

25 March 2020

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL HOME CARE CLIENTS

AND THEIR PRIMARY CONTACTS

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

These are challenging times for everyone. Uniting AgeWell's aim is to reduce the risk of infection, slow the spread and support you to remain safe.

We have been closely monitoring the evolving COVID-19 situation and implemented a range of precautionary measures based on the advice of Government and the Department of Health.

We write to advise you of the ways Uniting AgeWell plans to assist you during the next few months and share with you the latest information from the Department of Health on the things you can do to keep yourself safe.

Supporting Uniting AgeWell home care clients

If you are already receiving supports from your local Uniting AgeWell team, many of these services will continue to be provided during this challenging period.

You may find that some services such as domestic support may be suspended for a period as we focus on providing people with essential services including personal care assistance, shopping assistance, transport to and from essential medical appointments and nursing assistance.

Some services may need to be modified subject to staff availability or delivered in other ways. For example, planned home visits with your Client Advisor may be on the phone or via the use of other basic technology.

You may also find that your regular worker may not be available.

In each of the above cases, we will communicate with you prior to any alterations to your service plan.

What precautions is Uniting AgeWell taking to ensure we continue to provide quality services?

Uniting AgeWell takes its obligations in relation to quality, health and safety very seriously. This includes the ongoing training, supervision and support of all staff to ensure you continue to receive the assistance you need in the safest possible way.

All Uniting AgeWell staff are experienced in infection control and management protocols and have recently undergone refresher training in preparation for COVID-19.

Our process to support clients and staff during this time has recently been reviewed to ensure we are well prepared.

Page 1 of 3

As an additional precaution, we will now call all clients prior to undertaking home visits. We will ask you a few questions so that we can be prepared to best support you at home.

These questions include:

- Have you recently returned from overseas or have you had close contact with someone who has recently returned from overseas?
- Do you have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19? Symptoms include: sore throat, a cough, fever or respiratory issues
- Do you live with anyone who has symptoms consistent with COVID-19?
- Are you, or is anyone in your household self-isolating?

We also ask that:

- Where you are unwell or concerned about having people visit you, that you call your local Uniting AgeWell team prior to your expected home visit or service.
- If you are concerned about people coming into your home that you discuss this with your local team. There may be other ways that we can assist you or take additional precautions.

Please also let us know if you have a pre-existing respiratory condition or have a weakened immune system.

You've mentioned preparation and precautions for my home visit or service, what does that mean?

You will find that our staff are taking extra precautions when visiting you in the home, including: frequently washing their hands, and when necessary, the wearing of a mask, goggles and a disposable apron.

If you are presenting with any of the following symptoms including: sore throat, coughing, fever, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, we will enquire about your health, whether you have seen a doctor and work out a plan to assist you. We may ask you to wear a mask during the visit.

Staff will not be wearing a mask if you are not exhibiting symptoms or do not have an illness that may make you susceptible to the COVID-19 illness.

You can also consider having the following supplies at hand: detergents, hand wash, rubber gloves and surface wipes.

What other services are available during this time?

We will make contact with you in the coming days to discuss your care needs and to see if there is any other assistance we can provide. We also encourage you to call our local team to discuss your requirements.

Some examples of things we can undertake include:

- Regular telephone-based contacts;
- Arranging alternative services where available in your area;
- Arrangement of transport to attend important medical appointments;
- Assisting you with chores including shopping, pay of bills; and
- Arranging for your local meals on wheels service to provide meals to your home.

Communications & Contacting us

We will continue to review the situation in line with government and medical advice and will keep you informed of any service changes. Attached you will also find the latest frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding COVID-19 from the Department of Health which you may find useful..

You can also follow Uniting AgeWell's website for the latest information and updates on our response to COVID-19 and any service changes at <https://unitingagewell.org/covid19>

Please don't hesitate to email or call your local Uniting AgeWell team if you have any queries. You will find a contact list below.

We appreciate your ongoing support and understanding as we work together to keep you safe and living independently at home.

Local Home Care team contact details

<i>Victoria:</i>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Melbourne East	9845 3166	StrathdonCLO@unitingagewell.org
Melbourne South East	9089 1900	SouthernHCP@unitingagewell.org
Melbourne North West	9680 0450	northwesternhcp@unitingagewell.org
Barwon	9680 0450	barwonhomecare@unitingagewell.org
Gippsland	5152 9699	Gippsland@unitingagewell.org
Loddon Mallee North	4026 7000	LoddonMalleeNorth@unitingagewell.org
Loddon Mallee South	5454 2100	LoddonMalleeSouth@unitingagewell.org

Tasmania:

Southern (Hobart)	6282 1193	uaSouthernTasCS@unitingagewell.org
Northern (Launceston)	6715 7000	AldersgateCommunityNthTas@unitingagewell.org
North West (Latrobe)	6411 6500	Strathdevon.Community@unitingagewell.org