



CLS Staff FAQ: COVID-19

Updated as of 20.03.2020 - updates are in orange

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What is CLS doing to minimise the risk to clients, families and employees?

CLS is undertaking a number of activities to ensure we do everything we can to limit the risk of infection, including:

- Implementing National and State Government directives regarding workplace practices, including indicators that people should stay away from the workplace
- Refreshing infection control practices, including ensuring all staff complete a newly developed online training module (relevant to both COVID-19 and Influenza)
- Regular reminders of safe practices (handwashing, infection control, etc.) through regular emails, posters and monitoring at accommodation sites and CLS offices
- Suspending Community Access for high-risk clients to densely populated locations (with the exception of essential medical appointments)
- Limiting all non-essential visitors to accommodation arrangements
- Ensuring all staff and essential visitors are adhering to Mandatory Standard Precaution Protocols with increased airborne and contact precautions and PPE (masks, gloves, etc.)
- Sharing easy-read information

- Cancelling any non-essential organisational meetings/activities that require groups of people to congregate
- Encouraging social distancing with a no-touch protocol to limit transfer transmissions
- Working to stockpile additional clinical hand wash and disinfectant stock in case national stock levels decline

How are CLS keeping staff informed?

You will have received a text message asking you to check your email accounts at minimum prior to every shift to ensure you have the most up-to-date information. If you didn't receive this text please call the office and let us know.

Over the coming days and weeks, we will continue to keep you informed through regular emails.

Key places you will be able to access the information are:

- Your CLS email account (be sure to check your email each day you're at work)
- The "Announcements" button on the CLS Staff Portal (via www.cls.org.au/staff-login/)
- Posters in Houses and Offices
- You can always call the office where you have been unable to access information or are unsure of what it means

To help keep you informed about our preparations and planning, we have prepared this initial FAQ list that has been distributed via internal staff email, and uploaded to the Staff Portal on the CLS website.

Send any questions you have to hello@cls.org.au. As questions are submitted, we will develop responses that are firmly grounded in evidence, and then will distribute an updated FAQ.

Our Registered Nurse (Meg Williams) will also be available to our Supported Independent Living (SIL) arrangements to ensure that infection control procedures are being followed and to provide mentoring where appropriate.

Should I be worried if someone is getting precautionary testing?

There are thousands of people getting tested in Australia for COVID-19. This doesn't mean that they have the virus, it just means that they have symptoms that are like COVID-19 and they want to make sure they don't have it.

Where there are concerns about the health and wellbeing of CLS staff, they will be excluded from the workplace until cleared by their GP or Queensland Health as safe for work.

If there are suspected cases in clients we support, we will work with individuals to best understand their unique needs and whether we are best-placed to support them or they would prefer to pause services until they have received further advice from their medical professional and the requirements and recommendations of the Department of Health and Queensland Health.

If you are working with someone who is showing flu or cold-like symptoms, increase your use of PPE as per protocols.

Where we are supporting individuals who are displaying cold and flu symptoms, support workers will be utilising PPE equipment (masks, gloves, etc.) to minimise risk of infection or cross-infection.

How can I help CLS stop the spread of COVID-19?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses – be it at work, home or in the community. Jeanette Young (Queensland’s Chief Health Officer) has also advised all Queenslanders to stop shaking hands and avoid unnecessary physical contact. Dr Young said “It might seem rude but avoiding unnecessary contact is a smart way of stopping the spread of the virus”. We ask all CLS staff to follow this advice strictly and encourage our clients and families to do the same.

By working together to encourage appropriate social distancing and frequent hand washing, we will ensure that all CLS clients, family members, and staff are doing their part to reduce the likelihood that COVID-19 (or other viruses) spreads further.

