



WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

WSNBM District & Service Provider Briefing

Monday 26 July 2021, 2:00 – 3:30pm

Key Messages

Continuing to operate in a COVID safe way:

- DCJ services continue to operate in a COVID safe way – for DCJ it is business as usual which includes Community Services, Housing, and Commissioning and Planning.
- The Public Health Orders aim to reduce mobility and the chance of transmitting COVID-19. Wherever it is possible to do so, staff should work from home and stay in their LGA.
- DCJ encourages managers to carefully consider if staff must leave their LGA.
- A reminder that all DCJ funded services are considered **essential services**

Important Key Messages:

- **Authorised Workers:** *Only authorised workers* can travel outside the **Fairfield, Liverpool, Canterbury/Bankstown, Cumberland or Blacktown LGAs** they live in if they are required to leave home for work, and they cannot perform their work in any other way
- **Authorised workers include those who have to leave their LGA including:**
 - A person employed or engaged by the Department of Communities and Justice to provide housing or homelessness services
 - A community housing provider
 - A person employed or engaged to provide services to persons with disability or vulnerable persons
 - Family violence and sexual assault services
- **COVID-19 surveillance testing:**
 - Fairfield LGA – residents providing essential services outside Fairfield LGA must have a COVID-19 test every 3 days
 - Canterbury Bankstown – if residents who are aged or health care are leaving the area for work, they must have a **COVID-19 test once every 72 hours (3 days)** in order to be allowed to enter a workplace
 - Greater Sydney, Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour LGAs – residents working outside the 50 km outer boundary of Greater Sydney must have a COVID-19 test every 7 days
 - More information on the NSW Government website.
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx>
- **Authorised Worker Letters:** DCJ is providing a letter to service providers who as part of their service delivery cannot deliver services from home and have staff that live in the **Fairfield, Liverpool, Canterbury/Bankstown, Cumberland or Blacktown LGAs** and need to travel out of their LGA for work - the first tranche of these letters have gone out.
- **Business Continuity Plans:** DCJ encourages service providers to continually review their Business Continuity Plans and do what they need to keep their staff and clients safe – DCJ is happy to assist and support this process

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

- **Changing service delivery/ open communication/ flexibility:**
 - DCJ acknowledges and thanks providers for changing how they deliver services, to keep your staff and communities safe. Face-to-face delivery for many services especially non-essential services (e.g. group work, non-intensive case management support) should be delivered by alternative means.
 - It is important to maintain essential face-to-face work where it is can be safely managed for the most vulnerable people.
 - Open communication, mutual understanding and collaboration will get us through this together.
 - DCJ is committed to flexibility and ensuring that service providers can meet urgent priorities in their client cohort and use their funding flexibly to meet these urgent priorities. Please speak with your CPO about this as required.
- **PPE Supplies:** We understand that the supply chain for PPE is working. However, if providers are having difficulty accessing PPE please reach out to your contract manager and DCJ can assist.
- **Additional Funds:** There is a process for Specialist Housing Services to access additional funds including payments for staff expenses related to Emergency Accommodation and in exceptional circumstances for additional staff due to COVID-19 or brokerage for clients to establish or maintain their safety during COVID
- **Escalating Issues:** There are processes in place to escalate issues relating to issues such food security and education – and the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) is coordinating responses across government to resolve issues and emergency response coordination has been established. Any challenges can be reported to the Commissioning & Planning WSNBM mailbox for escalation at any time
- **New Process and Pathway for requests for material assistance:** There is a new process and pathway for requests for material assistance (including food) for Resilience NSW that means referrals don't need to come only from Health. **Referrals for material assistance from Resilience NSW should go to ServiceNSW on 13 77 88.**

DCJ will keep you up to date with health advice and continue to support you.

Thank you for you partnership in these challenging times and for the amazing outcomes you are delivering to the people of Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains.

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

Resources

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

COVID-19 (coronavirus) Official NSW Government response to COVID-19: symptoms and testing, what you can and can't do under the rules, information for businesses plus the latest news and updates.

<https://www.coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au>

DCJ COVID-19 (coronavirus) response information and resources for service providers, staff and community.

