

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Coronavirus

- Coronavirus (**COVID-19**) is a virus. A virus is an illness or disease that can spread easily from one person to another person.
- Coronavirus has been called a **pandemic**. A virus is called a pandemic when it spreads quickly to lots of countries around the world.

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

- The virus can cause a **range of symptoms**, including pneumonia, and sometimes it may have no symptoms at all. Common symptoms include:
 - **fever** (temperature above 37.8oC) ◦ **flu-like symptoms** such as coughing, sneezing, sore throat and fatigue
 - **shortness of breath** or difficulty breathing
- While Coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying these symptoms are likely suffering with a cold, influenza or other respiratory illness – not Coronavirus.

How is Coronavirus spread?

- Coronavirus is most likely spread from person-to-person through droplets transmitted via:
 - Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared.
 - Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes.
 - Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with confirmed Coronavirus infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

How can we prevent the spread of Coronavirus?

- We can all help slow the spread of Coronavirus in Australia.
- To protect ourselves and others we must all:
 - practise **good hygiene** i.e. washing hands and surfaces more regularly
 - **avoid touching** our faces and shared surfaces
 - **stay home** as much as possible
 - practise **physical distancing** i.e. staying 1.5 metres apart from each other
 - follow the **limits for public gatherings**
 - understand how to **self-isolate** if we need to i.e. if we have symptoms or have been overseas

I want to do my part to stop the spread - can I receive my supports via phone or web-based video conference instead of in person?

- In the interest of community safety, over the course of the pandemic **we have changed the way we deliver supports** from predominantly in-person, to include a mix of in-person, phone and/or web-based video conference in order to ensure the safety of our consumers, our staff, and the wider community.
- Over the past few months, social distancing restrictions have relaxed across most states and territories, **and we have gradually increased provision of our in-person services**, in a careful and considered manner.

- **We are prepared to take considered steps back towards phone or web-based supports if risks increase in any of our operating areas, in order to minimise risk to both our workforce, our consumers and the community.**
- In many cases, it may still be appropriate to use a mix of some in person sessions supplemented by webbased supports.
- The availability of in person service delivery will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with you, your worker and their managers as the crisis unfolds.
- Our residential services continue to be delivered in person as they have been throughout the crisis.
- We continue to be committed to doing our part as an organisation to stop the spread of Coronavirus in our communities.
- We know this is a time of ongoing change and we are here to help - please let us know about your preferences and whether you need support to set up phone or video-based support.

When do we need to use masks?

- We now encourage surgical mask use for both our consumers and our staff where physical distancing cannot be maintained, and more generally where there is high risk or preference.
- If you do not have access to a mask on the day of an in-person support session, please let your worker know in advance and they can bring a disposable mask with them for you to wear during the session.
- Updates on current mask wearing requirements in each state can be found on the state Health websites.

How effective are phone and web-based supports compared to face-to-face services?

- Phone and web-based supports are a **proven** and **effective** method of service delivery.
- During these challenging times, phone and web-based supports will provide you with the support and tools you need to maintain your wellbeing.

What if I want more online supports?

- Stride also has a range of ways that we can connect with you via phone or video. Ask your key worker whether you are eligible for our online **Therapeutic Supports** services.

Has anyone at Stride tested positive for Coronavirus?

- At the time of writing (May 2021) we are not aware of any positive cases amongst either our staff or those we support.
- We have implemented a **notification system** in order to track cases as they emerge.

Should I download the Government's COVIDSafe App?

- You have probably heard about the government's COVIDSafe tracking app, which is designed to help speed up contacting people exposed to Coronavirus.
- Whether or not to download the App is up to you.
- There is no need to download the App if it makes you feel anxious or worried about it.
- To help protect staff and our clients, Stride is encouraging staff to use the App on work devices, and millions of Australians are using it.

- You can find out more about the app at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafeapp>

What do I do if I develop symptoms?

- If you are sick and think you have symptoms of Coronavirus, **seek medical advice** about your symptoms:
- Call the **National Coronavirus Helpline (1800 020 080)** if you are seeking information on Coronavirus. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - To seek medical help from a **doctor or hospital**, call ahead of time to book an appointment.
- Follow any medical advice to **self-isolate**.
- If you have a **mask**, please wear it to protect others.
- Stay at least **1.5 metres** away from other people and cover your coughs or sneezes with your elbow.

