

SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

NAME OF DOCUMENT	Procedure for SESLHD facility visitors in home isolation or quarantine for COVID-19 exposure with exemption under compassionate grounds
TYPE OF DOCUMENT	Procedure
DOCUMENT NUMBER	SESLHDPR/682
DATE OF PUBLICATION	September 2021
RISK RATING	Medium
LEVEL OF EVIDENCE	National Standard 1: Clinical Governance
REVIEW DATE	September 2024
FORMER REFERENCE(S)	N/A
EXECUTIVE SPONSOR or EXECUTIVE CLINICAL SPONSOR	Executive Director Operations
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FUNCTIONAL GROUP(S)	Clinical Governance, Infection Control, Population Health
KEY TERMS	Coronavirus, COVID-19, Visitors, compassionate ground, exemption
SUMMARY	The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance to SESLHD staff on managing visitors who have been granted visitation rights under compassionate grounds and who are currently in home isolation or hotel quarantine for COVID-19 exposure. The procedure takes into consideration the needs of patients as well as the requirement to minimise risk to other patients, staff, visitors and therefore the broader community.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

This procedure is informed by the following:

[Public Health Orders by the Minister for Health and Medical Research, for people who arrive in Australia from overseas or by vessel from another port outside of NSW.](#)

[NSW Health Policy Directive PD2011_022 - Your Health Rights and Responsibilities](#)

[NSW Health Policy Directive PD2017_013 - Infection Prevention and Control](#)

[NSW Health Management of COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings guidance](#)

2. BACKGROUND

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) recognises that patients benefit from family members and loved ones being involved in their care and recovery. As such, where it is clinically appropriate and safe to do so, SESLHD will continue to provide the means to ensure a humanitarian and person-centred approach to its visitor policy is taken, particularly in the current state of emergency.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, limits on visitors to NSW Health hospitals may be necessary to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and minimise infection risk to patients, staff and visitors. During the pandemic, visitor management plans are agreed locally, as per SESLHD's visitor policy and the [NSW Health Management of COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings guidance](#).

People who arrive in Australia from overseas or by vessel from another port outside of NSW must enter into quarantine or a health facility for 14 days as directed by NSW Police. Additionally, people who are close contacts of a case of COVID-19 or have been in a declared COVID-19 location of concern are required to undertake home isolation. For these persons, visitation to SESLHD healthcare services/facilities is prohibited due to the high risk of transmission of COVID-19 to vulnerable patients and the wider community.

There are; however, exceptional circumstances where those in quarantine or home isolation can apply for exemption to visit loved ones in hospital/health care services on compassionate grounds. This is particularly for those requesting to visit dying or critically unwell relatives or friends being cared for in SESLHD facilities/services, or those receiving home palliative care support.

The purpose of this procedure is to therefore provide guidance to SESLHD staff on managing visitors granted exemption under compassionate circumstances and who are either undergoing home isolation or quarantine in a NSW Health managed accommodation, NSW Police managed accommodation or exempted to home quarantine, or are a resident of an identified COVID-19 location of concern as specified on the NSW

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Health website. This procedure takes into consideration both the compassionate needs of patients and their visitor/s, as well as the need to minimise infection risk to other patients, staff, visitors and the community. The procedure includes mechanisms for effective communication between clinicians and/or hospital staff, patients, and their family and carers within the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic for SESLHD.

Stringent consideration and risk assessment of the infection risk to other patients, staff and the wider community must be undertaken by senior managers in consultation with public health and senior medical staff in infectious diseases and/or infection prevention and control, and approved by the Executive Director Operations.

Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic, staff members accessing this document are encouraged to refer to the available resources and information on the [SESLHD COVID-19 Intranet page](#) as well as the [NSW Health COVID homepage](#) for the latest up-to-date information.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Employees will:

- Comply with SESLHD procedures for reducing the risk of spread of COVID-19 including: entrance screening, hand hygiene, physical distancing where this can be achieved, and correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for their clinical area as per the Clinical Excellence Commission Guidelines.
- Report any incidents arising from visitors not complying with COVID-19 restrictions via the Incident Management System (IMS+/IIMS) and escalate concerns to their line manager.

3.2 Line managers will:

- Proactively communicate visitor information to ward/unit staff through a variety of mechanisms, and as often as required. This includes the communication of any changes to visitor arrangements.
- Proactively communicate visitor information to patients and their families/carers as often as required.
- Manage any incidents arising from visitors not complying with policy/procedures/agreed arrangements, and escalate concerns immediately to district managers/service managers.

