

Communications Pack

COVID-19

Version control

This pack will be updated regularly or as required

Version	Date	Revisions by	Comments
1-10	16 March – 18 May 2020	Ren Adams (RA)	Prepared and various updates
11	26 June 2020	Nugent Stiles (NS)	Updates – Returning to our workplace (5.1.2)
12	2 February 2021	RA	Updates – 5-day hard lockdown
13	3 February 2021	RA	Updates – various, new 13 COVID #, Disability information
14	5 February 2021	RA	Updates – post 5 day lockdown updates

1. How to use this information

This communications pack is a resource for the Uniting WA team to help guide internal and external communications with our team, volunteers, the people we support and other stakeholders.

This information is a guide only - you are encouraged to apply nuanced and stakeholder-specific language in your verbal and written communications. Remember, what is applicable and suitable for one group of people may not be for another group.

While the essence of the information in this pack should not be changed, use your judgement and knowledge of the people you work with in determining the correct messaging and seek approval or review as per the **protocols** below.

For additional help on your communications, please refer to the [Uniting WA Writing Guide](#) on the Hub or [contact the comms team](#) for advice.

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2. Protocols

The COVID-19 pandemic can be complex and rapidly changing. To ensure that our internal and external communications reflect the latest information and are consistent with the position of the organisation, please follow the following protocols.

Communication	Response handled by	Resource used	Approval / review required
Media enquiries	Lead – Communications	All	CEO (or delegate)
General queries – phone & email	Reception	Internal FAQs	Refer to applicable Practice Lead, PPL or Lead - Communications
Participant/client phone & email queries	Practice area	Client FAQs	Practice Lead
Participant/client letters	Practice area	Client FAQs	Practice Lead
Volunteer letters / guidelines	Volunteer Coordinator	Internal FAQs	Head of Philanthropy and Business Development
Uniting team enquiries	Practice area	Internal FAQs	Practice Lead

3. Important update: 5-day lockdown, 31 January to 5 February 2021

3.1 Key facts

- The hard lockdown starts 6pm Sunday, 31 January and **ends 6pm Friday, 5 February 2021**
- Affects the **Perth, Peel and the South-West regions** (Great Southern is not affected)
- You must **wear a mask** at all times when outside of your home, unless you are driving by yourself

3.2 Regular updates

Updates specifically **for the Uniting Team** are available on the:

- Website: <https://unitingwa.org.au/covidupdates/>
- Hub: <https://intranet.unitingcarewest.org.au/covid-19-hub>

Updates **for members of the public and the people we support** are available on the:

- Website: <https://unitingwa.org.au/news-and-resources/media-releases/covid-19-coronavirus-updates/>

3.3 What you must do during the hard lockdown (until 6pm Friday 5 February)

At Uniting, you are required to work from home during the lockdown unless you:

- Work in a critical service that cannot be provided from home (such as Family Group Homes, Tranby, Street to Home outreach, My Home)
- Cannot complete your work to a suitable standard from home and have approval from your Practice Lead (or equivalent) to continue working from a Uniting office.

If not working, you must stay at home other than to:

- Shop for essentials like groceries, medicine and necessary supplies
- Attend to medical or health care needs
- Exercise with only one other person, limited to one hour per day within 5km of your home.

Restrictions during hard lockdown

- People should not leave Perth, Peel or the South-West during this period
- Restaurants and cafes to provide takeaway service only
- Elective surgery and procedures for categories 2 and 3 will be suspended from Tuesday, February 2. Category 1 and urgent category 2 surgery will continue
- No visitors will be allowed in homes, unless caring for a vulnerable person or an emergency
- No visitors to hospitals or residential aged care and/or disability facilities, unless there are exceptional circumstances

These facilities need to close:

- Schools, universities, TAFES and education facilities
- Pubs, bars and clubs
- Gyms and indoor sporting venues
- Playgrounds, skate parks and outdoor recreational facilities
- Cinemas, entertainment venues, and casinos
- Large religious gatherings and places of worship
- Libraries and cultural institutions.

