
Purpose

At West Heanton Ltd, we are committed to maintaining safe, effective and well-led services for the people who use our care and support. We recognise that unexpected events can affect service delivery, and we have clear arrangements in place to help protect people's safety, wellbeing and continuity of care during periods of disruption.

Our Business Continuity Plan supports our ability to maintain essential services, manage foreseeable risks, respond promptly to incidents and communicate effectively with people using our services, relatives, staff, professionals, commissioners and other partner organisations.

Scope of Services

- Residential care for older adults
- Extra Care Housing
- Regulated domiciliary care
- Community-based enabling and support services

From our rural North Devon location, we provide care and support both on site and within the local community.

Planning for Disruption

We regularly assess and review risks that could affect our services. These include, but are not limited to:

- Severe weather, storms and flooding
- Power, heating or utility failures
- Staffing pressures or shortages
- Transport disruption
- IT and telecommunications failures
- Cybersecurity incidents
- Supplier interruptions, including food, medication, equipment, fuel, personal protective equipment or utilities
- Building damage or emergency repairs
- Public health emergencies and infectious outbreaks

Risk management forms part of our ongoing governance, quality assurance and safety monitoring arrangements.

During any incident, the response will be led by the most senior competent person on duty at the time, with access to an on-call manager at all times. The on-call manager has access to key records and can support decision-making, communication and escalation. The Registered Manager for West Heanton retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the response remains safe, proportionate and well coordinated.

We also draw on practical support from trusted people who know the service well. This may include appropriate family support in an emergency, approved farm staff who are able to assist the care home when needed, and our maintenance and handyman support for breakdowns, repairs and site-related issues.

Maintaining Essential Care and Support

If disruption occurs, our priority is to maintain safe, person-centred care and support. Essential activities include:

- Medication administration and management
- Personal care and support
- Safeguarding and welfare monitoring
- Food, hydration and nutrition
- Emergency response arrangements
- Communication with relatives, healthcare professionals, commissioners and other relevant partners

Where necessary, non-essential activities may be temporarily adjusted so that staffing, time and resources remain focused on essential care delivery.

People's individual needs are prioritised using information held in their care plans, risk assessments and day-to-day knowledge held by managers and senior staff. This includes consideration of each person's health, mobility, communication needs, medication, safeguarding risks, level of ability, location, access arrangements, complexity of support needs and the availability of their personal support network.

Facilities and Infrastructure

We have arrangements in place to support the continued operation of critical services during disruption. These include:

- Backup power arrangements to support critical services during power outages
- Heating contingency arrangements to maintain comfort and safety
- Alternative transport options where required
- Use of separate buildings and infrastructure systems to help isolate localised issues
- Suitable indoor areas to support people during periods of extreme heat
- Electrical protection and maintenance arrangements
- Water and essential facilities contingency arrangements
- Food storage and catering arrangements to support continued meal provision during supply disruption

As a rural service, we also maintain practical arrangements to support access and operations during severe weather or other local disruption.

Staffing Continuity

Maintaining safe staffing levels is a key priority. Our arrangements include:

- Flexible deployment of trained staff across services
- A locally based workforce, with many staff living close to the people they support
- Access to bank staff and trusted agency partners where required
- Senior management support during emergencies
- Staff training and awareness of emergency preparedness and business continuity procedures

Technology, Communications and Information Security

Our care and business systems are supported by secure technology and backup arrangements, including:

- Secure cloud-based systems
- Data backup arrangements
- Information security measures
- Cybersecurity monitoring and protection
- Contingency arrangements for internet and telephone services
- Manual fallback procedures if digital systems become unavailable

These arrangements help support continuity of operations, information governance and timely recovery following disruption.

We understand that families may feel concerned if an unexpected event affects normal routines. Our priority is always to keep people safe, comfortable, informed and supported. We will communicate with relatives and representatives in a timely, honest and proportionate way, using the most suitable method for the type of emergency, such as telephone, email or message.

For each person, we hold key contact details and preferred contact arrangements, including priority contacts and the order in which family members or representatives should be contacted where this is known. This helps us communicate clearly and appropriately while protecting confidentiality and respecting each person's wishes.

Community and Professional Partnerships

We work closely with local organisations, professionals and suppliers to help maintain services and reduce the impact of unexpected events. These include:

- Healthcare professionals and NHS services
- Pharmacies and medication suppliers
- Food suppliers
- Transport and vehicle maintenance providers
- Building and maintenance contractors
- Utilities and specialist service providers

These partnerships support prompt communication, practical assistance and continuity of care when disruption occurs.

We also value our strong links with the local community. Local cooperation and support provide an additional source of resilience during challenging circumstances.

Escalation routes are used where required and may include emergency services, Devon County Council Adult Social Care, Devon Safeguarding Adults Service, local authority commissioners, NHS partners, pharmacies, GPs, community health services, utility providers and the Care Quality Commission where notification is required. In an immediate emergency, staff will contact 999.

For local support and coordination, this includes relevant Devon and Torridge services, including Devon County Council Adult Social Care and safeguarding routes. We also maintain working links with local healthcare services, including GP practices serving Black Torrington and Holsworthy, and local emergency partners. Hatherleigh Fire Station has visited and completed site familiarisation, helping local responders understand the layout and access arrangements.

Communication and coordination are supported by shared phone arrangements so that key staff can remain contactable and information can be passed on promptly during an incident.

Alternative Working Arrangements

If normal premises, systems or ways of working become unavailable, we can use contingency arrangements such as:

- Relocating activities within alternative areas on site where safe and appropriate
- Using suitable communal areas where appropriate
- Operating administrative functions from alternative locations
- Recording care using paper-based systems if required
- Coordinating services through secure mobile communications

Emergency, evacuation and relocation procedures are maintained and reviewed so that people can be supported safely if an incident requires temporary changes to normal arrangements.

Incidents, decisions, communications and actions taken during disruption are recorded appropriately. Following significant incidents or exercises, managers review what happened, identify any lessons learned and update plans, training or procedures where improvement is needed.

Review and Continuous Improvement

Our Business Continuity Plan is:

- Reviewed at least annually
- Updated following significant incidents, changes to services or changes in guidance
- Tested through drills, exercises, scenario planning, staff briefings and learning from real incidents where appropriate
- Used to support learning, quality improvement and staff development
- Supported by staff training on prevention, emergency response, available equipment and how to use it, first aid awareness, fire safety and continuity arrangements. Basic first aid training and fire training are provided to staff broadly, not only to key staff.

Commitment

West Heanton Ltd is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and continuity of care for everyone who uses our services. Through careful planning, resilient arrangements, trained staff, strong partnerships and ongoing review, we aim to respond effectively to unexpected events while continuing to provide high-quality care and support.

Review

This policy statement will be reviewed at least annually and following any significant incident, service change or relevant update to guidance.

Policy created on 8th July 2026

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