**Vulnerable Persons Risk Assessment Guideline**

**1. Workers considered as vulnerable**

A worker may be considered as a vulnerable person to COVID -19 if they:

* are 70 years or older;
* are 65 years or older with chronic medical conditions;
* are an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is 50 years or older with one or more chronic medical conditions;
* are significantly immunocompromised or taking immunosuppression therapy irrespective of age;
* have a chronic medical condition, including:
	+ chronic renal failure;
	+ coronary heart disease or congestive heart failure;
	+ chronic lung disease including severe asthma (for which frequent medical consultations or the use of multiple medications is required), cystic fibrosis, bronchiectasis, suppuratives lung disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or chronic emphysema;
	+ diabetes;
	+ hypertension.

Additional chronic medical vulnerabilities may be identified by the worker who then can provide their employer with their medical condition information.

These categories may increase or vary depending on the latest evidence. See the [Department of Health](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/04/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-employers_2.pdf) website for further information.

**2. Actions to take if a worker is considered a vulnerable person**

During the COVID - 19 pandemic situation, current health advice recommends vulnerable people self-quarantine in their homes and limit contact with those outside of their immediate household members as much as possible.

This may pose challenges in a work context, and requires workers and managers to work together to create solutions to address these challenges. The safety and wellbeing of all workers remains paramount during COVID – 19 pandemic situations.

If a worker considers they meet the definition of a vulnerable person:

* they should discuss their concerns with their direct line manager and provide supporting medical information such as a letter from a registered medical practitioner or medical certificate or other reasonable information supporting their medical risk. A manager may also draw on their existing knowledge of a worker’s health when considering how to support a vulnerable worker, rather than requesting new medical information be provided;
* the worker and manager should work together to assess any risks and develop actions to address those risks;
* risks need to be assessed and mitigated with consideration of the characteristics of the worker, the workplace and the work being undertaken by the worker.

If there are risks to the worker remaining in their current role in the workplace that cannot be mitigated, temporary short term and reasonable adjustments to support the worker should be discussed and documented using the **Vulnerable Persons Risk Assessment (010F).**

*Temporary* adjustments to mitigate risks may include:

* remote working, including working from home (which must include a risk assessment of the home/office), within the worker’s current role ;
* allocating work that can be undertaken remotely, that may not necessarily relate to a worker’s own role, but is in line with their skill set, experience and existing level;
* deployment to an alternate, role within the workers skill level;
* alternative hours, or patterns of work;
* working from another location;

All managers must support workers to continue to work wherever possible in a way that balances the:

* service delivery requirements of the workplace or the broader sector;
* worker’s continued health, safety and wellbeing.

Where risks to vulnerable workers cannot be mitigated in the workplace and the worker cannot work from home, the worker may apply for leave where applicable.

A worker who is granted leave under these provisions should keep in regular touch with the employer in the event appropriate work can be identified.

The worker must inform their manager if their circumstances change. For example, if the worker becomes sick or is required to provide care for an unwell family member, the worker should be placed on sick / carers leave where available.

Managers must regularly (minimum monthly) review the agreed arrangements to ensure they continue to fit the workers circumstances and impacts to the employer and worker have not changed.

**3. Vulnerable workers who wish to remain in the workplace**

On occasion, workers who have been assessed as a vulnerable person may indicate they wish to remain in the workplace and not self-quarantine at home.

Workers and managers must discuss these circumstances before the worker returns to work with the safety and wellbeing of the worker and others in mind.

Apparent risks should be identified, and mitigating strategies agreed upon, documented and put in place to overcome any risk there may be to the worker or to the employer. An example of this could include moving a vulnerable worker from a service centre role with face-to-face customer interactions to a role within a customer service call centre. When identifying mitigating strategies, the manager and worker should also take into account factors such as whether there will be any increased risks to the worker through transport options if alternative work locations are being considered.

The **Vulnerable Persons Risk Assessment (010F)** will assist to identify risks and agree upon strategies to mitigate these. The worker should also be encouraged to download the COVID – 19 tracking app.

**4. Workers who live with or care for a vulnerable person**

There may be circumstances where workers are not considered vulnerable, but their personal circumstances mean that they live with or care for someone is who considered vulnerable, and there is medical advice that the worker attending work presents a higher risk to the vulnerable person.

In these circumstances, the worker and manager should work together to identify and mitigate risks, following a similar approach to vulnerable workers in the workplace The manager and worker should also take into account factors such as any increased risks through transport options if alternative work locations are being considered.

If risks cannot be mitigated by implementing strategies such as working from home or another location or removing face to face customer interactions from the worker, the worker may apply for accrued annual leave, LSL or LWOP (where applicable).

This leave is granted at the discretion of the manager and should only be considered once all other options are exhausted. The granting of any leave (paid or unpaid) should include a review period that the manager considers appropriate, for example: an initial 14-day review period of leave may be suitable as this aligns with the current self-isolation requirements.

A worker granted special leave under these provisions should keep in regular touch with the employer in the event appropriate work can be identified.

**5. Pregnant workers**

South Australian Health have advised that currently there is insufficient evidence to guide definitive workplace practice and highlight specific risks during pregnancy. As such a thorough work environment assessment of the worker’s circumstances should be undertaken.

Whilst pregnant women do not appear to be more severely affected than the general population, the anxiety and subsequent stress regarding a pandemic may impact not only the mother but also the baby. Therefore pregnant workers should be supported in the same way as vulnerable workers.

**6. Collection use and holding of sensitive personal information**

The collection, use and holding of an individual’s sensitive personal information will be managed in accordance with the requirements of privacy legislation. This is inclusive of worker information and any information that may be disclosed where a worker is in a position of caring for others.

The sensitive personal information a worker provides to their employer will be used to consider and support a workers safety and wellbeing in accordance with work health and safety (WHS) obligations.

**7. Process**

1. Worker advises their direct line manager that they have assessed themselves to be vulnerable person, and provides supporting medical certification and / or information.
2. Worker and direct line manager discuss and agree upon mitigating strategies and timeline of review to ensure worker's safety, health and wellbeing and program needs. The agreement reached is documented and signed by both parties. A copy is provided and kept by all parties. Any changes that effect payroll will be provided to payroll for actioning.
	1. Where the agreed strategy is for the worker to commence working from home, a working from home agreement and workstation and home office checklist must be completed.
3. Worker and direct line manager to complete the **Vulnerable Persons Risk Assessment (010F)**, including information on the mitigating strategies to be implemented, timeline and review. No agreement should be left to lapse.
4. The Manager will monitor and check in with the worker on a regular basis to ensure the agreement made continues to provide a safe environment for all

