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**A SERVICE MANAGER'S GUIDE
TO
BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT
AND
WRITING A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is written in two parts to provide: at Part 1, an understanding of business continuity management and, at Part 2, a guide to enable service managers write their own service level business continuity plans.

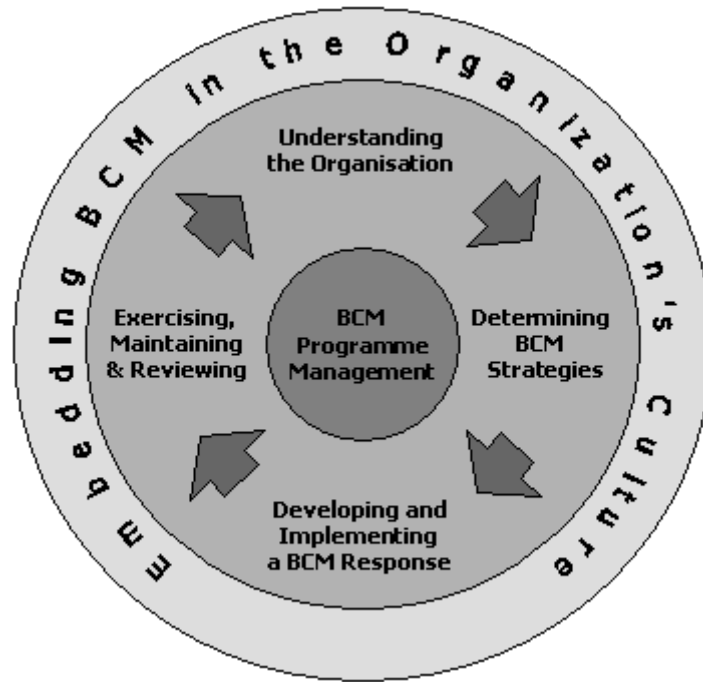
All Local Authorities have a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to have Business Continuity Management plans to ensure they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so as to: -

- Continue to exercise ordinary functions - “ so far as is reasonably practicable”
So may need to focus on critical services and may need to adjust service levels.
- Continue to deliver civil protection functions

PART 1: BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a planned process aimed at managing the many and varied, know and unknown risks inherent in the day-to-day activities involved in delivering services. The main purpose of the process is to ensure continuity of service delivery following an unexpected disruption to normal working. The following diagram, taken from the British Standards Institution’s BCM Code of Practice (BS25999) shows that BCM is a continuous process that exists within the organisation’s culture.



BS25999 defines BCM as “Strategic and tactical capability of the organisation to plan for and respond to incidents and business disruptions in order to continue business operations at an **acceptable pre-defined level within agreed time frames**”.

BCM is a business-owned, business-driven process that establishes a fit for purpose strategic and operational framework that:

- Proactively improves and organization’s resilience against disruption of its ability to achieve its key objectives;
- Provides a rehearsed method of restoring an organization’s ability to supply its key products and services to an agreed level within a agreed time after a disruption; and
- Delivers a proven capability to manage a business disruption and protect the organization’s reputation and brand.

The disruption could be from the external environment e.g. power outage or flooding or from within an organisation e.g. ICT failure or loss of key staff."

Why Bother with BCM?

Having a planned response to a crisis will help services ensure customers, the organisation’s reputation and key suppliers are maintained. It could make the difference between a service surviving an incident or not. In the commercial sector, nearly 1 in 5 businesses suffer a major disruption each year.

BCM arrangements can benefit an organisation because they help to:

- Develop a clearer understanding of how the organisation works. The process of analysing the business can yield sources of increased operational effectiveness and efficiency.
- Protect the organisation. Ensure the impact of an incident on day-to-day functions is kept to a minimum.
- Protect the reputation of the organisation. Continuation of service delivery to customers is vital.
- Produce clear cost benefits. Identifying, managing & preventing disruptions in advance can reduce the costs to an organisation in terms of financial expenditure & management time.

- Ensure compliance & corporate governance. Enabling performance standards & key performance indicators to be maintained.