<https://www.coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au/download?file=778992>

Guidelines for Residential Care Settings for Young People in Out of Home Care (OOHC) and COVID-19

[SHS guidelines homelessness accommodation during COVID.](#)

Guidelines for homelessness accommodation and COVID-19

<https://www.ncoss.org.au/sector-hub/sector-resources/covid-19-community-sector-resource-buttons/>

COVID-19 Community Sector Resources: What the new COVID-19 restrictions mean for NGO service providers A living resource to provide the latest information on COVID-19.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/2021-covid-19-support-package>

2021 COVID-19 Support Package. The NSW Government will provide financial assistance, support measures and tax relief to help businesses and people across the state impacted by the current COVID-19 restrictions.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/mental-health-at-work/50000-for-recovery-at-work-projects>

\$50,000 for recovery at work projects. Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to fund innovative mental health projects that support recovery at work and reduce mental health stigma.

https://www.parentingrc.org.au/telepractice_hub/

Telepractice Hub to best support parents and families, services need to identify when and how telepractice might work for their clients and to build skills and knowledge in effective telepractice delivery.

<http://ngolearning.com.au/practice-guidance-for-virtual-home-visits/>

NGO Learning Hub - Practice Guidance for Virtual Home Visits and engaging families

<https://www.ncoss.org.au/examples-of-covid-19-innovative-practices-in-the-sector/>

Examples of innovative practice

<https://www.coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au/service-providers/information-for-permanency-support-program-ppsp-service-providers>

DCJ advice for PSP providers

<https://www.coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au/service-providers/helpful-resources>

Factsheets, training and links for providers working with children, families and community

<https://acwa.asn.au/covid-19-resource-clearinghouse/>

COVID-19 or other similar resources through ACWA - Association of Children's Welfare Agencies

<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/COVID-19-Coronavirus>

Guides and resources to help staff and workplaces stay COVID safe.

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

<https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-leave-and-stand-downs/stand-downs>

Advice for employers if they needs to stand down employees during COVID.

<https://www.coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au/service-providers/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support>

EAP and other counselling services for service provider staff

https://www.coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/779166/Food-relief-services.pdf

Information on Food Services that charities can use including OzHarvest, Foodbank NSW.ACT, Anglicare emergency assistance and St Vincent de Paul.

<https://www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au/#services/results/food%20NEAR%20blacktown>

Local food services in Western Sydney on HSNet

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p>Authorised Workers and testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is, and isn't, considered authorised workers? • Will letters be available for authorised workers in WSNBM? • Why are workers in neighbourhood centres not authorised? • Many staff are working online, but what if there are crises and they need to deal with them face to face? • Can staff who live in a hot spot continue to provide services if they need to work with clients face to face outside their place of residence? 	<p>It is strongly advised that both providers and employees continually review the information and advice provided by NSW Health and the relevant Public Health Order but also where possible limit any unnecessary face to face interactions and utilise alternate means to engage with clients.</p> <p>As of 27.7.2021 the current advice is: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx#lga-requirements</p> <p><u>Authorised Workers</u> are workers who are employed or engaged to provide services that are necessary for that activity.</p> <p>Authorised workers in our sector would come under the health care and social assistance category. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person who provides health services within the meaning of the Health Services Act 1997 (whether or not in the public or private sector) or a registered health practitioner or a person who works for a registered health practitioner (each a "health services provider") • a person who provides ancillary or support services to the work of a "health services provider" (as defined above) (including, for example, cleaners, cooks and security providers at hospitals) • a person employed or engaged by the Department of Communities and Justice to provide housing or homelessness services • a community housing provider • a person employed or engaged to provide services to persons with disability or vulnerable persons • a person employed or engaged at a residential aged care facility • family violence and sexual assault services • veterinary services (including laboratory and diagnostic services and clinics) • animal welfare, care and accommodation services (excluding pet grooming unless there is an immediate animal welfare reason) • end of life services including funeral, crematorium and cemetery services, mortuaries and morgues, spiritual or religious services connected to end of life services <p>Locations Staff who live in Cumberland, Blacktown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield or Liverpool local government areas, you can only leave the local government to go to work if they are an authorised worker.</p> <p>Letters DCJ has issued a letter to a number of service providers confirming that activities they are doing on our behalf are considered essential.</p>