In summary, doing the following is a massive help:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating and food preparation, after going to the toilet, after sneezing or coughing, touching your face or contact with any public surfaces
- Cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues immediately (all CLS houses have clinical waste bins) and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Regularly moisturising to prevent dryness, cracking or breakdown (reducing the risk of infection)
- If unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5m away from people) and contact the National Coronavirus Health Information Hotline on 1800 020 080 or phone your GP. Also note that both Bundaberg and Hervey Bay hospitals have set up fever clinics.

Will clients showing symptoms continue to be supported?

CLS will endeavour to meet all of its support commitments. Where someone is unwell, we will use additional safety precautions to limit infection. Where someone is diagnosed with COVID-19 we will be guided by their health professionals as to what support they require and who is best-placed to provide this support.

Our hope is that the proactive approach taken by the Government will limit the spread of the virus, however we also need to be honest that this is an evolving situation and we need to remain vigilant. If the situation changes, we may need to limit services that we consider non-essential (e.g. Skills Campus). If this decision is made, it will be communicated directly to people and we will work with you to understand and minimise the impact.

When should I go to the GP?

If you have cold and flu-like symptoms you should contact your GP and not come to work until you have a clearance. Let your GP know how you’re feeling and any other relevant information (including travel history) as this may change how they support you (in order to prevent infecting others).

If you are worried you may have symptoms, the Queensland Government has a Novel Coronavirus Quiz: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/novel-coronavirus-quiz>.

Can visitors attend CLS or houses at the moment?

Visitors should be kept to family and necessary services.

We would encourage family to refrain from visiting a CLS site or supported home if they are experiencing flu-like symptoms. In these situations, we are happy to support ongoing contact via skype, email and phone until they are feeling better.

Where there are visitors, you must ask them whether they have any cold or flu symptoms before they enter the home and prompt them to wash their hands upon arrival and when leaving, and to wear masks and gloves where appropriate. If they do have symptoms, advise them that it is unsafe for them to enter. Where you have concerns or people do not follow your instructions, **call the office immediately**.

Where can I go to get information on COVID-19 or any concerns I have?

We would strongly encourage you to stick with verified sources of information:

- Queensland Health Resources: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>
- Australian Department of Health Resources: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>
- Primary Health Network updates: <https://www.ourphn.org.au/novel-coronavirus-latest-updates/>
- NDIS Updates: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/latest>
- NDIS Easy Read Resources: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-and-other-government-services/ndis-and-disaster-response>

What information is available for people with a disability about COVID-19?

Everyone has questions about what is going on right now, we would recommend using some of the below resources:

- Viruses and Staying Healthy resource: <https://cid.org.au/resource/viruses-and-staying-healthy/>
- Handwashing video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d914EnpU4Fo&t=3s>
- Handwashing Gangnam style: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGddyTW5eMc>
- Easy Read information about the Corona Virus: <https://www.thegrowingspace.com.au/coronavirus/>

Will Allied Health Appointments go ahead?

Where people are healthy their Allied Health Appointments can go ahead. If you are experiencing any cold or flu symptoms please ring and let us know and where it is not essential we can cancel and reschedule the appointment. Where it is essential, we can discuss with you extra precautions

(e.g. like us coming to you and wearing protective equipment) that may enable the appointment to go ahead. We can also provide over-the-phone support where it's identified as most appropriate.

We can assure you that the Allied Health Centre (along with all CLS work sites) is taking extra precautions with regards to cleaning and disinfecting clinic rooms, toys and resources.

What do I do if I live with someone who is unwell?

We encourage everyone to take necessary precautions around social distancing – including with the people that they live with. This includes:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating and food preparation, after going to the toilet, after sneezing or coughing, touching your face or contact with any public surfaces
- Cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues immediately and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Avoid sharing meal preparation
- Avoid shaking hands, hugging, other close contact or being in close quarters (i.e. sharing a bedroom)
- Regularly moisturising to prevent dryness, cracking or breakdown (reducing the risk of infection)

Where you are living with someone who is confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, you will be given specific instructions from your health professionals.

When will Support Workers and other CLS employees be directed to stay home?

