

## The safe return of CHS staff to their usual workplace (DRAFT)

Throughout the COVID pandemic, CHS has implemented measures to ensure the safety of our workforce and those using our services. A range of measures, including but not limited to, physical distancing, wearing masks and working from home (where possible) have been implemented to reduce the risks of exposure to or transmission of COVID in our workplaces. At times, these measures have been required under the ACT public health directions, but they have always been in place as part of our WHS obligations to provide a safe workplace.

Our WHS obligations to provide a safe workplace and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID remain even when public health restrictions ease. Any change to our working arrangements must be informed by risk assessments and our workforce consulted on the proposed changes. Safely returning all or some of the CHS workforce is the next step in the relaxing of restrictions associated with the COVID pandemic response noting this return may present some risks to staff, patients, visitors and CHS itself.

Any change in public health directions is an opportunity for workplaces to review the measures that are in place and consider if any changes are required. Any easing of public health directions should prompt consideration of a review of risks, consultation with the workforce, a planned change or staged implementation and continued monitoring of the effectiveness of measures in place as detailed below.

### CHS COVID Transition Plan - The safe return of staff to their usual workplace

Prepare	Consultation	Control Measures	Monitor and Review
<p><b>Develop draft risk assessment to assess and manage risks associated with staff returning to the workplace including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Potential increased rate of COVID transmission / serious illness to staff, patients, and visitors.</b></li> <li><b>Potential workforce disruption and operational issues, including physical/mental stress for CHS staff.</b></li> </ul> <p>Existing controls to manage COVID across CHS sites remain in place.</p> <p>All identified risks associated with the return to work are to be managed to the extent that is 'reasonably practicable' under the WHS Act.</p>	<p><b>CHS will take the following steps to encourage feedback and opinions from workers and others on the proposed changes including:</b></p> <p>Consultation with Health Safety Representatives (HSRs), Managers, and Division Executives.</p> <p>Engagement and consultation with Unions</p> <p>Consider the opinions of workers, Unions and HSRs when making decisions.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for workers to provide feedback on the proposed changes.</p> <p>Some key items that will be circulated for consultation and feedback are the proposed CHS Mandatory Vaccination policy and draft risk assessment for the return of CHS staff to their usual workplace.</p> <p>During consultation and the implementation of this plan staff are encouraged to provide feedback to their HSRs, Managers, Unions and the CHS WHS team.</p>	<p><b>Any changes, easing or removal of COVID-safe control measures must be gradual and clearly communicated to staff and stakeholders.</b></p> <p>Maintain physical distancing requirements and all risk controls identified in the RTW risk assessment.</p> <p>Communication to staff regarding mandatory/non mandatory vaccination requirements and detailing return to work arrangements.</p> <p>Staggered return to the workplace for staff to allow readjustment and reintegration in the workplace.</p> <p>Consideration of flexible working arrangements to occur as requested by individual staff under ACT Government and CHS policy and procedure.</p> <p>Ongoing consideration of individual requirements including for vulnerable workers e.g. managing risks associated with their exposure to COVID in the workplace.</p>	<p><b>Actively seek evidence for whether the change is working as intended, changes in risk, and unintended consequences</b></p> <p>Consider available data such as clinical and staff incident reports, workplace exposures</p> <p>Consider whether existing controls are effective</p> <p>Review the risk assessment and identify any changes that may be required.</p> <p>Consult with workers and their representatives seeking feedback on any proposed changes</p>

Reasonably practicable COVID safe controls must be in place

If you need further information or support contact the WHS team - [chs.workhealthsafety@act.gov.au](mailto:chs.workhealthsafety@act.gov.au) or 5124 9410

#### Resources

- [ACT Government COVID-19 website](#)
- [WHS through COVID-19 sharepoint site](#)
- [COVID-19 leave and employee entitlements](#)
- [ACTPS COVID-19 WHS guide](#)