



Inspector of  
Custodial Services

# Inspector of Custodial Services COVID-19 plan

Version 6 – January 2022



## Contents

<b>A message to stakeholders and the public</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Purpose of the Inspector of Custodial Services COVID-19 plan</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic	3
1.2 Inspector of Custodial Services legislative requirements	4
<b>2. Principles of the Inspector of Custodial Services COVID-19 plan</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Inspector of Custodial Services staff</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Vaccination requirements	7
3.2 Confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19	7
3.3 Custodial centre visit protocols	7
3.4 Working from home arrangements	9
<b>4. Impact of COVID-19 on our work</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1 Continuity	10
4.2 Additional monitoring and oversight work	11
4.3 Official Visitor Program	11
4.4 Recovery	11
<b>Appendix A: Official Visitor Program COVID-19 plan</b>	<b>12</b>
1. Purpose of the Official Visitor COVID-19 plan	12
2. Principles of the Official Visitor COVID-19 plan	14
3. Official Visitor Program during COVID-19	15
4. Official Visitor mail and phone line	18
<b>Appendix B: Dates for inspection in 2022</b>	<b>20</b>

## A message to stakeholders and the public

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Inspector of Custodial Services (ICS) changed the way we provide oversight of adult and youth custodial centres.

In 2020 we postponed our scheduled visits and inspections of NSW custodial centres from 13 March 2020 until 25 May 2020. This decision was not taken lightly. However, we believed it was necessary to ensure the safety of our staff and the staff, inmates and detainees of NSW custodial centres. A further postponement of scheduled visits and inspections was put in place in June 2021 in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in NSW. It is vital that relevant agencies continue to focus their resources on responding to COVID-19.

We continue to monitor the conditions and treatment of inmates and detainees in NSW custodial centres and provide guidance on best practice. In 2020, the ICS conducted a series of visits focused on the response of relevant agencies to COVID-19. Other in-person visits will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

We are liaising closely with Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW), Youth Justice NSW (YJNSW), the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (JHFMHN) and individual custodial centres on their response to COVID-19 and other matters relevant to our functions. We are also continuing with existing work where possible, particularly in relation to the preparation of inspection and thematic reports, including a review of agency responses to COVID-19.

The ICS is exempt from any restrictions that may be applied to visitors to custodial centres under section 275 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* and section 110 of the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987*. Our ability to access all people detained in NSW custodial centres, including those in isolation, is consistent with [guidance](#) provided by the World Health Organisation.

The Official Visitor Program also continues to operate. Adjustments have been made when required so that Official Visitors can safely provide support to inmates and detainees. A dedicated mail address provides inmates and detainees an additional avenue to raise enquiries and complaints directly and confidentially with Official Visitors. During periods of reduced physical visits by Official Visitors inmates and detainees can also raise matters with Official Visitors via a dedicated phone line.

# 1 Purpose of the Inspector of Custodial Services COVID-19 plan

The purpose of the ICS COVID-19 plan is to:

- ensure the safety of ICS staff and stakeholders
- ensure business continuity for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic
- respond and adapt to emerging issues in the custodial environment
- ensure the continuity of the Official Visitor Program.

The purpose of this plan is to outline how the ICS will operate for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic having regard to applicable legislative requirements, international human rights standards, NSW Health directives and applicable workplace health and safety requirements.

## 1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2 virus). The SARS-CoV-2 virus is one of a family of coronaviruses that cause illnesses ranging in severity from the common cold to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). SARS-CoV-2 is a 'novel' coronavirus, meaning it is a new strain of coronavirus not previously identified in humans.

COVID-19 was first detected following an outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019. On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak to be 'a public health emergency of international concern'. On 12 March 2020, the WHO declared the outbreak to be a pandemic. A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease.

In the period since COVID-19 was first detected, its genetic structure has changed. Changes to COVID-19 that make it easier to spread or make people more unwell as are known as 'variants of concern'. The dominant Delta and Omicron variants were declared by WHO as variants of concern on 31 May 2021 and 26 November 2021 respectively.

According to NSW Health, COVID-19 is spread through contaminated droplets from coughing or sneezing, or contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects. Aerosol transmission may also occur, particularly in crowded, indoor spaces with poor ventilation. The Delta and Omicron variants are highly contagious when compared to previous variants of COVID-19.

