

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) workplace risk management policy

A novel (new) strain of coronavirus is causing a respiratory disease called COVID-19. COVID-19 spreads from person to person in a similar way to the flu:

- **from close contact with an infected person**
- **from touching objects or surfaces contaminated by the sneeze or cough of an infected person and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- **COVID-19 can cause symptoms similar to the flu, including fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath.**

Most people who are infected experience mild illness from which they fully recover. However, some people may develop more serious illness with pneumonia. People at increased risk include the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions or a weakened immune system.

It is important to remember that most people who become ill with respiratory symptoms at work are likely suffering from a cold, the flu or other respiratory illness – not COVID-19

**In order to limit the spread of infection and ensure the safety of our clients and clinicians we have put in place the following procedures. Please adhere to the below mentioned procedures as required:**

**Teleconference assessments and meetings-** The NDIA have advised that face to face meetings with clients be changed to teleconference meetings wherever possible. Should the client already have a face to face appointment booked or will be requiring one in the future, the clinician must contact the client to discuss the option of holding the appointment via teleconference or phone.

**Face to face assessments -** We understand that face to face appointments may still be necessary, therefore the following procedures have been put in place to limit unnecessary exposure to the virus. Prior to attending the appointment each clinician must hold a pre-review screening test over the phone in which the following questions must be asked:

- **Have you (or are there any additional people on the premises who have) returned from overseas in the last 14 days**
- **Have you (or are there any additional people on the premises who have) had known contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19**
- **Have you (or are there any additional people on the premises who have) experienced symptoms of fever or acute respiratory infection in the last 14 days.**

If the client answers **YES** to any of these questions the face to face appointment cannot proceed. Explain the reasons to the client and offer them an alternative of a teleconference or over the phone appointment.

If a face to face appointment is required it is important that all clinicians, clients and their family be proactive in virus prevention practice. This includes:

- **Washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds directly before and after the appointment with the client.**
- **If possible, follow the social distancing directive of 1.5m between all parties present at the appointment**
- **Sneeze and cough into your elbow, not your hands**

**Stage 1 and 2 lockdown** - Should the government take the action of a stage 1 or 2 lockdown, face to face appointments may still be possible but can only be held if all parties including the clinician and client/family believe the review is essential (e.g. swallowing review, chest physio). However, it is a requirement that GRS clinicians wear face masks and gloves during these visits. They will also supply these to the clients if requested.

**Stage 3 and 4 lockdown** - In the event that the government enforces a state-wide stage 3 or 4 lock down, it would be in the best interest of both the client and clinician that community visits and clinic appointments be held only in the event that they are deemed essential. **As the service GRS provides to its clients is considered essential, face to face appointments may still be possible if the advice from authorities allows it. PPE must be worn at all times. Please follow the guidelines mentioned above for face to face appointments.**

Further information and advice surrounding Covid-19 can be obtained from <https://www.health.gov.au/> .

Please be assured that GRS will be closely monitoring the advice given with regards to COVID-19 and will act accordingly in a swift and appropriate manner. By working together and following the social distancing advice given by the government we are ensuring the highest standard of care can be given to our clients and all of our staff and clients have the best chance in remaining healthy over the coming months.