

# Disability Services Newsletter

General Manager Update *Wendy Pettifer*

JUNE/JULY 2021 - LOCKDOWN SPECIAL



**My apologies for not having managed to get a newsletter out for June. I usually write the newsletter for the preceding month in the first week of the next month, but with the new COVID outbreak just taking hold at the time, we've been fully occupied since then managing all the required changes. I thought that as this has been a couple of months almost entirely focused on the pandemic, and mainly in lockdown, we'd do a double month issue and make it a lockdown special!**

## KEEPING EVERYONE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE

In common with last year, our absolute priority during this difficult time has been to keep staff and clients as safe as possible and this starts at the top.

The Senior Leadership Team have got into a routine of watching the 11am announcements daily and then meeting at 1pm to discuss any new restrictions or guidance and what we need to do to implement it in our organization. Sometimes these meetings also take place at the weekend, as this is often when big

announcements seem to be made. We then communicate through managers to frontline staff and clients and families.

Until 27<sup>th</sup> July we had around half the normal number of clients in our centres, which meant not only was it quiet but was easier to maintain social distancing. As per the regulations, all staff – everywhere indoors and on transport, not just when they are with clients – were wearing masks. That included all the leadership team and their staff, although they are all now working full time from home.

All staff arriving at work were checking in using a QR code, and then completing a declaration confirming that they are well and are not supposed to be self-isolating. We were also encouraging staff to be regularly tested and had identified any staff who – because of where they live – were required to test every three days.





We had also 'quarantined' staff to particular centres to reduce the number of people everyone came into contact with. This meant, for example, that if a member of staff worked at Earth, they would only be rostered at Earth with clients who only attend and travel with other Earth clients.

In terms of activities, we were not taking clients outside of the centres at all. Disability services were exempt from the restrictions relating to being outside in groups, but we had taken the decision that at the moment it would be wise not to do this. Of course, this was under constant review, and balanced at times against the needs of some clients to stretch their legs and have a change of scene. It also means that we are relying on the creativity of staff to come up with interesting and engaging activities.

We felt we were doing everything we could to operate safely but on 27<sup>th</sup> July, Woodville – along with all other disability services in the Greater Sydney region – were directed by NSW Health to suspend all days services until 10<sup>th</sup> August.

Indications are that it is likely that this two week suspension of services is likely to continue for at least another two week period. As soon as we are able to, we will let you know what date we will be recommencing services.

This means that at the moment we are providing services only to a very small group of clients who have requested services 1:1 and who we have assessed as being at risk without any services. We are also providing online activities for a couple of hours per day to Geek and Chester Hill clients.

If you need services, or are struggling at home in any way, please call myself or Toby and we will do everything we can to assist you.

## VACCINATIONS

At Woodville, we strongly believe that the way out of this crisis is vaccination. We have encouraged staff and clients to get vaccinated, and by mid to end of August according to our records we estimate that around 60% of both staff and clients in disability services will have got their jabs. We've been proactive in providing opportunities for vaccination, by partnering with the Ministry of Health to provide two 6 day vaccination clinics at our Carramar hub, and we are currently in talks about running further clinics from Mandarin Street whilst it is empty.





We'd like to see both staff and client vaccination numbers improve. Many of our disability clients would be particularly vulnerable to the virus, and both the available vaccines have been shown to reduce both the severity of the disease and the rate of transmission if a person is infected.

Remember that despite the very hard lockdown in our communities, visiting a vaccination centre is one of the very few reasons you are able to leave your home, so don't be deterred! If you are unsure about vaccination, please look for reliable information so that you are making an informed decision. Your doctor, community leaders, NSW Health, the South West Sydney and Western Sydney Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and the federal Ministry of Health are good places to start.

