



Roadmap out of lockdown for parents and carers

NSW

– a safe transition back to in-person services



**We have been in
lockdown for a long
time. We are looking
forward to seeing you
in person!**

**WE'RE
COVID
SAFE**

The Shepherd Centre will return to in-person services in 2022 with the highest practicable level of COVID-safe provisions in place. We will continue to offer flexible access options for all families and participants: our outstanding Telehealth service families who choose this option, 100% in-person services, or a mix of both online and in-person.

We will do everything practicable to protect our community and we support vaccinations to keep us safe. We'll be taking a cautious, careful approach over the next few months as we establish how we work in our new normal and living with COVID and so we can do this as safely as possible, there will be no in person services for the rest of this year, apart from those that are absolutely necessary and based on clinical need.

The Shepherd Centre has mapped the way that we will be coming out of lockdown in line with the government advice and health orders.

The dates and actions are outlined for you on the next few pages.

**The Shepherd
Centre will return
to in-person
services in 2022**

How the staged return to centres will work

From 11 October to end of 2021:
70% + of population vaccinated:



- Every person working or volunteering at The Shepherd Centre locations will be fully vaccinated;
- If we do contact you to arrange an in person visit, please ensure that you have proof of vaccination with you: two doses for adults and at least one dose for children 12 years and over;
- We will be protecting our community by ensuring there will be no teenagers or adults on TSC premises who are unable to provide proof of vaccination, unless under exceptional circumstances (see **Vaccination** section for more details);
- Family members or participants over 12 years of age who are not able to show proof of vaccination will also not be able to attend any of centres in person at this point in time, unless under exceptional circumstances as above;
- We will continue to provide most of our services via our outstanding Telehealth service and staff will continue to work from home if they can, only coming on site if they cannot work from home;
- Masks remain required for every person on site unless to support and aid audibility and communication when talking to someone with hearing loss;
- All families, participants and visitors must use all QR codes to check in and out: this includes The Shepherd Centre's check-in system and the state-based app;
- Physical distance of 1.5 meters must be maintained whilst on site wherever possible;
- Hands and surfaces will be sanitised regularly – please help us by using the sanitising stations on arrival and throughout your visit;
- We will abide by all state health, education and disability guidelines as these evolve and change;
- All our staff are responsible for ensuring we are COVID-safe and will be reminding everyone at our locations to do the same.

How the staged return to centres will work continued

2022 and beyond

The government has indicated that further restrictions will ease during December and that life will be returning to a 'new normal'. It is reported that cases will rise during November/December so The Shepherd Centre will monitor conditions and provide you with an update on what the start of 2022 will look like for us.

We will be constantly reviewing our approach as information evolves, and provide further updates/guidelines as required, and in particular at the commencement of each term. We also recognise that back to in person services may differ based on location, and type of program (for example hot spot areas, individual vs group programs).

We are committed to providing you with clear, usable information on our guidelines and approach as we best know it, at any point in time.

Wellbeing

We acknowledge that this is an anxious and uncertain time. If you are worried about the impacts of COVID-19 or anxious about attending the centre for in-person sessions, please discuss these with our Child and Family Counsellor team.

Please get tested if you are unwell

إذا كنت مريضاً،
اطلب إجراء
الفحص لك ورجاءً
اذهب إلى المنزل.

**Nếu không
thấy khỏe, hãy đi
xét nghiệm và
vui lòng về nhà.**

**身体不适时
即刻接受检测，
并返回家中，
切勿外出。**

**यदि अस्वस्थ हैं,
तो जाँच करवाएँ और
कृपया घर जाएँ।**



Creating a safe environment – guidelines for visitors attending in-person in the future

We've missed you!



We know that there are great benefits of in-person services and that many families have missed in-person sessions and seeing each other. We also know that while there will be excitement, there will also be some anxiety and uncertainty about being back together in centres.