What BCM success achieves

- Critical activities are identified and protected, ensuring their continuity
- An incident management capability is provided to avoid incidents becoming a crisis
- The organisation's understanding of itself, its relationships with its suppliers, other organisations, the emergency services is properly developed, documented and understood
- Staff are trained to respond effectively to an incident or service interruption
- Stakeholder requirements are understood and satisfied through effective delivery of their requirements

Effective BCM is Built on the "Seven P's". (Emergency Preparedness 2005).

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Programme - proactively managing the process. | |
| 2. People - roles & responsibilities, awareness & education. | 2. The |
| 3. Processes - all organisational data and processes, including ICT. | 3. four |
| 4. Premises - buildings & facilities. | 4. most |
| 5. Providers - supply chain, including outsourcing. | 5. important. |
| 6. Profile - brand, image & reputation. | |
| 7. Performance - benchmarking, evaluation & audit. | |

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

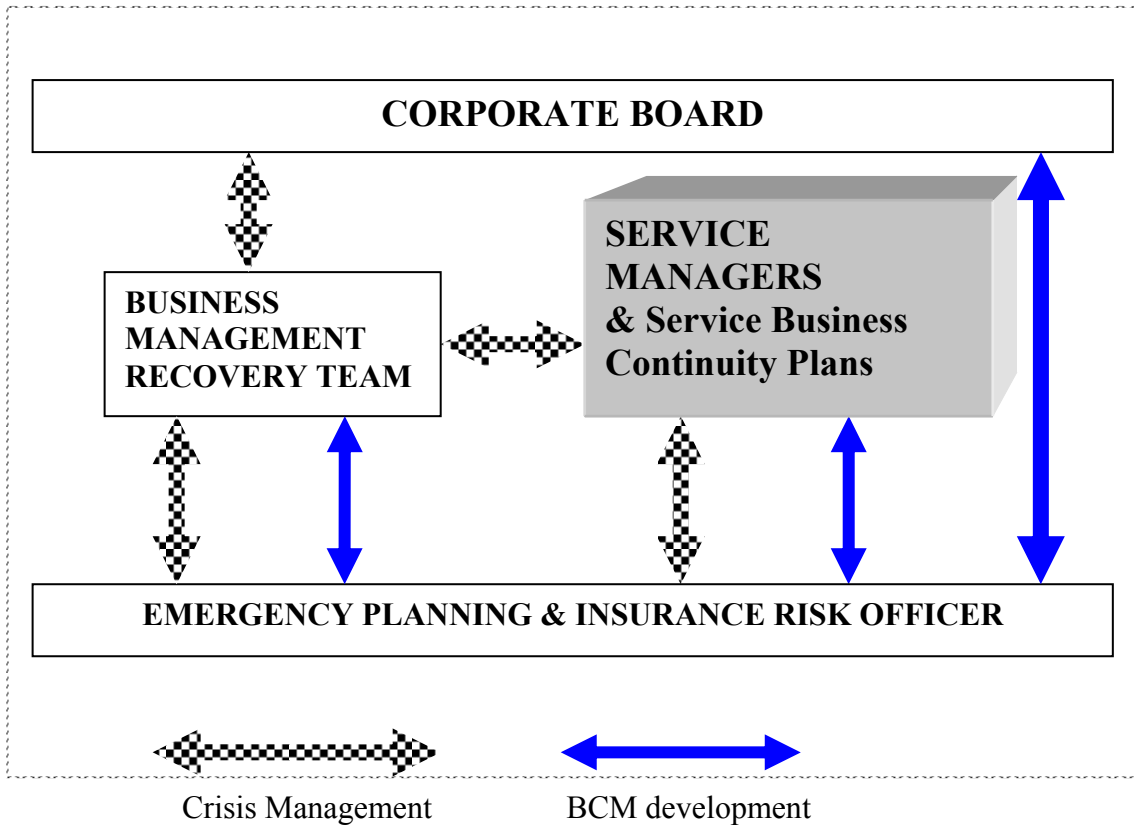
BCM must be regarded an integral part of the normal management process. The organisation's senior management regard BCM arrangements as essential. Senior officers' support provides crucial:

- leverage across the organisation in order for arrangements to be effective;
- decisions about attitudes to risk & service prioritisation that can only be taken at the top level;
- responsibility for ensuring effective governance arrangements is in place.