3.4 Testing

People are encouraged to get tested if they have symptoms and if people have been to an exposure site, they must go and get tested.

NOTE: If you are tested for COVID-19, you must tell [Jen Park](#), Head of People Services.

WA COVID clinic operating hours will be extended as part of a testing surge. Testing locations and times can be viewed here https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/COVID-clinics

The WA Health contact tracing team is still working with this positive case and a list of exposure sites will be updated on

<http://www.wa.gov.au> and

https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/Locations-visited-by-confirmed-cases

3.5 Post-lockdown transition period until 12.01am, Sunday 14 February

A post-lockdown transition period for the Perth and Peel regions will be in effect **from 6pm Friday 5 February until 12.01am Sunday 14 February**, allowing for the 14-day covid incubation period.

The South-West region will return to pre-lockdown conditions from 6pm Friday, February 5.

During the post lockdown transitional measures in Perth and Peel (until 14 February) you must:

- Continue to wear a mask in public and while at work, unless when doing vigorous outdoor exercise
- Practice physical distancing where possible and maintain good personal hygiene at all times.

All other activities are subject to additional safety measures:

- Business and venues can re-open, except for the casino and nightclubs
- The 4m2 capacity rule applies as well as a 150-person capacity at hospitality, entertainment, fitness venues and events including weddings, funerals (excluding staff)
- Community sport can involve up to 150 people including players, officials and spectators
- Seated service only at hospitality venues
- Dancing only permitted at weddings and dance studios
- 20-person limit for private indoor and outdoor gatherings
- Visits to aged care and disability care facilities restricted to compassionate grounds and advocates
- Residential school and boarding facilities can resume with a COVID Safety Plan
- Only essential travel, including work, is permitted in and out of the Perth and Peel regions.

Perth and Peel schools will start from Monday, February 8, with the mandatory mask rule applying to all school staff and secondary students. Masks are not required for primary school students.

People who need to leave the Perth and Peel region for essential purposes must wear a mask at all times in other regions of WA, as per the rules in place in Perth and Peel.

Pre-lockdown requirements for the entire State still remain in place, and include:

- Mandatory contact registers for most WA businesses and venues
- Capacity restrictions for major venues
- Restrictions on travel to remote Aboriginal communities
- WA's controlled interstate border arrangements.

If you need any urgent information or advice on COVID, please contact the Coronavirus Information Helpline on 13 268 43 (13 COVID).

4. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) - Internal

4.1 Returning to our workplace

4.1.1 When will we return to our usual place of work?

In line with the post-lockdown transition period, Uniting teams can return to the workplace from 6.01pm Friday 5 February 2021.

Individual teams being encouraged to **work through the best solution** for them in returning to usual workplaces. No-one is compelled to return to your usual workplace if you feel unsafe, and we're maintaining our flexible work practices.

4.1.2 What happens when we start returning to our normal place of work?

We'll still maintain *physical distancing, good hygiene* and the *4m² rule* for all activities.

4.1.3 Will we be welcoming visitors at Uniting offices?

Yes, in line with any protocols as directed by the State Government.

All visitors are required to follow mandatory contact tracing laws by using the SafeWA app or by completing the handwritten register at reception. We also require visitors to use hand sanitiser as they enter and follow personal hygiene practices and the 4m² rule.

4.2 COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

4.2.1 What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new strain of human coronavirus which usually causes mild illness but can cause severe illness in some people. It is usually transmitted by:

- Close contact with an infectious person, including 24 hours before they start showing symptoms
- Contact with an droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- Touching your face or mouth after touching doorknobs, handrails on public transport or workstation equipment which has traces of the virus.

4.2.2 What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any or all of the following:

- Fever (common)
- Cough (common)
- Sore throat (sometimes)

- Shortness of breath (sometimes)
- Fatigue (sometimes)
- Loss of taste and/or smell (sometimes).

Symptoms can range mild to severe however, for most people, COVID-19 will be a mild infection.

