

Importance of Staff Contingency Plans to Manage COVID-19 Outbreaks.

Planning and Preparation in Advance is Key

The RHRA reminds homes to prepare a “Home-specific” staff contingency plan to manage a COVID-19 outbreak.

The plan should answer key questions:

1. How you would deal with minimum staffing levels, assuming that 50% of full-time and 50% of part-time staff are unavailable;
2. Are there any staffing agencies or other redeployment resources that will be relied upon to provide staff if the Home sustains a staffing shortage. Who is responsible to contact these resources, what is their contact information, and how will these additional resources be oriented and trained to the Home and its proper IPAC practices.
3. Which staff can be moved from non-essential tasks to essential tasks and which non-essential tasks can be deferred in the event of a staffing shortage;
4. Where in the Home will COVID-19 positive residents be isolated and if they cannot be isolated, how will you ensure that the Home can safely operate while assuming that all residents have been exposed to COVID-19;
5. Which staff will be dedicated to work only with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive residents.
6. How will staff and resident cohorting be determined and how will staff and resident cohorting be managed and monitored;
7. What staff are cross trained in several areas of competency or can they perform alternative functions, such as feeding, cleaning, screening, or social engagement. Is additional cross training required and how will essential and key staffing roles be filled if staff become sick with COVID for 14 days
8. How will Home contact trace residents and staff in the event of a confirmed case of COVID. Can managers outline the process and map out a case and its timeline.
9. What key resources and contact information are required to be included within the staff contingency plan (i.e., Public Health, RHRA, LHIN, MOL, Union, Agency, Essential Service Providers, and staff- full time, part time and casual).
10. Has the Home’s Joint Occupational Health and Safety or Infection Prevention and Control Committee reviewed the staff contingency plan and approved it
11. Are staff aware of the Home’s staff contingency plan and able to answer all of the above questions

Mock outbreaks, table top exercises or a contact mapping drill which tests the effectiveness of your Home’s staff contingency plan are highly recommended in collaboration with your local Public Health Unit.

Please refer to ORCA’s [Staff Contingency Guide](#) and the [Hiring Resources \(Job Portals/Candidate Sources\)](#) for more information.