

Our ref: H20/92613-1

Substantive new content since last letter from Chief Health Officer dated 21 August:

- New restrictions for staff and visitors who live in or have visited listed areas in South East Queensland in the last 14 days
- Removal of Newcastle (LGA) from the table on page 2
- All visitors and staff to residential aged care facilities along the NSW border with QLD from Tweed Heads through to Woodenbong must wear a surgical mask while in the facility

Dear Residential Aged Care Facility Director

Thank you for being responsive to implementing measures to prevent introduction of COVID-19 into your facility.

Community transmission of COVID-19 continues in the eastern states, including areas of Melbourne and regional Victoria, south-western and other areas of Sydney, and more recently in south-east Queensland. This remains a concern to NSW residents – currently in both the affected regions of Sydney and in the border communities.

NSW Health wants to ensure that all appropriate preventative action is taken to avoid transmission into these facilities.

It is crucial that all residential aged care facilities maintain vigilance to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into your facility.

#### **Minimising staff movement across facilities**

As part of preparedness planning, aged care providers should put in place arrangements to limit staff working across facilities.

Where ceasing staff movement across facilities is not practicable, staff movement should be minimised and additional measures should be put in place, such as maintaining records of staff and work locations and increasing use of Personal Protective Equipment.

#### **Infection prevention & control - staff training and competency requirements**

I would like to again highlight the importance of comprehensive infection prevention and control preparation in our COVID-19 response. As part of your outbreak preparedness, facilities should ensure that:

- There is an infection control lead or champion at the facility
- Staff are well trained and can demonstrate competency in infection prevention and control, particularly in the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Sufficient stocks of PPE are held on site.

There are a number of excellent resources specific to residential care facilities and staff available to support staff training. These are attached to this letter.

#### **Public health advice on screening and entry restrictions**

Given the current risk of COVID-19 now in the community please implement the following measures.

##### **All facilities:**

- Must have a robust process for screening all staff and visitors on entry to the facility

- Ongoing: any staff or visitors with fever  $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  or respiratory symptoms<sup>1</sup>, even mild, **should be excluded** from the facility. They should be advised to isolate at home and seek COVID-19 testing.
- Ongoing: any staff or visitors who have been in Victoria in the previous 14 days **should be excluded** from the facility (noting an exception for staff in border communities with a valid border permit)
- Ongoing: any staff and visitors who have visited any of the locations on the same time as a COVID-19 case (see updated list of venues and dates at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>) should be excluded for a period of 14 days since their visit to the listed location. **It is important to regularly check the website, as this list may expand.**
- Until further notice: any visitors to any NSW residential aged care facility who have been in the following areas in the previous 14 days **should be excluded** from the facility:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| New South Wales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hornsby Shire (LGA)</li> <li>• Hills District (LGA)</li> <li>• Merrylands (suburb)</li> <li>• Guildford (suburb)</li> <li>• Canterbury-Bankstown (Bankstown part)</li> <li>• Woollahra (LGA)</li> <li>• eastern part of City of Sydney<sup>2</sup> (refer to footnote)</li> <li>• Parramatta (LGA)</li> <li>• Fairfield (LGA)</li> <li>• Liverpool (LGA)</li> <li>• Campbelltown (LGA)</li> </ul> |
| Queensland      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Brisbane</li> <li>• City of Ipswich</li> <li>• Logan City</li> <li>• Scenic Rim Region</li> <li>• Somerset Region</li> <li>• Lockyer Valley Region</li> <li>• Moreton Bay Region</li> <li>• Redland City</li> </ul>   |

- Ongoing: all aged care staff who reside in, or have visited in the last 14 days, areas listed in the above table or a NSW/VIC border community **must wear a surgical mask while in the facility.**
- Ongoing: all visitors and staff to residential aged care facilities along the NSW border with QLD from Tweed Heads through to Woodenbong **must wear a surgical mask while in the facility.**

<sup>1</sup> Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore/scratchy throat, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell

<sup>2</sup> Suburbs: Sydney, Surry Hills, Darlinghurst, Woolloomooloo, Potts Point, Rushcutters Bay, Elizabeth Bay, Centennial Park

**Additional steps for NSW facilities in the above areas and NSW/VIC border communities:**

- Ongoing: all residential aged care staff who work in NSW residential aged care facilities located within areas listed in the above table and NSW/VIC border communities **must wear a surgical mask while in the facility** (irrespective of where they live or have visited).
- Until further notice: NSW residential aged care facilities in areas listed in the above table **should not allow any visitors** (visitors performing essential caring functions may be allowed but must wear a mask). In exceptional circumstances, seek advice from your local NSW Health public health unit on 1300 066 055.
- In NSW/VIC border communities, **only visitors from NSW are permitted** providing:
  - The facility must obtain name and contact detail of visitors (in case there is a need for contact tracing)
  - The visitor is checked against the above questions
  - The temperature of the visitor is checked to be below 37.5 degrees Celsius
  - The visitor is escorted directly to the room (single room) of their loved one and must remain within the room for the duration of the visit. At the completion of the visit, the visitor is to be escorted directly back to the reception area
  - A surgical mask is to be worn at all times
  - Hand hygiene is facilitated
  - Visits are restricted to once/day for each person
  - A maximum of two visitors at a time; children are to be closely supervised.

Measures such as phone or video calls should be made available to all residents to enable continuation of communication with family, friends or others who are not allowed to enter the facility at this time.

Please note that some residents may react with discomfort to seeing staff wearing surgical masks. Consider supporting tools to manage this (eg: show a photo with the staff member's face uncovered), should it occur in your facility.

In response to questions received from residential aged care facilities about implementing this guidance, a series of FAQs has been prepared and is available here:  
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/aged-care-faq.aspx>

If you need additional public health advice, please contact your local NSW Health public health unit on 1300 066 055.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kerry Chant PSM  
**Chief Health Officer, NSW Health**  
25 August 2020

## NSW Clinical Excellence Commission resources

### Personal Protective Equipment training

<http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/keep-patients-safe/COVID-19/personal-protective-equipment>

### Escalation framework

[http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/595754/COVID-19-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-Response-and-Escalation-Framework.pdf](http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/595754/COVID-19-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-Response-and-Escalation-Framework.pdf)

## Commonwealth Department of Health Resources

### Infection Prevention & Control

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidelines-for-infection-prevention-and-control-in-residential-care-facilities>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-aged-care-sector/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-for-the-health-workforce-during-covid-19>

### Personal Protective Equipment resources – multiple languages

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/05/coronavirus-covid-19-when-to-use-personal-protective-equipment-in-aged-care.pdf>

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/translated/coronavirus-covid-19-when-to-use-personal-protective-equipment-in-aged-care-other-languages>

### Training Modules - Specially developed for aged care

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/new-covid-19-e-learning-modules-now-available>

### Personal Protective Equipment Videos

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/videos/coronavirus-covid-19-wearing-personal-protective-equipment-in-aged-care-video>

## Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission resources

### Infection Protection and Control

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resources/are-you-alert-and-ready>

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/cdna-guidance-for-symptom-monitoring-in-health-and-aged-care-workers-during-the-covid-19-outbreak>