



Dear Home Services Provider

I am writing regarding your obligations to effectively manage risks associated with the delivery of consumer care.

The current flooding events in south east Queensland and New South Wales present heightened risks for consumers living in the community, particularly those with complex care needs. These events can easily and significantly disrupt access to much-needed services and supplies.

The Aged Care Quality Standards (the Quality Standards) require providers to demonstrate effective risk management practices that can be readily activated during times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the critical importance of the aged care sector appropriately planning and preparing for major, challenging events.

To demonstrate these practices during a flood event, home service providers must be ready to:

- respond to staff shortages where staff are unable to travel to and for work due to floods or other personal circumstances
- plan for critical infrastructure issues including power failures
- adapt service delivery to accommodate restricted access to essential supply chains.

I request that you urgently review the profile of your consumers to ensure you are able to identify and contact those who may be at the highest risk. Undertaking a 'welfare check' via telephone with a consumer who may live alone and/or be dependent on others for necessary care could alert you to a situation which requires immediate action, including possible referral to an emergency responder.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to review all care planning for consumers in flood-affected areas to establish the interim arrangements for their continuity of care and access to services (with a focus on those at highest risk). Communicating with consumers and their representatives to confirm their current needs and provide advice about the services that are continuing in their area is critical. Where services are not able to be provided and consumers have critical needs (such as medication administration), providers should activate their emergency planning arrangements and identify alternative care arrangements to cover the period when services are unavailable.

The Australian Government Department of Health has published several resources for providers to guide your preparations for emergencies and to assist with service continuity. They are available [here](#).

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is continuing to work collaboratively with Australian and state government agencies to monitor the care and safety of older Australians during these flooding events.

Thank you for your continued efforts and diligent attention to help prepare for and minimise the impact of adverse weather events on our older Australians receiving home services.

Yours sincerely

J. M. Anderson

Janet Anderson PSM

Commissioner

4 March 2022