



Protocol 5

Version 6: 19 December 2021

Home visits by South Australian Government employees

Purpose and scope

This protocol outlines recommendations for home visits to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This protocol is only applicable to South Australian Government employees **outside** of the health system (it does not apply to healthcare workers, but is instead applicable as a guide for those who work in disability care, child protection, and so forth).

General information

Home visits should be subject to risk assessments on case-by-case basis following the border re-opening and while vaccination rates remain below 90%. Where a home visit is deemed unsafe or not immediately necessary, they should be replaced with alternative models of service delivery, like telephone or video-conference, as much as possible and without compromising the health and wellbeing of clients, their families, the community or the workforce.

This will help maintain the delivery of essential services to families and individuals while managing the risks to workers, clients and the community.

Local policies establishing limitations on visits may be placed by residential care facilities or remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, given the heightened concern of COVID-19 for these groups. Prospective home visitors should investigate whether such local policies exist prior to seeking access.

Do **not** visit care facilities if you:

- are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19; OR
- have been directed to self-isolate or (self-)quarantine; OR
- have been identified as a vaccinated close contact, an unvaccinated close contact or casual contact of a COVID-19 case as per the Test, Trace, Isolate, Quarantine model: [Test, Trace, Isolate and Quarantine | SA Health](#) OR
- been in contact with someone with a high temperature, fever, chills, symptoms of acute respiratory infection, or loss of taste and smell, in the last 72 hours (without adequate personal protective equipment); OR
- have a fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.

Vaccination Requirements

Many facilities will require vaccination either as part of a mandatory requirement under the Emergency Management Act 2004 direction for particular workers or through the imposition of a local policy requirement.

For aged care facilities, from 1 June 2021 you must have had a 2021 influenza vaccination and from 6 December 2021 you must have received at least 2 doses of a TGA approved or recognised COVID-19 vaccine to visit an aged care facility.

For in-home and community aged care and disability support workers, from 30 November 2021, must have:

- Received at least one dose of a TGA approved or recognised COVID-19 vaccination,
- Received, or have evidence of a booking to receive, a second dose of a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine within the interval after the first dose recommended by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) for that COVID-19 vaccine Provided the operator of the health care setting with proof of their vaccination status upon request.

The vaccination requirement is for disability support workers whose role means they are involved with:

- assistance with daily life tasks in a group or shared living arrangement
- group and centre-based activities
- specialised supported employment
- assistance with daily personal activities
- community nursing care
- therapeutic supports.

Those undertaking home visits may also be required to take clients to healthcare settings. Anyone attending a healthcare setting as part of their work duties must have be vaccinated in line with the Healthcare Settings Direction under the Emergency Management Act.

From 11 December 2021, anyone attending an education or early childcare setting in South Australian must have received their first dose of a TGA approved or recognised COVID-19 vaccine, have received or have evidence of a booking for a second dose of the vaccine.

Protocol for home visits - General

- 1 Call ahead to undertake a risk assessment, including to identify if the client/the client's family is/are a confirmed, probable or suspected case of COVID-19. Refer to Definitions for more information. If unsure, ask screening questions:
 - Did you return from overseas and/or an interstate high community transmission zone in the last 14 days?
 - Have you been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

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- Do you have a fever or respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath?

2a If the answer is 'yes' to having respiratory symptoms **AND** to any of the other questions:

- advise client to contact a medical practitioner (usually his/her GP) or the National Coronavirus Hotline (1800 020 080) and seek testing
- it is recommended to postpone the home visit or deliver your service electronically
- if the face to face visit is deemed critical and unavoidable, a short home visit (less than 15 minutes) can be completed by an employee equipped with full PPE.
- advice on the correct usage of PPE is available separately.

2b If the answer is 'no' to all the above, you can undertake a home visit. Please consult the [SA Health website](#) for advice on home visit PPE relevant to your particular sector.

3 During home visits:

- minimise physical contact
- maintain a minimum distance of 1.5 metres and ensure a density of no more than 1 person per 2 square metres where possible
- restrict the duration to less than 15 minutes
- practice universal precautions and infection control procedures; observe general [advice](#) on physical distancing and hygiene.

