

Primary Health Care Provider Emergency Readiness Survey - Responses

Executive Summary

Overall, the survey suggests that while many practices feel reasonably confident they would cope during an emergency, that confidence is not always matched by consistently developed or tested plans. There is clearly a baseline level of awareness across general practice, but preparedness varies, and in many cases appears to rely on experience and adaptability rather than structured processes. The low response rate, particularly from pharmacy, means we should be cautious about over-interpreting the findings, but the themes are familiar. Most practices appear to have some form of plan in place, however these are not routinely tested, and key practical elements such as communication, triggers for action, and contingency arrangements are not always well defined. Infrastructure resilience, particularly around power and communications, also emerges as a common vulnerability. Overall, this points to a system that is capable but not consistently prepared for more prolonged or high-impact events.

From a practical perspective, the biggest gains are likely to come from small, achievable steps rather than major new pieces of work. Practices may wish to consider running a simple, low-stakes exercise (for example, “what would we do if we lost power for a day?”) to test how their current plan works in reality, and ensuring there is a clear, shared understanding within the team of how to communicate and who does what when something goes wrong. These sorts of practical checks tend to highlight gaps quickly and are often more valuable than further written planning

Response Rate

- 40 of 137 General Practices in Canterbury (including Urgent Care/After Hours) = 29%
- 10 of 146 Pharmacies in Canterbury = 7%

Response limitations

Low response rates (29% of general practices and 7% of pharmacies) mean the results should be interpreted with caution, as they may not represent the wider sector

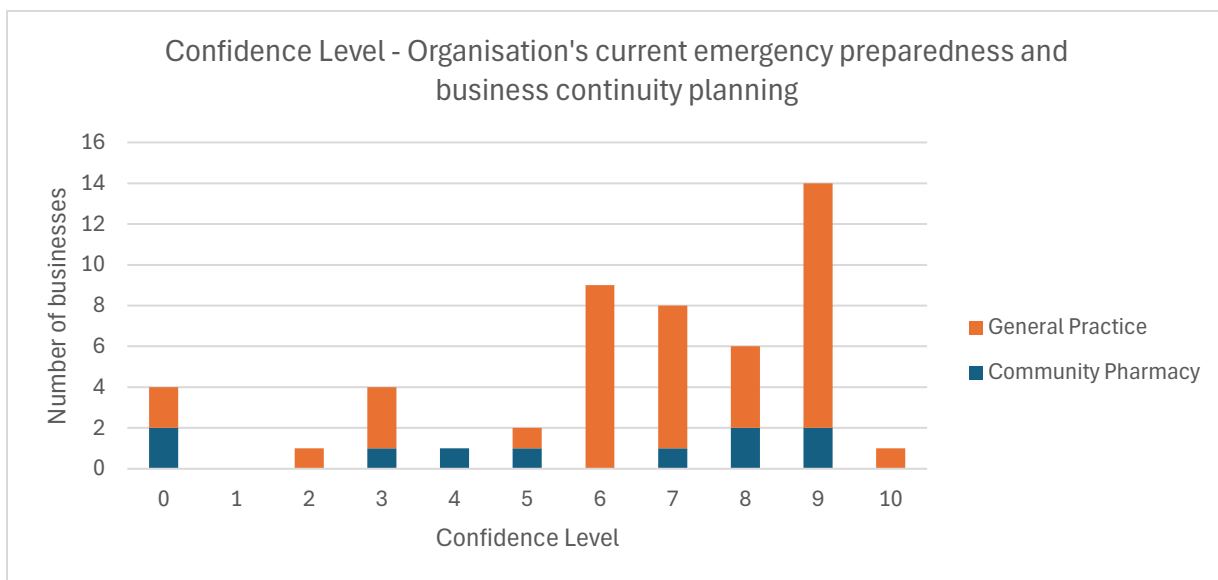
The size of the businesses who responded varied

FTE	General Practice	Community Pharmacy
<5	2	5
6-14	12	0
15-24	18	3
25-49	6	1
50-99	2	1

Confidence Levels

How confident are you with your organisation's current emergency preparedness and business continuity planning?

Nearly 60% of respondents were confident (rating ≥ 7 out of 10) in their organisation's current emergency preparedness and business continuity planning, with over 40% fairly confident (≥ 8 out of 10). 20% of respondents indicated that they were not that confident (rating 4 or below), while 22% were in the middle (5 or 6 out of 10).

