



Co-ordination on life insurance for frontline workers during pandemic

14 April 2020

The ACCC has granted interim authorisation allowing life insurers to co-ordinate to ensure frontline healthcare workers are not excluded from coverage due to potential or actual exposure to COVID-19.

The interim authorisation, granted to the Financial Services Council (FSC) and its members, means that exposure to COVID-19 cannot be used as a reason to decline life insurance coverage to a frontline health worker, or to charge higher premiums or apply risk exclusions to any new policy.

The FSC members' commitment applies to workers including, but not limited to, doctors, nurses and all hospital workers; ambulance workers and paramedics; people working at GP surgeries or clinics; people working on COVID-19 vaccines; pharmacists; police; aged care workers and volunteers supporting people with COVID-19.

"This is a stressful time for everyone, but especially those working at the frontline of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's sadly understandable that such workers may consider life insurance coverage at this time," ACCC Chair Rod Sims said.

"I strongly encourage everyone looking to purchase life insurance to first check the cover they may have under existing policies and through their superannuation fund."

"We see a clear public interest in allowing FSC members to work together to provide a consistent, clear and fair approach to people performing critical work during this pandemic," Mr Sims said.

"The authorisation does not include co-ordination on pricing, meaning customers should still shop around."

"We are going to closely monitor the effect of these arrangements and when it is appropriate for this authorisation to be revoked," Mr Sims said.

The interim authorisation applies to new policies, while customers with existing policies will maintain all current benefits. Healthcare workers who have taken out new cover between 11 March 2020 (when the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic) and the announcement of the commitment by FSC on 6 April 2020, should check with their life insurance company or superannuation provider about any exclusions that may apply.

Having granted urgent interim authorisation, the ACCC will now seek feedback on the application. Details on how to make a submission will be available on the ACCC's authorisations public register. More information, including the ACCC's statement of reasons, is available at [Financial Services Council \(FSC\) on behalf of its Member Life Insurance Companies](#).

Background

The FSC is a member body for financial services companies in Australia, including life insurance companies. Not all life insurance companies have agreed to adopt the commitment and the FSC will notify the ACCC whenever an FSC member opts in.

Notes to editors

ACCC authorisation provides statutory protection from court action for conduct that might otherwise raise concerns under the competition provisions of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010.

Section 91 of the Act allows the ACCC to grant interim authorisation when it considers it is appropriate. This allows the parties to engage in the proposed conduct while the ACCC is considering the merits of the substantive application.

The ACCC may review a decision on interim authorisation at any time, including in response to feedback raised following interim authorisation.

Broadly, the ACCC may grant a final authorisation when it is satisfied that the likely public benefit from the conduct outweighs any likely public detriment.

Release number:

73/20

ACCC Infocentre:

Use this form to [make a general enquiry](#).

Media enquiries:

Media team - 1300 138 917

AUDIENCE [Media](#)

TOPICS [Authorisations](#)