

RESPIRATORY INFECTION AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Policy & Procedure Control	
Policy & Procedure Name	RESPIRATORY INFECTION AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
Policy & Procedure Status	FOR APPROVAL
Version No.	4.7
Date Approved	24 July 2024
Date of Next Review	24 July 2025
Approval Authority	Cancer Care Western NSW Executive and Board

1. Purpose

This policy aims to

- a) ensure that the health of guests, carers and staff at Western Care Lodge is protected,
- b) facilitate guests' ongoing access to treatment at the Central West Cancer Centre, and
- c) allow for the ongoing operation of the Lodge in providing accommodation for guests being treated for cancer,

through procedures to minimise the likelihood of serious respiratory infections entering and/or spreading in the Lodge.

2. Scope

All staff, contractors, volunteers, guests, carers and visitors are required to comply with the specified procedures because of the ongoing spread of Covid-19 and other respiratory infections in western NSW.

3. Definitions

- 3.1** CCW – Cancer Care Western NSW
- 3.2** The Lodge – Western Care Lodge
- 3.3** Covid-19 Vaccine – A vaccine approved by the Australian government.
- 3.4** Covid-19 PCR Test – a test on swabs taken at an official testing centre.

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- 3.5** Covid-19 RAT – a Rapid Antigen Test approved by the Australian Government.
- 3.6** PPE - Personal protective equipment designed to protect people from Covid-19 infection.
- 3.7** PHU – Public Health Unit, NSW Health, Bathurst.

4. Statement of Principles

CCW is committed to adhering to all legislation, regulations and best practices and complying with the directions of the Public Health Unit and Western NSW Local Health District.

CCW is committed to cooperating with Central West Cancer Care Centre to facilitate access to treatment for guests at the Lodge as appropriate.

Emphasis is placed on people who are at higher risk of being infectious and becoming infected to protect the health and well-being of themselves and others at the Lodge. This expectation will be communicated at the time of enquiry and booking.

5. Policy for Respiratory Infection

Covid-19 and influenza continue to spread in NSW, especially as waves of new variants. Other respiratory viruses have been spreading in NSW recently

Covid-19 variants present a genuine health threat to guests, carers and staff at the Lodge and especially to people who are immuno-compromised or not recently booster vaccinated.

WCL will welcome patients who are booked and accepted for treatment at the Cancer Centre, and other patients and guests as arranged by the CCW Board with the Hospital and Health Service, subject to the following conditions.

Vaccination

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All people working, visiting and staying in the Lodge are strongly encouraged to be up to date with vaccinations for the common respiratory infections as recommended for their age and health status by the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

<https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/covid-19>

Risk Assessment/Declaration

All guests and carers will provide a completed *Respiratory Infection Risk Assessment/Declaration Form* (Attachment 1) on arrival.

Testing

All guests and carers (except medical staff) will be tested for Covid-19 by RAT under supervision on arrival and on return to the Lodge after more than a day's absence (for instance, after returning home for a weekend).

The guest and carer will self-administer the RAT in the presence of a staff member to help ensure that the sampling and testing is conducted correctly.

Medical staff staying as guests at the Lodge (principally visiting specialists at Orange Hospital) will not be required to test for Covid-19 by RAT.

Symptoms and Contacts

Any people who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, who have had significant contact with people infected, or suspected to be infected with Covid-19, are not to enter the Lodge until their status is resolved.

Risk Assessment/Test Outcome

People who,

- a) test Covid-19 RAT positive on entry, **OR**
- b) currently have or have had symptoms of a respiratory infection in the past 7 days, **OR**

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c) are a household contact of, or have had other close contact with, someone with a respiratory infection in the past 7 days

will be accepted, subject to their agreeing to take *additional infection control procedures* aimed at protecting other residents and staff within the Lodge (see below).

If a guest or carer does not agree to comply with these conditions, the Manager may try to assist them by organising alternative accommodation.

Masks

Masks will be available in the foyer and all people are encouraged to wear a mask inside the Lodge.

