

## COVID-19 Pandemic Management Policy

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Purpose

This Policy supports Bridging Care Pty Ltd to apply the Risk Management NDIS Practice Standard.

#### 1.2 Policy Aims

Bridging Care Pty Ltd is committed to ensuring that risks to participants, workers and the provider are identified and managed.

#### 1.3 NDIS Quality Indicators

In this regard, Bridging Care Pty Ltd aims to demonstrate each of the following quality indicators through the application of this Policy and the relevant systems, procedures, workflows and other strategies referred to in this Policy:

- (a) Describe or provide a copy of the providers work health and safety policies and procedures relevant to the supports delivered for this registration group, including any relevant material provided to NDIS participants.
- (b) The policies and procedures should be relevant (proportionate) to the size and scale of the provider and to the scope and complexity of the supports being delivered.

#### 1.4 Scope

- (a) This Policy applies to the provision of all services and supports at Bridging Care Pty Ltd.
- (b) All permanent, fixed term and casual staff, contractors and volunteers are required to take full responsibility for ensuring full understanding of the commitments outlined in this Policy.
- (c) The relevant persons specified in the column corresponding to a procedure described in this Policy have the responsibility to implement the relevant systems, procedures, workflows and other strategies referred to in the relevant procedure.

### 2. Definitions

In this Policy:

**Bridging Care Pty Ltd** means Bridging Care Pty Ltd means Bridging Care Pty Ltd ABN 95 644 801 945.

**Client** means a client of Bridging Care Pty Ltd (including an NDIS participant).

**Principal** means Fernando Pedro Andres and Natalia Varela Da Rosa.

**reasonably practicable** means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring workplace health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters

including:

- (a) the likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring; and
- (b) the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk; and
- (c) what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about:
  - (1) the hazard or the risk; and
  - (2) ways of eliminating or minimising the risk; and
- (d) the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk; and
- (e) after assessment, the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

**Representative** means a person specified as the representative of the client in the client's Service Agreement or any person who provides personal care, support or help to a client and is not engaged as a paid or volunteer worker, often a family member or guardian (if any).

**Risk Management** means the process whereby hazards are identified, the risks associated with the identified hazard are assessed and the control measures which will eliminate or minimise the risk of injury from the identified hazard are planned and implemented.

**Worker** means a permanent, fixed term or casual member of staff, a contractor or volunteer employed or otherwise engaged by Bridging Care Pty Ltd and includes the Principal.

**Workplace** means a place where work is carried out by Bridging Care Pty Ltd and includes any place where a worker goes or is likely to be while at work including:

- (a) Bridging Care Pty Ltd's business premises;
- (b) a client's home or part of their home (for example, a dedicated treatment room), a vehicle or a community venue, where and while a service is being undertaken; and
- (c) accommodation a worker occupies that is owned by or under the management or control of the Principal where the occupancy is necessary for the worker's engagement because other accommodation is not reasonably available.

### 3. Policy

#### 3.1 General

(a) COVID-19 is a contagious viral infection that generally causes respiratory illness in humans. The World Health Organization (WHO), has declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a 'pandemic'- a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (effective 11 March 2020). This is mainly due to the speed and scale of transmission of the virus in countries around the world, including Australia.

- (b) Presentation can range from no symptoms (asymptomatic) to severe illness with potentially life-threatening complications, including pneumonia.
- (c) People with COVID-19 may experience:
- (1) fever
  - (2) flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue
  - (3) shortness of breath
  - (4) other symptoms may include:
    - (a) runny nose
    - (b) headache
    - (c) muscle or joint pains
    - (d) nausea
    - (e) diarrhoea
    - (f) vomiting
    - (g) loss of sense of smell
    - (h) altered sense of taste
    - (i) loss of appetite and fatigue
- (d) COVID-19 is spread by contact with respiratory secretions and objects or materials which are likely to carry infection, such as clothes, utensils and furniture.
- (e) The Australian Government is constantly updating the current status of COVID-19 including health recommendations, travel, isolation and quarantine restrictions, and a vast collection of resources and information to help people make informed decisions.
- (f) As this information is rapidly changing, Bridging Care Pty Ltd is monitoring health alerts and implementing measures suggested by key health experts to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.
- (g) The Bridging Care Pty Ltd Work Health & Safety Policy and our Managing and Reducing Risks Matrix reflect our commitment to safety culture and demonstrates our commitment to the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of workers.
- (h) The evolving nature of COVID-19 and the unprecedented steps required to protect our community as recommended by the Australian Government has resulted in the development of a specific policy to assist Bridging Care Pty Ltd to manage risks associated with this pandemic. This Policy will change as required to ensure recommended protective measures against COVID-19 are implemented.
- (i) This COVID-19 Pandemic Management Policy complements and should be read alongside that Policy and supplements the information in those documents in relation to the identification and minimisation

of risks associated with COVID-19.