All staff who are healthy and asymptomatic (not displaying symptoms) are to attend work. Only CLS staff displaying flu-like symptoms (temperature, sore throat, runny nose, cough, headache, etc.) should refrain from attending work until they have a clearance from their GP.

Where influenza-like illness (ILI) has been identified, staff will be unable to return to work until they have been tested and confirmed negative (or no longer infectious) for Influenza. The definition for ILI is as follows (as per [Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Public Health Management of Influenza Outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities in Australia](#)):

- Sudden onset of symptoms,
- **AND**, at least one of the following three respiratory symptoms:
 - Cough (new or worsening)
 - Sore throat
 - Shortness of breath
- **AND**, at least one of the following four systemic symptoms:
 - Fever or feverishness
 - Malaise
 - Headache
 - Myalgia

The decision to test for COVID-19 will be at the direction of GPs and Health Officials. All CLS employees are expected to follow directions given by government authorities and medical professionals where it is identified that they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

What happens if I have to take leave because of illness?

You are able to take sick leave and annual leave if you need to take time from work. If you are unsure of your balances or have queries about this process, please email payroll@cls.org.au. If you have concerns about how taking leave may impact you, please speak with HR or email them at hr@cls.org.au.

Can I share CLS resources (i.e. hand sanitiser) with family and friends?

We know that the lack of resources in the community is stressful and has an impact on all of us. At the moment, CLS has enough stock to ensure that clients and staff can stay safe while accessing our services. However, we have to be mindful that our ability to replace stock at this time is limited, and we need to ensure that it is readily available – particularly for clients at high-risk. As such we are unable to share our resources with family and friends.

Remember, whether you're at work or not:

- Wash your hands regularly: Use soap and water wherever possible (not only is it more readily available but is just as good, if not better, than hand sanitiser)
- Encourage social distancing of 1.5m
- Avoid touching others
- Cough into your elbow, not your hand

Should I pick up a client's "click and collect" with or without them? What if "click and collect isn't available?

People still need to access the community for essential activities. However we should be avoiding spending social time in shopping centres (window shopping, attending the food court, etc.). When we do go, we should try and avoid busy times and ensure that we are spending the shortest time available. Planning ahead by supporting people to think through their shopping list will help with this.

If "click and collect" is an option and the person is okay with it, this is ideal.

Remember, when supporting someone in the community:

- encourage them to wash their hands before and after being in the community (and while out where possible)
- practice social distancing and refrain from touching others
- sneeze and cough into your elbow rather than hand
- always take disinfectant supplies when accessing the community

Where you are concerned about someone's safety in going into the community to do their own shopping, contact the office and we can assist in making arrangements.

What should I do if I can't adhere to the recommended 1.5m social distancing (e.g. during client transportation and providing support)?

Practice good hygiene and using appropriate PPE when in the community. Ensure you take disinfectant supplies with you every time you leave the home and use them where needed.

Avoid transporting people who are exhibiting cold and flu symptoms. Where this is not possible, use PPE.

It is not always possible to stay exactly 1.5m apart – particularly when providing care. This is where you need to ensure regular handwashing practices and use your judgement and training to determine where PPE is required. Always use PPE when providing personal care supports OR where you are supporting someone who is displaying cold and flu symptoms.

If you are using your own vehicle, wipe down or spray surfaces after you have finished transporting a person.

What's happening to keep shared spaces at CLS offices clean?

Additional cleaning practices have been created. All activity rooms are being cleaned between each use, and door handles and work surfaces are being cleaned a minimum of three times each day.

CLS Fleet vehicles are being cleaned daily and Hygiene packs are available in each car.

What does the Government's announcement regarding meetings requiring four square metres of floor space per person mean for CLS?

We have the measuring tapes out and are checking our meeting/activity room sizes to ensure we know what the maximum number of people in a room at one time should be. At this stage, we do not foresee this drastically changing any of our meetings or programs being able to go ahead, it may change the room we use.