

# Communique to the Homelessness and Housing sector - COVID-19

On 29 July 2020, Queensland Health advised of new cases of COVID-19 identified in the Logan area and that contact tracing is underway. In response to these new cases, the Department of Housing and Public Works is taking a proactive approach to communicating with key stakeholders including our funded providers.

The Queensland Government is focussed on keeping all Queenslanders healthy and safe during our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes supporting our state's most vulnerable and providing the funding, structure and support required for the housing and homelessness sector to respond.

As our partners, your ongoing work during this critical time is making a real difference to Queenslanders. Please continue to stay in touch with your local contract officer, as your main contact during this time. The department will continue to provide email updates on how we are responding to COVID-19.

## Latest information from Queensland Health

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve across the State, we recommend you regularly check the latest Queensland Health **restrictions, directives and guidelines** via the Queensland Health website:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>

If you become aware of a staff member or client with a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19, please follow Queensland Health advice available at [health.qld.gov.au/coronavirus](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19) or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

Information on contact tracing is available from the Queensland Health website:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/contact-tracing>.

## Where to get tested

People with symptoms of COVID-19 including showing signs of a fever (a temperature higher than 37.5 degrees), a cough, sore throat, runny nose, fatigue, shortness of breath, loss of taste and loss of smell should visit:

**Your local doctor** - Before your appointment, please call ahead and tell them about your symptoms so they can prepare for your visit.

**Fever clinics** - Fever clinics are specialist clinics managed by Hospital and Health Services that assess people who may be infected with COVID-19. These clinics help to keep people who may be contagious away from other areas of hospitals and health centres. This helps to reduce the potential spread of the virus and keeps the emergency department available for emergencies.

Information relating to fever clinics is available on the Queensland Health website:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/testing-and-fever-clinics>



## Business Continuity Planning

The Queensland Government is committed to continuing to work with housing and homelessness services across Queensland to ensure service continuity during the response to COVID-19. The department appreciates you working with your regional contract officers and local networks to develop responses that meet the needs in your area.

We know that all organisations have undertaken significant work to update their **Business Continuity Plans** to support ongoing service delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering current and future staff capacity and mechanisms to ensure the safety of staff and clients.

You can access resources developed by the [Queensland Council of Social Service](#) and the [Community Services Industry Alliance](#) to help you review and update your Business Continuity Plan.

The department encourages all funded providers to follow the direction of Queensland Health when considering which steps to take to protect the health and safety of their staff and tenants.

If your organisation identifies any issues or risks in ensuring continuity of service or has a staff member or client with a confirmed case of COVID-19, please **notify us** by contacting your contract officer. A **COVID-19 Incident – Notification by Funded Providers Form** would need to be completed.

## Support available

As you are aware, on 25 March 2020 the Queensland Government announced the COVID-19 Housing and Homelessness Immediate Response Fund (IRF), which was an integral element of the Queensland Government's immediate response to COVID-19. The IRF enhances the housing and homelessness services available for vulnerable Queenslanders and assists funded providers to operate safely.

The IRF continues to support the response to COVID-19 and providers are encouraged to contact their contract officer if they require any further information.

## For more information

Funded service providers should direct any questions in relation to policies, procedures and the allocation and expenditure of funds to their contract officer. If your organisation identifies any anticipated issues or risks in ensuring continuity of service, please notify your contract officer immediately.

If your organisation operates a Residential Service and has any questions relating to impacts of COVID-19 please contact Regulatory Services via email [regulatoryservices@hpw.qld.gov.au](mailto:regulatoryservices@hpw.qld.gov.au) or phone 07 3008 3450.

### Australian Government directions

Check the Australian Government's website - <https://www.australia.gov.au/> - for the latest COVID-19 news, updates and advice from Australian Government agencies, including information available in a range of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse languages.

**Thank you again for your ongoing support and efforts as we work together to respond to COVID-19 in Queensland.**

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The safety and wellbeing of sector staff, clients, and the wider community is our highest priority.

The department recognises that the COVID-19 situation is emerging and evolving rapidly. Officers have been looking at systems, operations and business continuity plans to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our customers and maintain business as usual.

Service continuity is vital, and we will work together as a broad sector, to meet any challenges.

The department encourages all Queenslanders to follow the direction of Queensland Health when considering how to protect their health and safety.

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