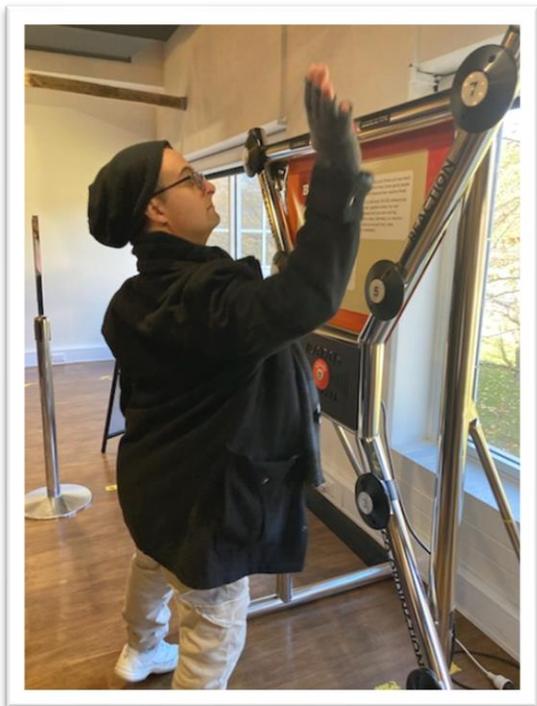
### STAFFING

Due to declining numbers in our centres since the start of this lockdown, we had already had to temporarily stand down about half our staff. Unfortunately, with the mandatory suspension of day services, all except a skeleton staff are now stood down. This is obviously tremendously challenging for everyone, and we have been doing our best to support our colleagues as best we can. We have provided information

on claiming the COVID 19 disaster payments, and we are conducting regular wellbeing check – ins. Our Human Resources department have developed a great Wellbeing Resources directory for staff as well, which contains lots of useful tips and links for staying sane, safe and supported during this time. We're having regular social catch ups over Zoom for all staff, to give everyone the opportunity to say hello to one another, and to share any information we might have about the current situation.

You should all now have received letters from both myself and Pam about my resignation. I've received some lovely messages from families as a result, and it's really nice to know that my time at Woodville has been appreciated. At the moment it's not clear when my last day will be, as moving interstate is currently a bit challenging. Pam has kindly agreed to allow me to continue to work flexibly until I go. Toby and I are working hard on ensuring the handover is smooth, and of course we will let you know when I have a firm leaving date. I will certainly miss everyone, and I will definitely be staying in touch.





## ACCESSING SUPPORT

These are tough times. You probably know that Woodville Alliance does not only provide disability services, but also has an important role locally as a provider of community services in our local area, particularly to families with children, and to people with mental health problems. The staff in that part of the business are busier than ever supporting people who are struggling, and also as a packing and distribution point for emergency food hampers. If you, or anyone you know, needs support please let us know – we can direct you to places that can assist you.

## GETTING BACK TO 'NORMAL'

It's important that, even while we are dealing with this crisis, we are also making plans for getting up and running again. Toby and I have been working hard on ensuring that any learnings from the previous lockdown are factored into our thinking. When we are able to resume service delivery, and you are ready to return to our centres, please ensure that you give us at least one week notice of your

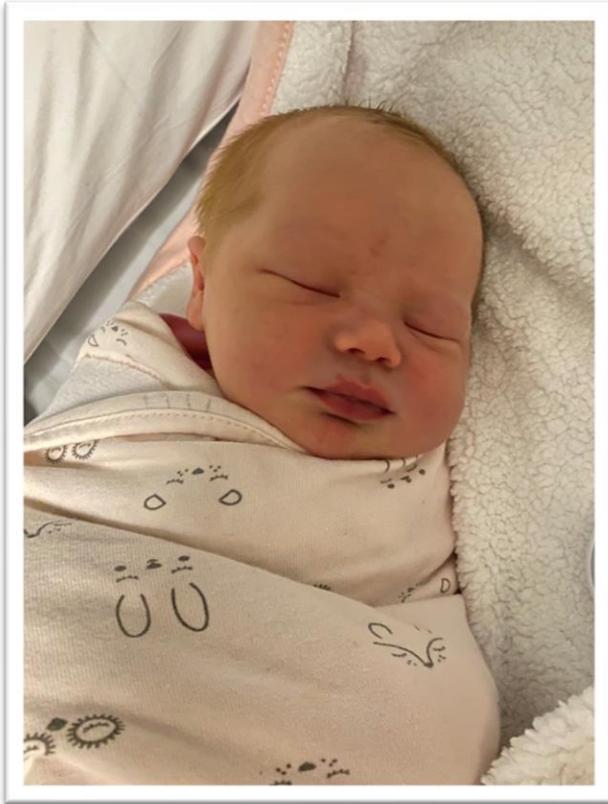
intention to return, so that we can organize staffing etc. In some circumstances, due to numbers, it may be necessary to return to your centre at a higher ratio of support than normal for a short period, but if this happens we will discuss this with you. From our experience previously, we know that some clients need additional support anyway to help them transition back into their normal routine, so this can be helpful in ensuring that change is as smooth as possible.

