



## Emergency and/or Crisis Planning- Planning for Covid-19

### **Information for staff working with people with dementia and their support people**

It is good to always have an emergency plan for your family/whānau. There are many situations which can disrupt normal daily living such as earthquakes, volcanic eruption, tsunami, fire and infectious diseases as well as unexpected health events and accidents. Being prepared is a good rule.

Covid-19 is a very real risk to the people we provide services for. With the likelihood of it causing illness and possibly death there will be situations where our clients find themselves in a crisis or emergency situation.

In an emergency/crisis there is a need for immediate decisions. Making plans in advance, writing these down, and making sure others know about them or have a copy is a good way to ensure that everyone involved will know what to do. To meet our obligations as providers of a health service we should work alongside clients to help ensure that the needs and preferences of the person with dementia are available for others who might be required to advocate for, or to support them, at short notice, especially in situations where they have limited ability to do that for themselves.

The ideal situation would be for all clients to have such a plan developed as part of their early support documentation and for it to be updated on a regular basis. However, as this is not been the practice in most areas, thought will need to be given as to how this can happen quickly so that plans are in place should a situation occur soon. Covid-19, which is very likely to have most impact on the people we support, is the current motivation. Various scenarios could result in the person with dementia being without their usual carer/support person and the substitute will need information to support the safety and wellbeing of the person with dementia.

Some clients will be able to complete much of it themselves; others will take quite a bit of support to get it done. We suggest you prioritise those clients who are most in need of a plan, such as those that are frailer or have higher support needs. You might also need to prioritise who you personally can support to complete the plan, involve the wider family members now or if there are none a friend, a volunteer or a neighbour.

### **An Emergency Plan should be developed when:**

- There is a situation that poses a risk to the community e.g. a pandemic
- The support person and/or the person with dementia has moderate - high support needs,  
or
- The support needs of the person with dementia or their support person are fluctuating

*Ideally, all people requiring support should have an emergency plan as some events occur suddenly, are unavoidable, and maybe unrelated to the health of either the person with dementia or the support person.*

### **Possible crises that could occur are:**

- Carer - sudden absence, ill health or death
- Environmental – earthquake, flood, fire, pandemic
- Person with dementia- sudden illness, accident or event such as them going missing

### **An emergency support plan**

This is a plan of the support needs of the person when their usual support is not available. It should cover areas such as emergency contacts, health information (including medication), what support is required, and any other information important to the wellbeing of the person.

### **Things for families consider when developing the Emergency Support Plan:**

- Who else might be available and willing to support the person when usual support is not available e.g. family member, friend, or a neighbour?
- How the emergency plan could be made available in an emergency (e.g. a notice in a prominent place about where it is kept, ensuring wider family has the plan and their contact numbers or providing a copy to another such as a neighbour, or health worker)
- Provide wider family phone numbers to neighbours so they can contact them if concerned (e.g. haven't seen any signs of usual activity in the house)
- The importance of updating the plan when any changes occur (e.g. to medication), or changes in health etc.
- Any formal support arrangements already in place such as carer support, respite care and if so where this has been in the past
- A recent photo attached to the plan could be helpful

**The My Emergency Support Plan is about the client who is the person with dementia.**