



## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for Transition Care Programme (TCP) Providers

During the pandemic, TCP clients may not be able to receive the services they need. This might be due to isolation or quarantine requirements, health advice or other factors.

This fact sheet is to assist TCP providers during this time.

### COVID-19 – general impact on program delivery

COVID-19 may mean that face-to-face assessments and/or care provision present a risk to staff or TCP clients. In this case you might need to adjust the way you provide your service. This might include the use of phone and/or telehealth assessment.

It is important to protect yourself and your clients from COVID-19. We must also stop the spread of the virus. Maintaining good hygiene and a clean workplace is essential. Advice on environmental cleaning and disinfection is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) and searching using the term aged care cleaning.

All aged care workers entering clients' homes must practise good infection control. We encourage aged care workers to complete the aged care and infection control training modules. These are available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) and searching using the term COVID-19 infection control training. Make sure all are registered as aged care workers to get access to all modules.

### COVID-19 mandatory vaccination requirements

From 17 September 2021 COVID-19 vaccination became mandatory for all residential aged care workers. Further information is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) and searching the term mandatory vaccination aged care.

These requirements apply to workers delivering TCP in a residential aged care facility, however, they do not extend to transition care delivered in state/territory hospital or health facilities or in community settings.

### COVID-19 – mandatory reporting of vaccination status

It is mandatory for TCP service providers to keep records and report on the COVID-19 vaccination status of their workforce.

TCP service providers are required to submit de-identified data at a service or outlet level every Tuesday on the My Aged Care provider portal on the:

- total number of workers at each aged care service and, of those,
- the number of workers at each service who have received a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and

- the number of workers at each service who have received all required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Please note these new reporting requirements relate to obligations on providers to report workers' COVID-19 vaccination status where transition care is provided in a residential or a community setting. They do not, however, impose any obligation for transition care workers in a community setting to be vaccinated.

Steps on how to report the COVID-19 vaccination status of aged care workers are available via the [Quick Reference Guide](#) and also the [My Aged Care Provider Portal User Guide](#) on page 84 (2.6.1).

## Breaks in care

Clients might cease TCP services during the pandemic due to:

- isolation or quarantine due to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- direction by their GP or medical practitioner, or
- the client's personal preference.

TCP clients may take a break in their care for up to seven days in total during an episode of TCP for any reason. These 'leave days' do not need to be consecutive.

If a client takes more than seven break days for any reason, their transition care episode will cease and they will be discharged from the programme. A TCP client discharged within the four week 'entry period' from their approval, may enter a new TCP episode without a new approval.

A person requires a new TCP approval from an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT), if:

- there has been a break in their care for longer than seven days in total during a TCP episode, and
- this break fell outside the entry period.

## Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessments

Due to COVID-19, ACATs are taking a flexible approach to the delivery of assessments.

Decisions on how to conduct assessments are guided by the ACATs' local circumstances and client choice. Face-to-face assessments should be offered where it is possible and safe. ACATs do, however, have protocols in place to return to telephone assessments should a local outbreak occur.

If necessary, emergency provisions under the *Aged Care Act 1997* (the Act) can be used during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The assessment method will depend on patient and/or hospital. This may vary due to the:

- infection control requirements
- welfare of staff
- need for consultation with hospital teams

- support needs of the client. This includes the client's willingness to participate in a phone or telehealth assessment.

The person must still meet the eligibility requirements of the programme. This includes that they must enter the programme following discharge from a hospital.

Any transition care extension or support plan review should be requested through the My Aged Care provider portal.

For more information on streamlined ACAT assessment processes, contact your ACAT assessor teams.

## Providers unable to service clients due to staffing shortages

During the pandemic you may be unable to provide a service to clients due to staffing shortages. If this occurs you should update your service and availability information through the My Aged Care Provider portal. This will help to prevent referrals from the assessor and contact centre to your organisation.

You can also provide this advice to the My Aged Care through the Service Provider Helpline (**1800 836 799**).

You should try to subcontract staff for existing clients from elsewhere. If no staff are available, consider transferring existing clients to other providers.

## Further information

### Visitation for people receiving TCP in a residential aged care facility

- The Aged Care Visitation Guidelines, available on [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) provides advice to residential aged care providers on how to support visitation and reduce the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions including physical and emotional deconditioning.  
The [Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes during COVID-19](#) has been released by aged care peak bodies and consumer advocacy groups. It describes how residential aged care services should allow residents to meet their visitors, whilst minimising the risk of COVID-19 within the facility.
- The Code was updated on 6 August 2021 to reflect advice requiring aged care workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by 17 September 2021.

### Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 vaccination

- For TCP clients receiving care in a residential setting, any current direction or requirements for COVID-19 or flu vaccination, will apply.
- All aged care workers entering clients' homes must practise good infection control to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We encourage aged care workers to:
  - complete the aged care and infection control [training modules](#), and
  - have a current flu vaccination.

### COVID-19 resources and information

- [COVID-19 resources](#) are available on [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) using the search term advice on aged care during COVID-19. They include responses to [frequently asked questions](#) and information for the [general public](#) and [industry](#). The Department updates this information regularly.
- We also publish a COVID-19 newsletter on our [website](#). Our newsletter lets you know when there are updates to aged care information. You can subscribe to the newsletter and aged care sector email announcements at: [www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/subscriptions/subscribe-to-aged-care-sector-announcements-and-newsletters](http://www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/subscriptions/subscribe-to-aged-care-sector-announcements-and-newsletters).

### Support to use the My Aged Care Provider portal

- The My Aged Care provider portal user guide provides a range of instructions:
  - Part 1 includes how update service and waitlist availability:  
<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/09/my-aged-care-provider-portal-user-guide-part-1-administrator-functions.pdf>.
  - Part 2 includes how to make a support plan review request and record client notes:  
<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/03/my-aged-care-provider-portal-user-guide-part-2-team-leader-and-staff-member-functions.pdf>.