Aged care surge workforce support

Frequently asked questions

What is the temporary surge workforce support?

The Australian Government provides temporary surge workforce support to eligible residential aged care homes that are impacted by COVID-19.

Who is eligible?

To access the surge workforce support, approved residential aged care providers, including National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) Program providers, must:

- be impacted by a COVID-19 outbreak and unable to maintain high-quality, safe care for residents
- provide evidence that all existing partnerships and recruitment channels have been exhausted
- be in a MM 3 to 7 location.

Aged care homes in a MM 4 to 7 location, such as rural, remote and First Nations services, experiencing emergencies other than COVID-19 are also eligible.

Aged care homes that have not provided regular access to COVID-19 vaccinations for their residents may not be eligible to get surge workforce support.

How do I access surge workforce support?

You must first report the COVID-19 outbreak to the Department of Health and Aged Care (department), including staff and resident COVID-19 case(s) via the My Aged Care Service and Support portal.

To submit a request for surge workforce support, email:
AgedCareCOVIDEnquiries@health.gov.au.

How quickly can support be provided?

Workforce supports will be deployed to an aged care home usually within 48-72 hours of a request.

You may request temporary surge workforce supports to fill an immediate gap while attempting to find a longer-term solution. This includes staff returning from leave due to COVID-19 infection, however, there may be limitations in the timeframe for deployment.

Who is responsible for staffing an aged care home in an outbreak?

All aged care homes must have an outbreak management plan in place that includes a workforce plan to be implemented in times of staffing pressures due to outbreaks.

You are responsible for ensuring the ongoing delivery of safe and quality care to residents in the event of an outbreak – including staffing the service appropriately.

Providers must provide evidence that all existing partnership and recruitment channels are exhausted before you are eligible to access surge workforce support. This includes considering internal options, such as increasing the hours worked by staff at the affected home (for example, 8 to 12-hour shifts) and drawing staff in from other homes operated by the approved provider.

Can I access workers from the surge workforce support if my home is not directly impacted by COVID-19?

If you are impacted by a non-COVID-19 emergency event, such as a natural disaster, severe weather event, or other emergency, contact your Local Network office.

What if surge workforce cannot be supplied?

You are required to enact outbreak or emergency management plans, including workforce plans, when the first resident tests positive for COVID-19.

Once the department has assessed the need of an aged care home in relation to your location and a COVID-19 outbreak, surge workforce support may be deployed.

Read about the Australian Government COVID-19 supports for providers and workers.