

COVID-19 SPECIAL LEAVE UPDATE

Last updated: Thursday 17 March 2022

The information below is to provide guidance to leaders, employees and volunteers regarding work arrangements and leave arrangements for employees directed to isolate due to COVID-19 exposure.

Employee or Volunteer required to isolate in accordance with a Public Health Direction

If an employee or volunteer has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is deemed a close contact of an individual diagnosed with COVID-19, or is directed to self-isolate under a Public Health Directive, the employee or volunteer must isolate as directed and not attend any UnitingCare facility. Evidence of the direction to isolate must be provided to the relevant leader.

If an employee or volunteer is tested for COVID-19, they must remain in isolation (unless advised otherwise, for example, if undergoing surveillance testing and monitoring by a PHU), and not attend a UnitingCare facility until a negative result is received or they have completed the required period of isolation as directed.

If the test result is negative, the employee or volunteer must notify their leader, provide evidence of negative result and may return to work at a UnitingCare facility as long as **NO** ongoing testing or isolation directions remain in place.

If the employee or volunteer tests positive for COVID-19, they will be required to quarantine for the prescribed period under direction.

Working from Home

If an employee or volunteer cannot attend the UnitingCare facility because of a direction to isolate, then if suitable, (depending on the nature of the employee's or volunteers work) working from home may be considered by UnitingCare. The decision for an employee or volunteer to temporarily work from home will be at the discretion of the relevant leader. If temporary working from home is accepted by UnitingCare as a suitable option, all reasonably practicable steps to ensure compliance with work health and safety requirements are required to be taken. The employee and leader will also complete a Work from Home Agreement at the commencement of the temporary working from home arrangement.

Leave Entitlements

If temporarily working from home is not accepted by UnitingCare for employees who are required to isolate, the employee may access their personal leave entitlements. Once an employee has utilised their 10 days personal leave (or exhausted existing personal leave entitlements if their leave balance is less than 10 days), the employee is able to apply for 'special paid leave'.

Special Paid Leave

If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or deemed a close contact of an individual diagnosed with COVID-19, or are directed to self-isolate under a public health directive, you must isolate as directed and not attend work. If you test positive for COVID-19 you will be required to quarantine for the prescribed period under the direction.

So, if an employee is a part-time or full-time employee and is directed to isolate / quarantine, and consequently unable to work, the employee can apply for the following leave entitlements:

- Up to 10 days personal (sick) leave or if less than 10 days available, exhausting the employees personal leave balance; and
- Up to 7 days UnitingCare special paid leave (noting that up to 7 days leave will be available to eligible employees every 6 months).

This also applies to casual employees in certain situations. Refer to the [COVID-19 SPECIAL LEAVE UPDATE](#) on UnitingCare's COVID-19 website for more information.

Special paid leave is an additional entitlement in excess of our Enterprise Agreements and UnitingCare policies, and must be approved by the relevant General Manager, therefore it is a temporary arrangement which will cease after 7 days or at the discretion of UnitingCare, whichever comes first.

Returning to work

Return to work can occur once an employee or volunteer has completed the required period of isolation and has been advised that they are able to leave isolation. In some instances, the employee or volunteer may be requested to provide evidence to their leader that they are able to return to work and a medical certificate may be requested for the period that they are unable to attend work.

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