Business Continuity

and your organisation

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milton keynes council

What it is…

Why plan?

> *"Business Continuity Management is when an organisation identifies risks that may interfere with delivery of products or services and puts in place plans to mitigate interruptions so that business can resume quickly and with as little disruption as possible"*

Creating an effective **Business Continuity Plan** ensures that the really important parts of your organisation survive and customers and others who rely upon you, continue to receive service.

A plan will help you to understand your business and empower staff to react effectively to overcome any challenges.

It also means you will have all the important information you need during and following an incident (such as contact details and action cards).

You will be able to respond and recover more effectively and efficiently, keeping financial losses to a minimum.

It means supporting your customers, your brand, your reputation and your key activities.

Whatever the size of your business, planning is the most effective way to overcome any incidents you may face.

Your plan will allow you to identify the critical activities for your business, what threats the business may face and identify some mitigation strategies in case something does go wrong.

Why plan?

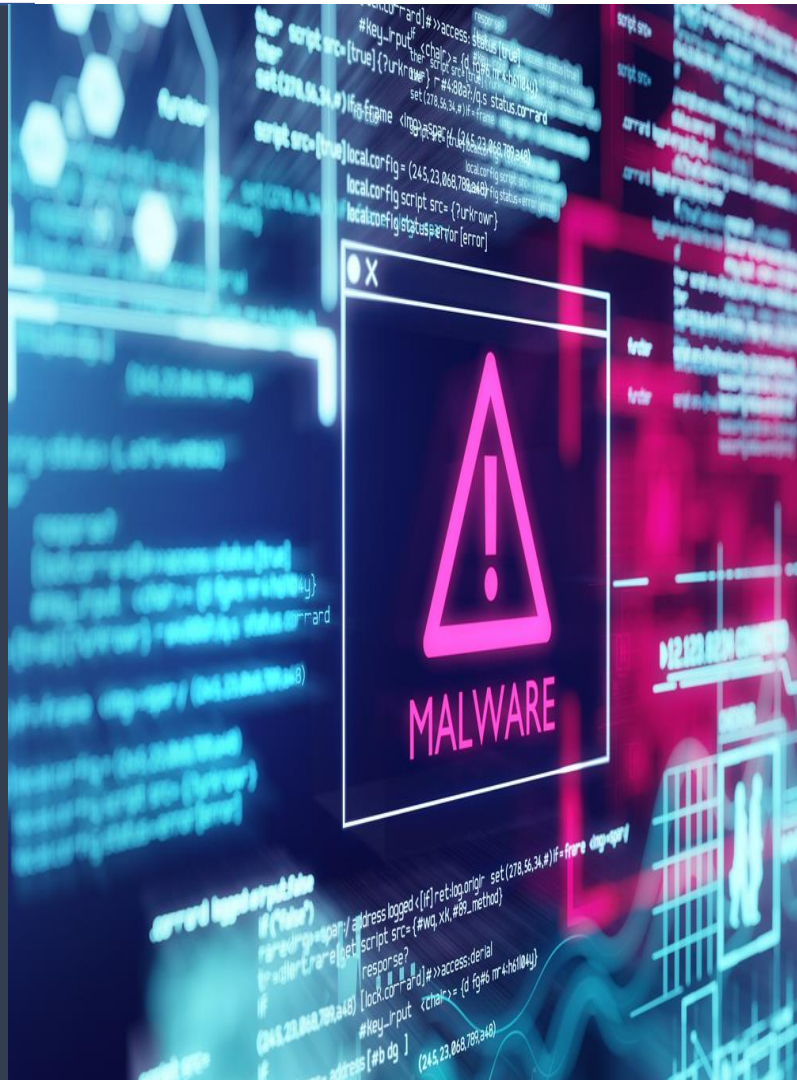
Checklist

Business Continuity	Yes	No	Don't Know
Has the idea of Business Continuity Management (BCM) been agreed at owner/partner/board level?			
Do you have a Business Continuity Plan (BCP)?			
If yes, is the plan documented clearly and easily accessible?			
Have you exercised your plan within the last 12 months?			
Is there a policy for how and when to activate the plan?			
Do you regularly review and update the plan?			
Are staff trained in activating and operating the plan?			
Who in your organisation will have responsibility for looking after Business Continuity?			
Have you made a list of key contact telephone numbers?			
Have you prepared an emergency pack?			