4.2.3 How do I protect myself and others?

The best way to protect yourself and others is to practice good hygiene. This includes:

- Coughing or sneezing into a disposable tissue, clothing or your elbow
- Disposing of used tissues properly
- Closing the toilet lid before flushing
- Washing your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water
- Regularly using alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- If you feel ill, avoid contact with others, place yourself in self-isolation and seek medical advice.

4.2.4 What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation means that you:

- Do not go to public places such as work, school, shopping centres, childcare or university
- Ask someone to get food and other necessities for you and leave them at your front door
- Do not let visitors in — only people who usually live with you should be in your home
- Need to wear a mask outside of your home
- Should stay in touch by phone and online with your family and friends
- Continue to isolate yourself until you have a “Fitness for Work” certificate.

4.3 Managing your health and wellbeing

4.3.1 When should I self-isolate?

You should self-isolate if you:

- Are feeling ill or someone in your household is feeling ill (or have COVID-19 symptoms)
- Travel overseas - for a period of 14 days after you have entered Australia
- Have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Are awaiting results of a COVID-19 test.

If you are in any doubt about whether to self-isolate, talk to your Team Lead or Practice Lead or to People Services before going to work. You can also call the Coronavirus Information Helpline on 13 268 43.

4.3.2 Are there any consequences if I don't self-isolate?

Yes, you could expose someone else to COVID-19 and risk disciplinary action.

It is critical that all employees take responsibility to self-isolate if they notice they have any of the symptoms associated with the virus. If any employee attends work with presenting symptoms, they will be immediately sent home and be required to explain their actions and, subject to their response, Uniting may take disciplinary action.

4.3.3 What should I do if I am feeling ill or someone in my household is feeling ill?

If you or one of your household members are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 you should stay at home, notify your Team Lead or Practice Lead (who will contact People Services) and contact your medical professional for advice. You should:

- Self-isolate at home (as detailed above)
- Practice good hygiene (as detailed above)
- Avoid cooking for or caring for other members of your household wherever possible
- Avoid close contact with other people.

You can also call the Coronavirus Information Helpline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 13 268 43.

4.3.4 What should I do if I am diagnosed with COVID-19?

Your medical professional will advise you on action that you need to take. You will need to immediately notify your Team Lead or Practice Lead (who will contact People Services) and stay at home self-isolation for 14 days.

Once symptoms have passed and you are well, you will need a “Fitness for Work” certificate to return to work and a medical certificate to support your absence.

4.3.5 What do I do if I have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19?

Being at the same location with a confirmed case does not necessarily mean you have been in close contact with that person. Close contact is when:

- You have been in face-to-face contact for at least 15 minutes, or have been in the same enclosed space for at least 2 hours, as someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 when that person was infectious
- If you are concerned, please talk to your manager before going to work, and ring the Coronavirus Information Helpline on 13 268 43 to confirm if you need to self-isolate
- If you are unwell with any illness you should always stay at home and seek advice from your medical professional before going to work.

4.3.6 What should I do if I have an underlying health condition and I am concerned that I am at increased risk of COVID-19 when working?

Speak to your Team, Operations or Practice Lead, or to People Services.

You may be able to utilise flexible work practices such as working from home and staggered working hours to ensure that you can maintain the function of your role while being better protected. If flexible work practices are not suitable for you or your work, People Services will work on an appropriate solution.

4.4 Working from home

4.4.1 Am I required to work from home during a lockdown?

Yes, if a lockdown is called in the area of your work you must work from home unless:

- You work in a critical service which cannot be provided from home (such as Family Group Homes, Tranby Centre, Street to Home outreach, My Home)
- Cannot complete your work to a suitable standard from home and have approval from your Practice Lead (or equivalent) to continue to work from a Uniting office.

4.4.2 What if my child cannot attend school or childcare?

If you have a child or children who cannot attend childcare or school, you can work from home or access your personal leave/annual leave to care for your child/children.

If you have insufficient leave, you may access personal leave in advance up to 10 days for full time, prorated for part-time employees. If you have exhausted your leave, you are encouraged to apply to take leave without pay in accordance with Clause 6.3 of the UCW Employee Collective Agreement.

