STAFFING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Version 2.0: June 2026

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure Bilingual Care maintains a workforce that is sufficient, skilled and capable to deliver safe, high-quality and person-centred supports that meet the needs, preferences and rights of consumers. This includes ensuring continuity of care and supports that respond to individual needs, goals and preferences of consumers, including during periods of workforce shortages, emergencies or disasters.

It applies to all Bilingual Care staff, including associated providers and volunteers, and meets relevant legislation, regulations, and Standards.

Applicable Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

- *Standard 2. The Organisation*
- *Standard 3. The Care and Services*
- *Standard 5. Clinical Care*

Definitions[1]

Continuity of Care - maintaining safe, quality care during and after an emergency event. This includes planning for disruptions such as staff shortages, infrastructure failures, and access restrictions, to support consumer's ongoing safety, health and wellness.

Ordinary hours - a staff member's normal and regular hours of work, which do not attract overtime rates.

Roster - a timetable/schedule that sets out the days and times staff are required to work.

Spread of hours - the time of the day ordinary hours are worked (e.g. 7am to 7pm).

Policy

As part of Bilingual Care's commitment to reliability, flexibility, and continuity of support for consumers, it will employ enough appropriately qualified and experienced staff, to meet legislative, policy and service standards, based on the services that Bilingual Care provides. See Bilingual Care's *Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure* for further details about staff recruitment planning.

Day-to-day operations are managed in an efficient and effective way to avoid disruption and ensure continuity of services.

[1] Fair Work Ombudsman 2026, *Glossary & Acronyms*, Australian Government, accessed 14 May 2026, https://www.fairwork.gov.au/dictionary

In the event of staff absence or vacancy, a suitably qualified and/or experienced person will be placed in the role.

Bilingual Care will implement contingency workforce arrangements to maintain continuity of care and supports during periods of unexpected disruption, including emergencies, disasters and infectious disease outbreaks. This includes activating relevant emergency and outbreak management processes, reallocating resources as required, and ensuring appropriate staffing, supervision and skill mix to meet consumer needs and ensure safety at all times.

Procedures

General

Staff will be employed and provided training in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Training and Development Policy and Procedure*, based on the nature and complexity of the role. Bilingual Care will only provide services to consumers where it has the staff with the necessary qualifications to do so.

Where Bilingual Care is unable to provide services due to insufficient staffing capability, availability or skill mix, it will take appropriate action to ensure continuity of care and supports. This may include (as relevant to the situation and the consumer's needs):

- reallocating staff provided they have the appropriate skills, qualifications and experience to provide the supports
- arranging appropriately qualified relief or agency staff (or via associated providers)
- where safe and appropriate, temporarily modifying or postponing non-essential services
- coordinating alternative service delivery arrangements
- referring or transitioning the consumer to another suitable provider where required.

Any changes to service delivery will be communicated with the consumer (and/or their representative) to get their consent, and will be managed in a way that prioritises safety, continuity, and the needs, preferences and rights of the consumer.

Rosters and Ordinary Hours of Work

Ordinary hours of work and payment rates are set out in Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award [MA000100] Award. The Managing Director is responsible for developing staff rosters and these will be provided to staff on a weekly basis.

Should a change to a staff member's regular roster or ordinary hours of work be required, the Managing Director will first discuss this with the staff member, providing as much notice as possible.

Because the needs of consumers change, staff rosters may need to be adjusted from time to time. Bilingual Care cannot guarantee that staff will always retain the same roster they were assigned upon employment. Further, working a temporary schedule does not signify a change to the staff member's official roster.

Overtime

Full-time staff are entitled to overtime penalty rates if they work:

- more than the maximum number of ordinary hours of work (per day or per week, as stipulated in their Award) or
- outside the spread of ordinary hours.

Part-time staff are entitled to overtime rates if they work more than the maximum number of ordinary hours of work (per day or per week). Part-time staff will not be paid overtime rates if they work more than their agreed hours, but less than full-time ordinary hours.

Casual staff will be paid overtime if they work more than the maximum number of ordinary hours of work (per day or per week).

Staff who are called back to work after finishing their shift will be paid at overtime rates for the time worked, with a minimum payment of 2 hours at the applicable overtime rate.

Bilingual Care can request that a staff member works overtime, provided the following things are considered:

- any risk to their health and safety from working the extra hours
- their personal situation, including their family responsibilities
- the needs of the workplace
- if the staff member is entitled to receive overtime payments or penalty rates for working the extra hours
- if they are paid at a higher rate on the understanding that they work some overtime
- if they were given enough notice
- if they have already stated they cannot ever work overtime and
- the usual patterns of work in the industry.

Health and safety issues must be considered and managed if a staff member is required to work overtime, particularly fatigue.

The Managing Director is responsible for approving overtime. The Scheduling Coordinator may authorise short-term, emergency overtime to cover staff shortages occurring after business hours or on weekends.

For more information on overtime, breaks and other allowances, see the *Social and Community Services Award* at www.fairwork.gov.au.

Planned and Unplanned Leave

Staff are entitled to take planned leave (annual leave, long service leave and maternity leave) or unplanned leave (sick/carer's leave, bereavement leave, domestic violence leave) in accordance with their employment contracts and the *Social and Community Services Award*. Bilingual Care meets the minimum leave requirements as per the National Employment Standards, or the staff member's relevant Award (whichever is the greater).

For absences due to a work-related injury or illness and Worker's Compensation, refer to Bilingual Care's *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*.

