

Isolated and Quarantined Staff

Key roles for asymptomatic isolated and quarantined staff

Staff who are well, but at home isolating or in quarantine, can perform key roles remotely to:

- Support management of a residential aged care facility (RACF) during an outbreak
- Relieve some of the burden for on-site staff
- Enhance the safety and wellbeing of residents
- Keep staff engaged in the workplace and increase likelihood of return

These roles could include:

- Clinical and operational telephone support to provide immediate advice and remote support for on-site staff (including agency or new staff)
- Clinical support from registered nurse (RN) who can remotely access electronic records to:
 - Monitor individual resident risks
 - Assist with prioritising work on each shift
 - Monitor care plans and daily records for each resident to escalate any concerns
- Dial in support to assist with guiding shift handovers and share knowledge of individual residents
- Assist with personalised communications
- Keep in touch with staff who are affected, ensuring support is provided
- Keep track of staff and resident test dates and results (this will assist Public Health Unit determination of clearance dates to allow return to work)
- Monitor and record ongoing orientation and education programmes being undertaken
- Provide management oversight of inventory, ordering and logistics for items such as personal protective equipment (PPE), waste management and other critical supplies
- Contribute to the coordination of rostering and staffing, as well as liaising with agencies
- Communicating with and providing information to authorities
- Keeping floorplans and resident whereabouts up to date

How to support staff to return to the workplace

What are the reasons preventing return?

- Lack of contact and involvement during isolation or quarantine
- Fear, anxiety and misinformation
- Family circumstances or personal vulnerabilities

What can the RACFs do to assist?

- Teleconferences or phone calls with staff to stay in close contact with information, updates and support
- Reassurance about safety precautions on-site
- Incentives to return for specified periods, to red zones or other
- Zoom meetings with the Victorian Aged Care Response Centre (VACRC) or other clinical staff available to answer questions and address concerns
- PPE and infection prevention and control (IPC) training – either through VACRC or own supplier

Recovered staff

Staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are clinically cleared to return to work (recovered) are ideal candidates to work in COVID positive zones, as they will have a level of immunity.

Recovered staff will be the safest workforce to deploy to COVID positive zones but are often unaware of their greatly reduced risk. RACFs can play a key education role, as well as potentially offering incentives. Significant reassurance and education may be required to address the concern of recovered staff.

Use of recovered staff in COVID positive zones will reduce the number of COVID negative staff required in positive zones and reduce risk of ongoing exposure.