We have already been contacted by many of you wanting to come back for an in-person session as soon as possible. Please be patient as we arrange for these sessions based on need and priority with the reduced capacity that we can currently safely maintain. Our team will continue to work with you over the next few months, so please keep in touch and liaise closely with them.

Recent evidence shows that very little COVID transmission happens between children, and only a very small number of children who contract COVID-19 get seriously ill. However, to support safety we are requiring all staff on site to be fully vaccinated, and we are strongly encouraging our families to do the same.

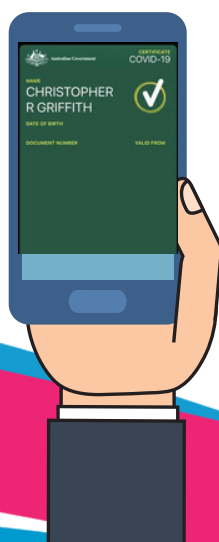
The Shepherd Centre will return to in-person services in 2022

We will be protecting our community by ensuring there will be no adults on TSC premises who are unable to provide proof of vaccination, unless under exceptional circumstances.

We are following State Health Department guidelines closely for our COVID-safe plan to return to centres and have developed effective procedures to support this, including staff vaccinations, mask wearing, social distancing, additional ventilation in centres and continued good hygiene and cleaning. We are confident that this, in combination with support from our community, will minimise risk and help to keep centres open and our families receiving in-person services.

Phone pre-screening

A member of the Family Care team will contact you in advance of your visit to ask you a number of pre-screening questions. It is vital that these questions are answered by whoever will be bringing your child into the centre for their visit. Thank you for your cooperation as we implement this extra measure to keep our community safe.



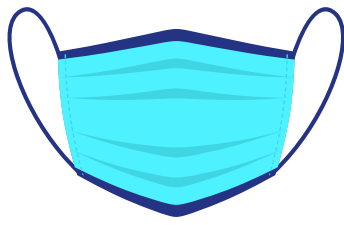
Vaccination

We understand that not everyone wants to get vaccinated. We respect that is a personal choice. The health advice informs us that the risk of being unvaccinated is significant. The Shepherd Centre has a legal responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all of our community. Subsequently all adults at centres, including Shepherd Centre employees, contractors, volunteers and essential visitors, must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine). Children aged 12 or above visiting centres must have at least one dose.

We will be protecting our community by ensuring there will be no adults on TSC premises who are unable to provide proof of vaccination, unless under exceptional circumstances, for example, in an emergency, in cases of a medical exemption, or where an in-person intervention service critical to a child's progress and must be provided.

In these situations, additional protection will be taken and contact with any others minimised unless absolutely necessary. This includes all of our contractors and providers.

Please arrive at your appointment ready to show proof of vaccination (two doses for adults and at least one dose for children 12+), which you'll need to show at every visit. Please note if you have a medical exemption from vaccination you will also need to show this to us. Thank you for your cooperation with this in advance.



Masks and face coverings

Mask use will be required in all locations unless to support and aid audibility and communication when talking to someone with hearing loss. Please bring your own masks where possible, however each centre will have back-up supplies just in case. We recognise that face masks can pose communication challenges for people with hearing loss, so there may be times when masks are lowered to help with this, or additional supports used to help audibility and communication.

Ventilation

Open or well-ventilated spaces reduce the risk of COVID-19. Where possible we will keep doors open (although we will be mindful of your privacy and ensure this is maintained). Air-conditioners will be set to use outside air where possible, and we are exploring the use of air purifiers to keep our staff and community safe (as we can't open all windows due to safety issues, particularly for children).

Physical distancing

All adults must keep 1.5 metres distance from each other wherever possible. Physical distancing between children is not required under the latest health guidelines, however we encourage families attending groups to follow COVID safe practices including:

- regularly washing hands
- not sharing drinks or food
- coughing or sneezing into your elbow, or else using a tissue which should be put in the bin straight away
- bringing your own water bottles for you and your child

Check-in

All families, visitors and participants must use all QR codes to check in and out: this includes The Shepherd Centre's check-in system and the State based app. If you need a manual check-in, please speak to one of our staff on arrival. Please also wear your mask and have your proof of vaccination ready to show to make the check in process easier. Please note we no longer need to take your temperature.

