



Australian Government



VICTORIAN AGED CARE
RESPONSE CENTRE

Establishing communications

Preparing communication contacts and channels will allow aged care facilities to deliver timely, meaningful messages to residents, nominated representatives, families and staff.

Aged care facilities should ensure residents are aware of the prepared communication processes, including method and frequency. Residents should be confident their nominated representatives and families will be contacted in the event of an outbreak and kept updated as events evolve.

Facilities may wish to contract a consultant to provide professional services in the event of an outbreak.

Please consult the [LASA COVID-19 Lessons Learned for Age Services Providers](#) for further preparation guidance.

1. Contact the nominated representative for each resident in your aged care facility by phone to confirm you have the latest contact number/s and email address for the nominated representative of each resident.
 - a. When speaking with the nominated person, check they understand their obligations of being contactable and their role in disseminating information to family and friends. You do not want to alarm the person.
 - b. The call should provide reassurance that your aged care facility is prepared in the case of a COVID-19 positive case. Describe the process for informing families in the case of an outbreak, ensure nominated representatives are prepared and answer any of their questions.
Consult the [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission for consumer resources](#).
2. Establish a clear list of the contact details of the nominated person for each aged care resident, organised logically (e.g. alphabetically, via room number).
 - a. Gain permission to share contact details with government authorities and the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN). Note that primary contact details will not be used for marketing purposes, but strictly for professional services to assist the aged care facility.

BE COVIDSAFE

3. Establish email distribution lists, including:
 - a. Residents, nominated representatives and family members
 - b. Staff and contractors
4. Send an email to your email distribution lists, acknowledge their anxiety and highlight how important the aged care facility considers regular communications with residents, families and staff. You are ensuring processes are set up in case you need to communicate with them during an outbreak.
5. Include an email address people can use to register for email updates, and request this is made widely available to all loved ones who will be seeking updates from the aged care facility. Note, family members beyond the nominated representative should be enabled to receive regular email updates, however only the primary contact should expect direct phone call updates.
6. Ensure the aged care facility has appropriate devices and resources, such as smart phones or tablets with support to operate if required (e.g. tripods to assist residents in holding up their phone or tablet), to connect residents with their families via phone and video calls.
 - a. You may need to download online tools so that family members can schedule video calls with their loved ones and communal devices are managed efficiently.
7. Update your website with a statement on your response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including how communications will be managed. Ideally under a new tab called 'COVID Update' or an existing 'News' section.
 - a. This statement or article will then need to be updated as the situation evolves. It is recommended that frequency of updates and level of detail is consistent. The website should provide information on what the service is doing to minimise the risk of an outbreak including visitor screening and restrictions, as well as what planning has been done in the event an outbreak does occur.
8. Advise families about the role of, and how to access, the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN). There is an [OPAN information resource](#) for distribution to families so families can be informed about the support OPAN can provide and explain who they are.
9. Advise families about the role of, and how to access, the [Aged Care Safety and Quality Commission via their website](#) or phoning 1800 951 822.

The role of the Commission is to independently accredit, assess and monitor aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government. The [Commission also resolves complaints](#).