3.3 Facility coordinators will:

- The nominated facility coordinator is the delegated decision maker for the facility/service to:
 - Receive and process exemption requests from either NSW State Health Emergency Operations Centre (NSW SHEOC) Exemptions Unit or from within the facility/service

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- Assess, facilitate requests, and confirm the approval for exemption for visits to the facility/service in conjunction with NSW SHEOC Exemption Unit where required if the visitor is in hotel quarantine. This will involve conducting a risk assessment and consultation with appropriate clinical and operational staff. Risk to individuals being exposed to COVID-19 will be the primary consideration in determining whether family/carers in quarantine/isolation can visit SESLHD facilities/services
- Liaise with department manager/nurse unit manager or NSW SHEOC Exemptions Unit where required if the visitor is in hotel quarantine, to coordinate a safe and appropriate time to allow visitors to visit relatives or friends being cared for in SESLHD facilities/services where approved by the General Manager/Tier 2 director and/or NSW SHEOC
- Act as a single point of contact for mobilising Geriatric Flying Squad where appropriate to check compliance with NSW SHEOC agreed visiting conditions in aged care facilities
- Draft Letter Template to Visitor Granted Exemption under Compassionate Grounds (see Appendix 1) for signature by Executive Director Operations.
- Advise NSW SHEOC Exemptions Unit/requestor of the outcome.

3.4 Public Health and Treating Team will:

- Seek consultation and advice from Infectious Diseases/Infection Prevention and Control staff as appropriate.
- Discuss and support alternative options for visitors to connect with patients such as virtual communication.
- Where visitation is prohibited, the treating team are responsible for ensuring the patient remains connected to their support network via virtual means. Social worker involvement should be considered if there is concern that the patient's psychosocial wellbeing is at risk.
- Determine the patient's COVID-19 status prior to establishing a visitation plan for visitors granted exemption under compassionate grounds.
- Together with the facility coordinator, conduct assessment of the clinical risks and benefits to all individuals involved, taking into consideration the patient's COVID-19 status and the risk that the proposed visitor may have COVID-19.
- Determine the grounds for visitation including: number of visitors; duration and time of visit; where visit will take place; safety precautions for patient, visitors and staff including level of PPE required.

3.5 Visitors granted exemption will:

- Undergo COVID-19 screening by telephone prior to leaving place of isolation and upon arrival at the SESLHD facility/service, including temperature and symptom checking. Those demonstrating symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 will be refused entry.
- Comply with all relevant infection prevention and control policy and procedures at all times whilst on SESLHD premises, including: screening, physical distancing,

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hand hygiene, and utilisation of PPE. Surgical masks are to be worn at all times whilst on the premise as a minimum. Refusal to comply with the requirements of in-person visitation could result in penalties under the [Public Health Act](#).

- Comply with agreed visitation arrangements, and agree to leave if requested by assigned SESLHD supervisor.
- If in NSW Police hotel quarantine, report to on-site medical team if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, who will ensure that the person has access to COVID-19 testing and defer or re-schedule visit as appropriate.
- If in home isolation or SESLHD managed accommodation, report to SESLHD Public Health Unit (PHU) if feeling unwell or showing COVID-19 symptoms, who will ensure that the person has access to COVID-19 testing and defer or re-schedule visit as appropriate. PHU will inform the facility coordinator if a visitor develops symptoms of COVID-19 after the visit.

3.6 Assigned SESLHD Staff member supervising the visit will:

- Ensure that the visitor has been pre-screened for symptoms before leaving place of isolation or quarantine.
- Greet visitor/s at entry of facility/site, and provide instruction for the visit, including: relevant infection prevention and control procedures (hand hygiene, physical distancing, PPE requirements) and details of the visit (duration, location, permitted amenities if required).
- Ensure visitors comply with instructions on arrival.
- Be responsible for escorting the visitors to and from the patient's agreed location.
- Follow up with visitor daily for three days following visit to check for and symptoms/ COVID-19 testing if the visitor is in home isolation.
- Document compliance of instructions in clinical notes.

4. PROCEDURE

Staff involved in the coordination/management for visitors granted visitation rights to SESLHD facilities and services under compassionate grounds should consider the following elements:

- The date, time, duration, and location of the visit must be agreed by all parties involved (patient, family/carers, treating team). This should be clearly documented and signed off by local management (General Manager/Tier 2 Director) as well as the Executive Director Operations.
- NSW SHEOC Exemption Unit to arrange that the visitors in quarantine are screened for symptoms before leaving the hotel and email that to the Facility Coordinator. The visitor will travel according to directions from NSW SHEOC Exemption Unit to the entrance of the facility/service (details to be provided). Note, health screening is completed at the airport for visitors travelling directly from the airport to the healthcare facility/service. Similarly, the visitor will travel according to directions from NSW SHEOC Exemption Unit to the entrance of the facility/service.