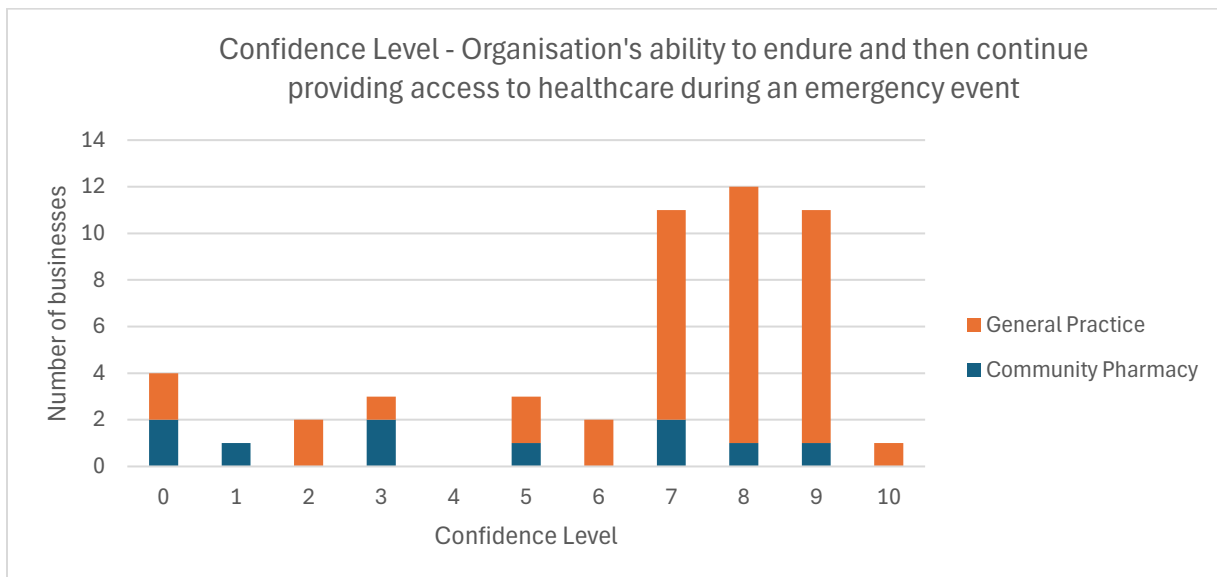


Key takeaway: 60% were confident (7+) in their business's current emergency preparedness and business continuity planning. 20% were not confident (≤ 4).

Discussion: As businesses both General Practice and Community Pharmacy are required to have emergency plans (having businesses continuity plans is best practice but it is not a legal requirement), therefore, there would be a minimum amount of work that should have been undertaken in this space. Dealing with the unknown or unexpected is often BAU for many working in primary care so perhaps inherently, this has also contributed to the results.

How confident are you that you can endure and then continue providing access to health care during an emergency event?

Over two thirds of respondents were confident (rating of ≥ 7) their business would be able to endure and be able to continue providing access to health care during an emergency event, and nearly half of all respondents were fairly confident (≥ 8 or above). Similar to their confidence levels of their business's emergency and business continuity planning, a fifth of respondents indicated that they were not that confident (level of 4 or below).



Key takeaway: 70% feel confident (7+) they can endure and continue providing care during emergencies. 20% are not confident (≤ 4).

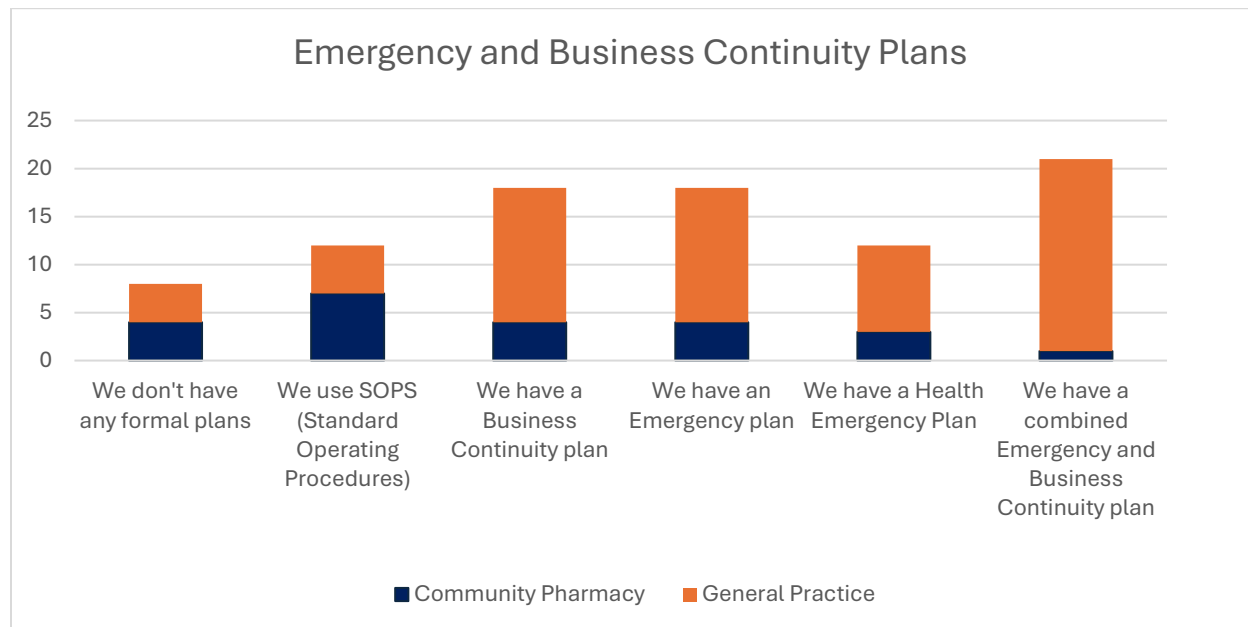
Discussion: Respondents seemed to have a higher level of confidence in their ability to respond to events despite lower levels of confidence in their business’s emergency and business continuity planning. This could be due to lived experience of some respondents. The size of the business did not appear to have a significant impact on confidence levels reported.

