



Community Legal Centres
Australia

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BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING FOR CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019
(COVID-29)

[YOUR CENTRE]

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a guide on business continuity planning (BCP) for [YOUR CENTRE] to help us deal with the global novel coronavirus outbreak. This guide is non-exhaustive and does not cover all situations and should be read in conjunction with the latest relevant advice and alerts from government agencies, regulatory agencies, and health professionals who provide guidance and possible restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus. It is also a working, regularly reviewable document, acknowledging the need for adaptable responses in real time.

The objective of this guide is to help [YOUR CENTRE] with our BCP in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and it covers the following key business operational risks:

- Supporting Our People
- Processes and business functions
- Supplier and stakeholder management
- Communications, both internal and external
- Service Delivery Contingency Plan

WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can make humans and animals sick. They cause illnesses that can range from the common cold to more severe diseases. Symptoms can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, and others may get very sick very quickly. Generally, the symptoms that may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection are a cough, difficulty in breathing and fever.

HOW COVID-19 IS SPREAD

From what is known about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus are most likely to be the main means of transmission. There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs.
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face)

There is currently little evidence that people who are without symptoms are infectious to others.

Q&A coronaviruses (COVID-19) World Health Organisation can be found at <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

WHAT ROLE CAN WE PLAY IN SUPPORTING THIS RESPONSE

Everyone can help support the response by:

- following public health authorities' advice, for example on hand washing
- reducing the impact and spread of misinformation by relying on information from trusted sources, such as www.health.gov.au, and <https://www.who.int>
- checking and following the latest travel advice when travelling and planning to travel www.smartraveller.gov.au/
- ensuring you and your family's vaccinations are up to date as this will help reduce the pressure on health services through reducing vaccine-preventable diseases
- checking on elderly or vulnerable family, friends and neighbours
- using Government Health agencies and advice line (including online, where possible), pharmacies and GPs responsibly, and go to the hospital only when you really need to. This is further information see the attached Support Services Contact List
- being understanding of the pressures the health and social care systems may be under, and receptive to changes that may be needed to the provision of care to you and your family
- accepting that the advice for managing COVID-19 for most people will be self-isolation at home and simple over-the-counter medicines
- checking for new advice as the situation changes

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS (BCP)

[YOUR CENTRE] is actively monitoring the developments related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The threat of the virus has put everyone on alert as governments, regulatory agencies, and health professionals provide guidance and possible restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus.

This BCP outlines key business operational risks as well as steps we should take to prepare for and minimise business disruptions due to COVID-19 and should be read in conjunction with the latest relevant guidance from applicable regulatory and government agencies.

Status updates on the virus can be found on the World Health Organization and Australian Government Department of Health websites at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>

To address the unique challenges posed by COVID-19, [YOUR CENTRE] 's business continuity and disaster recovery plan provides:

- a proactive program to reduce the likelihood that [YOUR CENTRE] 's business operations will be significantly affected by a pandemic event, including monitoring of potential outbreaks, employee training, and ongoing communications and coordination to ensure critical service delivery
- processes and controls that should be followed during a pandemic event
- a framework to address business locations and/or facilities to ensure [YOUR CENTRE] 's ability to continue its operations if its usual physical spaces are unavailable
- a testing program to validate the effectiveness of the business continuity, technical recovery procedures and the availability and functionality of [YOUR CENTRE] 's critical processes and supporting resources
- for evaluation and analysis that include preparation for a number of potential scenarios including but not limited to office closures and quarantines as well as public transportation and critical service provider disruptions
- management oversight and governance to ensure [YOUR CENTRE] 's business continuity and disaster recovery plans are kept up-to-date and supportive of its business operations

SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE – PREVENT, SUPPORT AND ENHANCE

For [YOUR CENTRE] , supporting staff and client welfare is critical to an extended response, with this in mind, the three key groups covered in this plan are staff, clients and key stakeholders. [YOUR CENTRE] is acutely aware that everyone will face increased pressures at work, as well as potentially their own personal illness or caring responsibilities, such as caregivers for sick family members; caregivers for children if schools or day care centres are closed; have at-risk people at home, including immunocompromised family members.

