

39. COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

To establish the process to comply with the Queensland Department of Health's mandate that all disability staff are vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have a medical contraindication, to help reduce the risk residents and staff have of contracting and spreading COVID-19.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all Australian Quality Care staff, directors, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

Responsibility

All staff, directors, volunteers, other healthcare providers, visitors or agents and/or related third parties of Australian Quality Care shall comply with this policy.

Australian Quality Care management is responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining this policy and procedure.

Definitions

Worker in healthcare means a person who works, undertakes an education placement, or volunteers in a healthcare setting

Healthcare setting means a setting or premises where healthcare is provided including shared disability accommodation services

COVID-19 vaccination requirements see Section 1

COVID-19 vaccine is a vaccine for COVID-19 that is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in Australia or that is endorsed by WHO-COVAX where the employee was vaccinated overseas

Responsible person for a healthcare setting means the person legally responsible for employing or engaging workers in healthcare and for facilitating their access to the healthcare setting

Medical contraindication means a temporary or permanent contraindication

Unvaccinated worker in healthcare means a worker in healthcare that is not fully vaccinated by 16 December 2021, or who has not met the COVID-19 vaccination requirements in a Public Health Direction or Health Employment Direction that applies to the worker

COVID-19 PCR test means tested for COVID-19 with an oropharyngeal and deep nasal swab for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing, undertaken in a clinical setting, and does not include a self-test

PPE guideline means an established guideline appropriate for the setting, such as [Queensland Health PPE guidelines](#), and may include existing guidelines used by the healthcare setting, or as outlined in the COVID Safe Plan.

Policy Details

Under its overarching Risk Management Policy, Australian Quality Care is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all members of our team and anyone who comes in contact with our business.

Under Australia's model WHS laws, employers are required to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of workers and others at the workplace. This duty extends to the COVID-19 pandemic, where employers must eliminate, or if that is not possible, minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of exposure to infection from COVID-19 in the workplace both now and into the future.

The ongoing rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations is an important additional safety measure being driven by various government bodies, that will assist the community, but also organisations including Australian Quality Care to continue providing a safe and healthy work environment.

Australian Quality Care has taken the decision that it is reasonable for our business to implement a mandatory vaccination policy, in line with Public Health Directions and State and Federal laws, for all employees, directors, contractors and volunteers.

Where possible, Australian Quality Care will facilitate arrangements for staff to receive vaccinations during work hours to ensure those seeking to be vaccinated can access appropriate medical services. Staff are encouraged to speak to their managers to discuss these arrangements.

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Workers in Healthcare

The Queensland Department of Health's mandate considers Healthcare settings to include group disability accommodation.

Section 1

A worker in healthcare must not enter, work in, or provide services in a healthcare setting unless the worker in healthcare complies with the COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

The COVID-19 vaccination requirements are that:

- By 15 December 2021, a worker in healthcare has received the prescribed number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine; or
- Where COVID-19 vaccination requirements in another public health direction or an employment direction also apply to the worker in healthcare, the worker must receive the prescribed number of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine by the date in those requirements; and
- As soon as reasonably practicable after each dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the worker in healthcare must provide evidence of complying with the COVID-19 vaccination requirements to their employer, where applicable, and to the responsible person for the healthcare setting.

Note: Evidence of meeting the COVID-19 vaccination requirements may include a person's MyGov record or Immunisation History Statement from the [Australian Immunisation Register](#).

A person's Immunisation History Statement can be obtained from the Australian Government using myGov, the Medicare mobile app or by calling the Australian Immunisation Register and requesting a statement to be posted. Information is available at:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register/how-get-immunisation-history-statement>.

Section 2

Section 1 does not apply to a worker in healthcare who is unable to be vaccinated due to a medical contraindication where the responsible person for the healthcare setting:

- a. Assesses the risk to the staff member, other staff, patients, clients and other persons at the healthcare setting; and
- b. Determines that the unvaccinated worker may continue to work in the healthcare setting where their work cannot be performed outside the healthcare setting; and
- c. The unvaccinated worker complies with the requirements in *Section 3*.