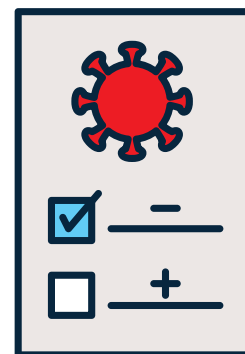


COVID Testing

Even if you are vaccinated, if you or your child have been unwell during the three days preceding your session at TSC with the following symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, runny nose or a sniffle from a cold) you will need to show a negative COVID test result on entry (PCR - polymerase chain reaction or non-self-administered Rapid Antigen Test). If you/your child still has symptoms even with a negative COVID test you won't be able to enter our locations for the safety of our community and given the contagious nature of these conditions, nor will our staff. Thank you for your cooperation as we implement this extra measure to keep our community safe.

Cleaning and hygiene

We will be supporting the safety of our community with the purchase and implementation of appropriate resources (PPE, plexiglass shields, ventilation solutions, and outdoor furniture). We continue to implement additional cleaning measures in line with advice from State Health Departments. We have extra supplies of soap, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes and personal protective equipment and can order more as needed. Please use the hand sanitizer on arrival and at all stations around the building.



Responding to COVID-19 cases

Where there is a case of COVID-19 in one of our centres, The Shepherd Centre has established systems and protocols in accordance with the State Health Departments to manage and respond accordingly to keep our staff and families safe. These protocols include communication with parents or carers if they or their child has been in contact with someone who has tested positive to COVID-19 while at one of our centres or if the centre becomes closed.

If your centre has a close contact COVID-19 case

Families will also be notified if there is a close contact case of COVID-19. If this is the case, we will let you know via the usual channels (phone, email, SMS and The Shepherd Centre website). Please check the weekly Shout Out e-newsletter for regular updates.



If your centre becomes closed due to a positive COVID-19 case

Families will be notified when a decision is made to make the centre closed for onsite attendance due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 or other events that require us to close. During this period, The Shepherd Centre will again revert to providing all services via Telehealth (for critical in-person sessions we may be able to arrange an alternate location). If this is the case, we will let you know via the usual channels (phone, email, SMS and The Shepherd Centre website). Please check the weekly Shout Out e-newsletter for regular updates.

If your centre becomes closed due to a Public Health Order

If there is a Public Health Order or direction from State Health Departments, The Shepherd Centre will revert to providing all services online (for critical in-person sessions we may be able to arrange an alternate location). If this is the case, we will let you know via the usual channels (phone, email, SMS and The Shepherd Centre website). Please check the weekly Shout Out e-newsletter for regular updates.



Help us to support you

We are here to help you: please respect our team so that we can best support you. All of our staff are empowered to uphold COVID-safe practices, and remind others to do the same. Where services do need to be provided in person between now and 1st December, these will be provided based on clinical need, not on family expectation or want. Thank you for complying with COVID-safe practices and doing everything practicable to keep the community safe.

Privacy

Your privacy is important to us. So that we can support you and your family in a safe way, The Shepherd Centre will record your vaccination status in our clinical system. However, we will still need to see proof of vaccination on every visit to ensure all people entering into our facilities are vaccinated. Thank you for your cooperation.

A copy of our privacy policy is available at:
<https://shepherdcentre.org.au/about-us/privacy/>



Get in touch

We are planning for a COVID-safe return to in-person services in 2022. Please get in contact with the Family Care team directly if you would like more information about our COVID-safe plan or if you have concerns about attending in person.

Phone: 1800 020 030

Email: familycare@shepherdcentre.org.au

If you need an interpreter to assist you with your enquiry, please email familycare@shepherdcentre.org.au and ask for an interpreter in your language.