

## Mandatory vaccination of residential aged care workers: next steps

The Staff Vaccination Support Service (SVSS) is available to support you beyond the 17 September mandate as you navigate the workforce implications and second dose.

### The Department of Health has advised the following:

After the 17 September it will engage directly with providers and individual facilities to discuss the vaccination and exemption data as reported on My Aged Care (MAC), to clarify if there are any unvaccinated workers and where there may be exemptions that may apply.

The Department will take a proactive and constructive approach in contacting facilities directly to:

- Ensure continuity of resident care standards as a priority
- understand the reasons for non-medical exemptions or unvaccinated workers
- provide advice on the availability and access to a vaccine for unvaccinated workers
- provide advice on exemption requirements for the relevant state or territory public health order, and
- how to report exemptions correctly in the MAC provider portal.

The SVSS is available to support you in these engagements. Please contact your local state manager to discuss:

- Tools to assist with workforce planning considerations; and
- Navigation of exemptions and exemption processes in your state/territory.

### In anticipation:

Gather information and document your strategy for addressing non-medical exemptions and increasing vaccination rates, including a plan to ensure all current workers not yet vaccinated receive a minimum first dose COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

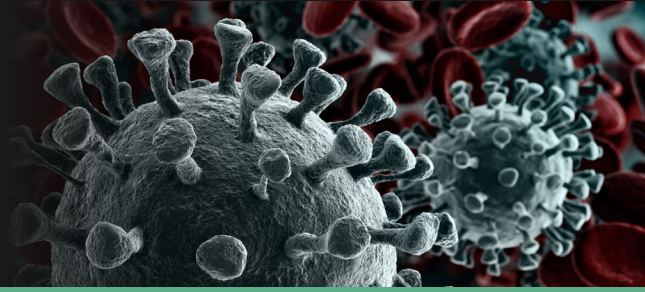
The strategy should consider overall vaccination rates at your facility, roles undertaken by unvaccinated workers, the transmission risk in your local area and other measures in place to prepare and manage the risk of COVID-19.

### As part of your documentation include:

- Activities undertaken by you to encourage and enable the vaccination of your workforce;
- Development of strategies to ensure staff have received their second dose and this is documented for reporting into My Aged Care;
- The impact on your workforce by role and number of staff;
- Impact on service delivery;
- Short-, medium- and long-term activities to address the workforce impact of vaccination, particularly if you have experienced the loss of staff subsequent to the decision



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- Short term measures such as roster adjustments, increased use of casual and/or agency staff; include risk mitigation measures in place if unvaccinated staff remain as a short term measure such as use of PPE, triggers for escalation, plans for unvaccinated staff in the event of community transmission in your area or an outbreak and how you would document and refer to exemptions which may apply in the jurisdiction for use of non-vaccinated staff in an emergency situation;
- Medium and long term measures around recruitment and retention of staff. Include a timetable for these activities.

SVSS support for employment relations activities continues.

## What the Department will do next:

The Department will share information with the state or territory and, where relevant, make a recommendation on whether formal exemptions should apply (this is not an option in all jurisdictions).

The Department will also share information with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) for further action, including immediate referral where no appropriate strategy is identified by the facility and/or provider.

If strategies are not implemented to adequately minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection, including through workforce vaccination, the ACQSC may take action, including issuing sanctions.

The relevant state or territory may then take compliance action or impose penalties where compliance with the relevant public health order is not achieved. These penalties are detailed in the state and territory public health orders.

Contact your local peak state manager to discuss how you can proactively engage with the Department on issues of workforce or exemption.

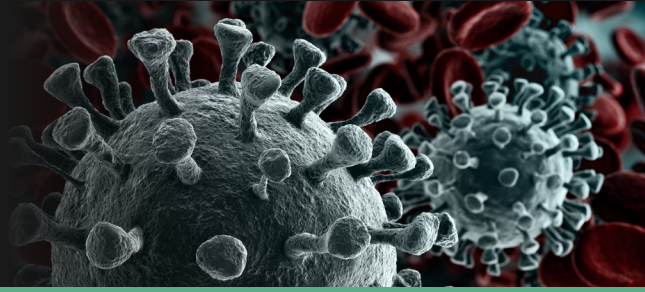
We will work with you to

- Discuss what exemptions may be applicable in your jurisdiction;
- Work with you to approach the relevant authority to discuss exemptions; and
- Guide you as you prepare materials for your engagements with the Department