Include within your plan:

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Aims and objectives
- ✓ Key critical business activities list, with their critical time frames (how long can you cope before getting each activity started again)
- ✓ Known potential risks and threats
- ✓ Plan triggers
- ✓ Activation process
- ✓ Action cards for response
- ✓ Recovery process
- ✓ Key contacts, customers, suppliers, staff, other stakeholders

How you plan for and respond to events such as fire, flooding, vandalism or loss of utilities, for example, can determine how quickly and to what level your business can recover.



Adverse weather

Flood

Power Outage

Pandemic

Key impacts and considerations

How would business continue in the event of an incident? Think about: -

- Premises – loss of or inability to access
- People – loss of staff or skills. Safety, wellbeing, welfare
- Communications – staff, suppliers, customers, media
- Equipment / stock – loss of key suppliers, supplies or utility supplies, loss of key or specialist equipment
- Computers, network access and telecoms – interruption to or loss of
- Financial issues
- Transport disruption
- Sources of help and advice

IT failure, equipment and stock

Staff and skills

Media and Comms

Fire

Key impacts and considerations 2

What are the critical activities of your business?

- What services do you provide?
- Do you have any statutory responsibilities?
- Are there any legal or financial implications if your product/service is impacted?
- What are the priorities of these activities?

For each critical activity:

- What is the priority?
- How long could you cope without that activity?
- What difficulties might you face?

What would the impact be if interruption lasted for:

- 24 hours
- 24-48 hours
- Up to 1 week
- Up to 2 weeks
- Longer than a month

If you or your business are involved in an incident and believe you may be in danger always dial **999** to request the appropriate emergency assistance.

If you are not in danger but may be affected indirectly, you may be advised to GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN

Starting your plan

Keep it simple. It's just a matter of assessing risks, keeping useful information to hand in case of an incident (big or small), keeping the information up to date, practicing and learning any lessons from incidents you may have already encountered. Give some thought to the following:-

- Assessment of impacts and risks
- What is critical to deliver services?
- Supply chain – alternatives if supply interrupted, key contacts
- Restoring key processes – how, who, where, resources?
- Safeguarding
- Communication – staff, media, suppliers, stakeholders, up to date contact details
- Health and safety
- Staff welfare
- Keeping plan information up to date

Six steps to plan

"Business Continuity is a holistic management process that identifies potential business impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value creating activities"

Business Continuity Institute

1 Know your business

- What is the aim of your business and what are the key activities involved in achieving it?
- What resources do you need for the key activities to happen? Think about staff, premises equipment, communication, links, IT, suppliers, specific knowledge or training.
- What deadlines to you work to?

2 Assess the risk

- What risks could your business face?
- What critical activities might be impacted?

What is critical, what is not?

3 Develop a strategy

- What actions will you take if an incident happens?
- How will those actions be done?
- Who will do these actions?
- Where will the actions take place? On site or at an alternative location?
- What will the priorities be?

4 Write your plan

- Use the information you have gathered to write the plan
- Templates with guidance notes can be found here

5 Test your plan

- You should test your plan by carrying out an exercise to see if your assumptions work.
- Staff must become familiar with it and have an idea of what would happen in a real incident.
- Some scenarios to help you are included within this booklet.

6 Maintain your plan

- Review your plan on a regular basis
- An out of date plan could be almost useless when you actually need it

Plan considerations – checklist 1

This is not an exhaustive list but aims to help you. Capture any details in your plan where you have answered Yes. If you have selected No or Don't Know, consider whether these are relevant to your business.

Equipment, Data and Documentation	Yes	No	Don't Know
What is your key equipment?			
Is there contingency plans in place to cater for the loss or failure of key equipment?			
Do you regularly update an inventory of key equipment for your business?			
Do you have any controls for the movement of your business equipment?			
Do you regularly copy/back-up data and information?			
Are critical documents protected robustly?			
Do you have copies of critical records at a separate location?			

