

MDS Website – COVID Update – 19th April 2020

The current circumstances the global community is facing with the outbreak of Covid-19 are unprecedented.

MDS's highest priority has always been and continues to be, the health & safety of our participants & staff. In light of this, MDS is responding to the Covid-19 threat with the upmost attention to detail, ensuring that every decision and action has the safety of our people at the forefront.

Whilst we continue to offer supports, our team has been focused on transforming the delivery of those supports. We have adopted the use of innovative technologies like video conferencing and are modifying our service offerings to ensure we offer the types of support that people need and want in the current climate as well as delivering them in a format that prioritises everyone's safety.

Our Executive Management Team are meeting on a daily basis to ensure that MDS is adhering to the health advice as directed by NSW Health & the operational requirements as directed by the NDIA. The MDS Executive Management Team have also developed a Pandemic Plan and have conducted scenario planning for situations such as what would happen if someone at MDS contracted Covid-19. This planning will assist us to make well informed, evidence based decisions quickly.

As a directive from those Executive Management discussions, a number of measures have been rolled out across MDS. These measures serve to keep our participants & staff safe. They include:

- Daily temperature checks for staff and participants at our sites & Head Office
- Being vigilant with cleaning standards and ensuring all surfaces such as bench tops, seats and equipment are sprayed regularly after each use with high grade disinfectant
- Tripled our supply and increased our usage of personal protective equipment such as (masks, disposable aprons & gloves)
- Hand sanitizer has been made readily available at all sites and Head Office
- All staff have completed infection control training
- We've reviewed our staff rostering to prevent staff from working across multiple sites/programs.
- We are modifying our services and becoming innovative with our delivery – to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

There are things you can do - to help us keep everyone safe:

- Stay home if you are experiencing flu like symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough or any respiratory like symptoms
- Self-isolate if you have returned from international travel or have been in contact with anyone who has tested positively to the Coronavirus.
- Inform MDS if someone in your contacts is being tested for coronavirus
- Follow procedures for infection control which include:
 - Hand sanitizing, hand washing before & after eating and after activities
 - Understand that PPE will be worn for all personal care.

MDS has been here for the community for over 38 years and today we are here for you more than ever before. We encourage you to reach out to us for whatever support you may require. Whether it is just a daily chat, or perhaps overnight respite or assistance to get groceries – please get in contact and let us know how we can help. You can speak with your MDS Service Coordinator or contact the General Manager of your services. Phone (02) 4621 8400 or email information@mdservices.com.au

Updates from the NDIS

The NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency) have made changes to the NDIS to support participants and service providers during the Covid-19 crisis. Some of the key changes include:

Cancellations – If you need to cancel a service, you will need to provide 10 days’ notice to avoid a cancellation fee. This new rule applies for any service provided from 25th March 2020.

Price Changes – Effective 30th March 2020, there is a 10% increase for the following support categories. This price increase is in place for 6 months.

- Category 1 – Daily Activities
- Category 4 – Social, Civic & Community Participation
- Category 15 – Improved Daily Living

Plan Reviews – If your plan is due to expire, it will automatically renew for another 365 days. This does not prevent you from seeking to change elements of your plan. The auto renew is designed to reassure you that funding will be ongoing with no gaps.

Support Coordination – Effective 25th March 2020, participants can flexibly use their Core or Capacity Building funding for support coordination.

For more information about these changes, please visit the NDIS website: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/4676-covid-19-update>