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
	<p>For some service types – e.g. Specialist Homelessness Services where their staff cannot do their work other than face-to-face, providers may issue a letter of authorisation for your staff to carry with them. If your staff can perform their work in any other way than face-to-face – e.g. by phone or video call, please do that.</p> <p>DCJ can provide letters to other agencies who have staff that meet the criteria for ‘authorised workers’.</p> <p>Surveillance testing The Order also details a surveillance testing program for certain workers. Under the Order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for all workers who live in the local government area of Fairfield, and for aged care and health care workers who live in the Canterbury-Bankstown local government area, and their employers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you work outside this area, you must have a <u>COVID-19 test once every 72 hours</u> (3 days) in order to be allowed to go to work as an <u>authorised worker</u> • the occupier of non-residential premises must not permit an affected worker to remain at the premises unless the worker has been tested in accordance with these requirements. • for workers who live in Greater Sydney (including Central Coast, Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour) and their employers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Greater Sydney worker must not enter premises for work that are more than 50 kilometres outside Greater Sydney unless the worker has been tested for COVID-19 in the previous 7 days and has evidence of the test available for inspection by their employer or a police office, and • the occupier of non-residential premises must not permit a Greater Sydney worker to enter the premises unless the worker has been tested in accordance with these requirements • a person must provide information, including proof of address and proof the person has been tested for COVID-19 to a police officer on request in order to enable the officer to determine whether the person is an affected worker or a Greater Sydney worker.
<p>Will there be priority vaccinations for our clients and staff?</p>	<p>Advice on this is changing rapidly. Please check on the NSW Health website about availability.</p> <p>At the time of writing, priority access to vaccines includes those in Group 1B eligibility – includes people sleeping rough and in Specialist Homelessness Services.</p> <p>DJC, NSW Health, Housing and SHS working together to deliver vaccination hubs, implement joint outreach patrols delivering mobile vaccinations, and act as pop up vaccinations clinics for their clients.</p>

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
	DCJ has been lobbying for DCJ and NGO workers to be considered essential workers to be a priority for vaccination but no luck yet.
Can we ask staff if they have been tested?	<p>You can ask to see an employee's proof of COVID-19 test if they live in the Fairfield LGA, if they live in the Canterbury Bankstown LGA and work in Aged Care or Health Care, or if you are located 50km or more outside Greater Sydney and they live in Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong or Shellharbour LGAs.</p> <p>You must not allow someone to work if they have not had a COVID-19 test in the set timeframes.</p> <p>You can find more information on the NSW Government website.</p>
Can we require staff to attend work?	<p>The Public Health Orders require employers to allow staff to work from home if they are able to do so.</p> <p>If providers can meet their service delivery requirements in ways other than face to face service delivery then they are encouraged to be flexible in their approach.</p> <p>DCJ is committed to ensuring essential services continue to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic. This involves timely coordination across government, nongovernment organisations (NGOs) and community stakeholders to communicate public health advice clearly and manage the safety of staff and children and young people.</p> <p>Much of our service provision requires face to face contact in residential settings such as homelessness services and Intensive Therapeutic Care. These services need to continue in a COVID-safe way by implementing risk mitigation strategies to limit the spread of the virus, such as personal protective equipment, good hygiene, stringent cleaning procedures, physical distancing and ensuring that staff don't come to work if they have any symptoms.</p> <p>If staff live in the Cumberland, Blacktown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield or Liverpool Local Government areas and need to attend work outside of those areas they are exempt as 'authorised workers'.</p>
We are concerned that we will have to pay for the time staff spend getting tested every 3 days.	<p>Surveillance testing only applies to authorised workers who live in Fairfield or Canterbury Bankstown LGAs. Additional testing sites have been established to expedite the process.</p> <p>Providers should support and encourage their staff to get tested if required.</p>
Can we have more direct access to Service NSW and Resilience NSW Linkages with Resilience NSW need to be stronger	<p>The best way to contact Service NSW is on 13 77 88.</p> <p>Additional staff have been appointed to deal with increasing volumes of requests.</p>