[YOUR CENTRE] 's key aim is to ensure our staff's wellbeing (physical and psychological) continues to be well supported by:

- minimising the:
 - ✓ the health risk to employees
 - ✓ the risk of premises becoming a node of transmission
- ensuring that:
 - ✓ plans are in place should employees be quarantined or infected
 - ✓ essential services to clients can continue to be delivered in a safe manner
 - ✓ Employers and employees are encouraged to take precautionary steps based on advisories issued by government agencies

- ✓ Employees should check the list of affected areas on the government agencies' websites before making any non-work-related travel plans
- Identify critical business functions (prioritised activities) and essential employees

[YOUR CENTRE] recognises the potential physical health risks that the COVID-19 virus poses to all of its staff. We also recognise the potential psychological health impacts that global/community stressors, ill-health and isolation and quarantine arrangements may have on the overall wellbeing of staff should further stages of COVID-19 responses be required.

[YOUR CENTRE] values the wellbeing of its staff highly and has a robust and well established staff wellbeing and resilience framework. In responding to the unique challenges that the COVID-19 response will likely require, we will utilise this framework structure to guide our wellbeing responses accordingly.

knowmore have shared on the following pages a wellbeing framework 'Supporting our People' supporting the three key themes - Prevent, Support and Enhance. A responsibilities and action plan accompanies this. This has been adapted from knowmore's recently developed Wellbeing and Resilience Framework for the CLC sector – which they also shared at the 2019 National Community Legal Centre Conference.

Supporting our People: The COVID-19 response

TRAUMA-INFORMED



CULTURALLY SAFE

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Image inspired by original artwork by Dean Bell depicting knowmore's connection to the towns, cities, missions and settlements within Australia.

Staff Wellbeing - Responsibilities and Action Plan: COVID-19



Executive Leadership

Understand the risks and legal responsibilities in regard to health and wellbeing of staff, be overt in organisation's commitment to same, ensure technical and practical supports are resourced to ensure flexibility and adaptability of the organisation organisational culture is supportive, plans, guidelines, policy and procedure in place, responses are quick and adaptive, communication strategies clear, and lead by example when it comes to own health and well-being

Prevent: to minimise risk

- Develop and monitor a wellbeing strategy
- Clear statement of commitment to staff well-being during COVID-19 response
- Create and maintain a culture that supports that encourages staff to self-report and isolate where required, keeps them feeling connected, doesn't judge or blame those that may be unwell, and allows supported returns to work (see framework also)
- Understand legal responsibilities to staff
- Establish staff feedback mechanism
- Continue to monitor and stay up to date with all relevant health and other government directives and adapt quickly in response

Support: to monitor & act

- Weekly or as needed organisational strategy reviews
- Create a management structure for oversight of COVID-19 responses inclusive of staff check-ins that facilitate not only the work we do but also a sense of enduring connection to one another
- Ensure resourcing of all tech and other supports required for staff to be able to vary work modalities and adhere to health guidelines (work from home for eg)
- Ensure all staff are reminded of their ability to access supervision and/or EAP
- Clear communication strategy and regular, proactive updates for staff

Enhance: to build resilience

- Ensure coordinated and easy to find resources for staff about health in the workplace, policy, procedures and guidelines and also other links/resources for staying well generally
- Lead by example with own health. Self-isolate when required, minimize unnecessary travel, be seen to practice all personal hygiene recommended practices and health screen any visitors.



Management & Operations

Monitor staff workloads, physical and psychological health. Ensure staff, regardless of if they are working from an office or at home, remain connected to their colleagues and feel supported. Ensure organisational communications are read and actioned where required. Ensure staff continue to access required support, and proactively identify and feed back to the Executive when additional supports may be required. Proactively raise any issues or concerns with the Executive. Contribute to positive work cultures

- Implement, monitor and maintain workplace health strategies for all office premises including hygiene guidelines, screening questions and self-reporting of staff symptoms
- Provide guidance and directives about other activities including travel and outreach consistent with current health and service delivery contingency directives
- Ensure staff read and action all health directives from the Executive
- Support organisational culture that encourages staff to self-report and isolate where required, keeps them feeling connected, doesn't judge or blame those that may be unwell, and allows supported returns to work

