



WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Business Continuity and Service Continuity Policy

Policy Reference	WLILP62
Category	Operational Policies — Governance, Health & Safety
Version	1.2 (reconciled with WLILP25)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	WLILP62 - Business Continuity and Service Continuity Policy (title contained a typo, "WLIL62")
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	Management, Service Coordinators, Personal Assistants, administrative staff, and relief and temporary staff of West Limerick Independent Living CLG ("WLIL")
Related Policies	WLILP7B - Data Breach Response Policy; WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy; WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure; WLILP29 - Information Systems and Cloud Access Control Policy; WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy; WLILP33 - Transport and Vehicle Use Policy; WLILP44 - Weather Policy; WLILP51 - Emergency Remote Working Policy
Review Cycle	Annually, or sooner following a significant disruption event, major incident, or legislative change

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach taken by West Limerick Independent Living CLG (WLIL) to maintain essential services during events or circumstances that may disrupt normal operations.

WLIL recognises that the services it provides are essential to the independence, wellbeing, dignity, and safety of the individuals it supports. The organisation is committed to taking reasonable and proportionate steps to continue service delivery during unforeseen circumstances while protecting the safety and welfare of service users and staff.

WLIL provides community-based Personal Assistant and Home Support Services and does not operate residential, clinical, emergency response, or emergency accommodation services. While every reasonable effort will be made to maintain continuity of support, service delivery may be affected by circumstances outside the organisation's direct control, including staffing shortages, public health emergencies, severe weather, transport disruption, unsafe environments, infrastructure failures, or interruptions to external services.



This policy aims to ensure that:

- essential supports are prioritised during disruption
- risks to service users and staff are minimised where possible
- communication is maintained during disruption events
- contingency arrangements are implemented where feasible
- service continuity arrangements reflect the practical realities of community-based disability services

2. Scope

This policy applies to all services delivered by WLIL, including:

- Personal Assistant Services
- Home Support Services
- Transport services where applicable
- Community-based support services delivered in clients' homes or community settings

This policy applies to:

- Management
- Service Coordinators
- Personal Assistants
- Administrative staff
- Relief and temporary staff where applicable

2A. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 — an employer's duty of care extends to planning for continuity of safe service delivery during disruption
- HIQA Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024)
- GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 — see WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy and WLILP7B - Data Breach Response Policy, particularly relevant to the cyber incident reporting in Section 12

This policy should be read alongside WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, which sets out WLIL's response to specific crisis types including public health emergencies and severe weather; WLILP44 - Weather Policy and WLILP51 - Emergency Remote Working Policy operate as detailed annexes to WLILP25 on those specific topics

3. Principles

WLIL will take reasonable and proportionate steps to support continuity of service delivery by:



- prioritising essential supports for clients
- communicating clearly with service users and staff during disruption
- implementing practical contingency measures where feasible
- maintaining appropriate safeguarding and risk management measures
- working collaboratively with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other relevant professionals or agencies where appropriate
- supporting staff to deliver services safely within the limitations of the circumstances

WLIL acknowledges that due to the nature of community-based services, it may not always be possible to maintain normal levels of support during major disruptions. In such situations, services may need to be prioritised according to assessed needs, available staffing resources, environmental safety, and operational capacity.

The safety of service users and staff will remain a central consideration during all disruption events.

4. Funding and Partnership with the HSE

WLIL services are primarily funded through the Health Service Executive (HSE). The continuation and level of services delivered are therefore dependent on the availability of funding, staffing resources, and the ongoing partnership arrangements with the HSE.

WLIL will liaise with the HSE where appropriate during significant service disruption to:

- communicate operational challenges
- support continuity planning
- prioritise essential supports
- manage service reductions where necessary
- ensure service delivery remains aligned with funding arrangements and service agreements

WLIL may also liaise with:

- Public Health Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Social Workers
- Hospitals
- Emergency services
- Local Authorities
- Other healthcare or support professionals where appropriate

5. Potential Service Disruptions



Service disruption may arise due to a range of circumstances including, but not limited to:

- public health emergencies or pandemics
- severe weather events
- staff shortages or workforce disruption
- transport disruption
- IT or communications outages
- cyber incidents or cybersecurity threats
- utility failures
- infrastructure or facility issues
- unsafe working environments
- public safety incidents
- fuel shortages
- disruption to external services or agencies

6. Prioritisation of Services During Disruption

WLIL's detailed, tiered Service Prioritisation Framework — which specific supports are critical, essential, or may be reduced, and the risk factors used to make that call — is set out in full in WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, Section 8, which is the authoritative version. This policy does not restate it. WLIL will communicate with affected service users regarding any temporary service changes as soon as reasonably practicable.

7. Public Health Emergencies and Pandemics

WLIL will follow national public health guidance, HSE guidance, and advice or directives issued by relevant authorities. The specific infection control and service-adjustment measures implemented during an active public health emergency are set out in WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, Section 9, and in WLILP38 - Infection Prevention and Control Policy. This policy's concern is the continuity question beyond the immediate response: whether WLIL's funding, workforce, and service model can sustain a prolonged public health emergency, not the day-to-day infection control measures themselves.

8. Staff Availability and Workforce Challenges

This section covers WLIL's ongoing workforce strategy and continuity planning. The immediate, in-the-moment response to a staffing shortage during an active crisis — redeployment, use of relief staff, prioritisation of critical calls — is set out in WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, Section 9.

WLIL recognises that recruitment and retention challenges within the care sector may affect service continuity.