Staff Absences and Vacancies

In the event of staff absence or vacancy, the Managing Director will ensure that a suitably qualified and experienced person will be organised to replace the staff member to provide

continuity of services for consumers.

As per its *Service Delivery and Participation Policy and Procedure,* Bilingual Care will ensure consumers are communicated with immediately should their usual staff be absent.

Staff Shortages

When an individual is unable to work their scheduled shift, a staff shortage may occur. Staff who are unable to work their scheduled shift must notify the Managing Director as soon as possible, with minimum 4 hours' notice (unless an emergency has occurred).

While it is Bilingual Care's practice to try to fill staff shortages through voluntary means (such as swapping shifts or seeking nominations from staff who would like to work additional hours), when critical shortages occur, staff may be required to work additional hours, including overtime hours, to ensure continuity of support for consumers.

The Managing Director is responsible for approving additional hours of work. Where possible, additional work will be limited to 12-hour shifts and consider any potential fatigue or safety concerns. In cases of extreme staff shortages, such as in a severe weather event, natural disaster or pandemic illness, staff may be required to work longer shifts. All staff members are expected to share the responsibility of covering unexpected staff shortages. Staff are also expected to keep overtime usage to a minimum.

Routine staffing shortages are the responsibility of the Managing Director who is expected to proactively recruit and train fill-in staff so that they have resources available to deal with staffing shortages.

Vacancies

Staff vacancies must be managed in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Succession Planning* and *Recruitment and Selection* policies and procedures.

Emergencies and Disaster and Outbreak Management

In the event of an emergency, disaster or other significant disruption (such as an infectious disease outbreak) that impacts workforce availability, Bilingual Care will implement its *Emergency and Disaster Management Plan* and/or *Business Continuity Plan* as per the *Emergency and Disaster Management Policy and Procedure.* The first priority in this circumstance is to ensure the health and safety of all individuals impacted, including the continued delivery of safe, quality and person-centred care and services for consumers.

Response Approach

1. The Managing Director will **assess the risks and impact** of the emergency or disruption on:
    - staffing levels
    - workforce capability and availability
    - service delivery requirements
    - consumer risk and priority needs

2. The Managing Director will **activate relevant emergency, disaster or outbreak management processes** in accordance with the *Emergency and Disaster*

Management Plan and/or *Business Continuity Plan*

3. Workforce availability and rosters will be reviewed immediately to **identify gaps or risks to continuity of care**.

4. Where staffing levels or capability are affected, the Managing Director will **coordinate appropriate workforce back up plans**, using the *Consumer and Services Prioritisation Matrix* to help identify and prioritise consumers based on their essential needs and services. Strategies may include:
    - reallocating available staff to priority services and high-risk consumers
    - adjusting rosters, shifts and duties while maintaining safe workloads and appropriate supervision
    - engaging casual, relief, agency or temporary staff
    - utilising staff from other service areas, or engaging associated providers, where appropriately skilled and safe to do so
    - modifying or prioritising service delivery to focus on essential supports, and/or
    - deferring or rescheduling non-essential services where appropriate

    Maintaining safe and appropriate care is essential even during an emergency. The Managing Director will ensure that:
    - services will only be delivered where staff have the necessary skills, qualifications and capability to do so safely
    - staff continue to work within their scope of practice and receive appropriate supervision and support, and
    - additional oversight and communication is implemented where staff are working in unfamiliar roles or environments.

    If Bilingual Care cannot safely maintain services, alternative service delivery arrangements may be used. This could include collaboration with partner organisations, or referring or transitioning consumers to another suitable provider, either temporarily or ongoing.

5. **Communication and consent** for changes - any service changes will prioritise continuity, safety and the needs, preferences and rights of the consumer. The Managing Director will arrange for:
    - consumers (and/or their family/supporters/representatives) to be informed of any changes to service delivery as soon as practicable, and encourage consumers to enact their *Personal Emergency Plans*
    - staff to receive clear instructions, updates and support during the emergency or disruption,
    - communication to be maintained across teams (including other stakeholders such as associated providers, labour hire agencies and partner organisations) to support coordinated and safe service delivery.

6. The Managing Director will **monitor workforce capacity and service delivery risks** throughout the emergency or disruption. Staff must escalate any emerging risks to the Leadership Team as soon as possible.

    Decisions will be reviewed regularly to ensure services remain safe and responsive as the situation evolves and risks change.

7. Once the immediate disruption has stabilised, the Managing Director will **review what**

ongoing requirements are needed and start recovery back to normal staffing and service delivery arrangements as soon as practicable.

When the situation has ended, the Leadership Team will review Bilingual Care's response and approach to identify any areas for improvement. If required, the *Emergency and Disaster Management Plan* and/or the *Business Continuity Plan* and workforce planning arrangements will be updated, and any improvement actions will be documented and tracked in Bilingual Care's *Continuous Improvement Plan*.

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Emergency and Disaster Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure*
- *Service Delivery Policy and Procedure*
- *Succession Planning Policy and Procedure*
- *Training and Development Policy and Procedure*
- *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
  Social and Community Services Award
- *Employment contracts*
- *Emergency and Disaster Management Plan*
- *Business Continuity Plan*
- *Consumer Emergency Planning Guide*
- *Consumer and Services Prioritisation Matrix*
- *Continuous Improvement Plan*

Monitoring and Review

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least every two years by the Leadership Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, consumer, and other stakeholder feedback.

Bilingual Care's *Continuous Improvement Plan* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of Bilingual Care's service planning and delivery processes.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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