

COVID-19 Coronavirus FAQ's

We want you to know that your health and wellbeing is important to us and we are closely monitoring the Government's advice around COVID-19. Valued Lives has a dedicated Coronavirus Response Committee who are meeting regularly to ensure all families, participants, employees and support workers are kept informed.

The Department of Health has a specific hotline to respond to enquiries by NDIS participants – 1800 020 080 (24 hours a day, seven days a week). If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can use the National Relay Service to access any of the department's listed phone numbers.

What can you do if you are concerned about exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If you are concerned about your potential exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) you are able to contact the Department of Health Coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080 or the National Relay Service on 1300 555 727. Alternatively, if you prefer, please contact your Network Advisor or Valued Lives directly on 08 9274 7760.

How can I maintain social distancing practices if I require close care from my support workers?

You may need to have close contact with your support workers, however, where possible, we encourage you to reduce unnecessary touching and maintain distance between you and your support worker. Social distancing is important because COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person through close contact.

Should my support worker be wearing a mask? Or should I be wearing a mask?

If you are well and your support worker is well, you do not need to wear surgical masks as there is little evidence supporting the widespread use of surgical masks in healthy people to prevent transmission in public. Surgical masks are only helpful in preventing people who have coronavirus (COVID-19) from spreading it to others.

How can I keep my home clean and hygienic?

Where possible, try to reduce the amount of people coming in and out of your home. Talk to your service providers and develop a plan for managing your supports during this time. If you have support workers coming and going, it is important that they wash their hands regularly, as well as yourself, and maintain clean surfaces.

What happens if I contract coronavirus (COVID-19) or need to go into quarantine?

If you are impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) it is important for us to ensure that you still receive your disability related supports and any additional supports you may need. If you contract coronavirus (COVID-19), Valued Lives must be notified immediately and we will assist you where possible to work with the Department of Health and the NDIA. Your Network Advisor will then work with you to ensure you receive adequate supports during this time.

What if I had an upcoming plan review meeting scheduled?

If your plan is due to expire, you do not need to take any action – it will automatically be extended by 12 months. If your current plan is not a 12-month plan, your extended plan will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. Your extended plan will have the same core and capacity building budget as your current plan. Planning review meetings are still occurring, however they are typically being held over the phone, by email or webchat. If you are happy with your extended plan, a plan review meeting is not required.

I want to temporarily change from Agency to Self or Plan-Managed, can I do this?

Yes, you can, however this will mean that a review of your plan is required.

If I am using less of my current plan's funding because services and supports are being cancelled, will I get less funding in my next plan?

Plans should be based on your disability-related support needs, not by assessing unspent funds from your previous plan.

Can a family member or friend provide support that would normally be provided by support workers?

Unfortunately, not at this time. If you are concerned that your current support needs are not being met, please speak to your Support Coordinator.

My provider cannot deliver services, how do I make sure I am not charged?

If your current support worker arrangements are not met, we will be in touch with you to organise a replacement support worker or other arrangements to help you. We will endeavour to meet your essential needs.

If you are concerned that you have been charged for a service that has not been provided or that is not aligned to your arrangement with us, please let us know.

What help can I receive with obtaining essential items and supplies?

We may need to support you a little bit differently during this time, however we will ensure that you have adequate supplies and your support needs are met.

Are there any special arrangements for me to get food supplies?

Coles and Woolworths have announced additional assistance for people with disabilities. This includes dedicated shopping times and access to online delivery services. If you would like more information on how to setup online delivery or would like assistance with shopping directly in store, please speak to your Support Coordinator or Network Advisor.

What happens if my support worker cannot attend to my needs?

We will help to ensure you receive adequate delivery of supports. If your usual support worker is self-isolating, we will be in touch with you as soon as possible to organise a replacement support worker to attend to your needs.

What if my support worker is self-isolating with symptoms, how do I know it is safe for them to return to work and support me again?

We have procedures in place for the ongoing management of employees and coronavirus (COVID-19). We have communicated in alignment with Government advice, that:

- Anybody who has recently travelled overseas must self-isolate for 14 days upon returning to Australia.
- Anybody who has had close contact with a person with a confirmed case of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) must notify valued lives immediately.
- If you have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, or difficulty breathing, please seek medical advice immediately.

Anyone who meets any of the above criteria must notify Valued Lives immediately to ensure any potential risks are controlled. Medical clearances must be provided to Valued Lives and approved by Network Managers to ensure and allow for continuity of support services.