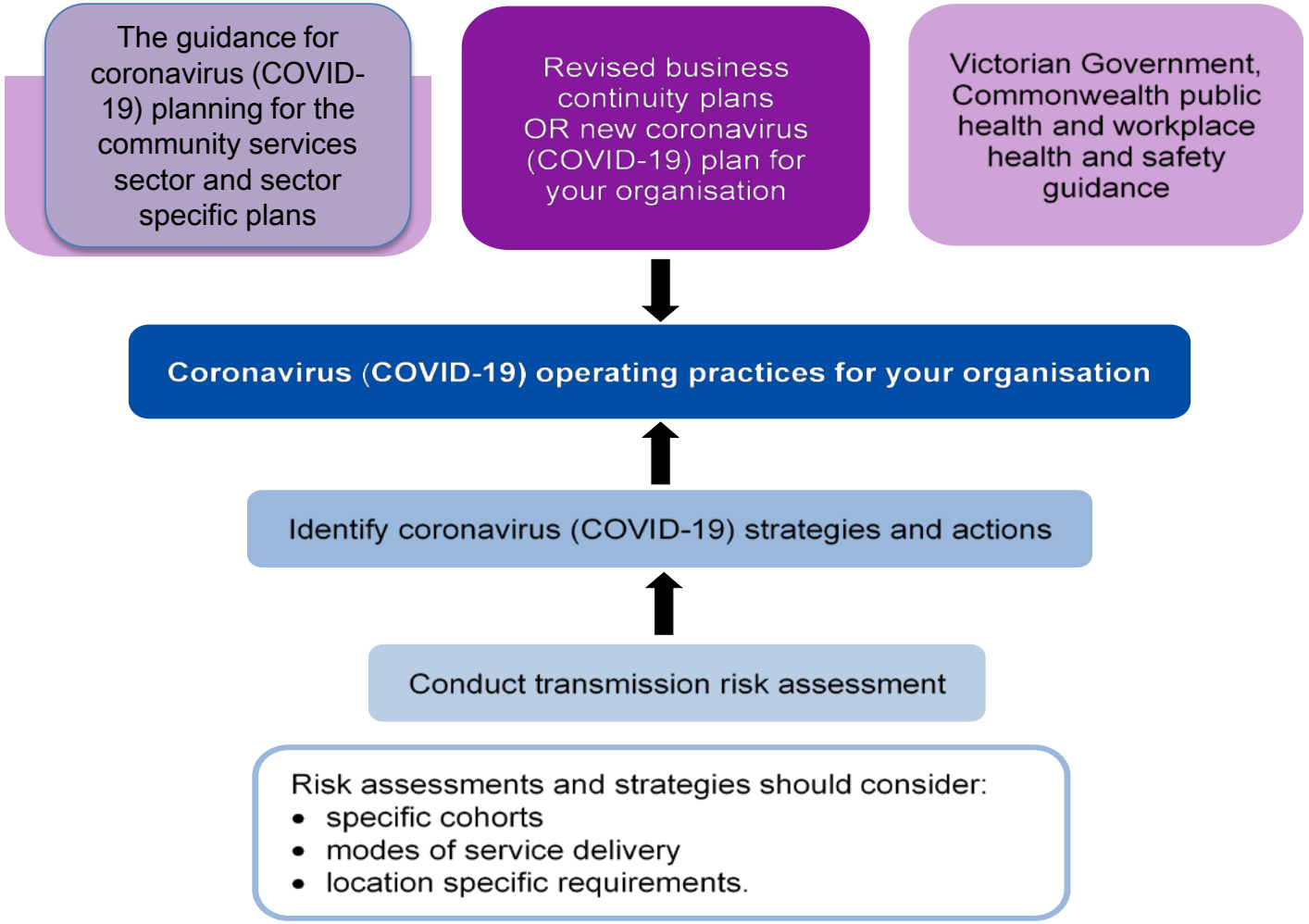
COVIDSafe Plans



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COVIDSafe Plans

- Providers must email DRRG@dhhs.vic.gov.au immediately as they become aware of a first positive test at any disability residential service, in either a staff person or resident. (This will engage a Disability Incident Case Manager)
- Frontline staff should all have completed the Commonwealth Australian Government Department of Health Infection Control training at www.covid-19training.gov.au
- All staff should know that when any testing is done on staff or residents of a residential service they must tell the tester they live or work in one, and testers need to label the sample as ‘OUTBREAK PRIORITY (P1)’
- Isolation plans should be in place for each site detailing how resident isolation and staff replacement will be managed in the event of whole staff & resident group being identified as Close Contacts (including what other locations may be used)

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COVIDSafe Plans – Supports for the sector

- COVIDSafe Plan assistance, including plan templates is available at https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/covid-safe-business/covid-safe-plan
- Guidance for coronavirus (COVID-19) planning in the community services sector (including a identification of specific strategies expected to be detailed in each heading) is at https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/community-services-all-sector-coronavirus-covid-19
- The department is offering site visits from the Infection Prevention Control (IPC) team in public health to provide practical advice.
- NDSV is developing and distributing practical resources and tools to the sector.
- Consideration is underway regarding peer support networks / communities of practice to share learnings
- Safer and Stronger - please contact NDSV if you have suggestions for resources or services that would be useful to your service.

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Update - Workplace directions

Workplace Directions were issued on 5 August 2020
Employers are required to implement measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace including:

- Face protection
- COVIDSafe Plans
- Record keeping of employees and visitors
- Cleaning of the premises
- Reducing work across multiple sites
- Responding to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19

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Workforce Directions

Mobility

- Reducing work across worksites has significant implications for the disability sector, with particular challenges for Supported Independent Living (SIL) services.
- The Directions note that where it is impractical to limit workers to a single site, the employer must show what systems have been put in place to minimise movement across sites. This might be through rostering systems or cohorting of staff groups, for example.