Planning and Documentation

Which of these plans does your business / facility have in place?

(Options: Emergency Plan, Combined Emergency and Business Continuity Plan, Health Emergency Plan, Business Continuity Plan, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and/or No formal plans.)

Respondents were able to select multiple options for this question. Three quarters of respondents indicated that they had some form of emergency plans (including combined Emergency and Business Continuity plans, and Health Emergency plans), 40% also had Business Continuity plans (including those that had combined plans). Of the 20% who indicated they had no Emergency or Business Continuity plans, a third did have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).



Key takeaway: 75% have some form of Emergency Plan; 40% have a Business Continuity Plan, 20% have no emergency or BC plans (though some rely on SOPs).

Discussion: As noted above, businesses are required to have at a minimum, Emergency plans. Therefore, it was somewhat surprising that some respondents indicated their organisation had no formal business continuity or emergency plans. It could be possible that the respondent was unaware of the plans (plans had not been shared with all staff).

When did you last update or review your Business Continuity / Emergency plans?

Of the 50 general practices and community pharmacies, 50% had reviewed their emergency and business continuity plans in the past 12 months, almost 30% confirmed they had updated or reviewed their plans in the last 12-36 months, and six percent, more than three years ago. Four percent of General Practice and Community Pharmacy indicated that their emergency and business continuity plans had never been reviewed or updated, and 10% did not know or were unsure.

Key takeaway:

50% reviewed plans within 12 months; 4% have never reviewed their plans.

Discussion: In a busy practice or pharmacy, finding time to review and update plans may not be a priority, perhaps there is little or no value seen in relooking at plans once they have been completed/ticked off.

Have you ever tested your Business Continuity / Emergency plans as part of a trial exercise?

The majority of general practice and community pharmacy respondents stated that they had never tested their business continuity or emergency plans as part of an exercise - almost 70%. There were 10 businesses (21%) who said that they had tested their plans, and 10% did not know/ were not sure.

Key takeaway: 70% of businesses have not tested their plans.

Discussion: This result was not surprising; in a busy practice or pharmacy taking time out for exercising plans may not been seen as a priority and may involve staff coming in outside of normal working hours or additional hours.

Which of these have been identified in plans/planning?

A little over 80% of respondents said that they had either identified or partially identified “The key products, services and/ or supplies critical to operating business as usual (Business Impact Analysis)”, whilst one fifth indicated they had not or did not know. We saw similar results for general practice and community pharmacy who had identified:

- Likely hazards / risks facing their business (85% identified or partially identified, 15% not identified or unsure)
- Key resources you'll need in an emergency (85% identified or partially identified, 15% not identified or unsure)
- Contact details for staff (85% identified or partially identified, 15% not identified or unsure)
- Contact details for key suppliers or customers (83% identified or partially identified, 17% not identified or unsure)
- Information source for obtaining situational awareness during the event (79% identified or partially identified, 21% not identified or unsure).

Areas that had not been given as much consideration were:

- Thresholds / triggers to start the plan (67% identified or partially identified, 33% not identified or unsure)
- Alternative options if key resources are no longer available (73% identified or partially identified, 27% not identified or unsure)
- Relocation options if required (73% identified or partially identified, 27% not identified or unsure)
- A plan for how you will communicate with patients/residents/clients (73% identified or partially identified, 27% not identified or unsure).

Key takeaway: Well-identified (>80%): Key services /resources, hazards, staff contacts, supplier contacts, situational awareness sources.

