



MEDIA STATEMENT

16 March 2020

People who are already experiencing vulnerability and hardship in our community are more at risk when a public health emergency occurs; as adequate access to hygiene facilities, a safe home – or people to support them become difficult to access.

UnitingCare West is deeply concerned about the potential impacts of COVID-19 on our team, our volunteers, the people we support and the broader community.

We have been monitoring the situation closely and have implemented a COVID-19 Response Plan which will be updated regularly to guide our ongoing response to this rapidly changing situation.

We will continue to be guided by advice from WA Health and other authorities as well as taking additional measures to protect the health and wellbeing of people wherever appropriate. This includes distributing information to our team, our volunteers and the people we support to inform them of what this may mean for them.

Avoiding the spread of the virus depends on our collective and individual responsibility. At UCW, we are taking action to maintain the good health and wellbeing of our team and others by:

- Meeting, at minimum, public health directives to protect people
- Following best-practice hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infection
- Adopting flexible work practices such as working from home and staggered working hours
- Using underutilised spaces as temporary offices or support service locations
- Ensuring team members quarantine themselves and seek a medical diagnosis when they or someone in their household feels ill
- Identifying how services may be able to altered to minimise risk of infection while still providing the essential supports
- Cancelling or postponing non-essential meetings or gatherings of people
- Arranging phone or video meetings with people wherever possible
- Postponing all non-essential volunteering
- Asking visitors not to enter offices if they have COVID-like symptoms, and call us instead.

The situation we are experiencing is complex, rapidly changing and unprecedented. We would like to acknowledge the commitment and hard work of our team members and the support from our volunteers, partners and health professionals.

We'll continue to review our response to the outbreak and provide regular updates to our team, our volunteers, the people we support and their families.

For up to date information, we recommend you regularly visit the following websites:

[WA Department of Health](#)

[Australian Department of Health](#)

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