- If workers work across more than one site for different employers, they have an obligation to advise each employer of this and the employer must keep a record if this.
- We are aware and appreciate that many providers have already taken measures to reduce mobility.
- We will continue to work with the sector to address the associated workforce challenges, including the critical linkage to labour-hire systems.

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Workforce Directions

Surge

- Restricting the mobility of workers and responding to workforce shortages as a result of infection and isolation points to the need for surge workforce.
- NDIA have entered into an agreement with four large providers for the provision of advice, support staff and isolation accommodation to assist smaller providers to meet the challenges of COVID-19.
- DHHS is working internally to establish access to clinical resources where needed and to leverage surge workforce capacity through systems that are in place for health and aged care workforce responses.

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Sector supports:
Call-to-Test for in-home testing

- **In-home testing service for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who are unable to access testing sites**
  - Available in metropolitan Melbourne
  - People who live in a regional part of Victoria and cannot leave home to attend a testing site can contact their GP, community health service or local hospital for assistance
  - People with moderate to severe physical or psychosocial disability and their carers who are symptomatic
  - Testing is free
  - GP referral required
  - Access is via the Coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline – **1800 675 398**
- **Asymptomatic in-home testing for close contacts directed by the department to be tested**

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Sector supports:
In-home testing for disability residential accommodation

➢ In-home testing service for residents of disability residential accommodation

- Available across metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria
- Includes priority processing of test samples at pathology lab to receive results faster
- A printed GP referral is required for each resident being tested
- Testing is available soon after confirmed positive case and again at Day 11.
- To access this service contact:
  - Silprovider.inbox@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Note: staff of residential disability accommodation are not covered through this program. However staff being tested should always tell the testing clinician that they work in a disability residential setting and request **priority processing** of their results.