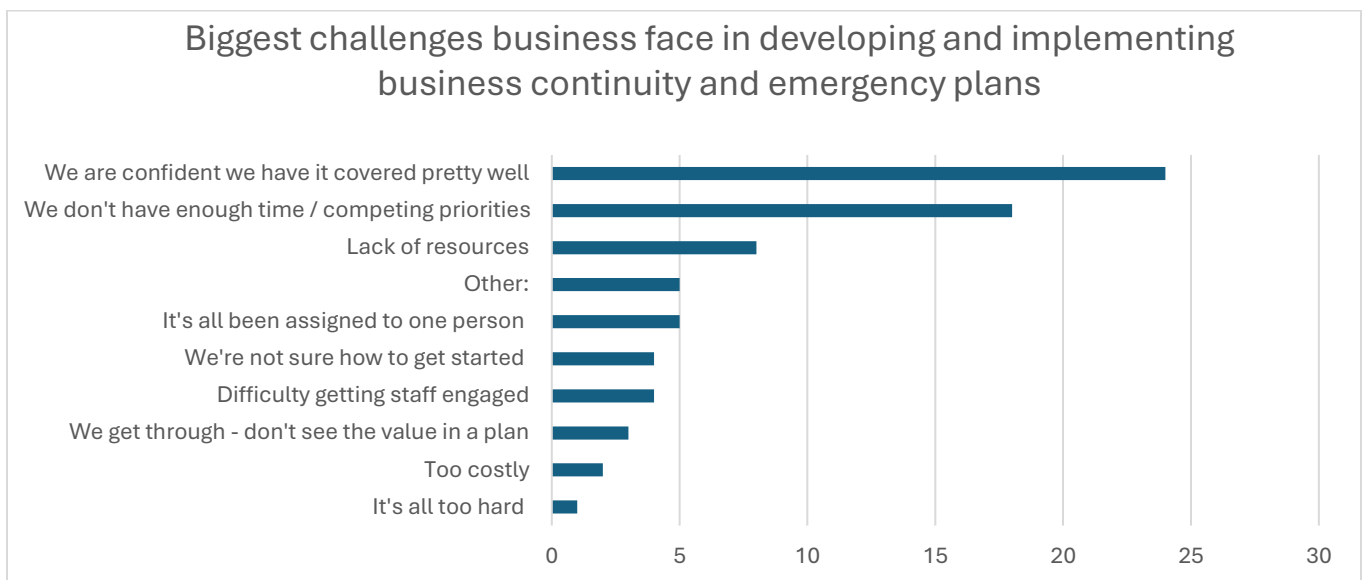
Less identified (approx. 27–33% not covered): Activation thresholds, alternative resource options, relocation options, communication plans for patients/clients

Discussion: The numbers above align with the numbers of respondents who had business continuity plans, emergency plans, and/or SOPs, so it is not surprising to see that 70-80% had identified the various areas in their plans. However, there could be some work in raising awareness and strengthening knowledge in all areas.

What do you see as the biggest challenge your business faces in developing and implementing BC and Emergency Plans?

Not having enough time or competing priorities was seen as one of the biggest challenges for 38% of respondents in developing and implementing BC and Emergency Plans, whilst 50% of respondents indicated they were confident they had things pretty well covered. 21% indicated limited resources and funding was also one of the biggest challenges.

Other challenges identified by respondents were also linked to resourcing and funding during emergencies; without easy access to these resources and emergency funding, closing and drawing on insurance was seen as a means to survive.



Key takeaway: 38%: Time/competing priorities is the main barrier. 21%: Limited resources/funding.

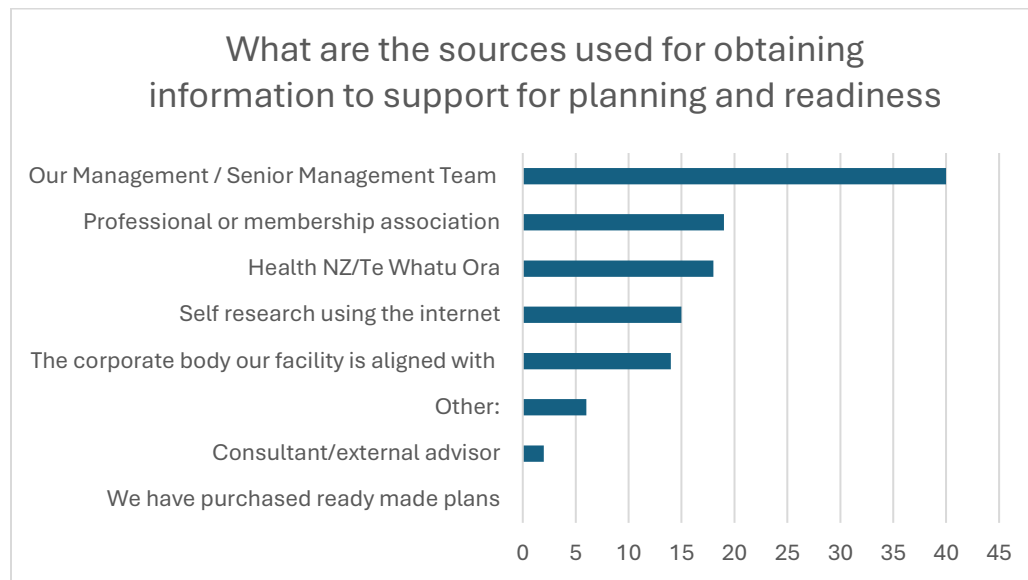
Discussion: Finding more time and resources for businesses to give to emergency and business continuity planning can be difficult. However, encouraging businesses to think about the consequences of not doing this could shift their prioritisation. Additionally, providing the right tools to assist businesses with this task may lessen the burden.