COVID-19 symptoms may include fever, fatigue, cough, aches and pains, nasal congestion/runny nose, a sore throat, and loss of taste and/or smell. In more severe cases, COVID-19 can cause pneumonia with severe acute respiratory distress. People with compromised immune systems (e.g. those with cancer), chronic medical

conditions (e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems) and older people are more likely to become seriously ill. People in detention facilities, such as correctional centres and youth justice centres, are considered to be at greater risk of being exposed to COVID-19 outbreaks if a case is diagnosed among staff or inmates or detainees. They are also more likely to have health conditions that make them more susceptible to developing a serious COVID-19 infection.

COVID-19 infection may be detected by a rapid antigen test (RAT) or a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. RATs involve a nasal swab or sample of oral fluid placed in a chemical solution, with results displayed after around 15 minutes. A PCR test involves a nose and throat swab taken at a testing clinic and sent to a lab for testing.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 Inspector of Custodial Services legislative requirements

The office of the ICS was established by the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* (the ICS Act) in October 2013. The mandate of the office is to provide independent scrutiny of the conditions, treatment and outcomes for adults and young people in custody, and to promote excellence in staff professional practice.

The Inspector is independent of CSNSW and YJNSW and reports directly to NSW Parliament.

Section 6 of the ICS Act sets out the principal functions of the Inspector as follows:

- inspect each custodial centre (other than juvenile justice centres and juvenile correctional centres) at least once every 5 years
- inspect each juvenile justice centre and juvenile correctional centre at least once every 3 years
- examine and review any custodial service at any time
- report to Parliament on each such inspection, examination or review
- report to Parliament on any particular issue or general matter relating to the functions of the Inspector if, in the Inspector's opinion, it is in the interest of any person or in the public interest to do so
- report to Parliament on any particular issue or general matter relating to the functions of the inspector if requested to do so by the Minister

---

<sup>1</sup> See NSW Government, 'COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions', *NSW Health* (Web Page, 7 January 2022) <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx#1-1>; Australian Government, 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic', *Department of Health* (Web Page) <https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19>; World Health Organization, 'Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic' (Web Page) <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

- include in any report such advice or recommendations as the Inspector thinks appropriate (including advice or recommendations relating to the efficiency, economy and proper administration of custodial centres and custodial services)
- oversee Official Visitor programs conducted under the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* and the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987*
- advise, train and assist Official Visitors in the exercise of the functions conferred or imposed on them under those Acts
- such other functions as may be conferred or imposed on the Inspector under this or any other Act.

The Inspector also has a responsibility to ensure that ethical and professional practice is observed across the custodial environment in NSW.

Sections 7 and 8 of the ICS Act detail the powers of the Inspector. Section 7 provides that, in the exercise of the Inspector's functions, the Inspector:

- is entitled to full access to the records of any custodial centre (including health records) and may make copies of, or take extracts from, those records and may remove and retain those copies or extracts
- may visit and examine any custodial centre at any time the Inspector thinks fit
- may require custodial centre staff members to supply information or produce documents or other things relating to any matter, or any class or kind of matters, concerning a custodial centre's operations
- may require custodial centre staff members to attend before the Inspector to answer questions or produce documents or other things relating to a custodial centre's operations
- may refer matters relating to a custodial centre to other appropriate agencies for consideration or action
- is entitled to be given access to persons in custody, detained or residing at any custodial centre for the purpose of communicating with them.

Section 8 of the ICS Act further provides that:

The Inspector has power to do all things necessary to be done for or in connection with, or reasonably incidental to, the exercise of the Inspector's functions. Any specific powers conferred on the Inspector by this Act are not taken to limit by implication the generality of this section.

## **2 Principles of the Inspector of Custodial Services COVID-19 plan**

The ICS is mindful of the 'do no harm' principle. This principle underpins the ICS COVID-19 plan and the ICS endeavours to realise the 'do no harm' principle in carrying out the Inspector's functions.

