

Vulnerable Workers COVID-19 Information

Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN) has a duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers and others in the workplace and implement appropriate strategies to mitigate and/or reduce identified risk associated with COVID-19 for vulnerable workers in the workplace.

1. Vulnerable Workers

The Ministry of Health confirmed the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)'s position; has been adopted as the current definition of who are [vulnerable workers](#) in relation to COVID-19.

Vulnerable people are, or are likely to be, at higher risk of serious illness if they are infected with COVID-19. They include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions.
- People 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions. Conditions included in the definition of 'chronic medical conditions' will be refined as more evidence emerges.
- People 70 years and older.
- People with compromised immune systems.

Note: The most updated AHPPC advice on [vulnerable people and relevant chronic medical conditions](#)

2. Risk Assessment

When risk assessing an individual vulnerable health worker's status, Public Health advises the following factors should be considered:

- Whether the worker meets the AHPPC criteria for people at risk of serious illness;
- The duration, frequency and closeness of the worker's interaction with patients;
- Whether the worker is trained in and able to effectively use recommended PPE when in contact with patients; and
- The opportunity for alternative work to be performed that does not expose the worker to COVID-19 whether in the workplace or through access to flexible working practices.

A [Risk Assessment template](#) has been developed to assist managers to:

- Identify risk with consideration of the characteristics of the worker, the workplace location and the type of work.
- Consider suitable strategies to mitigate and/or reduce identified risks, which may include:
 - Social distancing practice and utilisation of technology such virtual meetings and Telehealth.
 - Non clinical/frontline work within the Department/Unit.
 - Clinical/frontline work in a different Department/Unit.
 - Non clinical/frontline work in a different Department/Unit.
 - Flexible working arrangements, e.g., work from home performing normal duties, or work from home performing alternative duties.
- If a vulnerable worker elects to take leave, requests should not be unreasonably declined. Consideration of the request should be made taking into account all of the above circumstances, to come to a balanced decision.

Note: All completed Risk Assessments are to be sent to [SCHN-COVID19WorkforceSupport](#)

3. Important Considerations

- Managers must consult with workers on health and safety matters relating to the COVID-19 virus. Workers are most likely to know about the risks of their work. Involving them will help build worker's commitment to health and safety and increase understanding of any changes needed to be made.
- Where the risk cannot be sufficiently mitigated, managers and workers should consider alternative working arrangements outlined in section 2 (above).
- The AHPPC advice is that there is limited evidence at this time regarding the risk to pregnant women and so, at present, pregnant women are not included on the vulnerable workers list. Managers should consider any concerns raised by the workers and determine appropriate management actions to address their concerns.
- Workers must be directed to stay away from the workplace if they are unwell and not fit for work. Request them to seek medical advice as appropriate.
- Workers may be requested to provide a medical certificate or written information that the worker is affected by a medical condition listed in the AHPPC advice and the recommended mitigation strategy. Contact Workforce Services and/or Nursing Workforce for further information and support.
- Privacy obligations must be adhered to. Key points to note:
 - Personal information should be used or disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis.
 - Only relevant personal information which is necessary to prevent or manage COVID-19 should be collected, used or disclosed.
 - Ensure reasonable steps are in place to keep personal information secure.
- Workers may be directed to not attend their usual place of work, if it is reasonable for managers to require them to do so. Contact Workforce Services and/or Nursing Workforce for further information and support.
- Workforce Services and/or Nursing Workforce will support and assist managers to assess the risk and explore and implement strategies to mitigate and/or identified risk associated with COVID-19.

Vulnerable Workers COVID-19 Risk Assessment Template

<i>Elements for Consideration</i>	<i>Details</i>
Worker's Full Name:	
StaffLink Assignment Number:	
Position Title:	
Work Location:	
Hours of Work:	
Transport to Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Provide details:
<p>Vulnerable workers in relation to COVID-19 as defined by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).</p> <p>Please define the category of the worker.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50 with one or more chronic medical conditions. <input type="checkbox"/> People aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions. <input type="checkbox"/> People aged 70 years and over. <input type="checkbox"/> People with compromised immune systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Provide details below:
<p>Does the work involve face to face interactions with patients, parents or public?</p> <p>If yes, describe the duration, frequency and closeness of the worker's interaction with patients, parents or public.</p>	
<p>If medical conditions have been disclosed/identified, has the worker provided any information, e.g. medical or other support information.</p> <p>Does the information align with the AHPPC conditions included in the definition?</p> <p>What is your assessment of the information provided?</p>	

Elements for Consideration	Details
<p>If applicable, has the worker been trained in PPE?</p> <p>How would this reduce the risk?</p>	
<p>Can an alternative working arrangement be accommodated?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Social distancing practice and utilisation of technology such as virtual meetings and Telehealth.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non clinical/frontline work with the Department/Unit.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Clinical/frontline work in a different Department/Unit.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non clinical/frontline work in a different Department/Unit.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Flexible working arrangements, e.g., work from home performing the staff members normal duties, or work from home performing alternative duties.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other - Provide details below:</p>
<p>Other considerations and recommendations:</p>	

Risk Assessment completed by:	
Signature and Date:	
Comments:	

Tier 3 Manager name and position:	
Supported/not supported:	
Comments:	
Signature and Date:	

Note: All completed Risk Assessments are to be sent to [SCHN-COVID19WorkforceSupport](#)