It's possible – if not likely – that NSW Health will require us to put into place further safeguards before we are able to start operating again, and of course we will let you know how any of those things might affect you.

## SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)

Obviously, many of the plans described in your last newsletter are currently on hold, but one thing we are continuing to drive through is our SIL project. We have recently recruited Nadeeka Jayarathna as a Project Officer to take carriage of this work, and he will be being introduced to interested families over the coming week or so. Nadeeka comes to us with a wealth of experience in supported accommodation, and he will be responsible to ensuring that we get our first home up and running as soon as possible – given the circumstances around COVID. Our original start date of 1<sup>st</sup> September is not going to be possible now, but we have revised dates





and a flexible project plan that should support a quick turn around once we are able to move around more freely again.

### NEW ARRIVAL!

It's nice to get some good news when all the news seems so bleak – so it was lovely to hear that Jenna's baby had finally arrived. A little late, but beautiful and healthy. Tiana-Jade arrived on 12<sup>th</sup> July at 7.18pm weighing in at 3.6kg. I've had a number of chats with Jenna since, and they are both doing well. We send Jenna and her family our very best wishes.

As promised in our last newsletter, we've included photos from the client holiday in Canberra this time. We are looking forward to when we will be able to take clients away again!

Best wishes and stay safe!

*Wendy*

Email: [wpettifer@woodville.org.au](mailto:wpettifer@woodville.org.au)

Phone: 0448 976 271

## COVID VACCINATION CLINICS IN SOUTH WEST SYDNEY

**Location:** Glenquarie Town Centre, Corner of Victoria Road and Brooks Street, Macquarie Fields

**Getting there:** Parking is available at the centre.

Shuttle bus will be running from Glenfield Train Station from 7.30am to 7pm.

Regular bus also available, the 870, 871 or 872 bus stop at Glenquarie Town Centre and make stops along Victoria Road, opposite the TAFE NSW Glenfield Campus.

**Opening hours:** 8am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday.

### Liverpool Vaccination Clinic – Pfizer ONLY

**Location:** Ngarra Education Centre.

52 Scrivener Street, Warwick Farm

**Parking:** There is parking located in 32 Scrivener Street.

**Opening hours:** Monday to Friday: 8.00am to 5.00pm (last booking slot 16.45pm)

Saturday: 9.00am to 4.00pm (last booking slot 3.45pm)

Sunday: 8.00am to 6.00pm (last booking slot 5.45pm)

**Bookings:** [For Liverpool Pfizer Clinic](#)



## **Fairfield GP Respiratory Clinic - AstraZeneca**

**Location:** 3/118 Ware Street, Fairfield

**Opening hours:** Monday to Friday: 9.00am to 1.00pm,  
Sunday (alternate): 8.00am to 6.00pm

**Contact:** 02 9724 7512

## MOBILE VACCINATION CLINICS

### **Chipping Norton - Monday, 8.30am to 4.30pm**

Chipping Norton Community Centre  
Ascot Dr, Chipping Norton

### **Wattle Grove - Tuesday, 8.30am to 4.30pm**

Wattle Grove Community Centre  
Village Way, Wattle Grove

### **Edensor Park - Wednesday, 8.30am to 4.30pm**

Community Hall at Lao Cultural Centre  
711-715 Smithfield Rd, Edensor Park

### **Catherine Park - Wednesday and Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm**

Pasifika community vaccination clinic  
Catherine Park Community Centre  
55 Catherine Park Drive, Catherine Park

### **Miller - Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm**

Michael Wenden Aquatic Leisure Centre  
Cabramatta Ave, Miller

### **Carnes Hill - Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm**

Michael Clarke Recreation Centre  
2 Margaret Dawson Dr, Carnes Hill

### **Bankstown - Saturday, 8.30am to 4.30pm**

Islamic Charity Projects Association  
35 Brancourt Avenue, Bankstown  
(Female nurses available. Private rooms for ladies.)