What are your sources for obtaining information to support your planning and readiness?

Respondents obtained information from a variety of sources to support their planning and readiness. The most common source was Management / Senior Management Teams, used by 83%

of responding businesses. Around 38% of respondents said they looked to Te Whatu Ora | Health NZ for information, this was the same for respondents who relied on their professional or membership association. Almost 30% of respondents used internet searches, and 31% looked to the corporate body their facility is aligned with.

Other sources of information identified by respondents included: PHOs, GP Docs framework, previous Business Continuity Planning meetings, and CPRG.



Key takeaway: 83% rely on management teams. ~38% use Health NZ and professional associations. 30% use internet searches; 31% rely on corporate bodies.

Discussion: For those who relied on their management teams for information, we are unable to identify where these teams sourced their emergency and business continuity planning and readiness information from. It may be useful to gain some insight here.

Infrastructure and Continuity Measures

Does your facility have a generator to support continuity of service during a power outage?

78% of respondents do not have generators (or access to generators) to support continuity of service during power outages. Of the 22% who indicated they did have generators eight percent said their generators were permanently connected to their facility, while 14% said they would only connect when required (available within an hour). Four of these facilities relied on smaller generators that could keep fridges going and perhaps computers.

Key Takeaway: 78% of sites have no generator capacity. Those with generators often have small or portable units only.

Discussion: What are the implications of low generator access for service continuity during prolonged outages? In most cases practices would be able to revert to paper-based consultations, though Patient ID/record keeping could be problematic. Additionally limited or no access to shared care records like HealthOne, or referral applications like ERMS could pose challenges. Power to maintain cold chain storage, dispensing, and activity like sterilisation would also be compromised as well as the ability to charge patients for consults, create printed scripts, etc.

What alternative/additional power supply options do you have to support continuity of power supply for essential services?

82% of respondents said that they had no other alternative power supplies. Of those that did, the alternatives were mostly smaller power banks (suitable for 2-3 charges of cell phone and not much else). There were a couple of respondents who indicated they could potentially relocate to another site.

Key Takeaway: 82% have no alternative power supply.

Discussion: See below section.

What additional options do you have to support alternative communication into and out from your facility or activity (beyond your current communication resources)?

Over half of the respondents do not have alternative communication methods into or out from their facility. Several respondents indicated they had PSN sims (Public Safety Network – priority SIM for cell phones). 20% of respondents had radio comms (likely part of the CPRG radio network). Eight percent had StarLink/satellite phones and another four percent were considering this option.

Key Takeaway: 50%+ have no alternative comms options.

Discussion: On the whole there does not appear to be much resilience in terms of alternative power or communication sources. Fast moving technology means that there are multiple options available and possibly many of the newer ones or less utilised ones are not well understood. Additionally, investing in an alternative source of power and/or comms can be costly and risky, especially when the technology moves on.

Do you maintain a minimum of 3+ days of emergency supplies of water, food and other essential supplies, sufficient for the number of people normally on your premises?

Nearly 20% of respondents indicated they did have 3+ days of emergency supplies. 6% have water supplies and a couple of these also had some food. But almost 70% said that they did not maintain a minimum of 3+ days of emergency supplies. Two facilities indicated they have access to water and food, but it is not kept on site (e.g. supermarket in same building complex).