Jurisdiction	Process	Key contact
QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical exemptions decided by the provider and recorded in MAC</li><li>• Workforce shortage exemptions to be discussed with QLD DoH Office and recorded in MAC</li></ul>	<a href="mailto:COVIDVaccine.QLD@health.gov.au">COVIDVaccine.QLD@health.gov.au</a>
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No exemptions available</li><li>• If concerns – refer to NT DoH Office</li></ul>	NT Office Danni Humphris: 08 8919 3414 Maya Murphy: 08 8919 3410 Email: <a href="mailto:ntplaces@health.gov.au">ntplaces@health.gov.au</a>



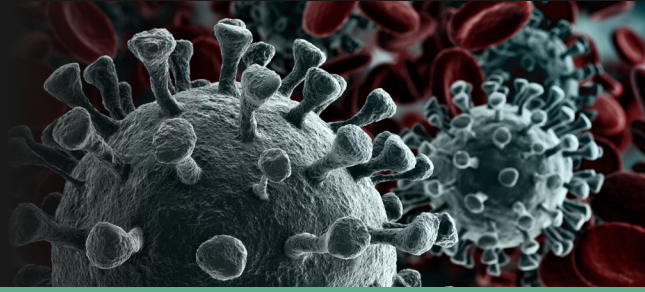
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Jurisdiction	Process	Key contact
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical exemptions to be sought by the staff member, decided by provider and recorded in MAC.</li><li>• NSW have delegated exemption powers under clause 8(2) of the PHO, to the Commonwealth ("to protect the health and well-being of the residents of a RACF").</li><li>• Provider to apply for exemption under clause 8(2) to NSW STO.</li><li>• Exemptions applications will be assessed, and if granted, provider to record in MAC.</li><li>• NSW Health will be notified of any approvals granted (under clause 8(2)).</li></ul>	<p><a href="mailto:NSWexemptions@health.gov.au">NSWexemptions@health.gov.au</a> Contact: Sarah Harrison</p>
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ACT managing exemptions (as per their PHO).</li><li>• Provider to record exemptions in MAC.</li></ul>	<p><a href="mailto:NSWexemptions@health.gov.au">NSWexemptions@health.gov.au</a> Contact: Sarah Harrison</p>
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical and exemptions and pregnancy - Medical practitioner certifies worker has medical exemption and worker provides proof to provider - provider records on MAC</li><li>• Workforce shortages/continuity of care related exemption requests via SA government Office for Ageing Well on case by case basis for maximum of 4 weeks</li></ul>	<p>Requests for temporary exemptions (not medical exemptions or pregnancy) must be made in writing to the SA Department for Health and Wellbeing via <a href="mailto:officeforageingwell@sa.gov.au">officeforageingwell@sa.gov.au</a></p>
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical practitioner certifies worker has medical exemption and worker provides proof to provider - provider records on MAC</li><li>• Workforce shortages/continuity of care related exemption requests via completed temporary exemption form sent to WA Health and granted by a WA authorised officer. RACF records on MAC</li></ul>	<p><a href="mailto:COVIDVaccinationExemption@health.wa.gov.au">COVIDVaccinationExemption@health.wa.gov.au</a> phone number: 13COVID (13 26843)</p>



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VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical exemptions from authorised medical practitioners with the provider holding the evidence and recorded in MAC</li><li>• Temporary Exceptions: The approved provider can grant a temporary exception as below. To be documented and recorded in MAC category 4:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• urgent specialist clinical or medical care for a resident due to an emergency, or</li><li>• critical unforeseen circumstances to provide urgent resident care and continued essential operations and maintain the quality of care for residents.</li><li>• Workers with temporary exceptions are required to wear, at a minimum, a surgical mask and face shield at all times on the premises.</li></ul></li></ul>	To Vic DHHS: <a href="mailto:covid19-dpit@health.vic.gov.au">covid19-dpit@health.vic.gov.au</a> CC: DoH Vic Office: <a href="mailto:viccovidexemptions@health.gov.au">viccovidexemptions@health.gov.au</a>
TAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical exemptions to be sought by the staff member and recorded in MAC</li><li>• Workforce shortage – TBC with TAS Health</li></ul>	DoH TAS office: <a href="mailto:TASPlaces@health.gov.au">TASPlaces@health.gov.au</a>