Plan considerations – checklist 2

Buildings and People	Yes	No	Don't Know
Does your business premises have an emergency evacuation procedure? Are there fire safety procedures in place?			
Do you have access to the premises at all times?			
If yes, is the plan documented clearly and easily accessible?			
Do you have access to an alternative workplace to use in an emergency?			
Do you have a list of all employee contact telephone numbers and home addresses? Where is this stored?			
Have staff been allocated specific roles in the event of an incident?			
If the business premises was made unavailable, could staff work from an alternative location or from home?			
Are any staff members proficient in first aid or have medical training?			
Have you identified or considered any risks to your business from the surrounding area or other businesses, eg Flood risk?			

Plan considerations – checklist 3

IT	Yes	No	Don't Know
Are your IT systems critical to the running of your business?			
If the IT system was inaccessible are there manual processes that could maintain critical functions and administration?			
How long would IT recovery take?			
Who would recover the system? What are their contact details?			
Do you have a tested IT disaster recovery plan?			
Is your computer anti-virus software up to date?			
Are documented IT security policies and procedures in place? Are all users fully aware of e-mail and internet usage policies?			
Is your company system part of a larger network?			
Do you know how many platforms/services/applications or operating systems support critical business functions?			
Is expertise of how to use your IT system, knowledge of where critical documents are electronically stored etc, limited to one individual?			
Do you have vital computer information stored on back-up discs held off site?			

Plan considerations – checklist 4

Customers and Suppliers	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do you have alternative suppliers for critical equipment/ stores/ parts/goods/ products etc?			
Do you have an arrangement with your critical suppliers where they will inform you if they cannot make a delivery?			
Do your suppliers have a business continuity plan?			
Do you have your suppliers correct contact details both office hours and out of office hours?			
Do you have the correct contact details for all your main customers?			
Do you have any key customers who you will need to be in constant contact with during a crisis?			

Other			

Guides

Templates for business continuity plans can be found on the Milton Keynes Council website by searching for business continuity

Further advice and templates can also be found at: -

- The government business continuity Toolkit
- The Business Continuity Institute (BCI)
- BCI Good Practice Guidelines a step by step guidance document

Emergency Pack Contents

If you had to evacuate in an emergency, having some key details at hand or stored off-site could make a significant difference in how quickly you can react.

Your emergency pack could contain:

- ✓ Business continuity plan (BCP)
- ✓ Contact details for insurance, customers, suppliers,
- ✓ landlord etc to be contained in the BCP
- ✓ Spare copies of BCP appendices, log sheets, contact lists etc
- ✓ Building plans (if appropriate)
- ✓ Laminated action cards
- ✓ High visibility vests
- ✓ Salvage inventory
- ✓ Basic toolkit
- ✓ Phone chargers
- ✓ Pen and paper to write down anything important

Scenario: Loss of staff

Consider

- Who are the key members of staff?
- Can staff work at alternative locations?
- Do other staff members know and understand how to do key activities?
- How will you communicate with staff?
- Where are staff based in relation to your workplace?

What are your next steps?

- Ensure all staff are trained in key roles
- Re-task staff from non-essential roles
- Consider use of agency staff or contractors
- Postpone any non essential activities
- Consider outsourcing activities where applicable
- Ensure all staff contact details are up to date

Exercise 1

This scenario means that supporting staff resources are affected because of contagious illness, strike, transport, outrage, adverse weather etc **Remember to update your plan with any lessons learned from this exercise.**

Questions

1. What are the immediate effects of this incident on the ability of your business to operate as usual? What immediate actions are required?
2. How will you minimise the impact on your critical activities?
3. What staff welfare responsibilities do you have?
4. What workaround options in this scenario do you have, especially for the most essential services you provide?
5. How will communication continue with staff, customers, relatives or others? Where do you keep contact details?
6. What further contingency arrangements need to be considered?

Scenario: Loss of IT

Consider

- Do you have IT system back-ups?
- Are all of your contacts/plans/critical data only stored digitally?
- What activities rely on having IT access?
- Remember that IT can also include your telephone networks as well as computers or internet access etc

What are your next steps?