- Provide regular check ins and line management supervision to staff, inclusive of workloads, and physical and psychological checks.
- Act promptly where required if a staff member reports symptoms and/or exposure/diagnosis
- Ensure staff have access to all required tech and other practical supports to work from home if required
- Ensure staff are accessing supervision, know about EAP and are encouraged to use where required

- Lead by example with own health. Self-isolate when required, minimize unnecessary travel, be seen to practice all personal hygiene recommended practices and health screen any visitors.
- Ensure staff know where to find resources and other materials to support their health and wellbeing



Staff & volunteers

Proactively monitor own health and wellbeing and report early if any symptoms are noted or other concerns in relation to physical or psychological health. Contribute to positive workplace culture. Participate in supports such as supervision and opportunities to remain connected with teams and colleagues, including peer support. Read and action any directives from the Executive, and retain ability to be flexible if quick adaptation to work arrangements due to health directives are required.

- Follow all workplace health strategies for all office premises including hygiene guidelines, screening questions and self-reporting of staff symptoms
- Follow all directives in relation to other activities including travel and outreach consistent with current health and service delivery contingency directives
- Contribute to organisational culture that encourages staff to self-report and isolate where required, keeps them feeling connected, doesn't judge or blame those that may be unwell, and allows supported returns to work

- Implement and continue all client screening processes
- Monitor own health and proactively report early, any health symptoms, or exposure risks consistent with current health and organisational guidelines
- Monitor own mental health and proactively report any concerns and seek support
- Participate in all offered supervision and other supports

- Educate self on where to find resources and other materials to support their health and wellbeing

PROCESS AND BUSINESS FUNCTIONS TO SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE

- Implement Basic Infection Prevention Measures
 - ✓ Educate employees on infection control and good personal hygiene and encourage staff to adopt
 - ✓ Ensure adequate supply of appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and undertake training to familiarise employees on their usage
 - ✓ Clean and disinfect companies' premises exposed to suspected or confirmed case(s) of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Prompt Identification and Isolation of Sick People, if Appropriate
 - ✓ Develop a robust employee sickness surveillance process to identify and manage unwell employees
 - ✓ Develop plans related to visitor and employee screening and follow-up actions (see suggested response for recommended procedures for health screening of visitors & employees)
- Implement, and Communicate about Workplace Flexibilities and Protections
 - ✓ Monitor closely the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)-related developments and follow travel and health advisories and other government agencies' websites

Test and secure remote access for work-from-home situations:

- Provision of laptop computers, monitors, keyboards, printers, docking stations, etc as necessary.
- Consider employees that require access to paper documents/files; identify and securely provision access to cloud file stores where shared access to documents is required (use multi-factor authentication and encryption)
- Confirm remote access capabilities. Test web and voice conferencing capabilities and ensure employees have access to and understand how to use these facilities
- Test employees' ability to work remotely (e.g., rotate staff to work remotely on selected days during the week to identify issues proactively in anticipation of a facility's closure or quarantine order)

Conduct staff training

- Share the BCP with the entire organisation
- Ensure employees understand roles and responsibilities during a business disruption
- Conduct exercises in preparation for office closures, quarantines, health emergencies as well as public transportation and critical service provider disruptions, and

- Ensure employees understand how to access critical business systems as well as organisational and/or client information remotely.

SUPPLIER AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

Coordinate with key vendors and outside parties:

