



COVID-19 and Emergency Disaster Management Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect all people in the care of Lift Up Voices and to ensure that risks associated with COVID-19 and other disasters are managed to protect people who work for, attend sessions and workshops, consultations, and meetings with Lift Up Voices staff members.

The inevitable arrival of COVID-19 into the South Australian community has presented challenges with regards to continuity of service delivery, risk management and ensuring the health and wellbeing of staff and participants.

This policy supports the NDIS Practice Standards Core Module 2, *Provider Governance and Operational Management*, in relation to *Risk Management*, *Human Resource Management* and *Emergency Disaster Management* (2021). It also reflects updated NDIS Commission guidance (2023–2024) and SA Health recommendations regarding COVID-19, infection control and business continuity planning.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the management, employees, contracted staff and volunteers of Lift Up Voices. This policy also applies to visitors, contractors and any external parties attending Lift Up Voices events or premises. A copy of this policy will be provided to all staff upon their appointment and is also available on the Lift Up Voices website. An easy-read version will be available to all concerned upon request.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Covid-19 pandemic first began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It has since spread throughout the world, with evolving variants being discovered on an ongoing basis. A coronavirus is a type of virus that effects the respiratory system of an infected person, with symptoms including coughing, sore throat, runny nose and fatigue. The virus is spread through close contact and the inhalation of airborne particles that contain the virus during a carrier's infectious period.

Since the start of the pandemic South Australia has been subject to numerous government-enforced control measures, such as lockdown periods, mandated vaccination and compulsory wearing of masks. As of 2025, COVID-19 continues to circulate in the community. While public health orders have been lifted, SA Health strongly recommends staying home when sick, maintaining good hygiene and applying common-sense infection prevention strategies, especially in high-risk environments.

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4. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Lift Up Voices provides individual mentoring sessions, music therapy services and group workshops to people with disability in the greater Adelaide metropolitan region. This includes people who have conditions that impact their physical or cognitive functioning and who will likely require additional support to abide by COVID-19 precautionary measures.

COVID-19 presents numerous organisational risks to Lift Up Voices, including:

- Disrupted service delivery due to quarantine of participants
- Staffing shortages due to mandated isolation
- Financial challenges associated with cancelled or postponed service delivery and additional costs incurred to maintain infection control measures
- Potential exposure of vulnerable participants to infection

It can reasonably be assumed that COVID-19 will continue to spread throughout the South Australian community and will impact Lift Up Voices as outlined above.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Preventative Measures

Lift Up Voices will engage in ongoing discussion with participants and their families regarding appropriate precautions to prevent COVID-19 being transmitted at the Lift Up Voices premises, including, but not limited to:

- Encouraging staff, participants and visitors to stay home if unwell or displaying symptoms
- Following current SA Health advice regarding respiratory illnesses
- Providing staff with KN-95 masks and patrons with disposable surgical masks
- Carefully monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 that may indicate an undiagnosed infection
- Managing numbers of participants to ensure that social distancing can be maintained, including redirecting patrons to an additional waiting area if required
- Cleaning of workspaces between each appointment and abiding by principles outlined in NDIS Infectious Control Training.
- Promoting COVID-19 and flu vaccination for staff, contractors and participants in line with SA Health and NDIS Commission guidance.
- Maintaining up-to-date emergency preparedness plans that include COVID-19 response, influenza outbreaks, bushfires, and other emergencies
- Distributing a copy of Lift Up Voices' Emergency Disaster Plan and COVID-19 response plan to staff and making it available to participants on request

5.2 If a staff member or participant tests positive to COVID-19

- In the event a staff member or participant tests positive to COVID-19, services will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams wherever possible.
- If online delivery is not practical or the participant is too unwell, the session will be postponed.

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- Rescheduling will be arranged as soon as possible in collaboration with the participant or their family.
- Lift Up Voices will follow current SA Health isolation guidance (e.g., staying home while symptomatic and avoiding high-risk settings for 5 days after testing positive).

5.3 If an infectious person has attended Lift Up Voices

A person who has tested positive to COVID-19 will likely have been unaware that they were infectious in days prior, including when they may have visited the Lift Up Voices premises. In the event this occurs, the following action will take place:

- Rapid Antigen Tests will be offered to staff where exposure may have occurred.
- Cleaning protocols will be reviewed and adjusted as needed.
- The Director will determine whether temporary changes to service delivery (e.g., moving to online sessions) are required.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure that they comply with all elements of this policy. Directors are responsible for ensuring infection control supplies are available, staff training is up to date and emergency plans are maintained.

7. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Lift Up Voices staff members are encouraged to provide feedback on this policy and procedure to the Director/s, to ensure that it remains relevant and reflects an appropriate response to the COVID-19 pandemic as it continues to evolve. This policy will be reviewed following significant outbreaks, changes in public health advice or feedback from staff and participants.

8. RELEVANT COVID-19 RESOURCES

- SA Health COVID-19 Information Line (8AM-8PM, 7 days per week) 1800 253 787
- South Australia COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line - 1800 632 753
- National Coronavirus Helpline (24 hours, 7 days per week) 1800 020 080
- Emergency Services in the event of immediate threat to safety – 000
- www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
- www.ndiscommission.gov.au/coronavirus

9. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure any legislative, policy or funding requirements alterations that result in the policy no longer being appropriate in its current form will be addressed by the immediate review and amendment of the policy.

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RELATED POLICIES

Code of Conduct Policy

Risk Management Policy

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Lift Up Voices NDIS Service Agreement

RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR STANDARDS

NDIS Practice Standards Core Module 2: Provider Governance and Operational Management

NDIS (Provider Governance and Operational Management) Rules

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Infection Control Training

SA Health Public Health Act 2011

National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No.1) Act 2024

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