4.4.3 What is expected of me when working from home?

When working from home, it is expected that your health and wellbeing enables you to undertake your duties satisfactorily and deliver the outcomes normally expected of you. This includes attending meetings via phone/video conference.

4.4.4 How do I ensure a safe working environment when working from home?

You are supported to work from home and Uniting takes its duty of care towards you very seriously.

When working from home, you must complete the [Computer Workstation Self-Assessment Checklist](#).

Your home (or part of it) becomes a 'workplace' and, as such, you are also required to comply with the [Occupational, Health and Safety Act 1984](#). In particular, s.19 of the Act refers to duties of other persons at the workplace.

You are also required to:

- Report any potential hazards (s.20) within your home which may cause an accident in the working environment
- Ensure that your working environment is well lit, ventilated and furnished with sound ergonomic equipment.

4.4.5 What if an incident happens at home which could be considered unsafe?

If an incident or potential occurs when working from home, please report it immediately to Nugent Stiles, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner, at nugent.stiles@unitingwa.org.au

4.4.6 What resources are available to me when working from home?

The ICT Team will set-up access to Citrix to enable anyone to access the work network securely from home.

You are permitted to have personal Uniting workplace equipment (monitor, keyboard, mouse, chair) at home only if this is needed to make a safe workplace environment.

If you wish to have any of these items, contact Gavin Denz on Gavin.Denz@unitingwa.org.au in advance with a list of the items you would like to have at home.

If you already have Uniting equipment at home, email Gavin and advise him which items you have.

4.4.7 What if I can't do my usual role when working from home?

Your team, operations or practice lead will work with you to provide opportunities for you to continue to contribute to achieving the outcomes of the organisation. There may be instances where you will be required to do different roles within your abilities and skill set.

In all instances, you will be expected to demonstrate the values of the organisation and deliver any work reasonably asked of you.

4.5 Privacy

4.5.1 How will my privacy be protected if I report a case of COVID-19?

Collecting sensitive information relating to potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19 is essential for us to reduce or prevent serious risk to your health and safety and to that of others.

We are committed to ensuring that any personal or sensitive information collected, maintained, used, stored and disposed of is done in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

While your consent is not required when related to potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19, we assure you that any personal or sensitive information collected will be held securely by People Services and with strict access restrictions.

The information will be disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis only – to allow us to take steps to maintain the health and safety of the people directly involved. Any additional reporting, such as that to the Uniting WA Board, will be de-identified to maintain your privacy and the privacy of those directly involved.

4.6 Volunteers

4.6.1 Why are we postponing all volunteer work during lockdowns?

We greatly value the important contribution our volunteers make in serving our community and the people we support.

All non-essential volunteer work with Uniting will be postponed during lockdowns until further notice.

This decision has been made to protect the health and wellbeing of our volunteers, our team and the people we support.

If volunteers have any questions, please direct them to Elaine Healy, Volunteer Coordinator, on volunteers@unitingwa.org.au.

4.7 Accessing Appropriate Leave

4.7.1 What leave do I take if I need to self-isolate?

If you are a permanent employee you will need to use your personal or annual leave as usual. There are also arrangements for casual employees (below). Please also read the Pandemic Plan Leave Policy for detailed information.

4.7.2 What happens if I don't have any leave available?

If you are a permanent employee who has been medically confirmed as having COVID-19, and you have exhausted your personal and annual leave entitlements, you will be able to access up to 10 working days personal leave in advance for full time staff (pro-rata for part time staff).

You can choose to take unpaid leave, and not use your annual leave or go into arrears, as long as all your personal leave has been utilised.

4.7.3 What if I'm a casual employee?

Casual employees who have, or suspect they may have, contracted COVID-19 will be able to access up to 10 days paid personal leave due to the exceptional circumstances. In this instance, you won't be entitled to the 25% loading for days taken as personal leave.

To access paid personal leave, you will need to provide a medical certificate showing that you were either being tested for the virus or had the virus.

