

memo

memo no: 784
to: All Lifebridge Staff and Volunteers
from: Bronwyn Mitchell
date: 15 April 2020
subject: COVID-19 Response Update – JobKeeper Wage Subsidy Scheme

Dear Lifebridge Staff and Volunteers,

The focus over the last several days has been on determining Lifebridge's eligibility to participate in the JobKeeper Wage Subsidy Scheme which passed into legislation last week. Lifebridge has registered with the ATO and based on our financial analysis we anticipate our eligibility to receive funding on the grounds of being a not-for-profit demonstrating a 15% or greater reduction in our GST turnover.

JobKeeper is a federal wage subsidy scheme ensuring eligible employees receive a minimum \$1,500.00 per fortnight. Payments to employers will likely commence the first week of May. The scheme will run from 30 March until 27th September 2020.

JobKeeper payments will be passed to eligible staff once Lifebridge receives funding in May 2020. There are several criteria which determine an employee's eligibility which are detailed in the attached Fact Sheets provided by the Australian Treasury. Please note that the scheme is aimed at ensuring all employees receive a minimum \$1,500.00 per fortnight so for some staff this will involve a "top up" or "make-up" pay to \$1,500.00/fortnight. It should be noted that JobKeeper is considered taxable income.

Based on our expected eligibility we will commence a staged approach to reinstating working hours for some office and administration staff effective the beginning of the next pay period – 21st April 2020.

At this stage, Lifebridge will maintain a conservative approach to reinstating full hours. This decision is based on the reduced workload associated with the suspension of group and community based activities and our ongoing need to reduce overheads to ensure the organisation remains viable and able to return to full services once the COVID-19 crisis resolves.

All staff are encouraged to read the attached Fact Sheets to understand how the wage subsidy scheme operates and identify any actions they need take regarding their eligibility to receive funds without incurring any future penalties.

- **Fact Sheet: Info for Employees 14.4.20**
- **Fact Sheet: Info for Employers 14.4.20**
- **Fact Sheet: JobKeeper FAQ's 14.4.20**

General Update

- We are pleased to advise there are no reported or confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst our staff, customer and/or carer population.
- Please remember your responsibility to adhere to all social distancing and hygiene protocols. By maintaining appropriate hygiene and social distancing practices we increase our chances of preventing exposure and infection in the community and in turn enable us to provide much needed supports to our aged and disability customers on an ongoing basis. Please see attached **Fact Sheet: Aged Care PPE 14.4.20**.
- Lifebridge continue to have available all personal protective equipment and product to be used in the provision of supports for the protection of our customers, co-workers and families. PPE and products including gloves, face masks, waterproof booties, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and hand towels are available at our Kingscliff offices, Monday – Friday 8.30am – 3.30pm. Wherever possible, please bring your own dispensers to be refilled from the bulk products we have sourced.
- A reminder to continue monitoring your Lifebridge email address for regular staff communications and updates. Please monitor your VisiCase roster daily in the event of any significant changes that need to be implemented to services. We will provide further details regarding JobKeeper once our employer eligibility is confirmed by the tax office.
- The Work, Health & Safety Committee continue to represent the interests of all staff and your Chairperson and HSR's are an escalation point for any WHS and COVID-19 related issues or concerns.
- All staff and volunteers are encouraged to receive the current influenza vaccination (flu shot). The 2020 flu vaccine is now available through most pharmacies and GP's. Once completed, please forward your Certificate to human.resources@lifebridge.org.au to be retained on your personal file. Although not mandatory, health authorities are advising likely worst case scenario if someone is infected with both the COVID-19 virus and influenza.
- All direct care staff are reminded that if unwell, no matter how slight the symptoms, you must avoid contact with others and stay at home. If you have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 you must self-isolate from work for a period of 14 days. **Please do not come to work**. If staying at home places you under financial hardship, please contact Amanda Chadwick in Business Services.
- A reminder to all staff of our Employee Assistance Provider, Kaye Laemmle who is available to provide confidential counselling services. If you are feeling overwhelmed or concerned, we encourage you to call Kaye on 0410 618 330.

If you have any concerns, issues or questions regarding the above please do not hesitate in contacting myself or your Department Manager. In the meantime, keep safe and take care.

Regards,



Bronwyn Mitchell
Chief Executive Officer
Lifebridge Australia Ltd.