Do I need to let Stride know if I develop symptoms?

- **Yes**. Please call your key worker to let them know **as soon as possible**, as any in-person meetings will need to be re-arranged whilst you are symptomatic.
- Before any in-person session, we will ask you some screening questions i.e.
 - Have you experienced any flu-like symptoms in the past 24 hours?
 - Have you been in close contact with someone who has been confirmed with COVID-19 any time in the last two weeks?
 - Have you returned from overseas or been in close contact with anyone returning from overseas within the last two weeks?
 - Have you been at a high-risk venue? Check your state health website for any current high-risk venue alerts. If the answer to any of these questions is YES, then we will provide phone or web-based support only.

What should I do if I think my worker is sick when we meet in person?

- We are implementing **strict self-isolation measures** for any staff who are symptomatic, so that you are not unnecessarily exposed.
- Since our shift to phone and web-based supports, many of **our staff are working from home more of the time**, greatly reducing the risk of transmission when we do meet in person.
- If you have any concerns about being exposed to symptoms by one of our workers, please let your worker know and they will arrange alternative support options. Alternatively, contact your worker's direct manager or call us on 1300 00 1907.

What will my worker do if they arrive and think I am sick?

- Your worker will call you prior to any in person meeting to confirm that neither of you are symptomatic, so please **ensure your phone is charged** and that you answer any calls from us.
- If your worker notices that you have symptoms during a support session, they may have to end the session and suspend in person sessions until you can be assessed. They will also discuss alternative support options we can offer during this time, such as over the phone or via web-based video conferencing.

What if my worker gets sick and is unable to support me?

- We have other workers who may be able to provide supports in the event of a last-minute cancellation due to worker illness, however as usual this is dependent on worker availability.

What can my Stride workers and I do to maximize our safety?

- Switch from in person to **phone or web-based supports** wherever possible.
- Talk to your worker to come up with a **personalized plan to keep safe and well** during the crisis.
- For in person meetings, you can **reduce the risk of transmitting** Coronavirus by:
 - Practicing thorough **handwashing** with soap and water before and after your meeting
 - **Meeting outside** in an open space and maintaining social distancing (staying 1.5 metres apart from each other)
 - **Not having any physical contact** with each other during the meeting
 - **Not exchanging any items** e.g. pens, paper forms
 - When out in the community, thoroughly wash your hands or **use hand sanitizer** before, during and after your meeting.
- **Keeping your phone charged and answering your phone** is important so we can confirm if either you or your worker are sick before we meet.

Is it safe to drive in my Stride worker's car?

- In order to **slow the spread** of Coronavirus in the community and prevent transmission between our consumers, we are **continuing to minimize the use of our transport services** wherever possible.
- If you are transported by our staff:
 - We will be using sanitizers and alcohol wipes regularly to keep our vehicles clean.
 - In line with current social distancing recommendations, you will be asked to sit in the back of the car on the opposite side to the driver.

Will any of your organisation's groups be cancelled?

- At the start of the crisis we **cancelled in person groups** in the interest of safety and social distancing.
- We have commenced some groups via web-based video conferencing, and these are proving to be a fun and effective way to stay connected and reduce feelings of isolation during the crisis.
- As social distancing restrictions have eased in most states, we are gradually returning to in-person groups in some regions, with strict safety plans in place to keep everyone safe.
- Stay connected to your service through your key worker to learn more about these changes.

Will I be penalized if I cancel my Stride supports?

- Our usual cancellation policies will remain in place, including for phone and web-based supports, so **please give us as much notice as possible** if you need to cancel any of your supports.
- Some of our service's cancellation policies have recently changed – please discuss this with your key worker.

Will you have to cancel my supports entirely if the situation changes?

- We are following the Department of Health's information and guidance and may have to make changes in line with their advice and direction from the Australian Government.
- We expect to be able to deliver phone and web-based supports throughout the crisis – speak with your key worker about getting prepared for any future changes now.

- Your key worker will keep you up to date with any changes to the way we deliver your supports.

We are always here to help so please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks for your understanding.