

24 March 2020

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL SOCIAL SUPPORT AND CARER RESPITE GROUP PARTICIPANTS

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the safety and wellbeing of our clients, their families and carers, and our staff is Uniting AgeWell's paramount concern.

We have been closely monitoring the evolving coronavirus situation and implemented a range of precautionary measures based on the advice of Government and the Department of Health.

With the new social distancing measures and restrictions introduced over the past 48 hours, Uniting AgeWell is modifying the delivery of its social support services, effective from today until at least Sunday, 19 April 2020.

What this means for you

Uniting AgeWell services impacted by these changes include:

- All group-based activities in our centres
- All group-based outings
- Transport to and from group programs

We will commence working with you to identify what services we can put in place quickly to assist you to remain independent at home.

Our staff will be making contact with you or your primary contact to develop a care plan that reflects your requirements in the coming weeks.

Some examples of things we are planning to undertake include:

- Visiting and support in your home;
- Regular telephone-based contact;
- Arranging alternative services where available in your area;
- Arrangement of transport to attend appointments; and
- Assisting you with chores including shopping

What other services are available during this time?

On 20 March 2020, the Department of Health announced that if people need urgent or immediate services, these can be put in place for up to six weeks without the requirement for an assessment for clients affected by COVID19 or in self-isolation.

For further information, please feel free to contact the Uniting AgeWell team in your region via email or phone. A contact list is provided on page 2.

Page 1 of 2

What else do you need to know?

If you are seen as a result of an urgent referral and present with any of the following symptoms, including: sore throat, coughing, fever, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, please let us know before we visit you at home.

We will enquire about your health, whether you have seen a doctor and work out a plan to assist. We may ask you to wear a face mask that we will provide.

Our staff will also take extra precautions when providing 1:1 support including frequent hand washing, wearing a protective mask and a disposable apron. All staff visiting people at home will be wearing their Uniting AgeWell identification badge.

For the latest information and advice on how to stay safe, reduce the risk and stop the spread of coronavirus, please read the attached information leaflet from the Department of Health or go to www.health.gov.au

What are the charges for these services?

Where we arrange services on a 1:1 basis in a client's home, the costs of these services will be the same as if people were accessing group centre-based activities. There will be no increase.

If people are receiving 1:1 assistance currently, these fees will continue.

Clients will not be disadvantaged if they cannot afford to pay for services.

Contacting us

We will continue to review this decision in line with government and medical advice and will keep you informed of any changes.

We have also established a special email address for client enquiries about the information in this letter and our services. Refer to the contact list below..

Where we receive an email, we aim to respond by the next business day.

Please call your local Uniting AgeWell centre if you have any queries.

We acknowledge that for many people, attending Uniting AgeWell centres is a staple and we understand the practical and emotional burden this decision will have on our clients, their families and supporters. Our aim is to reduce the risk, slow the spread and support the community to keep safe during these challenging times.

We appreciate your ongoing support and understanding.

Contact details of your local Uniting AgeWell Centre team:

Melbourne: AgeWellCentresVic@unitingagewell.org T: (03) 9845 3114

Bendigo: AgeWellCentresBendigo@unitingagewell.org T (03) 5454 2100

Tasmania: AgeWellCentresTas@unitingagewell.org T: (03) 6289 8850