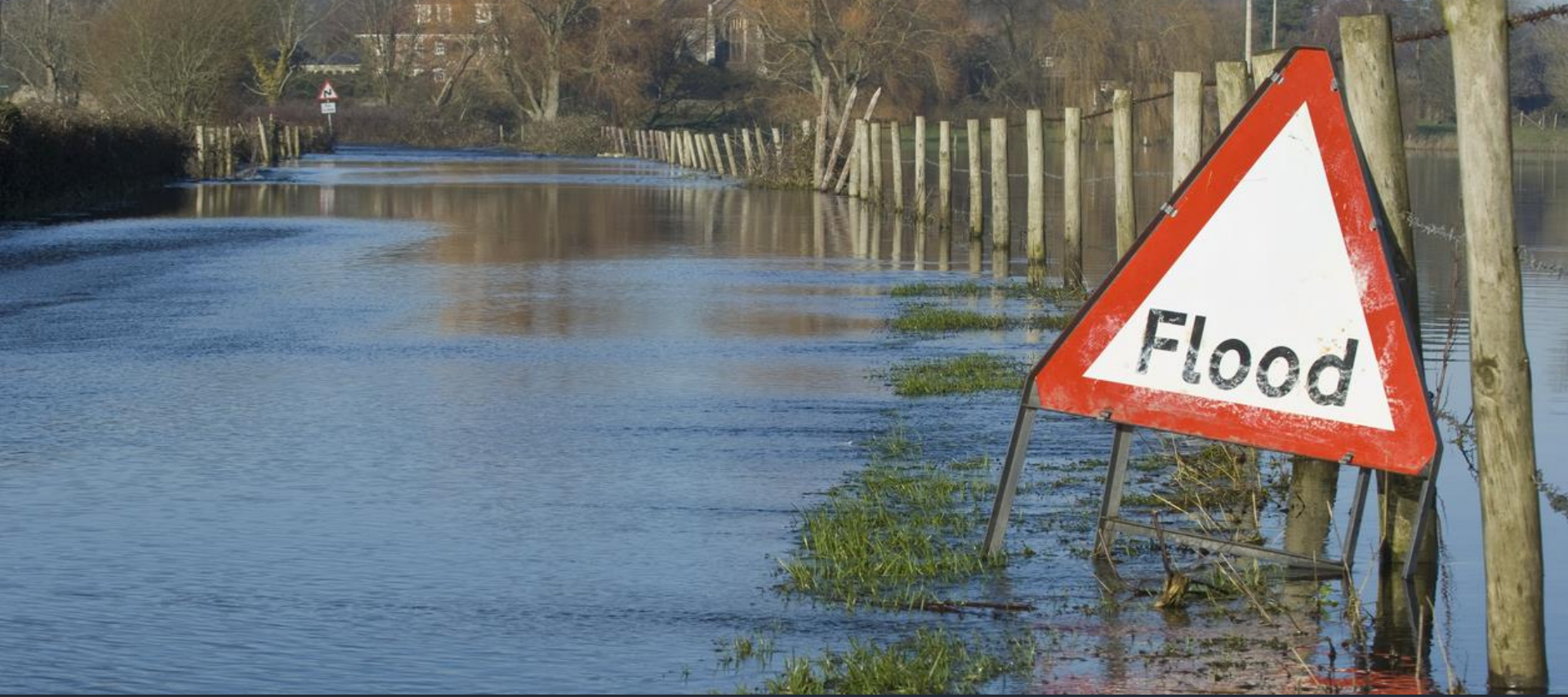
- Ensure computers/memory devices are encrypted and passwords are not shared
- Keep software and security software up-to-date
- Password protect confidential documents
- Keep hardcopy back-up documents in a secure location
- Lock access to computers when not in use

Exercise 2

IT systems can be affected in many ways. Whether it's IT network, application outage or telecoms or connection outage the result can mean major short or longer term disruption. **Remember to update your plan with any lessons learned from this exercise.**

Questions

1. What are the immediate effects of this incident on the ability of your business to operate as usual? What immediate actions are required?
2. How will you minimise the impact on your critical activities?
3. What activities rely on IT?
4. What workaround options in this scenario do you have, especially for the most essential services you provide?
5. How will communication continue with staff, customers, relatives or others? Where do you keep contact details?
6. What further contingency arrangements need to be considered?



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