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
	<p>DCJ is a member of the State Emergency Operations Committee (SEOC) and is raising critical issues and challenges directly with Resilience NSW. Please share examples with your contract manager so that these can be escalated if required.</p>
<p>Precautions for cleaners What precautionary measures are being taken for deep cleaning in refuges to ensure that the cleaners are not transmitting COVID into refuges?</p>	<p>Safe Work NSW requires all workplaces to assess the risk (in consultation with workers) and look for ways to minimise the risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. As per the Public Health Orders, all employers must comply with the mandatory testing requirements for affected LGA's/regions.</p> <p>Providers should work in partnership with the cleaning providers to develop risk assessment and ensure all staff are complying with the public health orders.</p> <p>Any suspected breach of the public health orders should be reported to NSW Police.</p>
<p>EAP and support for staff Can service providers access EAP programs? Why are organisations who have implemented their own EAP penalised. Many workers are not keen on government supplied EAP (especially not locally based).</p>	<p>DCJ EAP service is available to service providers again</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers are eligible if they don't have their own EAP service • Service providers who used the service last year will not need to register again • If you have service providers who did not use the service last year but want to, get them to complete the short registration form on the DCJ Coronavirus web page <p>Other counselling services are available for staff through organisations such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifeline Australia: 13 11 14 w or Lifeline Australia - A crisis support service that provides short term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe. • NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511- Mental health crisis telephone service in NSW.
<p>Business Continuity and ongoing service delivery How do we When business continuity planning fails due to shortage of housing options or staff resources (those in caring roles), does DCJ have a direct contact to support providers to overcome these deficits? Who can we call after hours? We are losing staff due to being close contacts and being sent to self-isolate for two weeks</p>	<p>It is critical that providers ensure that their business continuity plans are current so that we can continue to deliver services to the most vulnerable in our community.</p> <p>Providers need to plan for scenarios which may impact on staff or clients including close contacts, visiting hot spots or positive COVID tests.</p> <p>DCJ will work with providers to ensure continuity of service delivery where required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for use in residential care settings with young people in out of home care • SHS guidelines homelessness accommodation during COVID.

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p>What if a client or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 in residential, ITC or refuge settings?</p>	<p>If NSW Health confirms that a person has COVID-19, the local Public Health Unit will be in contact with any close contacts of the person to advise them on what action to take.</p> <p>If a staff member was infectious while at work, you must also notify SafeWork NSW . You can also make contact with the Public Health Unit directly to make sure that contact details are available in all units or facilities.</p> <p>If the measures recommended by NSW Health will disrupt service provision, please urgently contact your DCJ contract manager to discuss an appropriate response. As an example, they may recommend moving client/s or reconfiguring services.</p> <p>Further information is available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health advice for service providers • NSW Health fact sheet for people who have tested positive for COVID-19
<p>What do we do if young people are not following Public Health Orders?</p>	<p>If a young person has been directed to self-isolate, for example because they have been in contact with a confirmed case, they must remain at home, or another suitable residence as directed by a health practitioner, or in hospital for treatment.</p> <p>If a young person refuses to comply with self-isolation, contact the National Coronavirus Health Information line on 1800 020 080 and follow instructions on reporting requirements. You should also contact your DCJ contract manager to discuss how the situation could be managed.</p> <p>NSW Police have advised DCJ that reasonable attempts should be made to educate the child or young person in care on the importance of isolating, and to get them to return home, before law enforcement action is considered. However, if Police support is required, Police can be contacted through Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000, or an appropriate police officer, or police liaison officer.</p> <p>If there is repeated non-compliance, a specific Public Health Order can be obtained that will enable Police to arrest a person in order to return them to their place of isolation</p> <p>The NSW Joint Protocol to reduce contact for young people in OOHC with the criminal justice system remains in place. The protocol ensures that Police are not used for discipline or behavioural management of young people living in out-of-home care. It aims to reduce contact and use early intervention strategies to positively influence behaviour. It can reduce reoffending and unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system.</p>

