

9 November 2021



COVID-19 vaccination direction - disability & aged care

Dear sector colleague,

A [new Direction under the Emergency Management Act 2004](#) has been published that mandates COVID-19 vaccinations for **disability support workers** along with in-home and community aged care.

An update to the Residential Aged Care Facilities Direction regarding COVID-19 vaccinations has also come into place. Further information about this update, along with news about mandatory vaccinations required for anyone visiting the APY Lands, can be found below.

What is the purpose of this Direction and who does it apply to?

The [Emergency Management \(In-home and Community Aged Care and Disability Support Workers Vaccination\) \(COVID-19\) Direction 2021](#) mandates that **disability support workers** must receive their first dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine **by 30 November 2021** and have a booking for their second dose within the recommended interval time.

Up until now, vaccine mandate directions relating to aged care and disability have been setting based, providing protections for those in residential aged care and a range of healthcare settings including hospitals, GP clinics and allied health practices.

This new Direction aims to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to vulnerable members of the community by people who provide them with in-home or community-based care.

The Direction applies to employees, contractors and volunteers.

The Direction also applies to any setting (including in-home) where a disability support worker delivers their services to a person with disability.

The [In-home and Community Aged Care and Disability Support Workers Vaccination Direction](#) defines a **disability support worker** as:

- a person who provides **intensive disability support services** to a person with a disability

for or on behalf of a **reasonable provider** (which includes any person or organisation (including State or Local Government agencies and statutory authorities), whether registered as a NDIS provider or not) and

- who provides those **intensive disability support services** to a person with disability in person.

This means that the Direction applies only to **disability support workers** who provide in-person support to a person with disability and does not extend to other behind-the-scenes staff in an organisation that provides **intensive disability support services**.

The types of **intensive disability support services** defined in the Direction are taken from classes of support in the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018* as follows:

- assistance with daily life tasks in a group or shared living arrangement
- group and centre based activities
- specialised supported employment
- assistance with daily personal activities
- community nursing care, and
- therapeutic supports.

This Direction applies to both registered and non-registered NDIS providers.

In line with the Healthcare setting Direction, a person can continue to perform duties as a **disability support worker** if they have a medical exemption which is approved by the Chief Public Health Officer and is provided to their employer. [An immunisation exemption form can be found on the covid-19.sa.gov.au website](https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au).

What action do I need to take?

A **disability support worker** who provides the above services must:

- Receive their first dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine by 30 November 2021, and have their second dose booked within the recommended interval time; and
- Provide their employer with evidence of their vaccination status on request.

If a worker has not received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by 30 November, and does not have [a medical exemption that has been approved by the Chief Public Health Officer](#), **they are unable to engage in work or perform duties as a disability support worker**.

A **reasonable provider** (organisation / employer) must:

- Not let a **disability support worker** (an employee, contractor or volunteer) perform duties

(**intensive support services** to a person with disability in person) unless they have been vaccinated in accordance with the Direction;

- Keep a record of the vaccination status of any person engaged to perform duties of a **disability support worker**; and
- Verify the vaccination status of a person engaged to perform duties of a **disability support worker** by sighting evidence of their vaccination status (eg, a vaccination certificate).

Failure to comply with this Direction is an offence.

[Further information about the *Emergency Management \(In-home and Community Aged Care and Disability Support Workers Vaccination\) \(COVID-19\) Direction 2021*, including FAQs, can be found on the \[covid-19.sa.gov.au\]\(https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au\) website.](#)

As mentioned, the Direction also applies to **in-home and community aged care workers and services**, which includes a number of services and programs delivered by the Australian Government Department of Health including Home Care Packages and the Commonwealth Home Support Program. [Providers of in-home and community aged care services should refer to the Direction and FAQs for further information about how this applies to the aged care sector.](#)

Thank you all for your continued commitment to ensuring that we do everything we can to protect each other, and the people and communities we support.

If you have any questions please contact the DHS COVID-19 Response team on DHSCOVIDResponse@sa.gov.au.

Ngaityalya
(Kurna, *thank you*)

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