This involves adapting how the ICS operates to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 to inmates, detainees and staff of custodial centres as well as ICS staff. In addition, the work of the ICS should not place a burden on custodial centres in such a way that undermines their ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, it is important that the ICS continues to exercise oversight of CSNSW and YJNSW and develops innovative methods for undertaking the Inspector's functions. This is particularly crucial in connection with the treatment and conditions of inmates and detainees in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3 Inspector of Custodial Services staff

### 3.1 Vaccination requirements

For the protection of ICS staff and the staff, inmates and detainees of NSW custodial centres, ICS staff are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This includes receiving booster shots of a COVID-19 vaccine when eligible, as determined by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

Those unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccination must have a recorded medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines and must advise the Inspector.

### 3.2 Confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19

Staff should observe general instructions by NSW Health to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. NSW Health is regularly updating their website with relevant information. See:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

**ICS staff who test positive for COVID-19 on a RAT or a PCR test or who are a close contact of a person with COVID-19 *must not* visit a custodial centre or attend the office.** ICS staff must advise the Inspector immediately if they:

- Test positive for COVID-19 or are identified as a close contact of a person with COVID-19.
- Test positive for COVID-19 and have had in-person contact with work colleagues or have attended a custodial centre in the previous 14 days.

ICS staff who test positive for COVID-19 *cannot* return to the office or recommence visits and inspections of adult and youth custodial centres until all symptoms have subsided, any recommended period of self-isolation has ceased and they have been approved to do so by the Inspector.

**ICS staff who have COVID-19 symptoms *must not* visit a custodial centre or attend the office.** If ICS staff suspect they may have COVID-19 they should follow NSW Health advice in relation to testing and self-isolation. See:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx>.

ICS staff will work from home as necessary and when directed by the Inspector.

### 3.3 Custodial centre visit protocols

In-person custodial centre visits and/or inspections should only occur at the request of the Inspector. The necessity of visits will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> See *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* s 110; *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* s 275 (inserted by the *COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Act 2020*); World Health Organization, 'Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Prisons and other Places of Detention'



The Inspector may require staff to leave a period of up to 14 days between visits and/or inspections of different custodial centres to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 across different locations.

If the Inspector requests a staff member visit a custodial centre, that staff member does not have to attend the custodial centre if they are concerned about the spread of COVID-19. Staff should make themselves aware of the NSW Health advice in this regard.

ICS staff must not visit a custodial centre or attend the office if they:

- Test positive for COVID-19 on a RAT or PCR test or have been identified as a close contact of a person with COVID-19.
- Are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or do not have a recorded medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines.
- Receive a positive RAT result on entry to a custodial centre.
- Do not have the permission of the Inspector.
- Have visited a different custodial centre within a gap period provided by the Inspector, for example within the previous 14 days.
- Are directed by NSW Health to self-isolate or are required to self-isolate as per NSW Health guidelines for people exposed to COVID-19.
- Have undertaken international travel and have not completed any applicable testing and self-isolation requirements provided by NSW Health. Reside in an area that is subject to relevant public health directives, for example stay-at-home orders.
- Have any acute respiratory infection symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore/ scratchy throat, nasal congestion) or a fever (or history of fever) or a loss of smell or taste.

If visiting a custodial centre ICS staff must:

- Submit to screening on arrival. This may involve screening questions, a temperature check or a RAT administered on entry by CSNSW or YJNSW.
- Observe physical distancing advice: do not shake hands, limit the length of time speaking to individuals to less than 15 minutes where possible, and keep a distance of 1.5 metres from others.

- Conduct conversations with the staff, inmates and detainees of custodial centres outdoors or in well-ventilated areas where possible.
- Observe good hygiene, including washing hands regularly in the method directed by [NSW Health](#) or using hand sanitiser and covering the mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), such as face masks, gloves, gowns and eye protection when deemed necessary and in line with guidance from CSNSW or YJNSW.

## **3.4 Working from home arrangements**

### **3.4.1 Meetings**

Meetings can be held by Microsoft Teams or teleconference if necessary.

ICS has access to a teleconference facility. A designated conference line is available for our use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In-person meetings should observe physical distancing and current advised practices for reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19, such as wearing masks and opening doors and windows for ventilation where possible.

### **3.4.2 Computers**

All permanent and temporary ICS staff have means to work from home by way of an ICS laptop or Citrix.

Office landlines should be forwarded to an office mobile or another number. Office mobiles should be utilised for teleconferences and phone calls for work purposes.

### **3.4.3 Contact with colleagues**

Regular team meetings are to be held to provide regular updates on matters impacting the ICS and its work; to keep all staff informed of work activities and priorities; and to allow any issues or concerns that may impact the entire team to be raised.