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Sector supports:
Nursing support for disability residential accommodation

- **Nursing support is available for disability residential accommodation when there has been close contact with a confirmed positive case.**
  - Available across metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria
  - Can include testing of residents and nursing support up to 14 days after exposure
  - Nurses provide health monitoring – such as temperature checks, blood pressure checks and monitoring of mild symptoms.
  - This is not an emergency service and is not appropriate for nursing very unwell people. If residents are very unwell standard medical procedures should be put in place.
  - To access this service contact:
    - Silprovider.inbox@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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Information and resources

Key issues	Responses
Communication across the sector and with people with disability Two dedicated pages on the DHHS COVID-19 website: For people with disability For the disability sector	Disability sector plan & Isolation Management https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-disability-services-sector-plan Coronavirus (COVID-19) Isolation management in disability accommodation (Word) Face masks for disability support workers https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-COVID-19-face-masks-at-work-frequently-asked-questions-for-disability-support-workers-doc Restrictions https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-restrictions-disability-service-providers PPE fact sheet https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-fact-sheet-requests-for-ppe-by-community-services-providers-covid-19-doc
Testing	Get tested kit (promoting testing): https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/promotional-material-coronavirus-disease-covid-19 Priority processing of test results for people with disability https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/priority-processing-covid-19-tests-drs-doc Multiple testing sites across Victoria. In-home testing available https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/call-to-test-covid-19
PPE and masks	Requirement for disability support workers to use single use disposable masks and eye protection PPE sources: private suppliers, national stockpile (NDIS providers) . DHHS supply: CSPPE@dhhs.vic.gov.au Priority to positive cases
Infection prevention education	COVIDSafe and PPE e-learning modules are available on the DHHS website from Monday 17/8 Infection and prevention control team visits to services - requests can be made to: Email: silprovider.inbox@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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Public Health Update

Professor John Catford

Senior Medical Adviser

DHHS

NDIS Commission update

Simon Christopher – State Director Victoria, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Madeleine Boulton – COVID response team lead and Principal Advisor, Royal Commission, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

NDIS Commission update

14 August 2020

Presented by Simon Christopher, State Director Victoria and Madeleine Boulton, COVID-19 Response Team Lead

Provider obligations and business continuity

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

NDIS providers have obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct and the NDIS Practice Standards, as well as conditions of registration, to deliver safe, quality supports and services, and to manage risks associated with supports and services provided to NDIS participants – including risks from COVID-19.

Providers should:

- be agile, pragmatic and resourceful in meeting their provider obligations
- manage risks to service delivery through the lens of participants' rights and their need for continuity in supports
- stay up-to-date with current public health orders and adjust services and supports accordingly
- review their business continuity plans – assess risks to the business, staff, and the people they support, and have identified strategies to manage those risks in the event of a crisis
- ensure all workers have completed the Australian Government Department of Health Infection Control training

Notifying the NDIS Commission of events

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

- You must notify us of any event that significantly affects your ability to comply with any of your conditions of registration, including suspected and confirmed cases of NDIS participants and workers.

- If the event is related to COVID-19, use the Notification of event – COVID-19 (registered provider) form on our website

- This is an important requirement that enables us to monitor changes in the NDIS market and to connect you with any support you might require.

What the NDIS Commission is doing

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

- Triage and referral of notifications where there is an identified risk to the health and wellbeing of participants or risk to continuity of critical supports
- Working closely with the NDIA and DHHS in line with the Protocol for management of outbreaks in NDIS residential services in Victoria
- Working with DSS and NDIA as part of the NDIS Critical Response Group to respond to policy and operational issues
- Continuing to issue guidance to providers and workers through Provider Alerts, factsheets and links to Government resources
- Managing COVID-19 complaints and compliance responses through a centralised approach
- Continuing regular functions including handling complaints, reportable incidents and behaviour support and restrictive practices oversight

Further information

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

- All of our Provider Alerts, guidance and links to Government resources can be found at

www.ndiscommission.gov.au/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-information

- Please make sure you are subscribed to our communications via our COVID-19 webpage if you are not receiving Provider Alerts

- Email questions to **engagement@ndiscommission.gov.au**

NDIA update

Stephen Broadfoot

Branch Manager for Provider Engagement

NDIA

Provider Perspective

Craig Ballingall

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager

Aruma

Q&A

Thank you

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