Decisions about the need to conduct a home or centre visit is at the service provider discretion in line with business continuity plans and health authorities' general advice.

It is recommended that priority access for essential appointments is given to:

- Young infants and new parents at key ages and stages;
- Aboriginal parents, infants and children;
- Anyone with additional needs or complexity.

Home visits should **not** be undertaken by workers with confirmed, probable or suspected COVID-19. Workers should be tested if any of the below apply:

- Any possible symptoms of COVID-19 (fever or respiratory, even if very mild);
- Overseas or interstate travel (that is, to one or more high community transmission zones) in the last 14 days;
- Close or casual contact in 14 days with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Additional information: child safety-related essential home visits

As stated above for essential home visits, similar principles apply with some variation:

- It will not always be possible to restrict the visit duration to less than 15 minutes (i.e. intensive family intervention for children at high risk, or removal of a child from a dangerous situation).
 - In these circumstances, upon arrival at the property, staff are required to ask the appropriate screening questions to the adults at the property.
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- The screening questions should be asked at the front door of the property, while observing the 1.5 metre physical distancing rule.
- Should an occupant at the home answer “yes” to any question, please advise the adults present that PPE equipment will be used (mask, gloves and eye protection) for protection against COVID-19.
- Offer the clients PPE to use.

All efforts should be made to negotiate to undertake the visit in the open air outside of the home (back or front yard), if the weather permits.

Definitions

Casual contact

A person is a casual contact in the following circumstances:

- A vaccinated person has between 1-15 min contact with a case at less than 1.5m and both the contact and the case were wearing masks.
- A vaccinated person has greater than 1 minute contact with a case within an enclosed space of less than 100m², is more than 1.5m away from the case and both the case and the contact were wearing masks. It would be very unlikely of a room in any residential premises being more than 100m².
- An unvaccinated person has less than 1-minute contact with a case.
- An unvaccinated person has more than 1 minute contact with a case, at greater than 1.5m outdoors or in an enclosed space greater than 100m².

Vaccinated Close contact

A vaccinated close contact includes someone who has had the following contact with a positive case of COVID-19, including two calendar days before the case’s onset of symptoms:

- the vaccinated person has physical contact with a case (such as hugging, handshaking etc)
- the vaccinated person has between 1 – 15 min contact with a case at less than 1.5 meters distance when either or both the contact and case is not wearing a mask
- the vaccinated person has more than 1-minute contact with a case within an enclosed space that is less than 100m² and either or both the contact and case is not wearing a mask. It would be very unlikely of a room in any residential premises being more than 100m².
- The vaccinated person has more than 1 hour contact with a case within an enclosed space that is less than 30m². It would be very unlikely of a room in any residential premises being more than 30m².

Unvaccinated Close Contact

An unvaccinated close contact includes someone who has had the following contact with a positive case of COVID-19, including two calendar days before the onset of the cases symptoms:

- the unvaccinated person has physical contact with a case (such as hugging, handshaking etc)
- the unvaccinated person has more than 1 minute contact at less than 1.5m
- the unvaccinated person spends more than 1 minute within an enclosed space that is less than 100m² and is more than 1.5m away from the case. It would be very unlikely of a room in any residential premises being more than 100m².
- The unvaccinated person spends more than 1 hour within an enclosed space of less than 30m² and is more than 1.5m away from the case. It would be very unlikely of a room in any residential premises being more than 30m².

In-home and community aged care worker

Is a person providing in-home and community aged care services to another person in person for or on behalf of a responsible provider.

In-home and community aged care services

Means the following services under the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth) or the *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018* (Cth) and programs delivered by the Australian Government Department of Health:

- Home Care Packages
- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program home care services
- Short-Term Restorative Care
- Transition Care Program
- Multi-Purposes Services

This Protocol is subject to further updates. For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au or contact the National Coronavirus Information Hotline on 1800 020 080. For South Australia-specific information, visit www.covid-19.sa.gov.au.

For COVID-19 advice and information for health and aged care sector service providers refer to [this link](#).

Refer to [this link](#) for specific advice on physical distancing and hygiene.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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