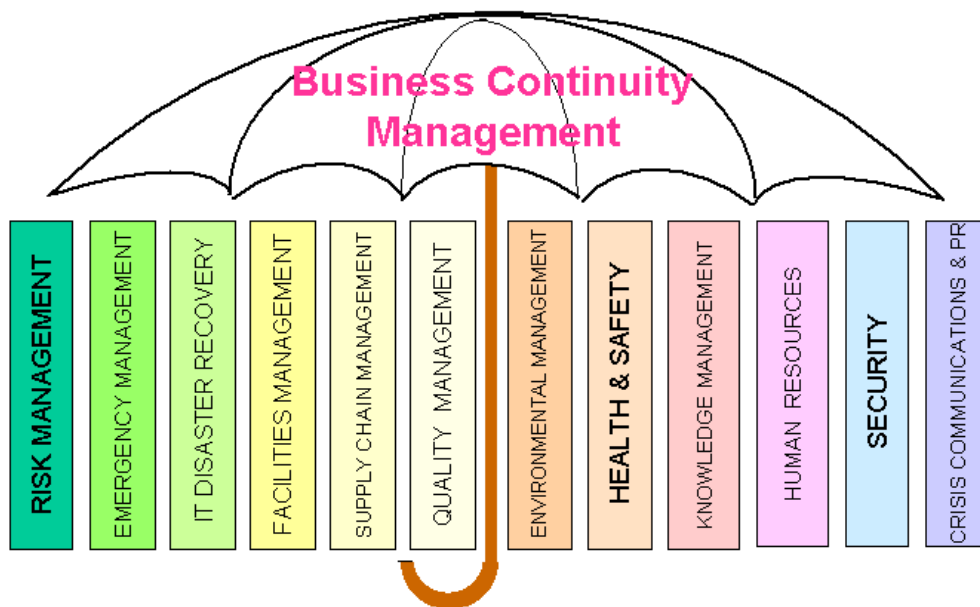
Responsibilities.

Immediate responsibility lies with Emergency Planning and the Emergencies Coordinator supported by the Emergency Planning Officer and the Insurance Risk Officer. The Services Director heads the Management Recovery Team to implement arrangements in response to an incident.

This ensures the profile of BCM issues is appropriate & decisions are made at the appropriate level. BCM is an ongoing process & it is important to gain the support & endorsement of the Board at the end of each stage. It is the responsibility of the senior management to provide the assurance that BCM arrangements are robust.



BCM is part of every service managers' normal responsibilities. Emergency Planning Services shall ensure all senior managers & service heads understand the importance of BCM, the organisation's approach to BCM & their responsibilities in relation to BCM. Ultimately, senior managers themselves must be responsible for embedding the programme within their service areas.



THE KEY STAGES OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT.

Stage 1: Understanding Your Business: Using business impact & risk assessments to identify critical deliverables, evaluate recovery priorities & assess the risks that could lead to a disruption of service.

Stage 2: BCM Strategies: Identifying the alternative strategies available to mitigate loss, assessing their potential effectiveness in maintaining the ability to deliver critical functions.

Stage 3: Developing & Implementing a BCM Response: Developing the response to business continuity challenges & the plans underpinning this.

Stage 4: Maintain & Audit BCM: Ensure plans are fit for purpose, updated & quality assured.

STAGE 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR SERVICE

An accurate assessment of the organisation & its business is critical, as it will provide the basis upon which all subsequent BCM policies & processes are based.

- Who are the key stakeholders?
- What are the critical activities? i.e. those activities which must be performed to deliver the key services which enable the Organisation to meet its most important and time-sensitive objectives
- What processes are used to deliver critical activities?
- Who and what is used in these processes?
 - Internally
 - Externally
- The impact if critical activities are interrupted – for whatever reason

It is important to put in place a process for identifying key services – whose loss as identified during the Business Impact Analysis would have the greatest impact in the shortest time and which need to be recovered most rapidly - and for identifying acceptable levels of service provision. If a declared set of aims and objectives exists, this will help identify the key services the BCM process should focus upon

BCM is also about understanding the inputs, infrastructure and processes delivery of these key services depend on. Services have many dependencies both internally and externally that support their critical processes and functions. These can include customers, suppliers, partners, trade bodies and other services provided by the organisation. It is important to identify these at an early stage and to take their influence into account. The involvement of representatives from these key dependencies will add significant value to the process.