Section 3

A worker in healthcare to whom Section 2 applies must:

- a. Comply with the [National guide for safe workplaces](#) and other COVID-19 guidance provided by [Safe Work Australia](#) for the healthcare setting; and
- b. Produce a negative COVID-19 PCR test result before commencing each work shift in a healthcare setting;
- c. And wear PPE as required under an established PPE guideline for the healthcare setting; or
 - i. Note: an established PPE guideline may include existing [Queensland Health guidelines](#), existing guidelines used by the healthcare setting or as outlined in the COVID safe plan for the healthcare setting,
- d. Where the worker in healthcare is a person to whom the *Health Employment Directive 12/21 Employee COVID-19 Vaccination requirements* (the HED) or the *Residential Aged Care Facilities Direction (No.12)* or its successor (*the direction*) applies, comply with the requirements relating to a medical contraindication or any other exceptions to mandatory vaccination requirements in the HED or the direction.

Section 4

A worker in healthcare to whom *Section 2* applies must provide a medical certificate, issued by a medical practitioner, and their Australian Immunisation Record, specifying the medical contraindication that makes the person unable to be vaccinated and the period of the medical contraindication if it is temporary.

Section 5

Where the medical practitioner certifies that a person has a temporary medical contraindication for being unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, *Section 2* only applies for the period specified in the medical certificate. If the medical contraindication continues beyond the specified period, the person must provide a new medical certificate from their medical practitioner certifying the matters in *Section 4*.

Section 6

Section 1 does not apply to an unvaccinated worker in healthcare who enters a healthcare setting to respond to an emergency. An unvaccinated worker in healthcare who enters a healthcare setting to respond to an emergency must comply with the PPE guideline requirements for the healthcare setting. A staff member must report the entry to Management as soon as reasonably practicable.

Requirements for Workers in Healthcare and Their Employers

Australian Quality Care Management and staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure the worker in healthcare does not enter, work in, or provide services in a healthcare setting if the person is prohibited from doing so.

Australian Quality Care will keep a record of having sighted evidence of, or verified, the staff members vaccination status, evidence supporting a claimed medical contraindication, and of the negative COVID-19 PCR test results required before an unvaccinated worker starts each shift.

After 15 December 2021, Australian Quality Care Management will obtain confirmation that any worker that enters, works in, or provides services has received the prescribed number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, or meets the conditions for a medical exemption.

Australian Quality Care will keep a record, either locally or centrally, of staff's COVID-19 vaccination information reported by the worker or Australian Quality Care. The information is collected and used to ensure compliance with State and Federal laws. This information is to be stored in a secure database that is accessible to authorised persons only.

Visitors to Healthcare Settings

From the 17th of December 2021, unvaccinated people will be *unable* to enter vulnerable settings. *Vulnerable settings include disability accommodation services.* The exceptions to this Queensland Department of Health mandate are people entering for medical treatment, end-of-life visits, childbirth or medical situations.

The onus will be on the person entering the healthcare setting to show their proof of vaccination status. Australian Quality Care staff and management may ask visitors to show their vaccination status. If visitors are non-complying, then Australian Quality Care may call the police for assistance. Penalties for people refusing to comply are up to \$13,785 issued by the Queensland Police.

The persons who are exempted from getting a COVID-19 vaccination include those who have medical contraindications. A person who cannot be vaccinated *must* show evidence of contraindication, certified by a legally qualified medical practitioner who will record it on the Australian Immunisation Register. A person that has evidence of a medical contraindication will be treated as if they are fully vaccinated and may be permitted to enter and remain on the premises.

Associated Documents

- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Australian Immunisation Register
- Code of Ethics and Conduct

References and Legislation

- Chief Health Officer Public Health Directions
- Workers in a healthcare setting (COVID-10 Vaccination Requirements) Direction
- Work Health and Safety Australia
- Information Privacy Act 2009
- Public Records Act 2002
- Privacy Act 1988