

18 November 2020

Dear Home Care clients and families,

Re: COVID-19 community outbreak and Home Care services

At 12:30pm, 18 November 2020, the South Australian Government announced a series of restrictions that would be in place for the following six days (i.e. 19 – 24 November 2020). These precautions are being referred to as a 'circuit breaker' in effort to contain a Covid-19 cluster.

I am writing to let you know about the measures we have put in place to ensure you can continue to receive essential services in your home.

Please be assured that Helping Hand is not cancelling services. Where necessary, we will modify the way we deliver these services to minimise the risk of infection and ensure your continued safety, as well as the safety of our staff.

To date, there have been no reported cases of COVID-19 at any of our residential care homes or amongst our Home Care clients and workforce. However, given the scale of the affected cluster areas and the highly contagious nature of the virus, the safety of all our clients in metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia, is our highest priority. For this reason, Helping Hand has also made the decision to restrict visits to all our residential care homes, unless in the case of exceptional circumstances.

The following adjustments to our Home Care Services come into effect on Wednesday, 18 November 2020:

- We will be supporting you *in* your home, rather than taking you out into the community. For example, we will do your shopping and deliver items to your home.
- All our social support and respite visits will take place in your home.
- Transport services will be reviewed and only urgent transport for medical appointments will continue, however you will be asked to sit in the back seat of the car. Please call us if this is a concern.
- All social support groups, centre-based respite and therapy groups are temporarily postponed for a minimum of 2 weeks.
- All staff who provide services will be wearing a mask.
- Staff will continue to ask you screening questions before they begin the service. If you, or anyone you have spent time with, has visited a location listed by SA Health or have symptoms of COVID-19, please call the office. This will not mean services will be cancelled, however, we will assess the individual situation and put further precautions in place if necessary.

These changes are in line with the latest advice from SA Health which is recommending that older and at-risk South Australians stay at home. These changes are expected to remain in place for an initial period of two weeks, however they may be extended depending on further advice from SA Health.

Staying up to date

We recommend that you get your information from reputable sources such as ABC Radio Adelaide (891).

The SA Health website ([www. www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)) posts daily updates on COVID-19 including a list of current contact tracing details with locations and times that people who have tested positive have visited. This list is regularly updated.

If you, or someone you know, has access to the internet and social media, we recommend regularly checking the SA Health Facebook page and we also encourage you to follow the Helping Hand Facebook page, which has information specific to our services. The Helping Hand website (www.helpinghand.org.au) will also provide updates.

Alternatively, you can call the COVID-19 Hotline 1800 253 787.

It is essential that we can contact you quickly in situation of an emergency. If you have a mobile phone or an email address, please contact us so that we can update your file.

If you would be more comfortable rescheduling an upcoming service at this time, please call us on 1300 444 663 and we will support you to make these arrangements.

Please be aware that while we will try to accommodate your wishes of a particular time and day for services, this may not be always possible as we respond to changing requirements of COVID-19.

As the situation unfolds, we will continue to keep you informed of any important changes. Please take care, stay at home, and let us know if you need any additional support at home or have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Rob Heinjus
Executive Manager, Home Care Services