

# Alternative care arrangements

## Children and adolescents of parents hospitalised with COVID-19

### Local planning advice for children of parents hospitalised with COVID-19

Children and young people may be left without adequate adult care and support when their parents or carers are hospitalised due to COVID-19.

Districts and Networks are encouraged to develop local processes to manage children of sick parents. These children may have care requirements that are very different to managing unwell children. This factsheet was developed by the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, in consultation with Districts, Networks and the Paediatrics and Youth COVID-19 Community of Practice.

If you require support please contact [SCHN-EOC@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SCHN-EOC@health.nsw.gov.au). For urgent matters, please call 9845 0000 and request to speak with the COVID executive on call.

Care for children and young people whose parents are hospitalised with COVID-19 should ideally:

- Be as close to home as possible
- Aim to keep families together wherever possible
- Ensure safe, age appropriate care that is child/adolescent and family focussed.

### Preparing for admitting children and young people

Caring for well children while parents receive care may present unique challenges. Planning should include consideration of social or medical admissions, where and how many can be admitted, whether admissions occur as individuals or in family groups, accommodation options for positive and negative kids.

Consider management of different age groups, along with other factors such as disability status and any behavioural issues. Culturally appropriate support should be available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse children/adolescents.

Develop a system for obtaining consent and communicating with parents/ nominated next of kin (e.g. a case manager).

Identify and engage surge workforce who can care for admitted children/adolescents.

Consider staffing requirements, particularly for infants and toddlers where 1 to 1 care may be required.

### Consult early with positive patients to help support family-based care

- When informing an adult that they are COVID-19 positive, ask if there are children/ adolescents in their care, and if so, discuss who can care for them if needed.
  - Most children can be safely cared for in the community by fully vaccinated family members or carers, following appropriate informed consent.
- Discuss options for alternate care arrangements, or additional support if required.
- Record and monitor families where alternative care arrangements are unavailable, and use agreed escalation pathways if they need support.

### **Internal and external partners will be vital to support care**

- Identify key partners and clarify their responsibilities and what support they can deliver. Important partners include:
  - Internal partners: Integrated Care, Virtual Care, Hospital in the Home, Aboriginal Health, Social Work, Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD), Disability services, Out of Home Care and Public Health teams
  - External partners: Department of Communities and Justice, GPs, Police, Ambulance, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, National Disability Insurance Agency and non-government organisations such as child and family health, disability, out of home care and social welfare focused services.
- Ensure consistent communication to all key partners. A regular provider forum may support relationship development and problem solving.

### **Additional support and resources**

- Resources are available on the [ACI Paediatric SharePoint](#). Access can be requested at [ACI-Paed@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ACI-Paed@health.nsw.gov.au)
- The Ministry will continue to liaise with government partners and act as an escalation point for districts.
- Please get in touch with SCHN if further advice is required.

Issues that require a systems or state-wide response can be raised through the Paediatric and Youth COVID-19 Community of Practice (CoP): [MOH-AcutePaedsYouth-Covid-19@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:MOH-AcutePaedsYouth-Covid-19@health.nsw.gov.au)