

| <b>Title</b>      | <b>Guideline on Infection Control and PPE's in the Community Setting</b>   |
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| <b>Purpose</b>    | This document aims to provide general information and guidance for Service Providers in minimising risk through the appropriate management of infection control and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the Home and Community setting.  |
| <b>Background</b> | Effective infection prevention and control is key to maintaining continuity of high quality supports and minimising risk to service users whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the service providers staff and other community members. Consideration must be given to the environment in which the supports are being delivered as they may differ for each service user.  |
| <b>Disclaimer</b> | <p>This guideline contains practical guidance and information to support service providers in safely delivering supports and services where infection control and the use of PPE in the community setting. This information does not in any way replace legislative, regulatory, or contractual requirements. Users of this document should seek appropriate expert advice in relation to their circumstances.</p> <p>ACIA does not accept any liability on the use of this guideline.</p> |

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| <p><b>Definitions and Supporting Information</b></p> | <p><b>Community Supports and/or Services</b> is defined as the provision of paid supports and services in a service Users home or community. It includes, but is not limited to, the following activities of daily living:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clinical supports</li> <li>• community access</li> <li>• gardening and home maintenance</li> <li>• higher risk supports</li> <li>• housework or domestic assistance</li> <li>• nursing services</li> <li>• palliative care</li> <li>• personal care or support</li> <li>• respite care</li> <li>• social support</li> <li>• transport assistance</li> </ul> <p><b>Service User:</b> is a person receiving supports to remain living independently in their community. Also, commonly known as a Participant, Consumer, Client, Care Recipient.</p> <p><b>Service Provider:</b> is an organisation or person accountable for the delivery of supports to service users.</p> <p><b>Support Worker/staff/personnel:</b> also referred to as an attendant care worker, disability/aged care worker is an individual who is paid to assist or supervise a service user to perform tasks of daily living to support and maintain general wellbeing and enable meaningful involvement in social, family and community activities in the person’s home and community.</p> <p><b>Emergency Event:</b> is an event involving a sudden and large-scale alteration in state or circumstance which may also include Police / Military Operations, and Terrorism where there is the potential for widespread implications. In terms of its definition within this guideline, it refers to Natural Disaster, Severe Weather (Fire / Flood) and Health Pandemic with the potential of widespread implications for service delivery.</p> <p><b>PPE:</b> Personal Protective Equipment</p> |
| <p><b>Desired Outcome</b></p>                        | <p>To support service providers to prevent the risk of the transmission of infections, and to best respond to Health Emergencies s (e.g. Communicable disease) in the interests and safety of their service users and personnel in the home and community setting.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Guideline</b></p> | <p><b>Communicable Diseases and Health Threats</b></p> <p>Service Providers must regularly remind staff of the importance of staying home if they are unwell to protect vulnerable service users, staff and other supports and ensure reminders are communicated periodically throughout the year.</p> <p>Service Providers should provide regular training on the importance of universal precautions/infection control and the use and disposal of PPE.</p> <p>Service users should also be made aware of the importance of informing a service provider if they are unwell with a potentially highly communicable disease.</p> <p>Service Providers should have a system in place to be able to monitor and record actions taken to ensure as much as practicable, the safety of service users, staff and other supports in relation to risks associated with communicable diseases and health threats.</p> <p><u>Infectious Diseases</u></p> <p>Infections are caused by pathogens such as bacteria and viruses, that enter the body. These can spread in several ways, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airborne – by inhaling or breathing in the germs from a sneeze or cough of an infected person.</li> <li>• Touch – by sharing personal items, clothing, or objects, touching an infected object, clothing, or person or by being touched by an infected person, especially in the case of poor hygiene where their hands are dirty. This is especially true where sufficient handwashing techniques have not been applied after using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Body Fluids – pathogens in saliva, urine, faeces, and blood can enter another persons’ body via cuts, abrasions and through the mouth and eyes.</li> </ul> <p>Staff should be trained, with refresher training on the correct procedures and reminded that these should be followed, with the assumption that everyone is potentially infectious. The use of PPE and good personal hygiene practices are the best form of defence when it comes to prevention.</p> <p><u>Personal Hygiene</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand washing – preventing the spread of pathogens starts with regular and correct hand washing. Hands are thoroughly wet with soap applied and lathered for at least 20 seconds. Hands are then dried completely with paper towel.</li> </ul> |
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- Unbroken skin – cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof dressing as a barrier to preventing any pathogens entering your body.
- Personal items – should not be shared

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Gloves – staff are to always wear gloves if touching broken skin, mucus membrane or performing any other tasks where there is a risk of exposure to body fluids.

Staff are required to wash their hands before applying gloves and must always wash their hands thoroughly between service users and wear fresh gloves to perform each task. Hand sanitiser should be available and utilised in the absence of handwashing facilities.

- Goggles / Face Shields or Masks - should be utilised by all staff when working closely with a person who is unwell and where there is a risk of exposure to sneezing or coughing or where there is a high likelihood of exposure to body fluids.
- Disposable gowns and plastic aprons should be utilised by staff when performing tasks where staff clothing may be exposed to bodily fluids, e.g. bathing, toileting, wound change etc. Policy/procedures for appropriately disposing and cleaning of equipment to prevent infection is to be followed by all staff.

PPE Supplies

It is recommended that organisations routinely monitor and manage their PPE supplies as part of an ongoing strategy, to avoid running out of unobtainable items. As observed during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, this can have a great impact on the ability to continue to deliver services, including those identified as essential.

The Australian Government has released a Buyers Guide to assist buyers when buying PPE. The guide provides links to portals that have been established to connect buyers and sellers of PPE, as well as useful links related to PPE.

[Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Buyers Guide | COVID-19 \(mcusercontent.com\)](https://www.mcgill.ca/healthcare/healthcare-articles/2020/05/2020-05-20-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-buyers-guide-covid-19)

**Pandemic**

Service providers are required to take reasonable precautions to minimise infection risk and be prepared to respond in the event of an outbreak.

They should refer to their State / Territory advice on actions and the use of PPE when providing supports <https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments>.

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|                                  | <p>In addition, the Australian Government have other resources available that may assist providers.</p> <p><a href="#">Fact Sheet: Living well in the COVID-19 pandemic (health.gov.au)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Fact Sheet: (health.gov.au)</a></p> <p><b>Reporting</b></p> <p>It is important to comply with general health orders and government directives and to remain updated on Commonwealth, State / Territory requirements for reporting during emergency events including the need for service providers to report any cases of communicable disease or interruption to service delivery.</p> <p>Service providers should maintain awareness of these obligations, either through communication or alerts from those Authorities, checking their websites for updates or contacting them directly.</p> |
| <p><b>Resource documents</b></p> | <p><b>Protecting Older Australians: COVID-19 update 23 October 2020</b></p> <p><a href="#">Protecting Older Australians: COVID-19 update 23 October 2020   Australian Government Department of Health</a></p> <p><b>NDIS Commission coronavirus (COVID-19) information</b></p> <p><a href="#">NDIS Commission coronavirus (COVID-19) information   NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guide for Home Care Providers</b></p> <p><a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guide for Home Care Providers   Australian Government Department of Health</a></p> <p><b>COVID-19 infection control training</b></p> <p><a href="#">COVID-19 infection control training   Australian Government Department of Health</a></p>   |