

Dear Clients, Carers and Family Members,

Following on from my update to you in February, I write to keep you updated. Thank you to those that provided feedback on the last update. It is always great to hear from you.

We continue to implement our COVID-19 Plan and I am very pleased to say that we have not yet had any positive cases for our clients or team members, however we have been made aware of some family members who have tested positive. This includes children who are isolating at home. To those isolating at home, we send you all our best wishes for a speedy recovery and to those who may be caring for others isolating, our special best wishes.

Changes since the last update

The WA State borders were opening, then not opening and are again opening on the 3rd March. This is at a time of increasing infection rates, now exceeding 1,000 per day. The Premier has announced restrictions will move to 'Level 2' on the 3rd March ahead of the predicted peak in cases towards the end of March.

What impact will this have on my services?

We are working hard to limit any impact on your services.

Due to the implementation of the Level 2 restrictions and in particular the requirement for venues of the 2 square metre rule, we will be imposing maximum numbers for our group services including the Friendship Club. You will be notified if this affects your attendance.

This will also impact some of our transport services. Again, if this affects your service, we will be in contact. Where possible we will be offering alternative options.

Your coordinator will continue to support you and discuss any services or changes in your plan over the phone, or by Zoom, for those that use online services.

What steps are Melville Cares taking to ensure our safety?

We continue to implement our COVID-19 Plan which adheres to all government requirements. We have daily updates and work closely with Lauren, our COVID-19 Project Lead and Registered Nurse.

What about the safety of the staff?

Our team members have all received infection control training, as well as being provided with personal protective equipment. All staff have received their two vaccinations and are required to have a booster in line with the Department of Health's mandate. We have also provided specialist training to staff who have volunteered to be part of our COVID-19 Response Team, so as to continue delivering services to those who may be isolating with suspected COVID-19 or have tested positive.

We have also split office staff into teams to limit personal contact and have moved from face to face catch ups, to online options.

In March we will be implementing a workforce screening program. All staff and volunteers who have contact with clients will have regular Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) before commencing services.

Additionally, all staff are required to confirm that they do not have any symptoms before logging on for the day. We hope that this gives you peace of mind that when we enter your home, we are as safe as possible.

What if I get COVID-19, or my carer does?

Members of our team have gone through specialist training to be able to continue providing essential services to those who may be isolating with suspected, or confirmed, COVID-19. This will be coordinated as usual, but in liaison with Lauren, our COVID-19 Project Lead.

We also anticipate that the primary support or carer of our clients may become unwell and may not be able to provide their usual level of support. In these instances please let us know, so we can look at additional support, or short term alternatives.

What do you require me to do?

We continue to encourage all clients to get vaccinated and will be making contact with you to ask for your vaccination status. This is to ensure we take all possible precautions to protect your safety and that of the team members providing services. Melville Cares is dedicated to providing our usual services, while taking all necessary steps to keep you and our team members safe, so this continues to be a bit different with wearing face masks and asking for proof of vaccination. We do appreciate your patience, as we may ask you for proof more than once, or we may request to change your service time, or who provides that service.

I also ask that you let us know if you have any cold like symptoms, are not feeling well, have been told you are a close contact, or advised to be tested for COVID-19 for any reason, so that we can work with you to provide the support you need in the safest way possible.

I know from our team members, that one of the most difficult things for them is when they arrive and see your disappointment that they are not your usual team member. I appreciate that having the same person, who knows you and who you trust, is at the cornerstone of our services, but at this time I ask again for your flexibility and patience. We are prepared for a number of our team members to need time off to care for others or to isolate, in addition to our usual planned and unplanned leave.

In summary, please be assured that we are taking all steps to maximise the safety of our clients and team members, while continuing to provide your usual services. As always, should you have any other questions or comments, I welcome them.

My sincere appreciation to you for your flexibility and patience as we work together.

Maria

Maria Davison
Chief Executive Officer