

# Workforce planning guide for emergencies and disasters



Resources for NDIS  
Emergency and Disaster  
Management

**Planning for workforce contingencies during emergencies and disasters is crucial for NDIS Providers to ensure the continuity of essential services and support for participants.**

**By planning for workforce contingencies, organisations can enhance their resilience and ensure the well-being of both NDIS Participants and staff.**

This guide provides pointers on what you need to think about and ideas for how to manage continuity of supports during emergencies and disasters.

Note that this is a general guide and should be customised based on the specific needs and circumstances of your organisation. Regular review and updates are critical in order to adapt to evolving challenges and best practices based on your experiences of managing emergencies and disasters.

**Here are some considerations to make.**

## **Safety of people**

- Always prioritise the safety and well-being of NDIS Participants and staff during emergencies by providing clear guidance and training on evacuation procedures, emergency communication channels, and personal protective equipment (PPE) if necessary.
- Conduct regular training and drills to prepare staff for emergency scenarios and reinforce emergency response protocols. Include specific training on workforce contingency planning and stress management techniques.
- Provide access to support services for staff who may experience emotional or psychological distress during and after emergencies. Offer counselling, peer support, and promote awareness of other resources to help staff cope with the impact of the emergency.

## **Leadership and communication**

- Have clearly identified authority figures who will ensure that staff are informed of their roles and responsibilities and are kept updated on any changes to emergency response plans.
- Establish clear communication channels and protocols for coordinating workforce contingencies during emergencies. Establish multiple channels for communication, including backup options.
- Utilise communication technologies for real-time updates and implement mass notification systems for quick dissemination of information. Test communication systems regularly to identify and address any issues.

## **Continuity of business**

- Establish redundancy plans for key functions to ensure continuity of operations - these clarify what absolutely must continue, and what can be delayed or turned off during a crisis event.
- Identify essential personnel who are critical to maintaining operations during emergencies. Create a skills matrix to track and manage workforce capabilities.
- Encourage staff to acquire additional skills through training programs so they can perform multiple roles and assume responsibilities to mitigate the impact of workforce disruptions.

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## Work and flexible arrangements

- Evaluate the feasibility of remote work arrangements for staff during emergencies, particularly for administrative and organisational support roles. Provide necessary tools and resources for remote work, such as laptops, internet access, and secure communication channels.
- Implement flexible work hours policies to accommodate staff availability and personal circumstances during emergencies. Consider offering additional leave options or flexible work arrangements to support staff who may be directly affected by the emergency.

## Local collaboration

- Forge partnerships with other NDIS Providers, community organisations, and local authorities to facilitate mutual aid and resource sharing during emergencies.
- Collaborate on workforce support initiatives and share best practices for emergency response planning. Consider cross-organisation training initiatives to highlight expertise, and build confidence and rapport amongst staff.

## Review and continuous improvement

- Document workforce contingency plans, including roles, responsibilities, and procedures, and regularly review and update them based on lessons learned from drills and real-life emergencies.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of workforce contingency measures and adjust as needed. Consider undertaking a practice review after an event has occurred; go to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission for a guide and resources to assist you with this - [Practice Reviews](#)