

## **FACT SHEET 6 August 2021**

### **Impacts of Covid-19 Infection in Residential Aged Care Services (RACs)**

COVID-19 primarily causes respiratory illness in humans and while all types of respiratory viruses can cause sickness in the elderly, COVID-19 is a very contagious infection that can cause severe illness and death for vulnerable people.

Residential care facilities are particularly susceptible to COVID-19 outbreaks. External cases may lead to residents or staff contracting COVID-19 resulting in outbreaks in residential care facilities.

### **What has the Commonwealth said about vaccination of employees in RACs?**

The Commonwealth announced that from mid-September employees in RACs will be required to have obtained at least a first Covid-19 vaccination in order to continue to work on site

At Residential Aged Care Services and MPS in NSW Health this will apply to all employees including:

- All Clinical Staff
- All Agency Staff
- All Support and Services staff, including HealthShare staff
- All Maintenance and Administration staff
- All Managers

### **Have Public Health Orders been made?**

No, Public Health Orders have not yet been issued to put the Commonwealth requirement into effect. However, given the short time period before the 17 September we are communicating with you so that you have as much information as possible in advance of the commencement of the change.

### **How will NSW Health assist employees meet the requirement?**

NSW Health has already facilitated access to vaccination and the majority of NSW Health employees working in these services are vaccinated.

NSW Health will continue to facilitate access to vaccination for employees in this workforce who have not yet had an opportunity to be vaccinated or who now wish to be vaccinated.

NSW Health will also provide access to information and/or information sessions for employees who require more information about vaccination

Employees who are vaccinated in their own time are able to claim a 2-hour special leave payment on each occasion of Covid-19 vaccination.

### **What do employees need to do?**

Employees are encouraged to get vaccinated

Employees who have medical concerns about being vaccinated need to speak to their doctor.

Employees need to advise their service as soon as possible if they will not be vaccinated by mid-September

### **How will redeployment opportunities be identified?**

NSW Health will seek redeployment opportunities for employees in non-aged care facilities, before 17 September 2021 pursuant to *NSW Health Policy Directive 'Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases'* (PD2020\_017).

Redeployment opportunities may be limited due to the isolated geographic location of a number of NSW Health Aged Care Services and MPS, differences in profile and skill set between Aged Care Services and the opportunities available in other services in NSW Health

Any redeployment to another facility is likely to be permanent in nature.

### **What happens to employees of these services if a redeployment opportunity cannot be identified?**

The Local Health District (LHD) is required to comply with the Commonwealth requirements and to manage risks associated with unvaccinated employees appropriately. If employees do not meet the vaccination requirement on the date it applies, then they cannot continue to work at the service.

If alternatives for redeployment are not available, or it is not feasible to redeploy an employee to a non-aged care facility/role, this may bring the employment to an end as the employee is unable to meet the inherent requirements of the role.

### **How will the Commonwealth requirement be enforced?**

NSW Health will not be permitted to have employees on site who do not meet the requirements from the date the Public Health Orders apply