

**Update since last letter from Chief Health Officer dated 28 August:**

- **NSW Health continues its current advice of 28 August.**
- **The advice will be reconsidered next week based on the incidence of COVID-19.**

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, especially in 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. Following the recent cases in the Sydney CBD, I am requesting residential aged care facilities in metropolitan Sydney and the Nepean Blue Mountains and Central Coast regions implement visitor restrictions for the next week. In addition, staff who work or live in these areas must wear masks whilst at work.

**This temporary requirement will be reviewed next week. Re-consideration of the areas of concern will be provided based upon the presence of COVID-19. Further declines in incidence may provide an opportunity to lessen current restrictions.**

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 which have been previously circulated and are available on our website.

## 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>• Metropolitan Local Health Districts including Nepean Blue Mountains and Central Coast (excluding Illawarra Shoalhaven)</li><li>• A detailed map is available at <a href="https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd/Pages/lhd-maps.aspx">https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd/Pages/lhd-maps.aspx</a></li><li>• A full list of corresponding Local Government Areas is attached to this letter.</li></ul>
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gold Coast</li><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

severe COVID-19 illness **must** wear surgical masks.

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

- Ongoing: all residential disability care staff who work in NSW residential disability care facilities located within areas listed in the above table and NSW/VIC border communities **should wear a surgical mask while in the facility** (irrespective of where they live or have visited).
  - If your facility cares for people at increased or higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness, staff **must** wear surgical masks.
- Until further notice: NSW residential disability care facilities in areas listed in the above table and NSW/VIC border communities **should limit visitors** (visitors performing essential caring functions may be allowed but should wear a mask). Facilities should communicate clearly with residents and potential visitors to request that visits be postponed. This will be reviewed in mid-September.

Measures such as phone or video calls should be made available to all residents to enable continuation of communication with family, friends or others to assist to limit visits to 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.

**Additional information:**

If you would like more public health information, please contact your local NSW Health public health unit on 1300 066 055 or visit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19>.

NSW Health has a COVID-19-focussed webpage specifically for disability service providers: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/disability-support.aspx>

If you would like more information about NDIS-related issues, including any funding issues relating to compliance with these measures for NDIS participants, contact:

- the NDIA on 1800 800 110 or <https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus>
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/>
- email [MOH-NDIS@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:MOH-NDIS@health.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely



Dr Jeremy McAnulty  
**Executive Director, Health Protection, NSW Health**  
11 September 2020

Local Health District	Local Government Areas
Central Coast	Central Coast
Nepean Blue Mountains	Blue Mountains Hawkesbury Lithgow Penrith
Northern Sydney	Hornsby Hunters Hill Ku-Ring-Gai Lane Cove Mosman North Sydney Northern Beaches Ryde Willoughby
South Eastern Sydney	Bayside Georges River Randwick Sutherland Shire Sydney (part LGA) Waverley Woollahra
South Western Sydney	Camden Campbelltown Canterbury-Bankstown (part LGA) Fairfield Liverpool Wingecarribee Wollondilly
Sydney	Burwood Canada Bay Canterbury-Bankstown (part LGA) Inner West Strathfield Sydney (part LGA)
Western Sydney	Blacktown Cumberland Parramatta The Hills Shire