

**Terri Carroll**

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**From:** Registration (NDIS Commission) <Registration@ndiscommission.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 9 March 2020 2:52 PM  
**Subject:** Practice Alert: Coronavirus information for providers [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

This alert is based on advice from Australian Government that should be regularly reviewed by NDIS providers.

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# Provider Alert

NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission

## CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION FOR PROVIDERS - 9 March 2020

This alert is based on advice from the [Australian Government](#) Department of Health that should be regularly reviewed by NDIS providers.

### Background

- On 30 January 2020, the [World Health Organization](#) declared the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
- Some people with disability are more likely to be vulnerable to the severe adverse effects associated with COVID-19.

### Your obligations

As an NDIS provider, you have obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct and the NDIS Practice Standards, as well as your conditions of registration, that relate to the delivery of safe, quality supports and services, and the management of risks associated with the supports you provide to NDIS participants.

Possible COVID-19 infection of providers, workers and people otherwise engaged by a provider to deliver NDIS supports, and the risk of infection of NDIS participants, present

risks that you are expected to manage in the context of your obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct and relevant NDIS Practice Standards.

The [NDIS Code of Conduct](#) requires workers and providers who deliver NDIS supports to NDIS participants to, among other things:

- provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill
- promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability.

The [NDIS Practice Standards](#) provide guidance for registered providers, including standards for:

• **Governance and operational management, including:**

- having robust governance and operational management systems
- considering organisational risks, other requirements related to operating under the NDIS, participants' and workers' needs and the wider organisational environment in your strategic and business planning
- identifying and managing risks, both to participants and workers
- analysing, prioritising and treating risks to the organisation, including participants, work health and safety risks, and risks associated with providing supports
- ensuring continuity of support so that participants access timely and appropriate support without interruption, including that disaster preparedness and planning measures are in place to enable continuation of critical supports before, during or after a disaster.

• **Provision of supports environment, including:**

- that each participant must access supports in a safe environment that is appropriate to their needs. This includes, where relevant, you working with other providers and services to identify and treat risks, ensure safe environments, and prevent and manage injuries
- verification standards include a requirement for risk management, including managing work health and safety, which requires protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of workers and others who may be affected by work activities – including NDIS participants.

## **Notifying the NDIS Commission of certain events**

It is a condition of your registration with the NDIS Commission that you [notify us of changes or events](#) that adversely affect your ability to deliver supports and services to NDIS participants. This includes any change or event that:

- significantly affects your ability to comply with your conditions of registration and the NDIS Practice Standards
- seriously impairs your ability to effectively conduct your operations and deliver ongoing supports or services to NDIS participants

- adversely affects a person with disability's access to the supports or services you are registered to provide.

## Reducing the risk to participants

While COVID-19 is of concern, it is important to remember that most people who display symptoms (such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness) are likely suffering from a cold or other respiratory illness—not COVID-19.

The Department of Health advises that people most at risk of getting the virus are those who have recently been in in a high-risk country/region and people who have been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of coronavirus.

If a worker has returned from a country or region that is at higher risk for COVID-19, they should not have contact with NDIS participants. This relates to people who:

- have travelled to (including transiting through) mainland China in the 14 days before the onset of illness
- left or transited through Iran on or after 1 March 2020
- have travelled from the Republic of Korea (South Korea) on or after 5 March 2020
- had close or casual contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days before illness onset.

In addition, you should **reinforce staff hygiene practices**, in particular:

- Washing hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet (see more information about [hand washing](#) published by the Department of Health)
- Covering the mouth when coughing and sneezing, disposing of tissues, and using alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- If unwell, avoiding contact with others (i.e. touching, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact)

You should review your practices and advice to staff – including your business continuity plans – to prepare for implementing activities that will continue to provide critical supports and services to participants while reducing their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Undertake contingency planning in the event that staff involved in the delivery of services are affected by COVID-19 and are unable to work.

## COVID-19 health information

You should keep up to date with Department of Health recommendations on how to respond should a staff member or an NDIS participant displays symptoms.

The [Department of Health](#) website contains useful up to date information on COVID-19, including ways to contact the Department of Health.

## Other links

The following resources have been developed by the Australian Department of Health:

- [Regular updates on COVID-19](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) resources](#)
- [Information for health care and residential care workers](#)
- [COVID-19 weekly epidemiology reports, Australia](#)
- [Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus](#)
- [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare](#)

The following resources are on the NDIS Commission website:

- [NDIS Code of Conduct \(NDIS providers\)](#)
- [NDIS Practice Standards](#)
- [Notification of changes or events form \(Registered providers\)](#)

The following advice is on the NDIA website for providers and participants:

- [NDIS and disaster response](#)



**NDIS Quality  
and Safeguards  
Commission**

## General Enquiries

**1800 035 544** (free call from landlines)

Our contact centre is open 9am to 4.30pm in the NT  
9.00am to 5.00pm in the ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, TAS and VIC. Monday to  
Friday, excluding public holidays.

To provide feedback, contact the NDIS Commission by emailing  
[contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au](mailto:contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au)

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NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission  
PO Box 210  
Penrith NSW 2750

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