Movements outside the Lodge

To reduce exposure to Covid-19, Influenza and other serious respiratory infections, guests and carers are strongly encouraged to stay at the Lodge for the duration of their treatment and return home at the end of their treatment.

If guests and carers return home they should remain isolated from potential sources of respiratory infections.

Guests and Carers returning to the Lodge must comply with all the conditions above.

Other people

Visitors and Contractors will be welcome inside the Lodge if they have no symptoms of respiratory infection and complete a risk declaration form.

Medical staff will be welcome to stay if they have no symptoms, advise the Manager of any change in the health, use the verandah doors as their main route of access and limit their contact with other guests and carers.

Records

Records of all guests and carers, their addresses and contact details are maintained in the Callista booking system.

Contact details of visitors, non-essential contractors and short-term accommodation will be maintained by the Manager.

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Additional infection control procedures

- Limit contact with other guests.
- Practice good hand hygiene.
- Wear a clean mask in common areas and dispose of contaminated masks in their room's garbage bin.
- Monitor and record their temperature daily for 7 days
- RAT test on days 2, 4 and 7 after entry.
- Advise the Manager as soon as possible if they develop symptoms of respiratory infection or test RAT positive.
- Undertake to follow the Manager's directions (which may include changing rooms, isolating in their room, etc)
- Depending on the severity of symptoms, the person's ability to appropriately care for themselves (+/- assistance) in their rooms and the Lodge's capacity at that time to manage the person's health and the risk they present to others, the Manager may have to arrange moving the guest and carer to alternative accommodation outside the Lodge).

PPE and cleaning

The Manager will maintain adequate supplies of PPE, cleaning materials, hand sanitiser, and other consumables recommended to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory infections at the Lodge.

The Manager will ensure staff and cleaners are trained in the correct use of PPE and maintain appropriate resources and services to correctly dispose of potentially contaminated PPE and other materials.

The Manager will engage qualified cleaners to undertake a Covid deep-clean if required.

6. Procedure for Preparedness

6.1 The Manager will maintain records of the Covid-19 and Influenza vaccinations of all staff

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6.2 Guests and carers will present a completed *Risk Assessment/Declaration Form* (Attachment 1), with documentary evidence of vaccinations on arrival at the Lodge. Staff will review and witness the signing of the form.

6.3 The Manager will maintain summary records of Covid-19 and Influenza vaccination of all guests and carers.

6.4 The Manager will provide each guest with a pack comprising a thermometer, hand sanitiser, gloves, spray bottle of disinfectant and water to wipe their own door handles and surfaces and fact sheets on Covid.

7. Procedures for Response to Covid-19 Contacts

7.1 If anyone staying at the Lodge is advised that they have had significant contact with Covid-19, he or she must advise the Manager immediately.

7.2 The person (and any accompanying guest or carer) must be tested by RAT as soon as possible and on days 2, 4 and 7 post exposure. The person must comply with the Manager's directions with respect to *additional infection control procedures*.

7.3 The Manager will assist guests and carers who are isolating to procure food and other necessities.

8. Procedures for Response to Suspected or Confirmed Covid-19 Infection

8.1 If anyone develops symptoms of Covid-19 at the Lodge, the Manager will immediately isolate the person(s) to their room for 7 days.

8.2 The Manager will also advise people staying at the Lodge, newly arriving guests and carers and any other people who may have been exposed to infection at the Lodge during the previous 10 days.

8.3 The Manager will arrange for the person to be tested by RAT. If the initial RAT is negative (ie day 1), the Manager will arrange RAT testing on days 2, 4 and 7 or may organise for the person to be tested by PCR at the closest testing centre .

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8.4 The Manager may reorganise accommodation and movements within the Lodge to minimize the contact with others, including only using external doors to verandahs.

8.5 If a person at the Lodge exhibits symptoms of deteriorating health, such as breathing difficulties and dizziness, an ambulance will be called.

8.6 If Covid-19 is confirmed in a person at the Lodge, the Manager will take further immediate steps to minimise the risk of spread within the Lodge.