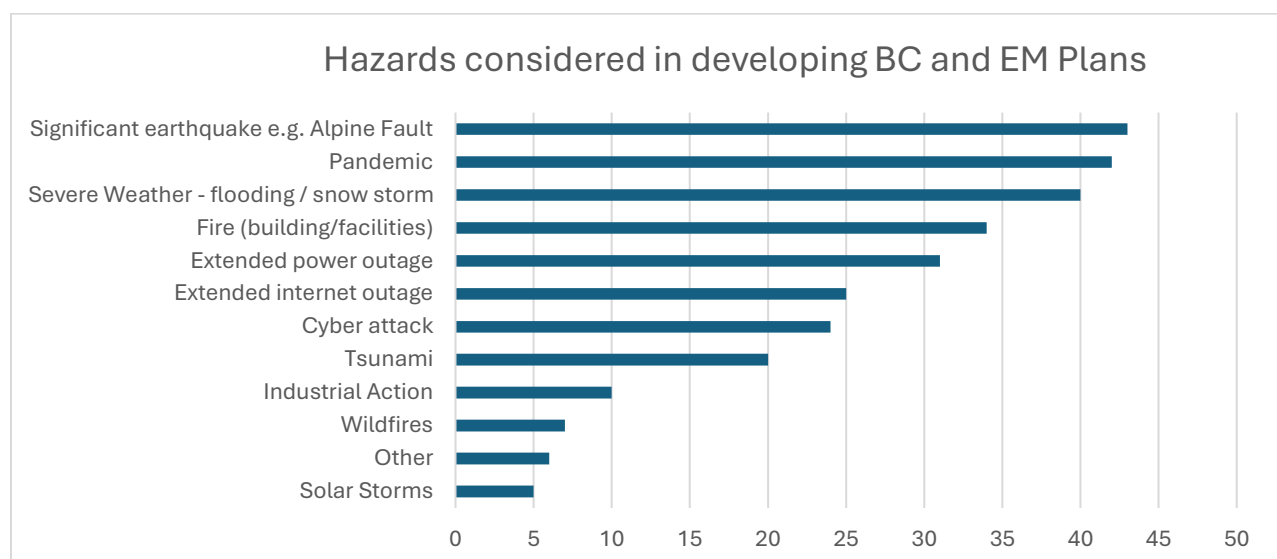
Key Takeaway: 70% do not maintain 3+ days of food/water.

Discussion: In a previous exercise where practices were provided with a large box of pandemic supplies, feedback was provided from many that they did not have space to store extra supplies. In addition, unless there is a dedicated staff member responsible for managing and rotating emergency stock, it is not surprising that over two thirds of businesses did not hold stock. A couple of respondents alluded to the fact that they would rely on nearby businesses, e.g., a supermarket in the same complex; this may be the case for other general practices and community pharmacies.

Hazard Awareness

What hazards have you considered when developing your BC and EM plans?

The majority of respondents (80% or more) considered significant earthquakes, pandemics, and severe weather in their BC and EM plans. Least considered hazards were tsunamis, industrial action, wildfires, and solar storms.

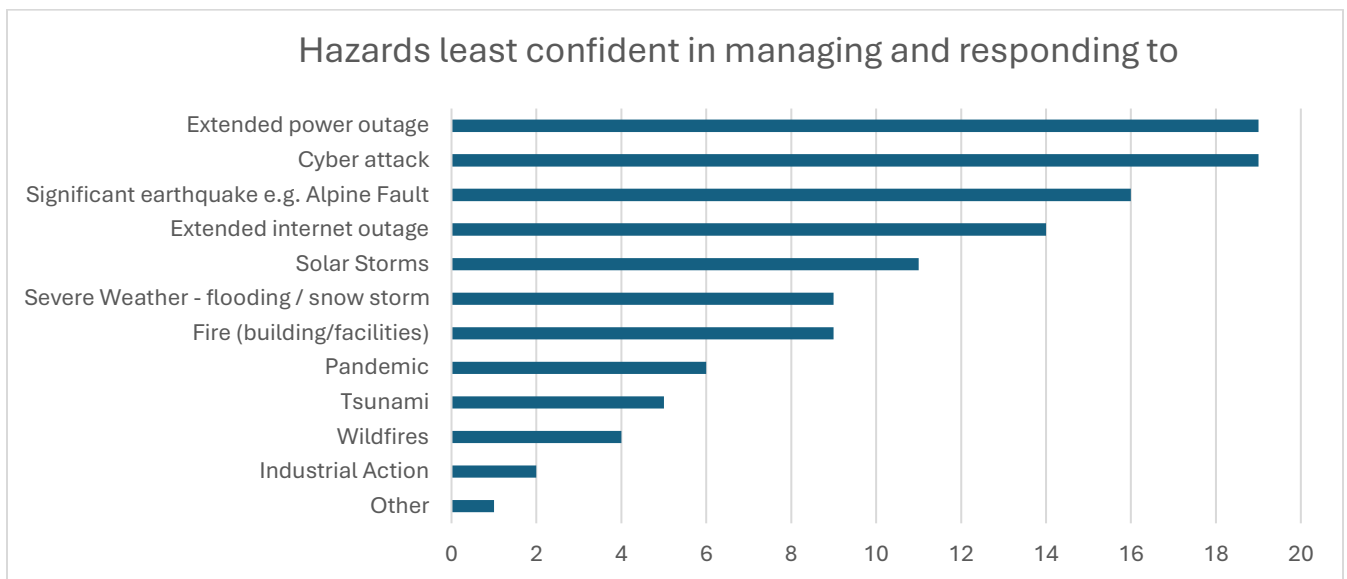


Key Takeaway: Most considered (80%+): earthquakes, pandemics, severe weather. Least considered: tsunami, industrial action, wildfires, solar storms

Discussion: If businesses have comprehensively considered a significant earthquake like the Alpine Fault, then in all likelihood, their plans would also cover extended outages of power and internet. And as one respondent pointed out if extended power and internet outages had been considered this should also allow businesses to work through solar storms.

