

North West Residential Support Services Inc.
Policies & Procedures
MANAGING STAFF DEPLETION THROUGH ILLNESS

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With the ever-present possibility of influenza, gastroenteritis and other community epidemics quickly and seriously depleting a workforce, it is imperative that the organisation has a realistic response in place.

This is not a precise, procedural document but rather a guide to let staff know what sorts of strategies might be used.

Epidemics bring the risk to some staff members who won't be able to attend work because they become ill. Others, who may have to stay at home to care for sick family members, and some who may have to stay away from their workplace, because of personal health vulnerabilities.

Such a situation would, obviously, involve doctors and hospitals and they would guide us. The following are back-up strategies if staff depletion seriously threatened the provision of basic care.

The resources that are immediately available to a service like ours are its homes, vehicles and community volunteers.

If staff numbers were seriously depleted the following steps would be taken, commensurate to the shortage:

- Calling on volunteers to work alongside remaining staff members
- Setting up mobile support teams to circulate around homes to help skeleton crews at crucial times, like personal care in the mornings and evenings. This might mean delivering meals from a central kitchen
- Mobile support teams might also be used to circulate amongst people who receive visiting support in their own homes
- In a severe shortage the people we support might need to be congregated in a smaller number of homes
- Some staff members have expressed an interest in taking clients to their houses if the extent of a crisis warrants it. The need for this, and who would be involved, would be assessed at the time

All of this would, of course, depend on consultation with doctors and health officials.

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