Epidemic/Pandemic

POLICY NUMBER: **NDIS GOV 26**

INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that Real Living Options Association Inc. intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.

DEFINITION

For the purpose of this policy, infectious diseases *mean diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. This policy is focused on infectious diseases that are declared to be an epidemic or pandemic.*

POLICY STATEMENTS

- From time to time infectious diseases develop into epidemics or pandemics and create increased risks for the community. These occasions require specific policies targeted at the particular disease in question and general efforts at preparedness.
- Real Living Options Association Inc. is obligated as much as possible, to protect its Participants, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.
- Real Living Options Association Inc.'s will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its participants, its staff, its volunteers, and the general public.
- Real Living Options Association Inc. will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.

PROCEDURES

- In carrying out the procedures listed below, Real Living Options Association Inc. will be guided by the information and directions provided by local health authorities and the World Health Organisation, and its occupational health and safety obligations.
- Real Living Options Association Inc. will as far as possible plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by an epidemic or pandemic.
- In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, Real Living Options Association Inc. will, as far as possible:
    - Assist its Participants, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
    - Encourage and assist those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis.

- Support employees, volunteers, contractors and Participants to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
- Maintain its services and operations as far as practicable throughout the period of concern.

- In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, Real Living Options Association Inc. requires Participants, Employees, Volunteers and Contractors to:

  - Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
  - Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or shaking hands with others.
  - Make sure you follow good hygiene and encourage others to do the same. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze and disposing of used tissues immediately.
  - Stay at home if you feel unwell and believe you may be infected by a virus or other infectious disease/illness.
  - Keep up to date on the latest hotspots (cities or local areas where the pandemic or epidemic is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to these places.
  - Advise the Service Manager or Support Team as soon as possible if you think you are likely to be contagious. It will be necessary for you to self-isolate by staying at home until you recover.
  - Advise the Service Manager or Support Team of any concerns relating to the contraction of an illness or disease that has been identified as an epidemic or pandemic by a Participant or people they have regular contact with.
  - Advise the Service Manager or Support Team of any concerns relating to the contraction of an illness or disease that has been identified as an epidemic or pandemic by another staff member of Real Living Options Association Inc.
  - Seek medical advice promptly and follow the directions of your local health authority.

Leave and Flexibility

- Real Living Options Association Inc. recognises that staff may request or require paid and unpaid leave when they are unwell, at risk of or vulnerable to infection, and at risk of infecting others.

- Workers may make use of leave consistent with Real Living Options Association Inc.'s leave policy, relevant industrial instruments and the National Employment Standards (including access to unpaid leave).

- Real Living Options Association Inc. may, at its discretion, direct those affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace.

DELEGATIONS

Management Committee

- Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and decisions relating to staff leave outside of the Staff Leave Policy

Service Manager

- Responsible for ensuring as far as practicable that all staff, Participants/Representatives/Nominees, volunteers and contractors of the Organisation are made aware of the Organisation's Epidemic/Pandemic Policy.
- Responsible for answering any questions or queries relating to the Organisation's Epidemic/Pandemic Policy.
- Responsible for making decisions relating to Participants continuity of support where there is a known risk of infection.
- Responsible for making decisions relating to staff, employees, volunteers and contractors continuing their engagements where there is a known risk of infection.

All Staff, Participants, Volunteers, and Contractors.

- Adhere to this policy.
- Responsible for advising the Service Manager or Support Team of any concerns relating to the personal contraction of an illness or disease that has been identified as an epidemic or pandemic.
- Responsible for advising the Service Manager or Support Team of any concerns relating to the contraction of an illness or disease that has been identified as an epidemic or pandemic by a Participant or people they have regular contact with.
- Responsible for advising the Service Manager or Support Team of any concerns relating to the contraction of an illness or disease that has been identified as an epidemic or pandemic by another staff member of Real Living Options Association Inc.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Policy NDIS Staff 12 – Leave
Office Staff Leave Form
Incident Form

REFERENCES

Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (AHMPPI)
Qld Health Pandemic Influenza Plan

AMENDMENTS/REVIEWS