4.7.4 What if I need more leave, and I've exhausted all my entitlements?

You can take additional medical leave as unpaid leave. You should discuss this with your Team Lead or Practice Lead.

4.7.5 Do I need to have a clearance to return to work?

A "fitness for work" certificate will be required before you can return to a work environment. You will also need a medical certificate that confirms you have had COVID-19 as part of your leave requirements.

4.7.6 What happens if my child's school or childcare centre closes?

If your children can't attend school or childcare you will be able to work from home. You should discuss this with your Team Lead or Practice Lead. You will also be able to access your personal or annual leave to care for your children.

Permanent employees can access up to 10 days personal leave in advance (pro-rata for part time employees). Casual employees can access up to 10 days personal leave to care for children who can't attend school during the crisis. In this situation you won't be entitled to the 25% loading for days taken as personal leave.

4.8 Media enquiries

4.8.1 What should I do if I am approached by the media?

All media enquiries should be directed in the first instance to Ren Adams, Lead – Communications on:

0422 146680 or Ren.Adams@unitingwa.org.au

5. FAQ – People we Support

This FAQ is designed to assist the Uniting WA team in responding to queries and communicating with the people we support, their families and relevant support partners.

All communications will need to be adapted to communications with specific people and in response to particular questions.

5.1 COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

5.1.1 What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new strain of human coronavirus which usually causes mild illness but can cause severe illness in some people. It is usually transmitted by:

- Close contact with an infectious person, including 24 hours before they start showing symptoms
- Contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- Touching your face or mouth after touching doorknobs, handrails on public transport or shared equipment which has traces of the virus.

5.1.2 What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of fever and cough. Having a sore throat, shortness of breath and fatigue are some of the other symptoms. Having a sniffily nose is not a symptom of COVID-19.

Symptoms can range mild to severe however, for most people, COVID-19 will be a mild infection.

5.1.3 How do I get up-to-date information about COVID-19?

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

WA Department of Health - ww2.health.wa.gov.au

Australian Department of Health – www.health.gov.au

Call the Coronavirus Information Helpline on 13 268 43.

5.1.4 How do I get up-to-date information about COVID-19 suitable for people with developmental disability and their families?

Developmental Disability WA has a range of resources to help support families and people with disability to be as prepared as possible during the ongoing pandemic.

Go to: <https://ddwa.org.au/covid-19-information/> or phone the support line on 1800 031 093.

5.1.5 Can I get information about COVID-19 in different languages?

Yes, the Australian Department of Health has a wide range of resources in many languages –

www.health.gov.au/resources/translated

5.2 Uniting WA response to COVID-19

5.2.1 How is Uniting responding to COVID-19?

The pandemic began directly affecting us in Western Australia in March 2020. Since that time, we have taken decisive actions to prevent spread of the virus and reduce the impacts of COVID-19 on our team, our volunteers, the people we support and the broader community.

On 16 March 2020, we implemented a COVID-19 Response Plan which includes taking these actions to maintain the good health and wellbeing of our team and the people we support by:

- Meeting or exceeding public health directives to protect people

- Following best-practice hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infection
- Adopting flexible work practices
- Ensuring Uniting team members self-isolate when they or someone in their household feels ill
- Conducting a full review of our services and supports to identify what we can alter 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 during lockdowns
- Suspending group-based activities, except critical services
- 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 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.

5.2.2 How will you keep us informed?

We will do our best to keep all of the people we support informed of the situation as it evolves.

This includes direct conversations, emails, phone calls, SMS text messages and information on our website. If you have any questions or concerns about our response to the situation, please speak with your regular support worker or call us on 1300 663 298.

5.3 Potential impacts on services

5.3.1 How are we protecting people in Uniting services?

During lockdowns, our critical services that cannot be operated remotely are continuing with additional safety measures.

At other times, we are minimising non-essential visitor and community access and asking that no one enter our services if they have any COVID-like symptoms. People are asked to phone us instead on 1300 663 298.