Connection with colleagues is encouraged through the use of email, phone, Microsoft Teams, and SharePoint.

## 4 Impact of COVID-19 on our work

Physical visits and inspections of custodial centres may be limited, where necessary, for the protection of ICS staff and the staff and inmates of NSW custodial centres.

Visits and on-site inspections will only take place at the request of the Inspector. Alternative inspection methodologies will be considered on a case-by-case basis during this time. For example, utilising teleconference and video technology.

Themed inspections not requiring on-site inspection of custodial centres are able to continue.

Preparation of reports for tabling is able to progress at this time.

### 4.1 Continuity

Regular communication with stakeholders is critical during this period. This includes:

- Regular communication with CSNSW, YJNSW and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network regarding their response to COVID-19 and suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff and inmates/detainees of NSW custodial centres and other matters relevant to the functions of the ICS.
- Teleconferences with ICS staff and the Governors/Managers of Security/Managing Directors of custodial centres instead of in-person visits where necessary. These teleconferences should provide an update of the custodial centre's response to COVID-19 and a more general update of the custodial centre's operations.
- Stakeholder consultation may still occur; however, timeframes for feedback may need to be extended to allow stakeholders to prioritise their response to COVID-19.
- Stakeholder meetings and consultation should be conducted using teleconference facilities to ensure confidentiality.

Preparation for announced inspections may continue during this period. Preparation of inspection and theme-based reports can continue utilising ICT assets that are currently available.

Monitoring and reporting activities will continue through desktop means, including requests for data whenever possible.

All professional development opportunities that can be undertaken through online mechanisms are encouraged.

Participation in Inspection and Oversight Networks is a priority during this period.

## 4.2 Additional monitoring and oversight work

The ICS is required to monitor the planning and response to COVID-19 undertaken by the agencies we oversight, and individual custodial centres.

The ICS also needs to respond to any serious issues or concerns in relation to the treatment and conditions of inmates that may arise as a result of COVID-19. This may require visits and/or inspections of individual custodial centres.

This may also include preventive advisory work regarding international best practice in relation to responding to a pandemic.

The ICS is undertaking a review of agency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. See: <https://www.inspectorcustodial.nsw.gov.au/inspector-of-custodial-services/current-inspections/adult-inspections/review-of-covid-19-response-.html>.

## 4.3 Official Visitor Program

An Official Visitor COVID-19 Plan has been prepared to ensure the Official Visitor Program continues to perform its statutory functions through visits and alternative means of communication between inmates and detainees and Official Visitors. See Appendix A.

## 4.4 Recovery

Preparations for returning to business-as-usual will continue during this period. This includes re-prioritising inspections and visits to comply with statutory timeframes for inspections and annual reporting requirements. See Appendix B.

On site visits recommenced on 26 May 2020.

Preparation of reports for tabling continues.

A COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan has been completed for the ICS office space to ensure appropriate COVID-19 safety measures are in place.

# Appendix A: Official Visitor Program COVID-19 plan

## 1 Purpose of the Official Visitor COVID-19 plan

The role of Official Visitors is to visit correctional and youth justice custodial centres within New South Wales to receive complaints and enquiries from people in custody, to resolve matters at the local level and to examine the centres. Official Visitors attend their appointed custodial centre in person regularly (usually fortnightly visits, except for some court/police cells which are monthly).

The Official Visitor Program has continued to operate, although necessary adjustments have been made when required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic so that Official Visitors can safely provide support to inmates and detainees.

Where necessary, Official Visitor visits to custodial centres have been reduced or paused. Official Visitors attending centres are following local centre COVID-19 protocols (e.g. wearing required PPE), practising strict physical distancing precautions and focusing primarily on examining the general functioning and physical appearance of a custodial centre, with particular attention given to places of confinement, separation and segregation.

A dedicated phone line and mail address (see 4.1 and 4.2) have been established to ensure that inmates and detainees can access the Official Visitor Program if an Official Visitor cannot attend a centre in a physical capacity.

