

Lighthouse

Family News

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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

It is great that we continue to be free of any COVID -19 infections for clients and staff. It is important to acknowledge the very important role that all of our staff have played in this – especially our front line staff.

Thank you to families who have let us know of your appreciation of our efforts. Thank you also to families who have contacted us with concerns. It is a great opportunity to explore issues and hopefully find a solution that suits everyone.

As the number of reported infections across the state continue to stabilise at mostly zero, we are sensing that there is a wish that we reduce our obligations to maintain physical distancing.

We understand the ‘push’ to get back to normal. However, it is important to note that this is a critical time when a second phase of infections can occur. Experts are warning us that, in these circumstances, the number of people who could become infected is likely to far exceed our experience to date.

It is also important to remember that the people who are most vulnerable to infection are those over 70 years old and people who have pre-existing medical conditions. While none of our clients are over 70 year old, **ALL** of our clients have pre-existing medical conditions.

Therefore, we will continue to comply with advice from SA Health and the Federal Government about physical distancing restrictions. We should aim to always maintain vigilance about hand hygiene because many illnesses are transmitted through poor hand hygiene.

Notwithstanding the above comments about caution in relation to getting back to normal too quickly, we are writing to each Day Care Provider and Supported Employment Service to clarify what precautions they have in place for our (and other) clients. When it is appropriate for clients to start attending programs again, we want to be clear that these providers are taking appropriate action to keep people safe.

We are very aware that if other providers do not take the need for precautions seriously, one of our clients (or staff) could contract an infection and bring it back to the home and potentially infect clients and other staff.

So our message is that we are not 'out of the woods yet' but we are expecting things to become less restrictive over time. It is important to note that the Prime Minister has just announced a three stage process which is a reflection of the caution that I have referred to above.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your Manager, Steve, Amanda, Luke or me.

For additional information please refer to the Australian Government's Department of Health's webpage re: COVID19 for people with disability.

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/advice-for-people-at-risk-of-coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-with-disability>

Contact from NDIA

It appears that staff from NDIA are making time to contact nominees to discuss how things are going, and this includes discussion about whether you are happy with the plan for your family member. We strongly encourage you to talk to your Support Coordinator about the funding in your plan to ensure that you have good information about whether you have adequate funds – or not. If you tell the NDIA worker that you are happy with the funds in your plan, it may make it difficult to seek additional funds if you find later that there are not enough.

Discount for electricity and gas bills

Recently, we tendered the electricity and gas accounts for all our sites including accounts that are in the name of clients. We have received a fantastic proposal offering significant savings on both electricity and gas accounts. We will write to you to provide more details about this and encourage you to support this initiative. For a small number of people, it will require the account to be changed from your name to Lighthouse Disability.

User Pays

The NDIS is based on a set of principles that include 'client choice and control' and to this end, funds are allocated for (most) services to each individual. We, as the provider for SIL (Supported Independent Living) no longer receive block funding (the old model of funding) and can now only provide the services for which each client pays (that is, the 'user pays' model). This means that some of the work that we did in the old funding model can no longer happen - unless there are funds in the client's plan to pay for it.

To date in some circumstances, we have paid for a range of things such as;

- incontinence aides and nutritia
- taxis
- equipment maintenance
- furniture, fittings and whitegoods

Since transition from state government 'block funding' to NDIS we are no longer funded to pay for the above items. Support Coordinators will talk with you about how to manage these situations.

At the same time, it is important to note that the Board has allocated a huge sum of money to enable us to keep our transport fleet. Each house has a vehicle funded by Lighthouse Disability. Therefore, every client continues to have access to transport until and unless there is a review and it is no longer financially possible to do so. This is a significant 'value add' provided by Lighthouse Disability together with the Volunteer Coordinator position which enables volunteers to support the Boom Box and provide specific support to specific clients.

Client Internet

Lighthouse Disability has now removed its use of the phone line at each service by providing our workforce wireless internet and mobile phones.

Clients and families are now welcome to utilise the phone line for NBN internet. Any installations and internet accounts will need to be organised and managed by families.

Thanks to our Front Line Staff

The photos below highlight some of the activities that our front line staff are doing with clients. We thank our staff for engaging with people to enable them to be 'safe, happy and live life well'.



Marj Ellis
CEO