During non-lockdown periods, all visitors are required to follow mandatory contact tracing laws by using the SafeWA app or by completing a handwritten register. We also require visitors to use hand sanitiser as they enter and follow personal hygiene practices and the 4m² rule.

5.3.2 What will happen if a person is confirmed as having COVID-19 at a Uniting-run service or office?

Speak with your support worker and self-isolate yourself as best you can.

We will assess the risk to you and let you know what actions will need to be taken. Part of this risk assessment is to check with WA Health guidelines to ensure you are not exposed to any undue risk to your health.

5.3.3 Will the supports I receive be affected?

Depending on the situation, Uniting will follow advice from WA Health and determine the best course of action for any location where a case of COVID-19 has been recorded. Maintaining the health and wellbeing of our team, the people we support and the community is an absolute priority for Uniting.

5.3.4 Are group-based activities and supports affected?

Yes. In order to prevent spread of COVID-19, we have suspended all non-critical group-based services and programs provided by Uniting WA. This does not include our homelessness centre, Tranby.

This decision has been made in line with guidelines from the Department of Communities and social distancing requirements by the Australian Government.

5.4 Staying safe and healthy

5.4.1 How do I protect myself and others?

The best way to protect yourself and others is to practice good hygiene. This includes:

- Coughing or sneezing into a disposable tissue, clothing or your elbow
- Disposing of used tissues properly
- Closing the toilet lid before flushing
- Washing your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water
- Regularly using alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- If you feel ill, avoid contact with others, place yourself in self-isolation and seek medical advice.

5.4.2 What should I do if I am feeling ill or someone in my household is feeling ill?

If you or a member of your household are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 you should stay at home, notify your support worker and contact your medical professional. You should:

- Self-isolate at home
- Practice good hygiene
- Avoid cooking for or caring for other members of your household wherever possible
- Avoid close contact with other people.

You can also call the Coronavirus Information Helpline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 13 268 43.

5.4.3 What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation means that you:

- Do not go to public places such as work, school, shopping centres, childcare or university
- Ask someone to get food and other necessities for you and leave them at your front door
- Do not let visitors in — only people who usually live with you should be in your home
- Need to wear a mask outside of your home
- Should stay in touch by phone and online with your family and friends
- Continue to isolate yourself until you have medical clearance.

5.4.4 When should I self-isolate?

You should self-isolate if you:

- Are feeling ill or someone in your household is feeling ill (or have COVID-19 symptoms)
- Travel overseas - for a period of 14 days after you have entered Australia
- Have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Are awaiting results of a COVID-19 test.

If you are in any doubt about whether to self-isolate, please contact your support worker and call the Coronavirus Information Helpline on 13 268 43 for advice.

5.4.5 What should I do if I am diagnosed with COVID-19?

Your medical professional will advise you on action that you need to take. You will need to immediately stay at home in self-isolation for 14 days and notify your support worker.

Once symptoms have passed and you are well, you will need a medical clearance to return to regular life.

5.4.6 What do I do if I have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19?

Being at the same location with a confirmed case does not necessarily mean you have been in close contact with that person. Close contact is when:

- You have been in face-to-face contact for at least 15 minutes, or have been in the same enclosed space for at least 2 hours, as someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 when that person was infectious
- If you are concerned, please call the Coronavirus Information Helpline on 13 268 43.

5.5 Privacy

5.5.1 How will my privacy be protected if I report a case of COVID-19?

Collecting sensitive information relating to potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19 is essential for us to reduce or prevent serious risk to your health and safety and to that of others.

We are committed to ensuring that any personal or sensitive information collected, maintained, used, stored and disposed of is done in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

While your consent is not required when related to potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19, we assure you that any personal or sensitive information collected will be held securely and with strict access restrictions.

The information will be disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis only – to allow us to take steps to maintain the health and safety of people directly involved. Any additional reporting, such as that to our Board of Management, will be de-identified to maintain your privacy and the privacy of those directly involved.

6. FAQ – Tranby Centre & homelessness services

This FAQ is specific to Tranby Centre and should be used in addition to FAQ above.