### 1.1 Legislative requirements

Official Visitors within New South Wales are required by legislation to:

#### 1.1.1 Corrective Services NSW Official Visitors

- Be appointed in a way to ensure that there is at all times at least one Official Visitor for each correctional complex and correctional centre.<sup>3</sup>
- Visit a correctional complex or centre at least once a month unless prevented by illness or other sufficient cause:
  - (ii) for the purpose of giving interviews to inmates (and staff for inmate related issues) held in custody at the complex or centre, and
  - (iii) for the purpose of examining the complex or centre.<sup>4</sup>
- Receive and deal with complaints<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* (NSW) s 228(4).

<sup>4</sup> *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* (NSW) s 228(5a).

<sup>5</sup> *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* (NSW) s 228(5c).

- Report to the Minister and the Inspector of Custodial Services at least once every 6 months.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.1.2 Youth Justice NSW Official Visitors**

- To enter and inspect a detention centre at any reasonable time and confer privately with any person who is a resident, employed or detained in the detention centre.
- To provide to the Minister and the Inspector of Custodial Services advice or reports on any matters relating to the conduct of the detention centre.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* (NSW) s 228(5d).

<sup>7</sup> *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* (NSW) s 8A(4).

## **2 Principles of the Official Visitor COVID-19 plan**

The Inspector of Custodial Services is mindful of the 'do no harm' principle. This includes harm to inmates, detainees and staff of custodial facilities as well as Official Visitors.

The work of Official Visitors should not place a burden on custodial facilities that undermines the ability to respond to COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 plan also considers the 'continuity of service' principle. We will continue to provide Official Visitor services to inmates and detainees to the best of our ability during the COVID-19 pandemic period. We will also provide opportunities for Official Visitors to provide these services remotely if they cannot attend the centre in a face-to-face manner.

## 3 Official Visitor Program during COVID-19

### 3.1 Vaccination requirements

For the protection of Official Visitors and the staff, inmates and detainees of NSW custodial centres, Official Visitors are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This includes receiving booster shots of a COVID-19 vaccine when eligible, as determined by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

Those unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccination must have a recorded medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines and must advise the Official Visitor Coordinator.

### 3.2 Confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19

**Official Visitors who test positive for COVID-19 on a RAT or a PCR test or who are a close contact of a person with COVID-19 *must not* visit a custodial centre.** Official Visitors must advise the Official Visitor Coordinator immediately if:

- They test positive for COVID-19 or have been identified as a close contact of a person with COVID-19 and are unable to complete a visit to an adult or youth custodial centre.
- They test positive for COVID-19 and have visited a custodial centre in the previous 14 days.

Official Visitors who test positive for COVID-19 *cannot re-commence visits* until all symptoms have subsided and any recommended period of self-isolation has ceased. Official Visitors must also advise the Official Visitor Coordinator before they re-commence visits.

**Official Visitors who have COVID-19 symptoms *must not* visit a custodial centre.** Official Visitors who suspect they may have COVID-19 should follow NSW Health advice in relation to testing and self-isolation. See: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/self-isolation-and-testing.aspx>

### 3.3 Custodial centre visit protocols

Official Visitors must not enter an adult or youth custodial centre if they:

- Test positive for COVID-19 on a RAT or PCR test or have been identified as a close contact of a person with COVID-19.
- Are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have a recorded medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines.
- Receive a positive RAT result on entry to a custodial centre.
- Do not have the permission of the Inspector.



- Have visited a different custodial centre within a gap period provided by the Inspector, for example within the previous 14 days.
- Are directed by NSW Health to self-isolate or are required to self-isolate as per NSW Health guidelines for people exposed to COVID-19. Guidelines as at January 2022 were to self-isolate if you:
  - have tested positive for COVID-19 on a RAT or PCR test
  - are waiting for PCR test results
  - are a household or high-risk contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case.<sup>8</sup>
- Have undertaken international travel and have not completed any applicable testing and self-isolation requirements provided by NSW Health.
- Reside in an area that is subject to relevant public health directives, for example stay at home orders
- Have any acute respiratory infection symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore/ scratchy throat, nasal congestion) or a fever (or history of fever) or a loss of smell or taste.

Official Visitors will be screened on entry into a custodial centre and must:

- Submit to screening on arrival. This may involve screening questions, a temperature check or a RAT administered on entry by CSNSW or YJNSW.
- Observe physical distancing advice: do not shake hands, limit the length of time speaking to individuals to less than 15 minutes, and keep a distance of 1.5 metres from others.
- Conduct conversations with the staff, inmates and detainees of custodial centres outdoors or in well-ventilated areas where possible.
- Observe good hygiene, including hand washing regularly in the method directed by [NSW Health](#) or using hand sanitiser, and covering the mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Wear PPE, such as face masks, gloves, eye protection and gowns when deemed necessary and in line with guidance from CSNSW or YJNSW.

