

# COVID-19 Tips from Residential Care

## Key Causes of Outbreaks

- Poor infection control processes
- Inadequate/poor use of PPE due to inadequately trained staff
- Lack of social distancing
- Practice of putting infected patients in same room

## Recommendations

### Organisation

- Appoint a Pandemic Coordinator
- Have key organisational contacts in place - Dept Health/Funders/other local organisations etc
- Have a Post-Outbreak Support Plan in place – this should be part of your Pandemic Plan
- Ensure your Incident Reporting Tool is relevant & up-to-date
- Have Workforce Contingency Plan if staff need to self-isolate
- Ensure that you have protocols to ensure that your suppliers & sub-contractors are adhering to government regulations & appropriate use of PPE
- Create Risk Assessment Process for staff to utilise prior to running face to face group activities
- Register for Government email updates, tools, Apps & factsheets
- Monitor use of PPE & ensure adequate stock levels
- Undertake random audits and obtain client feedback to ensure that

### Staffing

- Have a Workforce Contingency Plan - know how to manoeuvre rosters to manage crisis situations
- Be a good employer – ensure ongoing care of staff, make sure they are supported & you understand their perspective of CV-19. Consider staff payment measures if staff are required to self isolate due to being in contact with a CV positive client
- Ensure regular, consistent and clear communication utilising a number of platforms or mediums (eg Microsoft Teams) for staff, volunteers, Board etc. Ensure that communication is two-way.
- Staff training – ensure that all staff have all undertaken Govern training on PPE, infection control, how to screen clients before entering their home etc, also undertake competency checks
- Know your workforce – undertake Staff Survey to assist you
- Plan to have Staff Reserves in place that you can access to assist in emergencies
- Promote principle of good self management to reduce & prevent contraction & spreading of virus, plus protocols if staff test positive

## Clients

- Create Client Screening Tool for staff to use. Understand the risks associated with whatever each client has been doing in the past 14 days. Ensure clients inform you if they are unwell or have been in contact with others who have tested positive for CV, if they have been in hot spots etc
- Communicate constantly with clients – use multiple channels & methods & be consistent in your message
- Monitor & nurture clients – what else can you do for them to help them stay at home? Check the client is receiving appropriate medical care & has received medical clearance
- Look at your referral process – do you need to change this to ensure you are getting important information?
- Utilise Government Factsheet “It's Ok to Have Homecare”, online activities and/or video messages to alleviate client concerns
- Make sure that you have adequate client contact details: family members, GP, other health pros
- Be aware of subsidy changes & communicate these to clients

## Using Volunteers

- Ensure both parties are wearing masks & maintaining social distancing in face-to-face activities
- Utilise aged volunteers for online activities only
- Check your Volunteer Insurance Coverage as this may not cover volunteers if they contract CV-19 via their volunteer work
- Apply same protocols used for casual staff for volunteers, and use Screening tool

## Infection Control

- Establish strong CV-19 protocols & escalation procedures & that you have training in place & a process for being immediately informed if these are not being followed
- Have adequate & appropriate PPE – keep minimum of 3 months stock of equipment
- Utilise screening tools & download Government Apps – consider providing staff with work mobiles
- Test staff & clients at first signs of symptoms
- Establish both a client & staff register
- Ensure that you know how your clinical governance applies to the use of staff from online platforms as these can pose a much higher risk
- Understand masks – how to use, correct disposal, types that are effective e.g. cloth masks are not deemed effective in infection control