

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure

Policy Reference	WLILP25
Category	Operational Policies — Health & Safety, Continuity of Care
Version	2.1 (reconciled with WLILP62)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure (April 2026)
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	Personal Assistants (PAs), Service Coordinators, and Management, across all Home Support and Personal Assistant services
Related Policies	WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy; WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy; WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy; WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy; WLILP62 - Business Continuity and Service Continuity Policy
Review Cycle	Annually, and following any major incident

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- Health Act 2004, Section 39, and WLIL's HSE Service Arrangement
- HIQA Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024)
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 — relevant to staff safety during crisis response
- Framework for Major Emergency Management (Ireland) — relevant context for Level 3 crises requiring coordination with statutory emergency services

1. Purpose

To ensure a safe, coordinated, and effective response to any crisis impacting service users, staff, or service delivery, while maintaining continuity of essential supports and safeguarding service users at all times.

2. Scope

This policy sets out WLIL's acute response to a crisis actively unfolding — activation, immediate safety decisions, and the specific operational measures for each crisis type. It sits beneath WLILP62 - Business Continuity and Service Continuity Policy, which addresses broader, ongoing resilience: funding exposure, workforce strategy, and IT/cyber continuity. Where a disruption is unfolding right now, use this policy; for the wider continuity picture beyond the immediate response, see WLILP62.

Applies to all Personal Assistants (PAs), Service Coordinators, and Management, across all Home Support and Personal Assistant services.

3. Definition of a Crisis

A crisis is any event that disrupts normal service delivery or places service users or staff at risk. This includes:

- Medical emergencies
- Safeguarding concerns
- Staffing shortages
- Public health emergencies (e.g. pandemic)
- Environmental events (e.g. severe weather)
- Infrastructure disruptions (e.g. fuel shortages, transport disruption, power outages)
- Access restrictions (e.g. protests, road blockages)

4. Crisis Levels

Level 1 — Individual Incident

- Affects one service user
- Managed by PA and Coordinator

Level 2 — Service Disruption

- Multiple service users affected
- Requires coordinated response and prioritisation

Level 3 — Major Crisis

- Widespread disruption (e.g. fuel crisis, pandemic)
- Requires organisation-wide response and management oversight

5. Principles

All responses are guided by:

- Person-centred care
- Dignity and respect
- Duty of care
- Safeguarding
- Least restrictive practice
- Continuity of essential supports
- The social model of disability (prioritising independence and essential needs)

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Personal Assistants (PAs)

- Respond to immediate risks within scope of training and risk assessment
- Ensure service user safety
- Report all issues immediately to Coordinator

- Follow revised instructions during crisis

Service Coordinators (Key Role)

- Lead crisis response at operational level
- Prioritise service delivery
- Reallocate staff and adjust schedules
- Maintain communication with staff and service users
- Escalate to management where required

Management

- Oversee major incidents (Level 3)
- Support coordinators in decision-making
- Ensure continuity planning
- Liaise with external agencies (HSE, emergency services)

7. Crisis Response Procedure

Step 1 — Immediate Safety

- Ensure safety of service user
- Contact emergency services if required

Step 2 — Notification

- PA informs Coordinator immediately
- Coordinator assesses severity

Step 3 — Assessment

Coordinator determines:

- Level of crisis
- Risks to service users
- Impact on service delivery

Step 4 — Action

- Reallocate staff
- Adjust schedules
- Implement prioritisation framework

Step 5 — Communication

- Inform affected service users
- Provide updates to staff
- Maintain ongoing contact

Step 6 — Documentation

- Record all actions in the current care planning system
- Log incident details in line with WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy

8. Service Prioritisation Framework

This is the authoritative, detailed prioritisation framework for WLIL. WLILP62 - Business Continuity and Service Continuity Policy refers to this section rather than restating it.

During any disruption, services are prioritised as follows:

Priority 1 — Critical (Must be maintained)

- Personal care (toileting, dressing, transfers)
- Medication prompts/support
- Service users living alone with no supports
- High-risk individuals

Priority 2 — Essential (Maintained where possible)

- Meal preparation
- Basic hygiene
- Welfare checks

Priority 3 — Non-Essential (May be reduced or suspended)

- Cleaning
- Social supports
- Non-urgent tasks

All decisions must be risk-based, clearly recorded, and reviewed daily during ongoing crises.

These are the authoritative, operational response measures for each crisis type. WLILP62 covers the broader continuity picture around each of these — ongoing workforce strategy rather than in-the-moment redeployment, HSE funding exposure rather than daily service prioritisation — and refers to this section for the immediate response itself.

9. Crisis-Specific Response Measures

Staffing Shortages

- Redeployment of staff
- Use of available relief staff
- Prioritisation of critical calls

Fuel / Transport Disruption

- Cluster visits geographically
- Assign staff locally where possible
- Reduce non-essential travel
- Adjust call durations where safe

- Suspend non-essential visits

Public Health Emergencies (e.g. COVID-type events)

- Infection control measures
- Use of PPE
- Reduction of non-essential contact
- Remote check-ins where appropriate

Severe Weather / Access Issues

- Risk assessment of travel
- Adjust or cancel non-essential visits
- Maintain critical supports only

10. Communication Protocol

Effective communication is critical during all crises.

Primary Communication Methods

- Coordinator work mobile phones
- Staff messaging groups, where appropriate, in line with WLILP39 - Digital Communications & Social Media Policy
- The current care planning system

Communication Responsibilities

- Coordinators communicate with PAs and service users
- Management communicates with coordinators

If communication systems fail

- Use alternative phone contact
- Escalate to management immediately

11. No Access / No Staff Procedure

Where a service cannot be delivered:

- Attempt staff reassignment
- Contact service user immediately
- Assess risk level
- Contact the service user's emergency contact or decision-support representative, where appropriate and previously agreed. Where a decision requires legal authority rather than simply being informed, refer to the service user's actual decision-support arrangement under WLILP17 - Consent Policy, rather than assuming a next of kin automatically has that authority
- Escalate to emergency services if required
- Record all actions taken

12. Safeguarding

- All safeguarding concerns must be escalated immediately, in line with WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy
- Crisis situations must not delay safeguarding actions

13. Documentation and Reporting

All crisis events must be recorded in the current care planning system. Records must include the nature of the crisis, actions taken, decisions made, and communication carried out.

14. Post-Incident Review

Following any significant incident, the incident is reported and reviewed in line with WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy, using its SBAR process rather than a separate crisis-specific incident form, so that all incidents are handled consistently. Lessons identified are implemented, and this policy is updated if required.

15. Training and Preparedness

- Staff trained in emergency response, safeguarding, and infection control
- Coordinators trained in crisis management and decision-making

16. Records Retention

Crisis event records and related documentation generated under this policy are retained in accordance with WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy, which is the single authoritative source for WLIL's retention periods.

17. Review

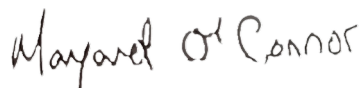
- Reviewed annually
- Reviewed after any major incident
- Updated in line with HIQA and HSE guidance

This policy reflects HIQA's Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024) and current HSE guidance, checked as accurate as of drafting. It is not a substitute for legal or clinical advice.

Approval

Approved by the Board of West Limerick Independent Living CLG on 9 October 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board, on its instruction, by the General Manager:



Margaret O'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed: 09-10-2026