Which hazards from the following list do you feel least confident to manage and respond to the resulting impacts?

Nearly 40% of respondents indicated that they were not confident in managing and responding to the resulting impacts of extended power outages and cyber-attacks. Over 30% did not feel confident in responding to a significant earthquake like the Alpine Fault.



Key Takeaway: Hazards with lowest confidence - nearly 40% lack confidence managing extended power outages or cyber-attacks. 30%+ lack confidence managing a major earthquake

Discussion: Mitigation/contingency to respond and work through cyber-attacks is a more recent hazard that businesses could face, therefore not so well understood. With that said, Te Whatu Ora Health NZ have worked with General Practice to produce a number of guides for Primary Care. Cyber-attacks could compromise patient privacy, and exclude or limit access to important patient

information, Likewise extended power outages, particularly for those without any alternative power supplies could really restrict what businesses could do continue to provide service.

It is likely the most significant and far-reaching hazard businesses will face is an Alpine Fault earthquake, so it is understandable that a number of businesses do not feel confident in managing this type of event. With that said, a number of businesses would have been through significant earthquakes already in the past 15 years hence 70% of respondents not identifying this as one of the hazards they feel least confident in responding to.

Recommendations

The findings from this survey will help direct the work Emergency Management and Business Continuity teams/personnel can undertake to support Primary Health Care across Canterbury.

Emergency and Business Continuity Testing

With over two thirds of respondents not testing their plans, it is recommended that a testing framework/guide is developed to encourage testing for primary care providers. Unpractised procedures can result in missed information, confusion and poor decision making.

Considerations:

- Simple exercises, routine, and relevant to daily practice.
- Scheduling annual, low-stakes simulation drills, integrating tests into staff meetings, and creating specific scenarios like power outages or natural disasters.
- Focus on reviewing business continuity, updating staff contact lists, and ensuring clear communication protocols to foster a culture of preparedness.
- Involvement in wider sector exercises.

Alternative Power and Communication Options

- Support businesses to access/understand alternative communication technologies. Provide technical info on available technology, tips and tricks, e.g., if opting for a StarLink there need to be regular checks for any software updates.
- Support businesses to assess their own critical functions, understand their power capacity requirements, and what alternative power supplies are available.

Planning and Documentation

- Explore education opportunities, e.g., workshops, webinars focusing on Emergency and Business Continuity plans.
- There are a number of good foundational plans and guides already in use - review what is currently in the system and direct businesses to best practice.

Improved Hazard awareness and resilience

- Provide practical guidance to cyber-attack responsiveness and resilience, understand what information has already been provided to Primary Care via PHOs, professional membership/association bodies, etc.
- Provide regular Hazardscape updates – including risk, what to expect.

Appendix

1. Primary Health Care Provider Emergency Readiness Survey

Primary Care Emergency Readiness Survey – Te Waipounamu Region

1. How confident are you with your organisation's current emergency preparedness and business continuity planning? *

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bare basis, not everything covered (1)								Strong planning, engagement and documented plans in place (10)	

2. How confident are you that you can endure and then continue providing access to healthcare during an emergency event? *

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low confidence we can keep services going during significant emergency events (1)								Strong resilience enabling continuity of services (10)	

3. Which of these plans does your business / facility have in place? * (Multiple Choice allowed)

- *We have an Emergency plan*
- *We have a Business Continuity plan*
- *We have a combined Emergency and Business Continuity plan*
- *We have a Health Emergency Plan*
- *We don't have any formal plans*
- *We use SOPS (Standard Operating Procedures)*
- *Other*

4. When did you last update or review your Business Continuity / Emergency Preparedness plans? * (Single choice).

- *Within the last 12 months*
- *12 - 36 months ago*
- *More than 3 years ago*
- *Never*
- *Not sure / Don't Know*

5. Have you ever tested your Business Continuity / Emergency plans as part of a trial exercise? * (Single choice).

- *Yes*

- No
- Not sure / Don't Know

6. Which of these have you identified in your plans/planning? *

	Yes	Partially	No	Don't Know
The key products, services and/ or supplies critical to operating business as usual (Business Impact Analysis)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likely Hazards /Risks facing your business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information sources for obtaining situational awareness during the event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thresholds / triggers to start the plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key resources that you'll need in an emergency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contact details for staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A plan for how you communicate with staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contact details for key suppliers or customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alternative options if key resources are no longer available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relocation options if required	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A plan for how you communicate with patients/residents/clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. What do you see as the biggest challenge your business faces in developing and implementing business continuity and emergency plans? * (Multiple choice).

