

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Pandemic Declaration Accountability
and Oversight Committee



Restrictions on hospital visitation under Pandemic Orders

Questionnaire

Purpose of questionnaire

The Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee, as part of its functions issued under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, is conducting a review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders (Nos. 1 to 5) and the Pandemic (Public Safety) Order.

The Committee has issued this questionnaire to all Victorian hospitals to understand how the Orders has been implemented and to identify any issues hospitals have experienced related to the Orders.

The Committee notes that as of 11.59 pm 22 April 2022, restrictions on hospital visitation (except for the requirement to wear masks) were revoked. However, the Committee still wishes to understand the experience your organisation has had with the Orders, including the implementation of previous orders. In particular, challenges faced in enforcing the Orders and managing exemption requests.

Please note, this information may be used and published by the Committee as part its reporting.

Response

Please provide a response to the questionnaire by **9 May 2022**.

The completed questionnaire should be sent to: pdaoc@parliament.vic.gov.au.

Questions

1. Has your organisation implemented visitor restrictions that are in excess of the restrictions detailed in the orders? If so, when did this occur and in what circumstances?

Our organization implemented visitor restrictions as per advice issued by the Chief Health Officer. Visitor restrictions have fluctuated as per directions from CHO. We have on occasion for short periods of time imposed tighter restrictions in our Age Care facilities due to staff shortages not allowing for the added risk of visitors entering the building.

2. Has your organisation received any complaints about visitor restrictions? If so, what were the outcomes of these?

Over all we received very few complaints regarding visitor restrictions. Any complaints we may have received were at point of entry and nothing formal came through to our complaint's manager.

3. Have there been instances where your organisation has misinterpreted the restrictions under the orders (e.g., when orders have changed or through confusing language in the content of the orders)?

At times the orders that came through were ambiguous and required site specific interpretation. We resolved this issue by discussing the orders at Executive level and making a local risk assessment prior to circulating to staff.

4. How many applications for visiting exemptions has your organisation received and how many been approved?

We received fewer than 10 written requests for exemption to visit, all of these were approved as meeting criteria for special consideration. Predominantly concerning "caring" for an inpatient.

5. What staff member of your organisation has assessed applications for exemptions?

These exemptions were reviewed and a decision made on a case by case basis by the Covid Coordinator, the Unit managers and the executive team.

6. What steps were taken to inform all visitors and their relatives of visiting rules and capacity to apply for an exemption?

Our organization ensured all staff employed were aware of changes as soon as they applied via a daily memo which was sent via email to all staff and circulated in hard copy to all units of the organization.

We also used social media, newspaper articles and our organisation website to inform the public

7. What steps were taken to advise staff of the availability of the exemption process when dealing with the public and visitors to patients?

Information regarding processes was made available to staff via web links to health officer directions and explanations within the daily memo we sent out to all staff.

8. What was your overall impression of the system, and could it have been improved?

Whilst acknowledging a situation we had never encountered before, we did receive quite a lot of feedback from staff waiting for directions to be released after the information had been released by the media. There was a large amount of frustration from staff at having to wait up to 3-4 days for official directions.