Staff shortages may arise due to:

- illness
- pandemics
- recruitment difficulties
- unexpected leave
- transport difficulties
- adverse weather conditions
- broader workforce shortages within the sector

WLIL will take reasonable steps to mitigate staffing disruption by:

- maintaining ongoing recruitment efforts
- advertising vacancies where required
- maintaining relief or available staffing resources where feasible
- reallocating staff where appropriate
- prioritising supports for clients with the greatest assessed needs
- reviewing schedules and service delivery arrangements where necessary

Despite these measures, there may be occasions where staffing limitations impact the level or timing of supports available.

9. Lone Working and Home Environment Risks

WLIL services are delivered primarily within private homes and community settings. The organisation recognises that some environmental factors may fall outside the direct control of WLIL.

Potential risks may include:

- unsafe environmental conditions
- access difficulties
- severe weather impacts
- utility outages
- infection risks
- aggressive or unsafe behaviour
- hoarding or environmental hazards
- inaccessible premises
- infrastructure failures within private homes



Where risks arise relating to health and safety, WLIL will assess the circumstances and determine whether services can safely continue.

Staff are required to:

- follow lone working procedures under WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy
- report hazards or safety concerns
- follow risk management guidance
- escalate concerns appropriately

WLIL reserves the right to temporarily suspend or adjust services where the environment presents a significant risk to staff or service users.

10. Severe Weather and Environmental Events

Severe weather is addressed operationally in WLILP44 - Weather Policy, and its specific response measures during an active crisis are set out in WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, Section 9. This policy's concern is the continuity question beyond any single weather event: repeated or prolonged severe weather affects WLIL's overall capacity and should be factored into workforce continuity planning under Section 8 above, and transport continuity planning under Section 11 below.

11. Transport Disruption

WLIL operates a limited transport service. The specific operational response to transport disruption during an active crisis (clustering visits geographically, adjusting call durations, suspending non-essential travel) is set out in WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, Section 9. This policy's concern is the broader continuity question: sustained transport disruption may affect WLIL's ongoing capacity to deliver services and should be considered alongside WLILP33 - Transport and Vehicle Use Policy and workforce planning under Section 8 above.

12. IT Systems, Cybersecurity and Communications

WLIL relies on electronic systems to support service delivery and operational management.

These systems include:

- Microsoft 365 systems for communication and document management
- CarePlanner for scheduling and care planning
- the WLIL Risk Assessment App hosted on Microsoft SharePoint
- cloud-based communication and storage systems

WLIL utilises secure authentication and cybersecurity measures to support system reliability and data protection.



Email and system security monitoring is provided through Hornetsecurity (Proofpoint) to support cybersecurity protection and reduce the risk of phishing, malware, ransomware, or unauthorised access.

In the event of:

- IT system failure
- cyberattack
- communications outage
- temporary loss of access to electronic systems

WLIL may temporarily revert to:

- manual communication systems
- telephone contact
- paper-based records where necessary
- alternative scheduling arrangements where feasible

Staff are required to report:

- suspected cyber incidents, in accordance with WLILP29 - Information Systems and Cloud Access Control Policy and WLILP7B - Data Breach Response Policy
- phishing emails
- data breaches
- system failures
- communication disruptions

in accordance with organisational procedures.

13. Risk Assessments and Incident Reporting

WLIL maintains risk assessment and incident reporting systems to support safe service delivery and business continuity planning.

The WLIL Risk Assessment App supports:

- identification of risks
- ongoing review of risk information
- reporting of hazards or concerns
- monitoring of service delivery risks

Staff are required to:

- report incidents or hazards promptly, using the SBAR incident report form in WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy, Appendix 3
- escalate issues impacting service delivery



- participate in risk management procedures
- follow organisational guidance during disruption events

Information gathered through risk assessments, incident reporting, reviews, and disruption events may be used to strengthen future continuity planning and service improvement.

14. Communication During Disruption

This section covers WLIL's broader stakeholder communication during disruption. The specific internal communication protocol during an active crisis — methods, and who is responsible for contacting whom — is set out in WLILP25 - Crisis Management Policy and Response Procedure, Section 10.

WLIL will communicate with:

- service users
- family members or representatives where appropriate
- staff
- the HSE
- relevant professionals or agencies where appropriate

Communication may take place through:

- telephone
- email
- text message
- video communication
- other appropriate methods

WLIL will aim to provide updates as soon as reasonably practicable during significant disruption events.

15. Responsibilities

Management

Management are responsible for:

- coordinating organisational response measures
- overseeing continuity planning
- communicating with the HSE and relevant agencies where appropriate
- supporting service prioritisation decisions
- reviewing major incidents and lessons learned

Service Coordinators



Service Coordinators are responsible for:

- communicating with service users and staff
- adjusting schedules and supports where necessary
- monitoring staffing availability
- escalating operational concerns
- supporting continuity arrangements at operational level

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- following organisational guidance
- reporting issues affecting service delivery
- complying with risk management and safety procedures
- communicating concerns promptly
- supporting continuity arrangements where feasible

16. Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed periodically, or following:

- significant disruption events
- major incidents
- changes in legislation or guidance
- operational changes within WLIL

WLIL will review incidents and disruption events to:

- identify lessons learned
- improve continuity arrangements
- strengthen operational resilience
- support ongoing service improvement

This policy will be updated as required to ensure it remains relevant, practical, proportionate, and reflective of the operational realities of community-based Personal Assistant and Home Support Services in Ireland.

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:



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Date signed: *09-10-2026*