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**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for DDS Supported Individuals and Families about Communication with DDS during the Public Health Emergency**

***During this time, the priority of DDS continues to be to perform all core functions of the Department at a high quality so that DDS supported individuals continue to receive the services/supports they need; and all core services are performed in a way that reduces the risk of spread of COVID-19.***

**Will DDS stay open during the pandemic?**

The Department’s goal is to continue to provide the core services and supports our individuals need while prioritizing the health and safety of those same individuals and our employees. DDS staff are working a combination of remotely from home and to some extent at the area office and regional office. All service coordination services will be provided remotely via telephone or videoconference unless there is a specific need for the meeting to occur in person.

**How will our Service Coordinator be able to contact us?**

All Service Coordinators were issued state cellphones and laptops early in the emergency shutdown. You should ask your/your family member’s service coordinator for their mobile work phone number. If you do not have that you can call the area office/regional office and ask to speak with the service coordinator or leave him/her a voicemail message. You can also email your/your family member’s service coordinator.

**When should I expect to hear from my Service Coordinator during this time?**

Service Coordinators that support adults should conduct at least a monthly check-in call with all individuals/families on their caseload. Certain cases may require more frequent check-ins. Service coordinators that support children and transition age youth will monitor their caseloads and adjust to family needs as they arise in consultation with their supervisors.  Families are also encouraged to work with their respective family supports programs.

**Does this also include those individuals who do not live with their families?**

For individuals living on their own, the Service Coordinator should check in at least monthly, unless the individual or guardian requests a less frequent check-in. For individuals in a 24/7 group home, the Service coordinator should check in at least every other month.

**What if I ever need to connect with our Service Coordinator?**

All service coordinators are expected to check voicemail and emails throughout the work day. If you don’t have your service coordinator’s mobile work phone number, you can call their office number or email them.

**What if I need our Service Coordinator to help us with non-DDS supports?**

Service coordinators will be expected to provide case management and problem solving where needed to ensure individuals on their caseload have access to services outside of DDS.

**How much can they really help us when they are working from home?**

Telework/remote work will continue to be encouraged as much as possible. However, for Service Coordinators and supervisors, there are still certain critical job functions that can only be performed in the area office such as printing and mailing ISPs, checking, and responding to mail, etc. So, you can expect your service coordinator to help you with everything you would expect help with prior to the pandemic.

**Will we still be able to have meetings and see other programs we are interested in?**

All meetings, including ISPs, will continue to be conducted remotely and tours/visits of group homes or day/work programs that an individual on their caseload may be considering will be scheduled remotely/virtually until further notice.

**How will our privacy be protected if my Service Coordinator is working remotely?**

Your service coordinator has a work-issued laptop and a work-issued cell phone. Both devices are supported with all of the EOHHS anti-virus and security features. So, you can be certain that your privacy will be protected during this time of teleworking and some work in the office.

**Will I be able to contact others at the area office if I cannot reach our Service Coordinator?**

You can always request your Service Coordinator’s supervisor’s contact information or contact the area office at [DDS Area Office Locator](https://areaofficelocator.dds.state.ma.us/Home/LookupByCity) .