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- A SESLHD staff member is to be allocated to supervise the visit. Door screeners are to be informed of the assigned supervisor in preparation for the visitor/s arrival, as well as the NSW SHEOC Exemption Unit.
- Visitor/s to be screened prior to entering SESLHD facility/site, including temperature and symptom checking. Visitors screened showing symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, will be refused entry and require COVID-19 testing. Those in home isolation are to be sent to a fever clinic, those in hotel quarantine should be referred to the hotel medical team.
- Visitor/s will be required to adhere to hand hygiene and infection prevention and control instructions from staff at all times whilst on SESLHD premise.
- The patient and visitor/s are required to wear a surgical mask if instructed to and perform hand hygiene before and after the visit.
- The patient and visitor/s are to remain more than 1.5m apart and have no physical contact unless authorised.
- If required, a room is to be approved for the use of the visit, and a terminal clean scheduled immediately after the visit.
- At the end of the visit, visitor/s are to return directly to their place of isolation or hotel quarantine as approved by the NSW SHEOC Exemption Unit.
- Visitor/s are to be asked by the facility (e.g. COVID Telephone Assessment Clinic) if they have any symptoms or COVID-19 testing daily for three days after the visit and any symptoms or COVID-19 testing is to be reported back to the nominated Facility Coordinator (see Section 6) immediately.
- Visits should not occur in high risk units such as transplant, haematology or oncology wards. A room outside the high risk units can be approved for use of the visit, ensuring a terminal clean is scheduled immediately after the visit.

See Appendix 2 for process flow chart

5. DEFINITION

For the purpose of this procedure, a visitor will be defined and limited to the following:

- for a patient under the age of 18 years—a parent or guardian of the patient or another person who has temporary care of the patient
- for a patient with a disability—the patient's carer
- for a patient who has a guardian within the meaning of the Guardianship Act 1987—the patient's guardian and, if the guardian is the Public Guardian, a family member or friend
- for a person who otherwise lacks capacity to consent to medical or dental treatment—the person responsible under Part 5 of the Guardianship Act 1987 for the person
- for a patient who is pregnant and whose status as a patient relates to the pregnancy—the patient's partner or support person
- for a patient attending at the hospital's emergency department—a person accompanying the patient

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- for a patient attending an outpatient appointment at the hospital—a person accompanying the patient
- a person at the hospital for the purposes of end-of-life support for the patient
- another person at the hospital for the purposes of visiting the patient.

6. FACILITY COORDINATORS

The Director of Medical Services or General Manager for Calvary and War Memorial Hospitals are the delegated Facility Coordinators:

Hospital/ Facility	Facility Coordinator Name and Contact Details
Prince of Wales Hospital	Martin Mackertich: 02 9382 2001 or Martin.Mackertich@health.nsw.gov.au
St George Hospital	Heidi Boss: 02 9113 2224 or Heidi.Boss@health.nsw.gov.au
The Sutherland Hospital	Huong Van Nguyen: 02 9540 7383 or HuongVan.Nguyen@health.nsw.gov.au
Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital	Pauline Rumma: 02 9382 2001 or Pauline.Rumma@health.nsw.gov.au
Royal Hospital for Women	Wayne Hsueh: 02 9382 6511 or Wayne.Hsueh@health.nsw.gov.au
Calvary Hospital	Drew Kear: 02 9553 3537 or Drew.Kear@health.nsw.gov.au
War Memorial Hospital	Gerard Hyde: 02 9369 0334 or Gerard.Hyde@health.nsw.gov.au

7. DOCUMENTATION

N/A

8. AUDIT

Not required.

9. REVISION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
September 2020	1	Draft procedure prepared, approved by Liz Curran, Executive Director Operations, Dr Jo Karnaghan, Director Clinical Governance and Medical Services and Dr Marianne Gale, Director Population and Community Health. Reviewed and endorsed by the key committee: COVID-19 Infectious Diseases and Infection Control Practitioners Committee
September 2021	2	Minor review. Addition of new appendix: Quarantine Exemption Procedure guide for overseas visitors in hotel quarantine. Approved by Executive Sponsor.

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APPENDIX 1

Letter Template to Visitor Granted Exemption under Compassionate Grounds (T20/66803)



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

T21/xxx

Dear {insert name/s of visitor/s}

Visitation to South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) Facility/ Service under compassionate grounds

People who have been overseas, or who are undergoing home isolation or quarantine are a high risk of COVID-19 transmission in health care facilities. For this reason, a compassionate entry permit comes with specific and strict conditions as required by NSW Health.

The following details outline the requirements for your visitation to SESLHD facility/service under compassionate grounds.

