

Information correct as of 17 March 2020, 3:30pm

Dear home care client

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Home Care services

I am writing to let you know about some of the precautionary measures we have taken regarding Home Care Services in response to the Coronavirus COVID-19.

Firstly, I would like to assure you that our in-home services are operating as per usual. We have taken a number of precautionary measures and are doing extensive planning in the situation that the current health alerts escalate. Details are changing rapidly and if at any time we need to change your services, we will contact you as a priority.

To date, 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 COVID-19 webpage <https://www.helpinghand.org.au/wellness/latest-health-updates/> as the virus alerts and information from the Federal Government are changing rapidly.

There are also a number of ways that people living at home can help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Regularly washing hands with soap and water, staying at home and keeping a distance of at least 1.5 metres from other people are a good start.

We want to keep everyone in our community safe and need to make sure that the person visiting you is also not at risk. So before staff arrive to support you, you will be contacted by the person delivering your services to check in with you.

- You will be asked a few questions about how you are feeling or whether you have been in contact with someone who has recently returned from overseas.
- If you have health concerns, such as respiratory issues, we will also check in with you.

When the care worker arrives at your home, they will go through these questions again. If you are not well, we can assist you to make contact or arrange a visit with your GP. We will continue to offer you critical services and staff will be asked to wear protective personal equipment.

As far as is reasonable given the nature of COVID-19, our care workers are all informed and are following the health advice set out by the Department of Health. We are also working closely with external contractors to ensure the same standards are being followed to ensure all caseworkers are fit to work.

We are reviewing how some of our services, such as shopping excursions, going out for a coffee etc. are done. The reason for this is to comply with the advice around avoiding public gatherings. We will contact you direct if your services are likely to change or be modified.

From Monday 16 March, Helping Hand has also taken the precautionary measure of limiting visits to all our residential care homes, in line with the Federal Government's guidance to limit visits under advice from the Communicable Disease Network of Australia, aimed at the prevention and control of coronavirus. As a result, we are also postponing lifestyle programs and other community activities at care home sites until further notice.

If you have any questions about programs you are involved in and would like to know if they are going ahead – please call us on 1300 444 663.

These are unforeseen circumstances for everyone, and our priority remains keeping you safe and healthy at home. If home care visits need to be cancelled as a result of COVID-19, this will be considered in regard to waiving cancellation fees.

Again, I stress, these are precautionary steps. I would like to assure you that we have an overall plan in place and are implementing a range of processes to reduce the risk to the people we care for at home.

As the situation unfolds, 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 appreciate these measures may feel challenging for people who are living at home and I thank you for your patience, cooperation and resolve during this time.

Yours sincerely



Chris Stewart
Chief Executive Officer
Helping Hand