

COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN AS OF 16TH MARCH 2020

Purpose of this plan

This plan is to provide support, protection and reassurance to Consumers and Staff of Essential Care, of the plan of response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The activation of each section of this plan will be made by the directors of Essential Care.

This document is intended as a guide only and will be tailored to meet the unique circumstances of the pandemic threat, advice issued by the world health organisation and chief medical officer for Australia as well as common sense, guided by the Essential Care Directors.

Objectives

- Provide timely and accurate information to our consumers and staff
- To reduce the risk of serious illness and death
- To reduce the emergency/spread of the covid-19 pandemic outbreak at Essential Care, to the extent that this is possible.
- Maintain continuity of Essential Care consumer support during the pandemic for as long as possible

Response overview

Each phase of Essential Care's response plan is outlined on a separate page. It lists each phase, what the phase will look like and what will be the likely cause which will implement each phase.

Breakdown of phases

Each phase is broken down in the breakdown of phases chart and will outline the action to be taken and the elements involved in each action.

Both Managing Directors are responsible for carrying out each phase and action with the assistance and cooperation of staff and consumers as required.

Staff and Consumers will be notified as soon as reasonably possible when each phase is implemented.

Staff and Consumers will receive notification via email, text message and social media when/if each phase is implemented.

PHASES	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT WILL CAUSE THE PHASE
One 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Updating records • Increased hygiene awareness • Keeping people informed • Monitoring risks • Keeping Staff in Australia and recommending consumers do so too 	<p>Evidence of pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO alert • Significant media evidence • Government directive
Two 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting environmental opportunities for exposure • Significant hygiene focus • Avoiding close contact where possible • Degrees of self-isolating based on risk factors • Recommending people rethink their contact with crowds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in local community transmission • Government directive • Industry best practice recommendation • Concern from Essential Care management team that rapid escalation is likely
Three 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Isolation • Significant changes in how supports will be provided • Remote working where possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government directive • Break within Essential Care community • Significant spread within similar community groups in Australia (Aged Care and Disability sectors) • Consumers and staff choosing to self-isolate

PHASE ONE

BUSINESS FUNCTIONS	
ACTION	ELEMENTS
Review pandemic plan and related documents. Update to reflect current threat of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic plan • Emergency Management policy • Related Government documents
Update Essential Services list and essential services consumers emergency contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Essential Service Consumers only • Essential Services list
Notify consumers and/or their family and/or carers of their essential service status via email. Any consumers without email access will be notified via their Family and/or carers, via post or via phone call. Whichever is deemed more effective and time efficient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential services list will be notified first • Non-essential service consumers of Essential Care notified second • Non-essential service consumers receiving coordinated NDIS supports notified third • Non-essential service consumers brokered to Essential Care notified fourth
Review essential supply needs and place order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is deemed critical to occur quickly
Communicate with consumers and staff re: expectations and potential service changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassurance emails outlying what to expect next • Social media and text messages used for urgent messaging
Cash flow analysis to allow for annual and sick leave pay outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presume all leave will be expended and no revenue coming in • Bring all billing up to date to secure cash position • Consider weekly invoicing only if negative cash position is likely or NDIS/other plan managers are likely to close • Consider requesting payment arrangements for payroll tax or BAS payments to protect cash flow if necessary • Directors to cease taking a salary if pandemic associated costs exceeds funds account
CONSUMER SUPPORT	
ACTION	ELEMENTS
Review high risk activities (large group gatherings). Assess risk of each and notify of any potential changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assess events Staff may be rostered to support consumers to attend
Inform directions regarding the virus, what to do and good hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to staff and consumers as much as possible

COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

STAFFING FUNCTIONS	
Provide staff with information about the virus including what to do and good hygiene practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide staff on how to respond to concerns or questions raised by consumers • Monitor for any undue anxiety or concern • Increase social media presence and email contact • Consider stock availability, how often particular staff work and reduce any potential stock piling
Provide staff with any equipment needed to protect themselves and consumers	
INFECTION CONTROL	
Identification of any training or upskilling required to deal with virus i.e infection control training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronically where possible to avoid group gatherings • Mandatory for staff who have not recently attended infection control training
Sterilisation program increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily office sterilisation of common touch surfaces • Move to paper towels rather than hand towel in office bathroom • Physical contact review i.e no hugging, handshake or closed spaced meetings