### **3.2 Minimising the transmission of COVID-19**

(a) Bridging Care Pty Ltd has implemented a Risk Management process in accordance with the Work Health & Safety Policy to identify risks and hazards to our Workplaces and practices. Where possible, Bridging Care Pty Ltd endeavours to eliminate or minimise these risks as is reasonably practicable.

(b) Effective 15 March 2020, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee has made recommendations to the general public to help manage the spread of COVID-19. These measures include implementing good hygiene, self-isolation and social distancing.

(c) Our workers are committed to assist in infection prevention controls and have completed COVID-19 infection control training.

### **3.3 Personal Protective Equipment**

(a) Masks and alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be provided for use by all workers.

### **3.4 Communication**

(a) Where appropriate, signs and posters will be displayed at the Bridging Care Pty Ltd business premises to remind workers of the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are necessary to stop its spread including hand washing and hand rub procedures.

(b) We will establish regular communication channels with clients and their support network as well as workers to share information about COVID-19 and our service delivery as required.

(c) Due to the fluid nature of COVID-19 and the possibility of self-isolation for some workers, we will endeavour to inform clients and their support network of any changes to the nature of our services and supports as required.

(d) Where possible, consultations with clients will be held via telephone or online conferencing (such as Skype or Zoom).

### **3.5 Exclusion / Self-isolation / Self-quarantine**

(a) Only essential workers, clients and their Representative will be permitted entry to any Workplace.

(b) Records of attendance will be kept by the relevant worker conducting the consultation.

(c) Workers must use their own pen, paper, computer and other equipment when conducting consultations.

(d) Any person who has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis must self-isolate for 14 days.

(e) Household members of a person who has a confirmed case (including children) of COVID-19 must also be isolated from Bridging Care Pty Ltd workers and the general public.

(f) Families must immediately advise Bridging Care Pty Ltd if they, or anyone in their family, develops any symptoms of the virus or receives a positive result of the virus whilst in isolation.

(g) Any person (employee, enrolled child, parent, caregiver, visitor or contractor) who is displaying symptoms such as: fever, coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath, must seek urgent medical attention to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19 and not attend any support or service consultation with Bridging Care Pty Ltd under any circumstance.

### **3.6 Implement effective hygiene measures**

(a) Effective handwashing is a vital strategy to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever you cough, sneeze or blow your nose, prepare food or eat, touch your face or use the toilet is required.

(b) Bridging Care Pty Ltd will adhere to National Regulation requirements and Government guidelines to ensure all clients, families and others who utilise our services and supports implement best practice.

(c) Controls include but are not limited to:

(1) Cleaning and disinfecting in accordance with guidance from Safe Work Australia and public health authority.

(2) Frequently touched surfaces including tables, handrails, doors, phones, keyboards and EFTPOS facilities are regularly cleaned.

(3) Masks and alcohol-based hand sanitiser are provided to all workers.

(4) Bridging Care Pty Ltd prohibits close contact with anyone with a positive COVID-19 in the past 14 days;

(5) Hand & personal hygiene (hand washing with liquid soap and water for 20 seconds and/or using the hand sanitizer provided to workers).

(6) Physical / social distancing and maintaining 1.5m distance from other people at a minimum and spacing furniture clients and workers use accordingly.

(7) Workers wearing the masks provided when it is anticipated that there may be contact with a patient's blood or body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or other potentially infectious material or equipment.

(8) Invoicing clients for services rendered and encouraging payment via online bank transfer, rather than taking payment from clients directly.

(d) Advice should be sought regarding more intensive cleaning requirements if COVID-19 positive cases are identified.

### **3.7 Notification**

#### **NDIS**

Bridging Care Pty Ltd should notify the NDIS Commission using the Notification of event – COVID-19 (registered provider) form, if one of the following events occurs:

- (a) a worker or participant is confirmed with the COVID-19 infection.
- (b) border closures or other restrictions may affect the ability of the business to access participants or provide supports and services.
- (c) changes occur to the business's available workforce due to border closures or other state or territory restrictions
- (d) the temporary or permanent cessation of supports or services as a result of border closures or other restrictions occur in the business's state or territory
- (e) where the business previously submitted a notification relating to changes in supports, the supports have since recommenced and the business is now again making changes to supports due to new restrictions.

#### **3.8 Commonwealth**

- (a) Bridging Care Pty Ltd should notify Comcare of all confirmed COVID-19 cases that are work related and arise from the business or undertaking of the Bridging Care Pty Ltd. Notification must be by the fastest possible method and as soon as it becomes aware of the incident.
- (b) Notification to Comcare can be made using the incident notification form which can be emailed to [notify@comcare.gov.au](mailto:notify@comcare.gov.au) or submit an online notification. Alternatively, call Comcare on 1300 366 979. When notifying by phone, you may be asked to provide notification in writing within 48 hours. If calling outside office hours, you can be redirected to the on-call inspector.
- (c) Notifications must be made regardless of whether the relevant Health agency is already aware of the case.