The Inspector may require Official Visitors to leave a period of up to 14 days between visits and/or inspections of different custodial centres to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 across different locations.

---

<sup>8</sup> See NSW Government, 'Information for People Exposed to COVID-19', *NSW Health* (Web Page, 8 January 2022) <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/people-exposed-to-covid.aspx>.

Official Visitors attending a custodial centre must also regularly complete a visit and examination of the centre checklist and return the completed checklist to the Official Visitor Coordinator.

The Official Visitor Coordinator will advise Official Visitors immediately if they do not have the Inspector's approval to enter an adult or youth custodial centre (for example if there is an outbreak at the centre).

Official Visitors should monitor the latest updates from NSW Health in relation to COVID-19. See <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/pages/default.aspx>.

Official Visitors should also monitor communications from the Official Visitor Coordinator and relevant agencies for updates on the management of visits to custodial centres.

## 4 Official Visitor mail and phone line

As previously outlined, the role of Official Visitors is to visit custodial centres within NSW to receive enquiries and complaints from inmates and young people in custody, to resolve matters at the local level and to examine the centres.

People in custody have traditionally accessed the Official Visitor Program directly to raise an enquiry or complaint by speaking with an Official Visitor when they visit a custodial centre.

***The Official Visitor mail and phone line were established to ensure that people in custody can access the Official Visitor Program if they cannot access an Official Visitor in person.***

These channels were established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, however they will accommodate any situation either state-wide or on an individual centre basis when an Official Visitor cannot attend a centre in person (for example if an Official Visitor cannot be covered at a custodial centre in a rural location).

The processes for each communication channel have been developed in consultation with CSNSW and YJNSW to ensure that the Official Visitor Program is accessed in a way that does not place a burden on custodial centres or undermine the ability to respond to events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The communication channels can operate under three different scenarios outlined below.

Scenario	Official Visitor communication channels
Official Visitors can attend centres in person as normal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In person visits</li> <li>➤ Mail</li> </ul>
Official Visitors cannot attend the centres as normal, or visits are reduced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mail</li> <li>➤ Phone line</li> <li>➤ AVL visits (if possible)</li> </ul>
Official Visitors cannot attend one centre due to individual circumstances (for example in a rural location where a temporary cover cannot be filled)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In person visits (for centres that are not impacted only)</li> <li>➤ Mail</li> <li>➤ AVL visits (if possible)</li> </ul>

## 4.1 Mail

The Official Visitor postal address will be available even when Official Visitor physical visits to centres are at normal capacity.

Inmates and detainees can raise an enquiry or complaint directly, or they can request for an Official Visitor to contact them via AVL or in person (if possible) by writing to the following address:

Official Visitor Program  
Inspector of Custodial Services  
PO Box 85  
MARRICKVILLE NSW 1475.

An inmate or young person is entitled to send letters confidentially to and receive letters confidentially from the Inspector of Custodial Services as an exempt person under the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* and the *Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015*. Any mail addressed to the Inspector of Custodial Services must not be opened by custodial centre staff.

## 4.2 Phone line

The Official Visitor phone line will be active during periods of reduced or no physical visits by Official Visitors to custodial centres.

Inmates and detainees can raise an enquiry or complaint directly, or they can request for an Official Visitor to contact them via AVL or in person (if possible) by dialling #27 on free call lists in adult correctional centres and #14 on the free call lists in youth justice centres.

## Appendix B: Dates for inspection in 2022

Centre	Date for inspection
Acmena Youth Justice Centre	January 2022 (postponed)
Broken Hill Correctional Centre	February 2022
Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre	March 2022
Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre	March 2022
Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre	April 2022
Cobham Youth Justice Centre	May 2022
24 hour court cell complexes, Amber Laurel Correctional Centre and Kariong Correctional Centre	May/ June 2022
Dillwynia Correctional Centre	June 2022
Reiby Youth Justice Centre	July 2022
Orana Youth Justice Centre	September 2022
Riverina Youth Justice Centre	November 2022