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
	<p>Ensure that all staff are familiar with the Joint Protocol and with the procedures as described in Annexure A for care staff and Annexure B for local Police.</p> <p>General advice for service providers on what to do if a young person in ITC or Residential Care does not follow the Public Health Order Advice</p> <p>Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080 if a young person refuses to comply with self -isolation requirements</p>
How do providers get provisional approval for accommodation out of hours/weekend?	<p>If directed by NSW Health, please follow instructions and advise the Director Commissioning and Planning at DirectorCommissioning&PlanningWSNBM@facns.nsw.gov.au</p>
Is there a position of whether it is required for clients to have a COVID test prior to be admitted to a residential care setting?	<p>There is no mention of screening on entry to a residential care facility in the Guidelines below however at this stage, providers should refer to Public Health Orders with a focus on testing requirements when a Child or Young Person is moving from an affected LGA or has been experiencing placement instability and increased exposure to the community and COVID-19 hotspots.</p>
Given our staff are not health workers, where do we stand in terms of caring for infected clients. Our guidance at present is that we can't force our staff into an infected environment.	<p>NSW Health will provide advice if a client tests positive.</p> <p>For staff in ITC settings please refer to - Guidelines: Residential Care Settings for Young People in Out of Home Care (OOHC) and COVID-19:</p> <p>For homelessness settings please refer to the SHS guidelines homelessness accommodation during COVID.</p>
How do we support/manage part time staff who also work in other organisations?	<p>In any case, the reporting obligations for mandatory testing remains in place as outlined in the current Public Health Orders. As an employer, you may ask an employee to present their evidence of testing.</p> <p>Employers may be able to stand their employees down during the coronavirus outbreak for various reasons. This includes when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the business has closed because of an enforceable government direction (which means the employee can't be usefully employed, even from another location) • there's a stoppage of work due to lack of supply for which the employer can't be held responsible. <p>https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-leave-and-stand-downs/stand-downs</p> <p>Further advice should be sought through www.Fairwork.gov.au for specific issues/advice.</p>

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p>Has consideration been given for cross service support of workers, if possible?</p>	<p>Business continuity plans should include preparation and planning for a range of scenarios. Providers should identify Partners, such as the local Public Health Units, police and other service providers and establish ongoing communication with them.</p> <p>For ITC providers, work with the CAU and your Contract Manager if additional support of workers is required.</p>
<p>Family preservation and family contact – how can this be done face to face or virtually?</p>	<p>DCJ will continue to deliver child protection face-to-face assessments where it's safe to do so. This includes joint visits with non-government organisations. For more information see the delivering essential services web page.</p> <p>If you have any questions about joint home visiting, please contact your local Manager Client Services or Director Community Services. If you are unsure who the local Manager Client Services or Director Community Services are, you can contact your contract manager.</p> <p>You should undertake all out-of-home care home visits virtually or postpone them unless there are safety concerns.</p> <p>Routine client service visits should be rescheduled or held virtually where possible. High risk visits will go ahead where essential only.</p> <p>Any critical family contact that needs to happen face to face may take place, but it will depend on the location and assessment of risk. Where possible please communicate by phone or videoconferencing.</p> <p>Additional information and support is listed in the resources below.</p>
<p>Emergency Food Assistance What emergency food assistance is available to vulnerable community members? What supports are available for our services that are providing emergency food supplies?</p>	<p>Food provision is so much harder than during the lockdown in 2020 as the scale is much bigger. We are unable to use manual system, so many people are in self- isolation and it is impacting a large CALD community. Logistics have changed due to impact of Delta variant as we are not able to use the hub delivery model this time to get food from warehouses to people.</p> <p>Commonwealth Department for Social Services (DSS) are responsible for coordinating emergency relief</p> <p>NSW Government has invested \$2.5m into Foodbank and Ozharvest – deliver support to NGOs.</p> <p>DCJ will raise challenges and gaps with Resilience NSW and with DSS.</p> <p>WSNBM DCJ staff are also liaising with Resilience NSW at a local emergency centre level to assist with coordination of the response.</p>

WSNBM Service Provider – COVID Sector Briefing

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p>Challenges with Digital Connectivity – How do we help vulnerable families and children access phones, computers or internet connection?</p>	<p>The way the community is supporting each other is amazing, we really encourage service providers to tap into local community networks and Service NSW on 13 77 88.</p> <p>If providers have a brokerage component they can draw on these brokerage funds. Additionally, service providers may utilise service funding on a case by case basis.</p> <p>For school students it is recommend in first instance that providers have discussions with schools.</p> <p>If schools are turning children away or do not have appropriate resources, services should inform their CPO for escalation to the state emergency operations centre (SEOC).</p>
<p>Does health have hospital options for those who can't remain in the home?</p>	<p>NSW Health have established Health Hotels that can provide accommodation options for people who have tested positive and are unable to remain in their home.</p> <p>Please follow advice from NSW Health in the event that a resident has tested positive.</p>