



## Updated health advice

Dear services and providers

The Premier has announced increased restrictions in the Hunter region including the Local Government Areas of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Port Stephens, Cessnock, Dungog, Singleton and Muswellbrook. **This lockdown will commence at 5pm today and continue through to midnight on 12 August.**

The department has compiled information relevant to your area as we work together to respond to the latest health advice.

The increased health expectations are in line with the advice provided for the Greater Sydney region. Please continue to [visit our website for updates](#).

### **Attendance at Early Childhood Education and Care Services**

Early childhood education and care services, including Family Day Care residences and Outside School Hours Care services, may continue to operate at this time.

### **Wearing masks in Early Childhood Education and Care services**

Masks are required in Early Childhood Education and Care settings in your area, including indoor and outdoor environments.

Exemptions for wearing masks in ECE apply:

- where a child is deaf or hard of hearing; or
- the clear enunciation or visibility of the educator's mouth is essential.

### **Visits from the Regulatory Authority, including Assessment and Rating**

The regulatory authority will limit non-essential visits to services within the Hunter region at this time, based on the importance of minimising risk to children. Any visits that are undertaken will follow COVID-safe practices and we will contact you if a scheduled visit will impact your service.

### **Keeping our ECE community safe**

While the vaccine rollout continues, the measures that ECE services take to protect their staff, as well as the children and families attending, are critical in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

- avoid non-essential visitors to your service
- minimise contact during drop-offs and pick-ups, ensure parents and staff all wear a mask during these periods
- ensure all visitors sign in using the Service NSW QR Code
- consider how to improve ventilation in the service by increasing time outdoors and keeping windows open where possible. Refer to [COVID-19 guidance on ventilation](#).
- If you or your staff member is unwell, go to a [COVID-19 testing clinic](#) near your home or work and remain at home until symptoms clear.

The latest advice from the Australian Government is that vaccination is now available for all Australians over the age of 18. The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is free, safe and very effective at preventing serious illness and loss of life from COVID-19.

You can book or change a vaccination appointment at a vaccination centre through the [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker](#). You can also check with your GP or local pharmacy to see if they are offering the vaccine.

You may have questions about a pre-existing medical condition and getting a COVID-19 vaccine. In this case, the Department of Health recommends you get your COVID-19 vaccine through your general practitioner (GP).

For more information, refer to:

- the [NSW Government COVID-19 vaccine website](#)
- the [Commonwealth COVID-19 vaccine website](#).

For further enquiries, contact:

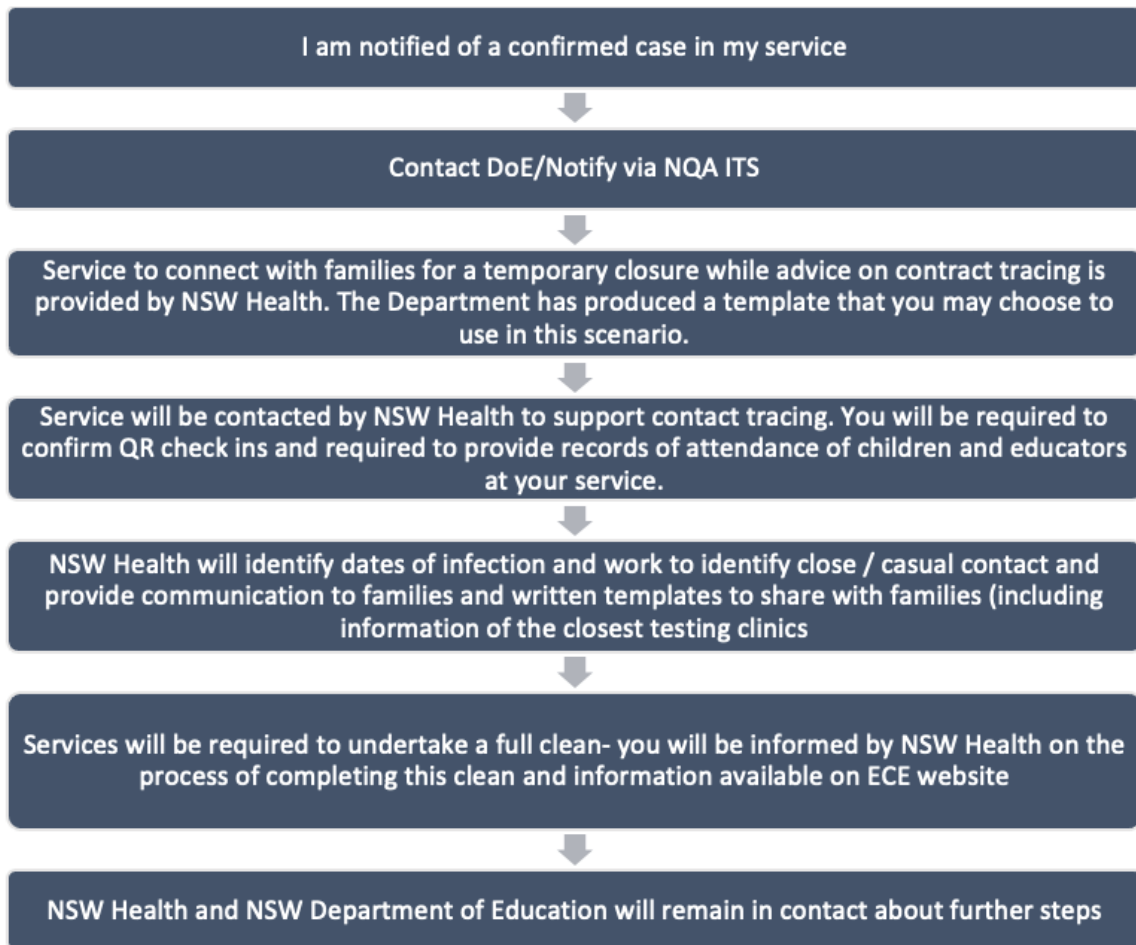
- the National coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccine helpline: 1800 020 080.

To book an appointment complete the [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker](#).

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## **Notifying the department of a confirmed case in a service**

If you have a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in your service (a child or an educator), you will be supported by the Department of Education and NSW Health. You should be aware of the following steps:



## For more information

This information is correct as of 5 August. Information is subject to change and services will continue to receive updates via these emails and our website.

The department regularly updates the [COVID-19 Guidelines for ECEC services](#) based on advice from NSW Health.

Educators are encouraged to regularly check the [NSW Health website](#) regarding up to date restrictions in NSW.

If you have any questions about your service operation you can contact the Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 or by emailing [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au).



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Sent services and providers in NSW

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