- Identify essential suppliers and service providers, and discuss continuity issues with them such as understanding and implementation of their BCP
- Develop a plan on how and when to activate:
 - ✓ Alternative suppliers
 - ✓ Alternative delivery means for services
- Develop open communications and coordination with key vendors and other outside parties, including clients, shareholders, limited partners, regulators, and the media
- Test the ability of critical service providers to support business during a disruption (e.g., ensure clients can access services)
- Consider alternative service providers
- Develop backup/alternative processes (e.g., manual or in-house) to ensure continuation of critical business operations.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Begin by identifying a communications coordinator who will disseminate your communications plan in line with your business needs and business continuity plans
 - ✓ How [YOUR CENTRE] will respond to various scenarios (e.g., closed schools, quarantine of areas, co-worker(s) suspected or confirmed to be infected) - what are the plans and what must employees do to prepare)
 - ✓ Whether the plan has been enacted;
 - ✓ How to respond to rumors and to confirm [YOUR CENTRE] 's status, and
 - ✓ How and when [YOUR CENTRE] will make an “all clear” announcement and a potential return to standard processes.
- Ensure that employees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities before the virus outbreak occurs. For example, employees should be informed of the BCP measures that will impact them and be kept updated on the policies and progress on the measures to be implemented by the company in the event of a virus outbreak. Consider setting up a communication channel for employees to report their status and to make enquiries
- Identify the relevant stakeholders and key messages for each stakeholder group; and begin a dialogue with them on potential contingency measures during a virus outbreak

SERVICE DELIVERY CONTINUITY PLAN

In the event of the outbreak worsening, or a severe prolonged pandemic, the response will escalate, and the focus will move from Containment to Delay, through to Mitigate. During the various phases the pressures on services and wider society may start to become significant and clearly noticeable.

This plan has the capacity to incorporate three phases of response: **Containment, Delay and Critical**

PHASES		
CONTAINMENT	DELAY	CRITICAL
The containment stage involves trying to minimise exposure and avoid the spread of the disease - prevent the disease taking hold for as long as is reasonably possible.	Many of the actions involved in the Containment phase also act to help Delay the onset of an epidemic if it becomes inevitable. If the disease becomes established, authorities will need to consider further measures to reduce the rate and extent of its spread.	If transmission of the virus becomes established or widespread, the nature and scale of the response will change. The primary focus will be to provide essential services and helping those most at risk to access the right treatment. There will likely be strong direction from authorities to reduce infection rate.

CONTAINMENT PHASE	OFFICE	F2F	OUTREACH	OTHER TRAVEL	WORK FROM HOME
<p>KEY AIM: Prevention of exposure and spread</p> <p>TRIGGER: Occurred. Now in delay phase.</p> <p>RESPONSE TYPE: Individual, as needs</p> <p>SD APPROACH: Screening questions in place for clients, no F2F appointments without necessity and approval of Manager, multidisciplinary approach available, limited work from home with client contact (must be two on call) [CHECK ALL SERVICE DELIVERY IS COVERED HERE]</p> <p>DECISION MAKERS: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p> <p>REVIEW PROCESS: Weekly, or as required</p>	<p>ATTENDANCE: No planned variation to staff attendance directives unless medically/carer responsibility required</p> <p>ESSENTIAL OFFICE FUNCTIONS: As per regular office running capacity</p> <p>PHONE LINES: As per regular office running capacity</p> <p>PREVENTION STRATEGIES: Maximizing personal hygiene, awareness and tracking of any exposure or symptoms, self-reporting</p> <p>PHONE WORK: Preferred service delivery approach – as per existing practices</p>	<p>PRIORITIES: Essential only</p> <p>APPROVAL: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p>	<p>PRIORITIES: Essential only</p> <p>APPROVAL: Unchanged</p>	<p>PRIORITIES: Essential only</p> <p>APPROVAL: Unchanged</p>	<p><u>EXCEPTION NOT RULE – CASE BY CASE</u></p> <p>TRIGGER: Medical directives, childcare implications/essential carer’s requirements or display of symptoms (self-isolation)</p> <p>APPROVAL: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p> <p>FOCUS: Non-client-facing work where possible (to be negotiated with line manager, depending on capacity across teams)</p> <p>HOME CALLS TO CLIENTS: Requires meeting of agreed variation to WFH policy and approval process, line manager to know which calls are being made, prioritize joint calls (multidisciplinary) wherever possible (see also Work from Home Guidelines)</p>

