

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



29 October 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen vaccination rates increase, with 93.4% of people aged over 16 in NSW having received one dose of the vaccine, while 86.5% are now fully vaccinated. In the ACT, the percentage of the population over the age of 12 fully vaccinated is now 92.3%. However, the risk of COVID remains a constant threat, with 2,074 new cases in NSW over the past week and 234 active cases in the ACT.

As the community continues to open up, the number of enquiries about when Warrigal will be transitioning to the next stage have increased. Our responsibility is to ensure that the residents/customers, many with underlying health conditions continue to remain safe, while meeting the emotional needs to connect with family and leave for social visits. We have communicated previously that the advice from NSW and ACT Health is a guideline that we use and will implement, providing we have the necessary resources. A Public Health Order is not advice and must be followed, which is relevant for unvaccinated visitors.

To update you on the next phase of the easing of restrictions, I have provided a summary of the most asked questions, which I hope will provide some clarity on visits and outings. The first change will commence next week with an additional weekly visit, which means that residents/customers can have 3 visits each week from a maximum of two fully vaccinated visitors, with masks still required for the visit.

Frequently Asked Questions

I work full time and cannot visit my mum during business hours. When does Warrigal expect to allow visits on a weekend, or alternatively, can I make some other arrangements to ensure I can visit?

Visiting is limited to business hours because of the administration resources required to undertake the screening process. We are looking at rolling out the Visitor Management System across all care homes in the next 6 weeks, allowing for visits outside of business hours. Visiting times vary between homes based on the administration support available, and for specific details, please contact the staff at your local home.

I know Warrigal is working on a staged approach, but can you provide more detail on when we will be able to see our loved one on more than 2 occasions per week, and especially on a weekend?

It will depend on cases of community transmission at the time. Still, Warrigal will move toward more visits each week in the coming weeks, and from next week, 3 visits per week will be permitted for fully vaccinated visitors. Weekend visits will depend on whether we have the resources available to undertake the screening.

Christmas is coming up and we would like to take my parent home for lunch. It will be immediate family only and we are all double vaccinated. Is this likely to be possible?

In the coming weeks, we are increasing options for visitations (in accordance with our staged visitation approach). A risk assessment will be completed and it is likely that your parent will be allowed home for Christmas lunch. These arrangements would still need to comply with any requirements from NSW

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or ACT Health regarding gatherings. We will keep you informed and more detail will follow shortly. It will also be dependent on community infection rates and that will be part of the risk assessment.

I have 5 siblings and at this stage we can all only take our partners to see our mum once every 2 and a half weeks. When will more visitors per visit be allowed, or when will more visits per week be allowed?

Warrigal is taking a staged approach to visitation, and in the coming weeks more visits per week will start to be allowed (after consideration of the current community cases).

Two people at a time is based on recommendations from NSW and ACT Health and will not change until this advice changes.

My parent is in a shared room and currently we are only allowed to visit in the room or outside. If the weather is poor, is there another area in the home where we can have the visit?

Please contact the care home to book in your visit and we will discuss options.

Can I take my loved one out for a drive, home for lunch, out for lunch etc. We are fully vaccinated. If not, how long before this can occur and what will the process/rules be?

At the moment we are encouraging visits to be limited to our care homes or in our gardens and surrounds. Trips outside are great for social engagements and community interaction and they will start occurring from the week commencing 8 November. From this week, we will still request that outings are to the family home or an outdoor area, and not to shopping centres or cafes where vulnerable older people with underlying health conditions are still a high risk as long as community transmissions are still happening. It would also be requested that no more than two people be in the car when transporting your loved one, consistent with the number of visitors allowed in the home for visits. A Rapid Antigen Test would be conducted several days after the outing.

Health advice states that residents are permitted to have 2 visitors/day provided that they are 12 years and over and have had their 2nd COVID19 vaccination at least 14 days prior to visit. When will this also apply at Warrigal homes as currently residents can only have 2 visitors, twice a week?

Warrigal permitted visitors returning from 5 October 2021 in NSW, and from 15 October 2021 in ACT and it was communicated at this stage, that visits would gradually increase subject to community transmissions. They will increase to three visits with up to two visitors a day from next week, and then we will look at increasing to four visits each week by the end of November. At the moment the same arrangements apply at all Warrigal Care Homes, but this may change depending on outbreaks in Local Government Areas.

My mum has friends who live in the Community Village, however, they have chosen not to be vaccinated. Can she arrange to meet them outside?

At this stage we are still not permitting unvaccinated visitors into the home and would prefer zoom conferences or telephone calls over face-to-face visits. Infection rates in the community remain constant, so we are encouraging safe distancing and visits by fully vaccinated people only.

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When can I take my loved one out to a Café or Club for a meal?

At the moment we are encouraging visits to be limited to our care homes or in our gardens and surrounds. Trips outside are great for social engagements and community interaction and they will start occurring soon. Residents/Customers will be able to leave with family and friends from 8 November. However, we are still recommending family and friends not to visit shopping centres or cafes and maintain distancing rules and masks if possible for the foreseeable future.

If I am unvaccinated, when will I be able to visit?

It is not possible to commit to a timeframe as we will be following the Public Health Orders which currently stipulate that only fully vaccinated visitors can enter the home.

I am fully vaccinated, but my loved one is unvaccinated. Am I allowed to visit?

Yes, however, you will need to be screened on entry to the care home and wear Personal Protective Equipment as will your loved one. We will also require a Rapid Antigen Test for your loved one, several days after the visit. Warrigal is concerned for all residents' and customers' welfare and safety, and an unvaccinated resident provides an opportunity (however small) to enter the care home and affect others. Again we are encouraging all residents to be vaccinated.

How can I access proof to show that my loved one is double vaccinated?

It's available on the Medicare link and it can also be downloaded onto your phone.

My mum wants to get new clothes at the shops, can I take her?

Given the risk in the community we suggest you purchase the clothes and bring them to the care home when visiting.

I hope that this provides some clarity on the current restrictions and the intentions in the coming weeks. As I have indicated, things can change very quickly, but we are working towards increasing visits and outings in a safe, manageable manner.

This week Warrigal held its Annual General Meeting, and released the Annual Report, which provides a summary of both a challenging year, but a rewarding one with growth and keeping our residents and customers safe. I have included a link to the Annual Report for your information: <https://bit.ly/3bBmldf>

Thank you for taking the time to send through your suggestions and comments, which has been valuable in preparing this update. Please continue to provide feedback by contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or by emailing us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

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Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS' or 'Craig Smith', written in a cursive style.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities