

COVID-19 NOTICE – 23 MARCH 2020

To: Brighter Access Participants, Families, Support Coordinators, NDIS Providers

From: Tanya Fox, Chief Executive Officer

I write to advise you about actions that Brighter Access is taking to support participants, staff and volunteers in addition to standard precautions in relation to the current pandemic.

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)

1. Effectively immediately, Brighter Access is locking down SIL homes in which Brighter Access's most vulnerable participants reside

Why are we doing this?

- Residents in these homes live with or are themselves highly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 due to co-morbidities. Brighter Access is being especially risk averse as a result, and this is a strategy to limit pathways for transmission.
- This provides a limited circle of contacts for epidemiological (disease) tracking if required.

What does this mean?

- Effective immediately, participants in some houses are not attending their day programs and/or community participation activities at Brighter Access or with other service providers.
- All non-essential appointments (including home visits) will be to the discretion of the Operations Manager in the region in consultation with the participant and family/advocate. Where possible all appointments will be done via phone, skype or other medium that doesn't require face to face.
- No visitors to the homes will be welcome. Please respect this as a safety measure for all participants and do not present at the premises.
- Participants will not be leaving the home. ie visits to family

2. As at 4pm on Tuesday, 24th March 2020, Brighter Access will be locking down all remaining SIL homes.

Why are we doing this?

- Residents in these homes live with residents who are moderately vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 due to co-morbidities. Brighter Access is using this as a strategy to limit pathways for transmission.
 - This provides a limited circle of contacts for epidemiological tracking if required. What does this mean?
 - Residents in all Brighter Access SIL homes will not be attending any centre-based or community participation activities, regardless of their provider.
 - Residents in all Brighter Access SIL homes will not be attending Brighter Access Employment or other volunteer work or employment.
 - All non-essential appointments including home visits will be to the discretion of the Operations Manager of the region in consultation with the participant and family/advocate, with a focus on health and safety. Where possible all appointments will be done via phone, skype or other medium that doesn't require face to face.
 - No visitors to the homes will be welcome. Please respect this as a safety measure for all participants and do not present at the premises.
 - Participants will not be leaving the home. ie visits to family
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COMMUNITY ACCESS DAY PROGRAMS

3. As at 4.00pm on 24th March 2020, Brighter Access will be closing our centre-based and community access day programs to all participants.

Why are we doing this?

- To reduce pathways for transmission by the congregation of several vulnerable people who each bring with them broader circles of contact from other SIL houses, from private houses and the community at large.

What does this mean?

- Participants regardless of their living arrangements will no longer be able to attend their usual Brighter Access centre-based or community programs and other community-based group programs currently being run throughout our regions.
 - Essential supports including personal care and domestic activities in home will be re-negotiated on a case by case basis.
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COORDINATION OF SUPPORTS, BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT & EARLY CHILDHOOD EARLY INTERVENTION

4. Effectively immediately, Brighter Access will be ceasing all face to face contact for these services.

Why are we doing this?

- To reduce pathways for transmission.

What does this mean?

- Participants regardless of their living arrangements will no longer be able to attend face to face meetings with Brighter Access, workers. Where possible all appointments will be done via phone, skype or other medium that doesn't require face to face.
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What does this mean for participant choice and control?

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented and unpredictable occurrence with no borders or boundaries. I have consulted with the industry peak body, National Disability Services who has confirmed that actions to protect transmission and preserve lives trumps choice and control, especially in this present time.

I am confident and comfortable about the decisions I am making in good faith on behalf of Brighter Access, and their express purpose is to reduce risk to participants, to ensure that Brighter Access has sufficient staff to fully support the most vulnerable participants and to support Brighter Access staff.

The situation is fluid and Brighter Access's responses will be reviewed daily. The relaxing or strengthening of these measures will be amended, under advice from relevant industry and/or Government authorities.

Yours sincerely,

Tanya Fox
CEO