6.1.1 Is Tranby Centre still open?

Yes, Tranby is still operating from the temporary site at 63 Newcastle Street, Perth.

6.1.2 Is it possible that Tranby Centre will close due to COVID-19?

Tranby is considered an essential service and is expected to remain open during lockdowns. It is possible that the centre will need to close but only for a short period of time and in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19.

Uniting WA continues to work closely with St. Patrick's Community Support Centre and Ruah Community Services to ensure our homelessness services have a combined, coordinated response to COVID-19.

All three homelessness services are dedicated to remaining open and providing supports for people as long as possible.

6.1.3 What are you doing at Tranby Centre to manage the situation?

We are working to reduce and manage the risks to our team and the people we support by:

- Screening and temperature-reading people to identify COVID-like symptoms before entry
- Directing people to the COVID-19 clinic at Royal Perth Hospital where symptoms are found
- Requiring people to clean their hands with hand sanitiser before entry
- Restricting numbers of people inside Tranby at any one time to 10 people only, in 45-minute intervals with 15 minutes to clean the space between each session
- Education and directions to COVID-19 clinics inside and at the door
- Ensuring that priority is always given people experiencing rough sleeping
- Promoting good hygiene practices consistently and regularly.

We have a roster of team-members to ensure that Tranby can continue to operate if any of the team are required to go into self-isolation.

6.1.4 Are meals still being provided?

Yes, although getting access to food is becoming more difficult. We are providing takeaway food and drink options wherever possible and providing vouchers for people to buy their own food.

We are seeking help from the community to assist us with food donations as several regular sources are no longer available, such as our volunteer-based Food Rescue service.

6.1.5 What can people do to help?

We welcome donations of non-perishable food and drinks, sanitary items, cleaning products and freshly made packaged food (suitable for takeaway). Thankfully, we have plenty of toilet paper.

6.1.6 What is happening with Uniting's other homelessness services?

Our Assertive Outreach services continue Monday to Friday 6:30am to 11:30am and have the capacity to respond to community requests.

Screening of people is done at a safe distance before further support is offered. Outreach workers are taking extra food supplies to support people who may not have accessed Tranby or other day centres. COVID-19 education and care resources are given to people experiencing rough sleeping.

The properties used for our **Homeless Accommodation Support Service (HASS)** remain open with additional cleaning, hygiene education, screening and other safety measures.

7. FAQ – Individualised Services (disability / mental health)

This FAQ is specific to Individualised Services at Uniting and is being provided to participants along with general information from the FAQ – People we Support.

7.1 Potential impacts on services

7.1.1 Is Uniting still delivering support services in my area?

Yes, the majority of 1:1 support services are still being provided. Given the rapidly evolving situation, we will continue to review and assess our services and any potential impacts on you, a member of the Uniting team and the broader community.

7.1.2 Will there be changes to the workers who provide 1:1 support?

Yes, we have arranged pools of workers to restrict the risks of infection to people who receive between 8 and 24 hours of support per day. If a different worker is going to support a participant, we will make every effort to let people know prior to the change.

In the event a worker becomes unavailable and we are unable to provide an appropriate replacement, we will contact participants as soon as possible. This will be more likely to occur where people are supported between 3 and 6 hours per week.

7.1.3 How will support in My Home be affected?

Outside visitors are being minimised where possible. If a family member would like to visit, please contact your Operations Lead.

Our scheduling team are also working to restrict the pool of staff working in each home, so as to reduce the risk of infection.

7.1.4 How do I get up-to-date information about COVID-19 suitable for people with developmental disability and their families?

Developmental Disability WA has a range of resources to help support families and people with disability to be as prepared as possible during the ongoing pandemic.

Go to: <https://ddwa.org.au/covid-19-information/> or phone the support line on 1800 031 093.

8. Media Statement – 23 March 2020

Taking action to continue providing the critical services needed by the most vulnerable people we support, now and into the future.