- *It's all too hard*
- *We don't have enough time / competing priorities*
- *We're not sure how to get started*
- *It's all been assigned to one person*
- *Difficulty getting staff engaged*
- *Lack of resources*
- *We get through - don't see the value in a plan*
- *Too costly*
- *We are confident we have it covered pretty well*
- *Other*

8. What are your sources for obtaining information to support for your planning and readiness? * (Multiple choice).

- *Our Management / Senior Management Team*
- *The corporate body our facility is aligned with*
- *Health NZ/Te Whatu Ora*
- *Self research using the internet*

- *Professional or membership association*
 - *Consultant/external advisor*
 - *We have purchased ready made plans*
 - *Other*
9. Does your facility have a generator to support continuity of service during a power outage? * (single choice)
- *Yes - permanently connected to our facility*
 - *Yes - but only connected when required (available within one hour)*
 - *No*
10. (Supplementary question to Q8) If answering 'Yes' to previous question, tell us about your generator. (free text)
- *Make/Model (if known)*
 - *Fuel capacity (litres) (if known)*
 - *How often is it run/tested*
 - *Do you have a MOU with your fuel provider*
 - *How long can your generator run (supporting your essential equipment) before the need to refuel (if known)*
11. What alternative/additional power supply options do you have to support continuity of power supply for essential services. * (Multiple choice)
- *Solar panels*
 - *Solar panels with battery reserves*
 - *Large volume power banks/batteries (e.g., could run the cold chain fridge for 4 + hours)*
 - *Smaller power banks (suitable for 2-3 charges of a cell phone and not much else)*
 - *None*
 - *Other*
12. What additional options do you have to support alternative communication into and out from your facility or activity (beyond your current communication resources). * (Multiple choice)
- *Satellite phone*
 - *Starlink*
 - *Radio telephone*
 - *Public Safety Network - PSN (priority SIM for cell phones)*
 - *None*
 - *Other*
13. What hazards have you considered when developing your BC and EM plans? * (Multiple choice)
- *Severe Weather - flooding / snow storm*
 - *Significant earthquake e.g. Alpine Fault*
 - *Cyber attack*
 - *Solar Storms*

- *Pandemic*
- *Extended power outage*
- *Extended internet outage*
- *Fire (building/facilities)*
- *Wildfires*
- *Tsunami*
- *Industrial Action*
- *Other* _____

14. Which hazards from the following list do you feel least confident to manage and respond to the resulting impacts? * (choice up to three options)

- *Severe Weather - flooding / snow storm*
- *Significant earthquake e.g. Alpine Fault*
- *Cyber attack*
- *Solar Storms*
- *Pandemic*
- *Extended power outage*
- *Extended internet outage*
- *Fire (building/facilities)*
- *Wildfires*
- *Tsunami*
- *Industrial Action*
- *Other* _____

15. Do you maintain a minimum of 3+ days of emergency supplies of water, food and other essential supplies, sufficient for the number of people normally on your premises? * (single choice)

- *No*
- *Yes*
- *Other* _____

Survey Demographics

Lastly, we have a few more questions about you and your business. Rest assured, all responses will be collected confidentially and reported anonymously. Knowing a little more about the type of health service you deliver and where you are based may offer valuable insights into identifying common needs specific to a community or sector.

16. Business Name *

17. Principle health sector your activity aligns with * (Multiple choice).

- *Aged Residential Care*

- *Home and Community Support Services*
- *Community Pharmacy*
- *General Practice*
- *Community Mental Health – Community Support*
- *Community Mental Health – Residential care*
- *Support Organisation (e.g. PHO, Pharmacy Assn, Imms outreach)*
- *Hauora Māori Service provider*
- *Pacific Health provider*
- *NGO (e.g. CanBreathe, Heart Foundation)*
- *District Nursing*
- *Other*

18. Location of your facility * (single choice)

- *Nelson/Marlborough*
- *West Coast*
- *Canterbury*
- *South Canterbury*
- *Southern*
- *Other*

19. Size of your health facility. * (Single choice)

- *< 5 FTE staff*
- *6 – 14 FTE staff*
- *15 – 24 FTE staff*
- *25 – 49 FTE staff*
- *50 – 99 FTE staff*
- *100 – 199 FTE staff*
- *200 or more FTE staff*

20. Name of the person completing this survey (Optional)

21. Your role within the organisation *

22. Email Address (Optional)

23. Any other comments you'd like to include (?) (Free flow text)