

Guidance: Implementing single site arrangements for residential aged care providers in Greater Brisbane

On 8 January 2021, the Queensland Government issued [Aged Care Direction \(No.18\)](#), which recommends *that the operator of a residential aged care facility ensure, to the extent possible, that employees, contractors, volunteers and students do not work across multiple care facilities* (this requirement has continued into [Aged Care Directions No. 19, 11 January 2021](#)). Single site working arrangements means limiting workers to work from only one site to mitigate the risk of unintentionally spreading COVID-19 between residential aged care facilities (RACFs).

The Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 (SACWIC) grant opportunity has been established as part of the COVID-19 Aged Care Support Program (the Program). The purpose of the grant opportunity is to minimise the risk of infection to aged care workers, residents, and service users. Please refer to the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for GO4215, as listed on the GrantConnect website – www.grants.gov.au. Specifically, *Section 2.1 About the Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 (SACWIC) Grant Opportunity*.

To support the recommendation in the QLD Aged Care Direction, below are some considerations for residential aged care providers planning on implementing single site arrangements, noting the definition of “care facility” includes not only other RACFs but also facilities such as hospitals and retirement villages:

1. Workers need to elect to work at a single care facility (this then being their primary job);
2. The employer should hold the worker’s position open for the critical period of 8 January 2021 to 22 January 2021 or the agreed period of unpaid leave if the worker elects to work at a single care facility;
3. The worker should notify the employer in writing, if the worker elects to extend their period of unpaid leave to work at another care facility (no extensions beyond the coverage of the SACWIC grant);

4. The additional employer(s) can request evidence of the worker's selected primary job (evidence may be in the form of an employment agreement, letter of offer, pay slip or statement of service from the employer);
5. Workers will continue to be allowed to access their annual leave and long service leave entitlements via their usual leave application and approval channels;
6. Personal and annual leave will not continue to accrue with additional employer(s) during this period if the worker is taking unpaid leave (although personal and annual leave **will** continue to accrue if the employee is taking paid leave); [see [section 22 of the Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)];
7. Continuity of service is protected (including for redundancy purposes) and long service leave will continue to accrue (if entitled under the long service leave legislation); and
8. As a result of taking this leave, the worker will not be disadvantaged in the future with respect to progression, development, learning and other opportunities in the workplace.

Funding Support

Funding support for eligible providers implementing single site arrangements, as recommended by the [Aged Care Direction \(No.18\)](#) (and also [Aged Care Direction No. 19](#)), is available for areas listed under Appendix 1 of the [Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 Grant Opportunity Guidelines \(GO4215\)](#) – in QLD this includes the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- City of Brisbane;
- City of Ipswich;
- Logan City;
- Moreton Bay Region; and
- Redland City.

The funding support will be available for the critical period of 8 January 2021 to 22 January 2021.

Eligible approved Residential Aged Care providers, approved National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP) providers and approved Home Care providers are able to apply.

Funding support is **only** available in cases where eligible workers work at more than one residential aged care facility. Eligible workers are defined under Section 4.2 of the SACWIC Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Furthermore, funding support will not be available where care is provided in multiple settings, such as residential aged care and another care facility (e.g. a hospital). The grant does not support that part of the QLD Aged Care Direction.

Examples of eligible workforce costs under the SACWIC grant are those that will support eligible workers:

- who normally work at multiple RACF, but will be working solely at the facility being applied for;
- who are not to work because they have been experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, have been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, require testing or are subject to self-isolation or quarantine requirements; or
- to undertake training in the event a skills gap arises from where existing workers are not to work due to experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or are subject to self-isolation or quarantine requirements.

Providers outside of the areas specified are also able to receive support if they have staff who are limited to working at a single RACF in any of the above locations.

The SACWIC grant will remain open for providers to submit their applications until 30 June 2021. Providers can submit an application after 22 January 2021 but can apply earlier if they are experiencing significant financial strain.

Providers can access support, advice and templates from the Support Hub through the Hotline: 1800 491 793 or through the website (<https://supporthub.agedservicesworkforce.com.au>). The Hotline is open Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.