



# Support for WA Disability Service Providers – COVID-19

***All information contained in this document is accurate as at 12 November 2020***

Under the State Support Plan – Emergency Welfare (Interim), the Department of Communities (Communities) primary responsibility is to coordinate welfare services during a pandemic in Western Australia (WA). Welfare services include emergency accommodation, food provision, clothing and personal requisites, personal support services, registration and reunification, as well as financial assistance.

In February 2020, Communities established a Disability Taskforce, with a role to support the disability sector to provide essential services to people with disability during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Disability Taskforce includes representatives of disability and community sectors, Communities and other government agencies working in partnership.

Through the Disability Taskforce, Communities is currently developing a preparedness guide in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak somewhere in the disability sector. This is being developed in conjunction with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the National Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) and State COVID committees. More information will be available shortly.

From 14 November 2020, WA will transition to a safe and sensible controlled border arrangement. WA is following the public health advice and taking safe, steady and sensible steps to cautiously replace our hard border with a new controlled border.

It is a reminder to everyone to not get complacent and take unnecessary risks, we all need to act responsibly and follow the health advice and to maintain COVID Safety Plans and embrace COVID-safe principles.

Find out more about WA's [Controlled Interstate Border](#).

Information about other work to date by the Disability Taskforce is below.

## Department of Communities COVID-19 Disability Service Provider Support

Communities works to ensure the WA disability sector receives appropriate supports to operate under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Disability service providers who are registered on the Disability Service Provider Panel in WA are required to advise of:

- Any concerns about business continuity
- The inability to provide contracted services as a result of COVID-19



Please use the telephone number and/or email below.

- **Phone:** (08) 6167 8777
- **Email:** [DSPProviderSupport@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:DSPProviderSupport@communities.wa.gov.au)

## Essential supports provided by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

If a person with disability has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the NDIS can provide additional resources to help maintain essential supports.

- **Contact NDIS**  
**Phone:** 1800 800 110 and select option 5 to discuss

Participants impacted by COVID-19 will be prioritised to ensure they continue to receive their disability related supports, including any additional supports or funding required.

If a person tests COVID-19 positive the laboratory that did the test will advise the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) and their General Practitioner.

If a person with disability lives in Supported Independent Living accommodation, and has been diagnosed with COVID-19, after 1 December 2020 the provider must advise the [NDIS Commission](#). The NDIS Commission will advise the NDIA, and existing plans will be updated with additional funding as soon as possible.

An Information Pack developed by the NDIS is available here [NDIS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information Pack](#) for NDIS participants.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When a person has undergone a COVID-19 test, the COVID Clinic or Hospital will supply immediate PPE needs until a test result is received. For a confirmed case of COVID-19 the Department of Health will provide further information and longer-term PPE needs as required.

For information about using and getting access to PPE, visit the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website](#) which specifies that disability service providers should continue to access PPE from their usual supplier. If suppliers have exhausted PPE please email [NDISCOVIDPPE@health.gov.au](mailto:NDISCOVIDPPE@health.gov.au)

Disability service providers can request business as usual PPE through the WA Department of Finance via email at [PDWSalesReports@finance.wa.gov.au](mailto:PDWSalesReports@finance.wa.gov.au) with the below information:

- who the PPE is required for and under what circumstance
- likelihood and consequence of exposure to an infection source or a non-infectious agent (e.g. pathogens, irritants, toxins)
- consequence of the service not being provided
- what and how much PPE is requested and how it will reduce exposure
- what stocks the disability service provider currently holds



- what the usage rates are (per item per week)

The WA Department of Finance will then assess these based on an agreed set of guidelines (including PPE use guidelines) and send the request to the Department of Health for review, if the Department of Finance is unable to source directly itself. The Department of Health will then review and approve based on availability and risk as appropriate.

[Advice on how to access Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#), WA Department of Health

Visit [COVID-19 information for aged care and community care providers](#), WA Department of Health to access PPE training resources.

## Essential Shopping Delivery Service (ESDS)

[Cahoots Connects](#) provides people who are isolated and without access to formal or informal supports, a service to access essential shopping and delivery of supplies, via a helpline with information and links to emergency relief services.

Cahoots Connects is free for eligible Western Australians. People pay only for goods purchased, with experienced staff and volunteers available to take calls and deliver essentials.

- **Phone:** 1300 103 880

## i-induct

A free online support worker induction program - [i-induct](#) - is currently available to enable people seeking work in the disability sector to undertake initial training to be job ready. I-induct was initially promoted for new employees of disability service providers with fewer than 350 employees. It has recently been extended to larger organisations.

To request a licence please contact [admin@iinduct.com.au](mailto:admin@iinduct.com.au)

## Jobs in WA Disability Services

The [Jobs in WA Disability Services](#) website was established to connect skilled job seekers, whose employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with employers looking for skilled workers. This resource is for both disability service providers and people self-managing their supports.

Employers looking to hire more staff can create a free employer profile to search for potential candidates and job seekers.

## Further information

Visit the Department of Communities [Disability Services \(COVID-19\)](#) website for more information, to keep up to date with the latest support and for a full list of online resources.