

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? **No**
2. Has your organisation received any complaints about visitor restrictions? If so, what were the outcomes of these? **Yes, able to resolve with the patient and /or family members in most instances. 2 cases were resolved through the Health Complaints Commissioner process.**
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)? **It is difficult to know if visitor restriction orders were misinterpreted as the language was confusing and open to interpretation. Clarity was difficult to establish.**
4. How many applications for visiting exemptions has your organisation received and how many been approved? **Average of 5 per week with 95% approved**
5. What staff member of your organisation has assessed applications for exemptions? **Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services**
6. What steps were taken to inform all visitors and their relatives of visiting rules and capacity to apply for an exemption? **Social media, website, ward staff, visitor screening officers**
7. What steps were taken to advise staff of the availability of the exemption process when dealing with the public and visitors to patients? **Social media, intranet, daily flow meeting, website, COVID circular**
8. What was your overall impression of the system, and could it have been improved? **Directions could have been clearer and not left open to interpretation this is especially important in regional and rural Victorian health services where there is not the infectious disease expertise on site to assist with interpretation. Timeliness of directions needs to be improved most often changes were announced to the community on a Thursday or Friday with orders coming into effect at midnight on a Friday which operationally is difficult. Announcing changes to the community prior to the health service causes confusion in the community and puts health services under addition pressure to implement changes at extremely short notice.**