8.9 If the Manager is advised that someone has been diagnosed with Covid-19 within 10 days of leaving the Lodge, she will advise other people who may have been exposed at the Lodge.

9. Resource People

CCW Spokespersons:

Chairman, 0427 103 979 / ricky.puata@regional.nsw.gov.au

Dr Jamie Gordon, 0428 814 836 / j.gordon48@optusnet.com.au

PHU Bathurst - (02) 6330 5880. After Hours 0428 400 526.

Central West Cancer Care Centre - Fran Ferguson, Rural Cancer Nurse

Coordinator: (02) 6369 3967, 0429 397 931

frances.ferguson@health.nsw.gov.au

Orange Health Service - Dr Jake Williams, Infectious Diseases Physician:

(02) 6365 7828 / jacowilliams@csu.edu.au

McArdles Cleaning, Orange – Mark Mangune (02) 6361 8447/

mark@mcardles.com.au

10. Revision History

Relevant changes to this Policy will also be reflected in concurrent updates to the Visitor Policy.

Vs 2 - 11 October 2021

Vs 3 – ## January 2022

Vs 4.2 – June 2022

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Vs 4.3 – January 2023

Vs 4.4 – XXXXX 2023

Vs 4.5 – June 2023

Vs 4.7 – July 2024

11. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Documents

Attachment 1 – *Respiratory Infection Risk Assessment/Declaration for Guests and Carers*, Version 4.1 then as subsequently updated.

Attachment 2 – Australian Vaccination Guidelines for Covid-19 (5 Oct 2023)

NSW Health:

NSW respiratory surveillance - COVID-19 and influenza

Latest surveillance summary

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/reports.aspx>

Advice for people exposed to COVID-19, (29 Dec 2023)

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing/people-exposed-to-covid>

Testing and what to do if you have COVID-19 (11 Jan 2024)

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/testing-managing>

Rapid antigen testing information for businesses (03 October 2023)

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/business/rapid-antigen-testing-information-for-businesses>

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12. Acknowledgements

Date Approved	24 July 2024
Approval Authority	Executive: Chairman
Signature	

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Attachment 1

Respiratory Infection Risk Assessment/Declaration for Guests and Carers - Vs 4.1

See separate document



Australian Government
**Department of Health
and Aged Care**

**Australian
Immunisation
Handbook**

Adults aged ≥18 years are recommended to receive COVID-19 vaccine

Primary course vaccination is **recommended** for all adults. The recommended schedule is 2 doses, 8 weeks apart.

An additional (3rd) primary course dose is **recommended** for severely immunocompromised adults, given 8 weeks after the second dose.

A 2023 COVID-19 vaccine dose is **recommended** for the following groups, to be given at least 6 months after their most recent COVID-19 vaccine dose:

- All adults aged ≥65 years,
- adults aged 18–64 years who have medical comorbidities that increase their risk of severe COVID-19, and
- adults who have a disability with significant or complex health needs.

A 2023 dose may be **considered** for other adults aged 18–64 years, based on an individual risk-benefit assessment.

A second 2023 COVID-19 vaccine dose, is **recommended** for all adults aged ≥75 years if 6 months have passed since their last dose.

A second 2023 dose can be considered for adults aged 65–74 years and for those with severe immunocompromise. Within these groups, the second 2023 dose would be of most benefit to those who have no known history of SARS-CoV-2 [infection](#) (therefore unlikely to have hybrid immunity), who are at greater risk of severe COVID-19 due to multiple complex comorbidities, or who reside in a residential aged care facility.

A person may be vaccinated earlier than the recommended 6-month interval in exceptional circumstances, such as before starting immunosuppressant therapy, before overseas travel or if someone cannot reschedule vaccination easily (such as in an outreach vaccination program).

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Last updated 5 October 2023
October 2023

Last reviewed 5

<https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/recommendations/adults-aged-18-years-are-recommended-to-receive-covid-19-vaccine>