DELAY PHASE	OFFICE	F2F	OUTREACH	OTHER TRAVEL	WORK FROM HOME
<p>KEY AIM: Limiting exposure and rate of spread, limiting a spike in cases and demands on critical health services</p> <p>TRIGGER: Already in place. WHO declaration of Pandemic, Directives from Australian Health Department and/or whole of Office contamination/exposure</p> <p>RESPONSE TYPE: Organizational, some office-based variation available depending on impact. Regularly assessed and varied to suit. People in high risk categories</p> <p>SD APPROACH: Screening questions in place for clients, no F2F appointments - [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE] has some capacity to approve in extreme circumstances), focus on phone advice, essential applications, regular work from home calls to clients, calls may have to be on own (without colleague), limited accessibility to multidisciplinary model</p> <p>DECISION MAKERS: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p> <p>REVIEW PROCESS: Daily/Regularly or as required</p>	<p>ATTENDANCE: Capacity to limit office-based staff numbers, including whole of office isolation at short notice</p> <p>ESSENTIAL OFFICE FUNCTIONS: Capacity to maintain key hard file requirements including printing and filing, operate mail procedures, arrange essential hard copy applications for submission where required</p> <p>PHONE LINES: Capacity to operate off-site if required</p> <p>PREVENTION STRATEGIES: As per containment phase, Limiting of office-based staffing numbers so as to further minimize office-based transfer risks</p> <p>Observe WHO guidelines re distance between work stations, one handset and one keyboard per staff member (no shared use)</p>	<p><u>EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY</u></p> <p>APPROVAL: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p>	<p><u>EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY</u></p> <p>APPROVAL: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p>	<p>APPROVAL: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p>	<p><u>CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SIGNIFICANT WORK FROM HOME ARRANGEMENTS</u></p> <p>TRIGGER: Individual/case by case - As per containment phase</p> <p>Office limitation arrangements – As per WHO and/or Australian Government directives, or whole of office exposure</p> <p>APPROVAL: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p> <p>FOCUS: mix of non-client-facing work and priority/crucial client facing work</p> <p>HOME CALLS TO CLIENTS: Requires meeting of agreed variation to WFH policy and approval process, line manager to know which calls are being made, limited joint calls (multidisciplinary) may be possible [REFER TO ANY SPECIFIC WFH POLICIES YOUR CENTRE HAS]</p>

CRITICAL PHASE	OFFICE	F2F	OUTREACH	OTHER TRAVEL	WORK FROM HOME
<p>KEY AIM: Responding to widespread infection, seeking to facilitate a reduction in rates and return to delay/containment phases over time</p> <p>TRIGGER: Directives from Australian Health Department and/or more than one office contamination/exposure [LIST ANY OTHER TRIGGERS RELEVANT TO YOUR CENTRE]</p> <p>RESPONSE TYPE: Organisational</p> <p>SD APPROACH: Screening questions in place for clients, no F2F appointments ([LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE has some capacity to approve in extreme circumstances), focus on phone advice, essential applications, regular work from home calls to clients, calls may have to be on own (without colleague), limited accessibility to multidisciplinary model</p> <p>DECISION MAKERS: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE – MAY INCLUDE BOARD] LIST WHO YOU ALSO NEED TO ADVISE – EG FUNDERS</p> <p>REVIEW PROCESS: Daily/regularly (as required)</p>	<p>ATTENDANCE: Nil</p> <p>PHONE LINES: Nil in office – all off site</p> <p>PREVENTION STRATEGIES: Nil office contact</p>	NIL	NIL	NIL	<p><u>CAPACITY TO RUN ENTIRE BUSINESS REMOTELY IF REQUIRED</u></p> <p>TRIGGER: Individual/case by case - As per containment phase</p> <p>Office limitation arrangements – As per WHO and/or Australian Government directives, or whole of office exposure</p> <p>APPROVAL: [LIST YOUR DECISION MAKERS HERE]</p> <p>FOCUS: Mix of non-client-facing work and priority/crucial client facing work</p> <p>HOME CALLS TO CLIENTS: requires meeting of agreed variation to WFH policy and approval process, line manager to know which calls are being made, limited joint calls (multidisciplinary) may be possible (REFER TO ANY SPECIFIC Working From Home POLICIES YOUR CENTRE HAS]</p>