- Patient for whom you have been granted visitation rights: {insert full name}
- Date of visit: dd/mm/yyyy
- Time of visit: XX:XX to XX:XX (total duration: XX minutes)
- SESLHD Location: {insert name of Facility/ Site}
- SESLHD site entrance details: {insert address and other details as necessary}
- Nominated SESLHD Facility Coordinator: {insert name and contact number}

Upon arrival, you will be asked a number of questions to check for any COVID-19 symptoms, as well as have your temperature checked. This is part of the standard visitor screening policy. During your visit, you will be required to comply with strict infection prevention and control practices, including hand washing, physical distancing and you may be required to use protective personal equipment (PPE, such as a mask) if instructed by the treating team. There are stations to clean your hands and posters throughout the facility/service to guide you, however please ask a staff member if you are unsure.

During your visit, you are to remain at least 1.5 metres apart from your loved one, and have no physical contact unless you have received approval from the medical team. At the end of your visit, you will be required to return directly to your place of isolation or quarantine.

If you are in hotel or home isolation, you will be called daily for three (3) days following your visit to SESLHD facility/service, as a follow up to check for symptoms/COVID-19 testing, if required. This is to ensure we protect your health and safety, as well as the health and safety of your loved one and the broader community.

If you have any concerns, or require further information about your upcoming visit, please contact your nominated SESLHD Facility Coordinator (details above).

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely

Kim Olesen
Executive Director Operations

Date:

District Executive Unit
Locked Mail Bag 21
TAREN POINT NSW 2229

P. (02) 9540 7756 F. (02) 9540 8757
E. SESLHD-Mail@health.nsw.gov.au

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APPENDIX 2

Quarantine Exemption Procedure guide for overseas visitor’s in hotel quarantine



Procedure guide for overseas visitor’s in hotel quarantine, who are granted Quarantine Exemption to visit **XXXXX at **<insert hospital>****

The following procedure will be followed for **XXXXXX** and **XXXXXX** who are visiting from **<insert country>**

Arrival **<insert location> – **<insert Address>****

- 1 Call on arrival **<insert designated person>**- **XXXXXXXX**
- 2 The family to report at **<insert location>**
- 3 **<insert number of persons>** will be met by the Infection Control nurse **<or insert staff>** with full PPE to assist family into appropriate PPE as identified below

PPE for **<insert visitors names>**

- 1 Hand hygiene prior to donning PPE
- 2 Long sleeve gown
- 3 Gloves
- 4 Mask (Surgical Mask)

Screening at the Entrance

- 1 The **<insert designated person>** will screen for symptoms on arrival
- 2 Temperature check to be undertaken

Walk to the **<insert location> (**insert distance**)**

- 1 The visitors will not touch any door, walls, lift buttons
- 2 Lift will be vacated by all other occupants during transfer

Entry to the **<insert location>**

- 1 Escort directly to the **XXXXX**
- 2 Cleanable chairs will be provided by staff
- 3 Keep PPE on at all times.

****<Insert room location>** Organisation.**

- 1 A box of tissues will be provided
- 2 Water in disposable cups will be provided
- 3 Hand sanitiser will be available

Staff interactions with **<insert names of visitors>**

- 1 Throughout the visit, the staff interacting with the family (**insert staff titles**) will wear full PPE which includes full sleeves gown, gloves, and a N95 mask and goggles or face shield
- 2 Staff have been fit tested and are fully vaccinated (2 doses)
- 3 Staff will use buddy process to don and doff PPE

Duration of visit

- 1 It is to be for 30 minutes

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Visit to other areas or meeting other visitors of the hospital

- 1 <Insert names> are not permitted in any other areas of the hospital.
- 2 Toileting by visitor should occur prior to arrival as there are no nearby facilities.
- 3 No other family members from Australia who are not in quarantine are to be present during visit

Escort out of the hospital

- 1 At the end of the visit, <insert family names> will be escorted out of the hospital by infection control staff while still in PPE. \

Disposal of the PPE

- 1 The PPE worn by the staff will be disposed of outside XXXXXX and will be removed by Domestic Services

Cleaning of the room

- 1 <Insert room name> – Deep cleaning of room will be done after the visit.
- 2 Items which are not cleanable will be removed prior to visit

Occurrences outside the scope of this document

The staff will remain vigilant about occurrences outside the scope of this document and do their best to minimize risk of potential contamination from the overseas visitors to the hospital patients & staff; and vice versa.

A copy of this document will be given to the visitors, so that they understand their responsibilities, and this may ensure compliance.

Procedure guide once completed must be approved by a member of the Infection Control Department or ID after hours. Send copy to MOH-COVID19-Quarantine@health.nsw.gov.au

Visit cannot go ahead until written approval obtained from both MOH Quarantine Exemptions Unit and Facility GM or DCS

For Further Information please refer to:

SESLHDPR/682 - *Procedure for SESLHD facility visitors in home isolation or quarantine for COVID-19 exposure with exemption under compassionate grounds*

<https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/policies-and-publications/functional-group/84>

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APPENDIX 3 – Process Flow Chart

