Considerations for disability service delivery

Questions to consider if a person with disability or support worker is suspected or confirmed with Coronavirus (COVID-19)

**10 May 2021**

The Disability Taskforce has developed a series of prompting questions to consider if a person with disability or support worker is suspected or confirmed with COVID-19. The document accompanies the outbreak scenario flowcharts located on the Department of Communities [Disability service providers (COVID-19)](https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19/disability-services-covid-19/disability-service-providers-covid-19/) webpage.

The questions may be useful in various situations, including people with disability living in the community independently or with family; people with disability living in supported accommodation; and support workers delivering supports. Note this not an exhaustive list and other factors need to be considered depending on the person’s situation.

# General

* For Disability Service Providers, has the business continuity plan been activated?
  + This should identify strategies to reduce the risk of infection to people with disability and staff, and ensure continued access to essential supports, including contingency workforce planning.
* If preparedness planning has been done by or with the person with disability previously, can this be referred to now?
  + Refer to the *Preparedness planning for COVID-19* resources listed on the Department of Communities [People with disability, their families and carers (COVID-19)](https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19/disability-services-covid-19/people-with-disability-their-families-and-carers-covid-19/) webpage
* For registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers, has the NDIS Safeguards and Quality Commission been notified?
* If additional supports are required due to COVID-19, has the funding body been informed?
  + NDIS participants – phone 1800 800 110, select option 5
  + People with disability funded by the State:
    - Continuity of Support Arrangement (under 65) – phone 08 6167 8131 or email [COSA@dsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:COSA@dsc.wa.gov.au)
    - Continuity of Support Program (over 65) – email [CoSCOVIDNotification@health.gov.au](mailto:CoSCOVIDNotification@health.gov.au)
* Is it safe for the person to isolate at home?
  + If there is not a safe place to isolate phone the State Incident Welfare Coordination Centre (SWICC) on 13 COVID (13 26843)

# Communication

* Has communication occurred with the person with disability, carer and/or legal guardian?
* Has communication with staff occurred?
* How will ongoing communication occur with key parties throughout the outbreak?

# Adjusting supports

* Which services and supports are critical to keep the person with disability safe?
  + For critical supports, all actions and contingencies should be taken to ensure the continued provision of such supports.
* Can supports temporarily be delivered via an alternative means? For example, moving services to phone-based or interactive online services rather than face-to-face.
* Are there any supports that can temporarily cease until the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) within the Western Australia (WA) Department of Health advise the person with COVID-19 has recovered?
* What strategies can be implemented to maintain social connection, safety and mental health?
* For Australian Disability Enterprises, if a person with disability is isolating at home can check-ins occur?
  + Consider the risk for each person’s situation to guide the frequency of check-ins and additional supports which may be required. For example, someone with excellent external supports may require less check-ins than a person who has minimal external supports

# Staffing

* Can the number of staff who come into direct contact with the person with disability be reduced? Can staff rosters be changed?
* Can alternative sources of staff be identified, if required?
  + Establishing a rapid response group of staff willing to be redeployed quickly where staff need to self-isolate
  + Reorganising staff rosters between different worksite locations managed by the same provider
  + Hiring agency staff

# Infection prevention and control

* Is there adequate stock of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other materials for the first two weeks of any outbreak?
* Do staff have access to PPE and other materials immediately required?
* Has the latest advice from WA Department of Health regarding PPE use been checked? See [COVID-19 information for aged care and community care providers](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-information-for-Aged-Care-and-Community-Care-Providers)
* Are staff trained and competent in the use of PPE (including disposal) when providing care to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?
* Have enhanced cleaning and disinfection principles been implemented in the person with disability’s home?

Read the [Disability Sector – Preparedness Guide for COVID-19](https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19/disability-services-covid-19/disability-service-providers-covid-19/) for comprehensive information on preparing for a COVID-19 outbreak.