PHASE TWO

BUSINESS FUNCTIONS	
ACTION	ELEMENTS
Work from home arrangements for office staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laptops and phones utilised to work from home if required Avoid travelling to other providers and consumer environments
Identify high risk businesses where Essential Care consumers and staff spend time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Particular focus on gyms, cafes and other activities where touching of high traffic surfaces exist. Consider necessity of consumer and staff visiting above identified businesses and whether support to these businesses is temporarily cancelled
Develop FAQ for staff support in case of remote support service provision in phase 3 (or self-quarantine of a Client in phase 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What to do if you suspect a consumer has coronavirus? What do you do if you suspect a consumers mental health is declining?
Limiting business growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new consumers to be accepted during this period unless critical to the consumers safety and wellbeing No new staff to be employed in this period unless critical to maintaining consumer support or continuity
CONSUMER SUPPORT	
ACTION	ELEMENTS
Cancellation of group events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to activities in spaces of over 100 people to cease immediately (concerts, airports, live theatre, shows, group social events)
Consider if staffing needs should change – particularly for high risk consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers who have identified as having comorbidities that may increase their risk of illness might want to limit the number of staff in their homes. Consider consolidating to a smaller team of staff to limit risk of exposure Consumers wanting to cancel services during pandemic period

STAFFING FUNCTIONS	
Staff notified of employment arrangements if impacted by pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff are given the option of working or not working during pandemic outbreak in area • No medical certificates will be required during this time
Staff mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify any staff with comorbidities that make them particularly vulnerable to the virus • Allow staff to self-isolate if they feel unsafe and no longer want to work without fear of losing their position once outbreak is controlled
INFECTION CONTROL	
Increase infection control program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to undertake car sterilisation between Consumers using single use disinfectant wipes • Increase disinfecting of high touch surfaces in consumers home • All visitors to office asked to use hand sanitiser upon arrival • Office cleaning frequently increased to before and after working day

PHASE THREE

BUSINESS FUNCTIONS	
ACTION	ELEMENTS
Business operates remotely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All office staff working from home • Emergency management plan ready to be enacted
CONSUMER SUPPORT	
ACTION	ELEMENTS
Consumers taken to alternative locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers who have notified they want to be taken to alternative locations to be collected and driven by staff. Staff are not to enter home or drop off locations.
Consumers "lock in" arrangements enacted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers who have "live in" arrangements made for this period of time advised to notify their person that its time to move in immediately
Consumers notified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All consumers will be notified that essential service provision is commencing immediately so any alternative arrangements for support can be implemented •
STAFFING FUNCTIONS	
Outbreak staff commenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff notified that outbreak staffing has commenced and those who put their hands up to continue to work re-rostered with essential services only
Work from home processes for office workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office staff offered to work from home if prepared to do so • Phone call welfare checks for all staff implemented twice a week • Essential Care consumers phone call welfare checks implemented twice a week
INFECTION CONTROL	
Best practice in home hygiene processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals reminded to maintain good home health and hygiene. Particularly in shared living situations

RECOVERY

The aim of recovery phase is to restore all business and support as usual pre-pandemic. Some considerations will be made in transitioning back to this will include:

- Official advice regarding the pandemic having ended and permission for a return to business as usual
- Evaluating the risk and any additional vigilance around a second wave of the virus
- Considering the transition of consumers and staff who may be fearful, fatigued or emotionally fragile after isolation periods, potential sickness and loss of loved ones
- Any practical support for consumers that may be required immediately i.e. restocking of food and essential items or reduction of personal hygiene due to limited support
- Ensure the thorough clean of the office before people return
- Conducting a post pandemic review to make any improvements or changes to the current plan