



Managing COVID-19 in a mental health hostel – guide for clinicians

This document is intended as a guide for general practitioners (GPs) managing COVID-19 in a mental health hostel.

The [WA COVID-19 TTIQ Plan](#) (PDF 287KB) provides guidance and resources for service providers as WA transitions to living with COVID. The plan and additional resources are available at [the TTIQ Plan webpage](#), and the [WA COVID Care at Home program](#).

A checklist has been developed for Congregate Living Facilities to assist with responding to and managing COVID-19 exposures or outbreaks. This is available at <http://health.wa.gov.au/COVIDworkplace/> under the tab **Positive COVID-19 case in the workplace** and on the Resources section of the [TTIQ Plan webpage](#).

Role of the GP

All visiting GPs and visiting clinicians should be informed of a case in the mental health hostel facility and provided the contact details of the Facility manager. The GP is responsible for the clinical care of their patient(s). Other support available to GPs includes:

Perth/Peel

- COVID Consultant at some tertiary hospitals.
- Medical Consultant at each secondary hospital.
- For advice on use and access to anti-virals: contact the on-call Infectious Diseases specialist at nearest tertiary hospital via switchboard.
- General deterioration/dehydration: contact on-call general medical team.
- Respiratory symptoms: contact on-call respiratory team.

Rural (hostels are located in Bunbury, Busselton, Albany, Geraldton)

- If specialist advice not available at local hospital contact your nearest WACHS regional resource centre
- Regional resource centre can advise regarding linked tertiary for antivirals or other related queries.

Mental Health Deterioration

- Mental health deterioration: Contact the Health Service Provider's local community mental health clinic. For residents active under a community mental health team, liaise with named care coordinator.
- Mental Health out-of-hours or in an emergency: contact Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL) or Ruralink.

GPs and clinicians will be considered visitors, and therefore supported to attend the mental health hostel safely and in accordance with Department of Health recommendations or directives of the day (i.e. compliance with the providers' screening requirements such as temperature testing, using the QR code and PPE).



COVID-19 Treatments

- Molnupiravir (Lagevrio®) – Prescribed by attending GP.
- Nirmatrelvir plus ritonavir (Paxlovid®) and Sotrovimab (Xevudy®) – WA Health approval required via an Infectious Disease Physician.

Advice on and access to anti-virals

GPs are responsible to assess patients and their possible eligibility for COVID-19 treatment options, and refer patients to HSPs based on current guidelines and referral processes

GPs are encouraged to seek consent for testing and treatment for eligible patients in a mental health setting, and to be aware of contraindications and precautions for use. Seeking consent well-in-advance is advised due to time-critical COVID-19 treatment combined with the high proportion of residents in mental health hostels with guardians **and substitute decision-makers due to capacity impairment.**

Further information regarding COVID-19 treatments can be found on the Department of Health website's [COVID-19 information for health professionals webpage](#) under 'Clinical Guidelines'. Commencing 1 March 2022 Lagevrio® (Molnupiravir) is listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Section 85 program as an Authority Required (Streamlined) benefit for patients with mild-moderate COVID-19 who have a high risk for developing severe disease, reducing the need for admission to hospital. Additional information can be found in the following [Fact Sheet](#).

PPE requirements

GPs entering the affected resident's room must wear all appropriate PPE as per airborne precautions. Further information is available at WA Health's [COVID-19 webpage](#) under the **Health professional and GPs** section and [COVID-19 information for health professionals webpage](#) under the 'Infection prevention and control and PPE' section.

Transfer to Hospital

Most residents should receive care within the hostel, with decisions regarding treatment and/or transfer to be made on a case by case basis. If transfer is required, inform hospital and transport staff if a resident is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.

Useful links

- [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Mental Health Services](#)
- [A Good Practice Guide: Providing mental health care when there is community transmission of COVID-19](#)

Note: Department of Health COVID-19 policies and guidelines are updated as the COVID-19 response evolves. Please refer to the Department of Health website for most up to date information.

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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