

Residential Aged Care Facilities Transition Planning Checklist

Background

In July 2021, National Cabinet agreed to formulate a [National Plan](#) to transition Australia's COVID response to 'living with COVID'. The plan consists of four phases defined by the achievement of vaccination thresholds broadly expressed as a percentage of the eligible population (aged 16+ years).

The initial transition phases are supported more broadly by maintaining:

- > appropriate Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM), eg. hand hygiene, masks and social distancing
- > testing, tracing, isolation, and quarantine (TTIQ)
- > hospital sector capacity, and
- > compliance with *Emergency Management Directions (RACF)*.

Under the national Phase B "Vaccination Transition", South Australia has implemented the [COVID Ready Plan](#), and from 23 November 2021 there will be staged changes to cross-border entry, social restrictions and COVID prevention. For residential aged care providers, these changes will occur in the positive context of mandatory staff and visitor vaccination requirements, high resident vaccination rates, high community vaccination rates, and proportionate visitor risk management protocols.

Integrated support for SA Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF)

During this transition, RACFs will be supported by an integrated framework, which includes additional in-reach support, situation-specific decisions about options for care-in-place or hospital transfers, updated exposure and outbreak protocols, revised staff furloughing risk assessments and strong vaccination precautions. The special requirements of rural and regional RACFs are understood.

Fact sheets and flowcharts are being developed and updated to communicate these processes and stakeholder responsibilities. The SA approach will be informed by learning from other states and through collaborative national strategies.

RACF provider responsibilities: COVID-19 Transition Checklist

In readiness for the changes commencing in SA on 23 November, each RACF should complete several key processes:

- Communicate and consult with your residents and representatives about the expected changes and the potential escalation of infection prevention and control (IPC) precautions.
- Review your systems to support resident wellbeing in the event of both short term and prolonged lockdowns and zoning, which may be needed to support positive COVID-19 cases on-site.
- Maintain high resident COVID-19 vaccination rates, including booster doses as they are rolled out from 8 November 2021.
- Review the special supports required to assist people living with dementia during both short term and prolonged lockdowns and zoning which may be needed to support positive COVID-19 cases on-site.
- Communicate with staff, GPs, health care professionals and contractors about the expected changes.

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- Update your Outbreak Management Plan (OMP).
- Review your resident and staff strategies for both zoning and cohorting (proactively and reactively).
- Review your situation-specific escalation protocols for a range of scenarios, including local geographic community clusters.
- Develop and implement a refresher staff education plan on current COVID-19 IPC protocols.
- Implement refresher PPE training for staff, incorporating [SA Health education resources](#).
- Plan and implement your fit-checking for the use of Particulate Filter Respirators (PFR).
- Review your PPE stock and your procurement arrangements.
- Ensure the effective induction of new staff and Agency staff to your revised COVID-19 exposure and outbreak responses.
- Update each person's Advanced Care Directive or Advance Care Plan to include specific informed choices about COVID treatment scenarios.
- Review your volunteer program COVID-19 protocols.
- Develop prioritised action plans to ensure readiness within the expected timeframes.
- Test your updated OMP using regular simulation exercises and implement any learnings.
- Update your potential media responses to a mix of COVID-19 outbreak scenarios.

As the state moves to the next phase of living with COVID-19, RACFs will transition to being able to manage more COVID residents in-place, supported by external specialist advice and in-reach services from both SA Health and the Commonwealth Department of Health.

For more information

Office for Ageing Well
Department for Health and Wellbeing
SA Health, Government of South Australia
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019

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