

Illawarra Diggers Family and Visitor COVID-19 Update

Thursday 7 October 2021

Dear Family Members and Visitors

RE: Changes to Resident and Visitor Restriction in NSW Residential Aged Care from 11 October 2021

Further to my letter on Tuesday 5 October, where the NSW Health changes to restrictions were foreshadowed, NSW Health have now released more specifics around the changes. They have also noted that these will be further updated in the coming days.

The key messages for this update are:

- From 11 October 2021 two visitors per day aged 12 years and over will be permitted to visit a resident in an aged care facility if they are fully vaccinated and their second dose was received at least 14 days prior to their visit. Children under 12 are not be permitted to enter an aged care facility.

Visitors will still be required to undergo the screening process as before and will need to provide evidence of their vaccinations. Staff will need to sight the COVID certificate which includes the vaccination dates (these are included on the Australian Government COVID-19 Certificate).

The published guidelines in the NSW Health website indicate that Wollongong will be out of the Stay at Home Orders by Monday and therefore these easing of restrictions are based on Corrimal not being subjected to a Stay at Home Order. If this changes (ie remains in lockdown), these new conditions changes may not apply.

Once Wollongong is no longer under a Stay at Home Order (ie projected to be Monday 11 October):

- Residents are permitted to leave the facility and attend small family gatherings but must abide by the current Public Health (COVID-19 Additional Restrictions for Delta Outbreak) Order (No 2) 2021
- Must not go into an area that is currently under a stay at home Order

On the premise that these new conditions come into place, we will commence visits to residents from Monday morning:

Restricted Visits

As visitors will continue to need to be screened prior to entry, visitors will be required to ring ahead and arrange a time so that we can smooth the process in the foyer. If you do not ring ahead then you may be required to wait outside until you can be accommodated.

For this reason, **visitor entry will still be restricted to between 8.30am and 4pm Monday to Sunday** however once inside, visitors may stay as long as they want.

As in the past, if a resident is in specific need of family visits (palliative, behavioural) then families should contact us to discuss specific needs outside of the stated visiting hours which will in most circumstances will be accommodated.

As per NSW Health, visits are only allowed in residents' rooms or, if pre-arranged, in an outdoor area. Visitors are reminded they are not to visit in resident common areas nor are visitors to visit with or seek out other residents while they are here.

All visitors will be required to comply with the NSW Health requirement to wear a mask while in the home. If the person you are visiting has a known hearing problem then you may request to remove your mask to aid communication, but you must remain 1.5m apart.

Access to Illawarra Diggers

Please be reminded that access **To** and **From** our home is strictly via the Main Entrance. This has not changed.

You will also need to use the NSW QR Code and show proof of using code on the NSW COVID App or sign in in the register. Only the main entrance has the provision for screening and signing in and out. This is a strict requirement imposed on Illawarra Diggers by NSW Health.

Resident Outings

Residents will be allowed to go out with families and friends. NSW Health has imposed restrictions on numbers in home gatherings to 10 fully vaccinated people and consistent with the restrictions on mask wearing.

Families and friends are asked to declare at reception where the resident is going to and with whom so that we can track and record any issues more easily.

This easing is a wonderful step forward towards a more balanced and "old normal" for our home, although many health and infection control restrictions remain in place.

It is essential that all families respect these new changes and comply with the NSW Health requirements as well as Illawarra Diggers policies and any directives while you are on site.

You may be aware that two positive cases of COVID-19 have just been declared at IRT's Tarrawanna home just a couple of kilometres away. The most significant impact, beyond the immediate health and wellbeing of the residents, is that about 25% of the workforce has been sent home. This significantly impacts on the home's ability to provide high quality care to all of the residents. This would be a similar scenario at Illawarra Diggers.

We all appreciate that this has been a long and very frustrating time. Our sole mission remains to ensure the health and wellbeing of every one of our residents and of our staff and your patience, cooperation and support are greatly appreciated.

If you have any requests or suggestions relating to your family member during these easing visiting periods please contact our Lifestyle Team on their general email address at lifestyle@illawaradiggers.com.au;

If you have any questions relating to this advice, or for administrative issues relating to appointments or other matters, please contact admin@illawarradiggers.com.au or call on 02 4225 4700.

As previously advised, if you wish to **deliver anything** to your family, you will need to do so in office hours, **Monday to Sunday 8.30am to 4.30pm**. The office staff or Weekend Coordinator will accept the delivery and ensure it gets to your family member.

Please do not visit or deliver anything outside of these times as the admin office is not attended and care staff may be taken away from attending to residents to answer the door or they may not attend the front door if they are busy.

Should you require further information regarding COVID-19, please refer to the Commonwealth Department of Health website:

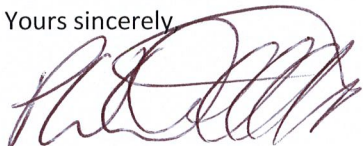
<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

and the NSW Health website which gives information specific to residential care in NSW:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/racf-latest-advice.aspx>

We will continue to update our procedures and protocols in line with government guidelines and to communicate with our residents and our families and Illawarra Diggers community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter Whittall', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Peter Whittall
CEO