UnitingCare West has today taken additional steps to ensure the safety of our team, the people we support and the community in the new paradigm of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Pandemic Response Plan has already served to educate and promote good hygiene, implement flexible working practices, reduce face-to-face contact wherever possible, postpone volunteering, suspend group-based activities, and ensure social distancing and self-isolation practices are upheld.

From Tuesday 24 March, UnitingCare West is suspending all non-critical face-to-face services to the people we support, until further notice. Additionally, we are instructing our team who do not provide critical services to people we support to work from home, wherever possible.

UnitingCare West will continue to provide essential critical services that are needed to maintain the health and wellbeing of the people we support. These services and supports already have additional precautions and safety measures put in place and include:

- Tranby Centre and Homelessness services, including expanded outreach
- Family Group Homes
- My Home / supported accommodation
- Welfare checks on participants when uncontactable by phone/email.

For non-critical services, we are adopting innovative, new ways of continuing the supports we provide to people over the phone, via video conference and through methods which do not require close contact.

The deeply serious nature of COVID-19 in our community has meant these carefully considered changes are necessary to support the health and wellbeing of our team, our families, the people we support and the broader community.

We will continue to adapt our services as needed and heed advice from WA Health and other authorities to protect the health and wellbeing of people wherever appropriate.

We have taken this action to enable us to continue providing the critical services needed by the most vulnerable people we support, now and into the future.

We are committed to ensuring that those who are already experiencing vulnerability and hardship aren't further impacted.

9. 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 be 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](#)

10. Standard letter - participants / people we support

This letter is designed for email and/or post (on letterhead template) and should be adapted to the needs of your particular service and the people you support. Please ensure you seek approval prior to sending your adapted version, as per the Protocols.

Dear

You will be aware that the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is evolving rapidly.

Your health and wellbeing is an absolute priority for us at UnitingCare West and we will aim to keep you up-to-date with information on how we're responding to the situation.

We have a response plan and are monitoring the situation closely. We are working hard to ensure that any action we take is informed by the best public health advice and is suitable for your situation.

This can be a confusing and overwhelming time for you, your friends and your family. We are here for you and will keep you informed as best we can during this difficult time. Please feel free to contact your Support Worker if you are worried or need more information.

In the meantime, you can find useful information on the websites listed below.

Stay up-to-date with the facts

- Healthy WA - www.healthywa.wa.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health - www.health.gov.au
- Information in different languages - www.health.gov.au/resources/translated

If you're feeling unwell or suspect you have been exposed to COVID-19:

- Self-isolate yourself and avoid personal contact with other people
- Contact your Support Worker
- Seek medical advice or contact the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often
- Cough or sneeze into disposable tissues, or into clothing or your elbow
- Avoid touching your face or mouth.

Please feel free to contact me on XXXX XXXX or [email address here] if you have any questions or concerns.

11. Volunteer letter from CEO

This letter can be adapted and used for emailing to particular volunteers.

Important message for UCW volunteers

17 March 2020

Dear valued volunteer

You will be aware that the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is evolving rapidly.

As a member of the UnitingCare West team, your health and wellbeing is an absolute priority for us.

To uphold our responsibility to you, we have made the difficult decision to suspend all non-essential volunteer work until further notice.

This is effective immediately across all of our services.

We have enacted a response plan and are monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely. We are working hard to ensure that any action we take is informed by the best public health advice and is suitable for our team, the people we support and the general community.

While this decision may seem drastic, we feel it is a necessary action in this fast-changing and unprecedented situation. We will stay in touch with you as we find out more.

In the meantime, you can find useful information on the websites listed below.

Stay up-to-date with the facts

- Healthy WA - www.healthywa.wa.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health - www.health.gov.au

If you're feeling unwell or suspect you have been exposed to COVID-19:

- Self-isolate yourself and avoid personal contact with other people
- Seek medical advice or contact the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often
- Cough or sneeze into disposable tissues, or into clothing or your elbow
- Avoid touching your face or mouth.

Please feel free to contact us on volunteers@UnitingCareWest.org.au or 1300 663 298 if you have any questions or concerns.



Amanda Hunt
Chief Executive Officer