

17 March 2020

Dear family and friends

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) and restricted access to residential care homes

I am writing to let you know about some of the precautionary measures we have taken in our residential care homes in response to the Coronavirus COVID-19.

Firstly, I would like to assure everyone that no outbreaks of COVID-19 have been reported in any of our residential care homes or amongst our home care clients in metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia. Should this situation change, we will notify you as soon as possible. We are also posting regular updates on our website. Visit www.helpinghand.org.au for up to date information from Helping Hand. Virus alerts and information is changing rapidly, so it is also important that you keep up to date with the information provided by the Federal Government.

On Monday 16 March, Helping Hand has taken the precautionary measure of restricting access to all our residential care homes. This is in line with the Federal Government's guidance to limit visits.

It is an important measure to ensure that the people in our care, those that are most vulnerable to the virus, are protected as much as possible.

We ask that no unnecessary visitors enter our homes until further advice. If it is essential that you visit, when you arrive on site, you will be asked to:

- answer questions about your previous travel arrangements and health
- sign in and out so that we have a record of all persons who have had contact with residents or been in the home
- disinfect your hands upon entering the home with the hand sanitiser in the foyer and regularly use the hand sanitisers across the home during your visit
- keep a distance of 1.5m where possible and restrict your visit to the person you are here to see
- not visit as a large group and please do not visit with young children
- only enter the home through the main entrance of the building
- entering the home will only be between the hours of:
 - Monday to Friday 9am – 8pm
 - Saturday and Sunday 10am – 6pmoutside of these hours, visiting is by appointment only so that we can speak with your prior to arrival regarding your health and travel.

If you are unwell, have been travelling overseas in the last 14 days or live with someone who has recently travelled overseas, it is important that you do not visit our homes.

I appreciate these measures may feel challenging for people who wish to make contact with families and friends. Please contact us if you are feeling concerned. We can always help arrange a video call or phone call with your loved one instead of a visit.

If you do need to visit, please be vigilant in washing your hands, practice social distancing and sign-in/sign-out.

Again, I stress, these are precautionary steps. I would like to assure you that we have put in place processes to reduce the risk to residents in our care. This includes:

1. Helping Hand has activated its Pandemic Plan and established a COVID-19 Response Plan. We are currently in the *Prevention* and *Preparation* stage of our Pandemic Plan and have a dedicated team that is continually monitoring all advice from the federal and state government Departments of Health and the World Health Organization regarding COVID-19.
2. Staff have attended special information sessions run by our Client Safety & Quality Unit on COVID-19 to reinforce the safe practices when delivering care and how to reduce the risk of infection.
3. Staff have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if they are providing services to a resident who is unwell and we have robust systems in place to manage infection outbreaks if needed.
4. All staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors have been advised that if they are unwell, they are not to come to site, and it is important to adhere to the travel warnings from the Department of Health. Any staff member who has been overseas in the last 14 days has been asked to self-isolate.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of all the activity underway, and we trust that it provides some reassurance regarding the steps we have taken to protect all people in our care. As the situation changes rapidly, Helping Hand will continue to keep you up to date and informed of any important changes. As a community we all need to work together to prevent the spread of this disease.

I thank you for your patience, cooperation and resolve during this time.

Your sincerely



Chris Stewart
Chief Executive Officer
Helping Hand