Business Impact Analysis (BIA).

Having identified the critical processes and functions that support the key services, it is important to determine what the impact would be upon the organisation's goals if these were disrupted or lost. This stage is known as Business Impact Analysis (BIA).

BS25999 defines BIA as “ the process of analysing business functions and the effect that business disruption might have upon them”.

The BIA is the crucial in implementing and underpinning the whole BCM process. BIA is a process to identify, quantify and qualify the impacts and their effects on a Service of a loss, interruption or disruption of a Critical Processes and Functions and helps measure the impact of

disruptions on the organisation. It will provide information that will underpin later decisions about business continuity strategies.

Experience has demonstrated there are four key elements to the BIA process: -

- Defining the business processes;
- Mapping the distinct stages of each process;
- Determining the impacts of a disruption;
- Defining the recovery objectives and the minimum resources needed to meet those objectives.

The purpose of the BIA is to:

- Obtain an understanding of the organisation's key services, the priority of each and the timeframes for resumption of these following an interruption
- Quantify the maximum tolerable outage for each service – the timeframe during which a recovery must become effective before an outage compromises the ability of the organisation to achieve its business objectives. Consider the contractual, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- Provide the resource information from which an appropriate recovery strategy can determine/recommended. Outline dependencies that exist both internally and externally to achieve critical objectives
- Quantify the resources required over time to maintain the key services at an acceptable level and within the maximum tolerable outage period. Include how many, where, when for staff and their skills, ITC, data paper and electronic, dependencies both internal and external to the service.

The BIA Process

Scope

- If the service has several teams – identify the relationship between them and their functions and various parts of the organisation
- Identify the key service objectives and the success criteria of each
- Confirm the incident scenarios to be investigated e.g. loss of staff, loss of premises, ITC failure, building services failure, supplier failure, other and possible combination of these

The Analysis

- Identify discreet service processes across different service areas and identify the managers of these processes
- Identify your service subject experts from whom information can be sought about the service processes
- Identify the impacts of a disruption on the service critical functions
- Quantify the timescale within which the interruption of each service business function becomes unacceptable to the service.

The impact of potential disruptions should be rated with consideration of the following factors by all those involved in the critical processes/ functions:

- Implications for service delivery;
- Health, welfare & safety of stakeholders;
- Environmental implications;
- Statutory duties & legal obligations;
- Financial cost to the organisation;
- Resources required to remedy the situation;
- Impact of disruption on partners;
- Reputation

The outcomes of the BIA are the identification and documentation of:

- Services' aims, objectives and outputs
- Key services and their dependencies including seasonal trends and or critical timing issues
- Financial and non financial impacts and effects/consequences resulting from disruption of the key services over various time periods
- The Business Continuity Management objectives for each key service and their dependencies
- A prioritised minimum acceptable resource recovery configuration, overtime, that is required to enable a predefined minimum level of continuity of key services and their dependencies. Include:
 - Staff numbers and key skills
 - Vital records/data (all media) and processes
 - Facilities
 - Key clients and stakeholders
 - Suppliers
 - Constraints

Very often services are cross-department/division and agreement must be reached on the ratings. At this stage agreement from the Board on the output of the BIA should be gained because it identifies the organisation's key vulnerabilities in the event of a disruptive incident and focuses the next stage of the process – Risk Assessment.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is a measure of the potential consequences of an incident against the likelihood of it occurring: the greater the potential consequences and likelihood, the greater the risk. Emergency Planning publishes the organisation's risks assessments as the Community Risk Register (CRR) on authority's website Emergency Planning pages.

From the CRR service managers can identify the significant risks threatening the performance of critical functions and processes in the event of an emergency as this will enable them to focus resources in the right areas and develop appropriate continuity strategies.

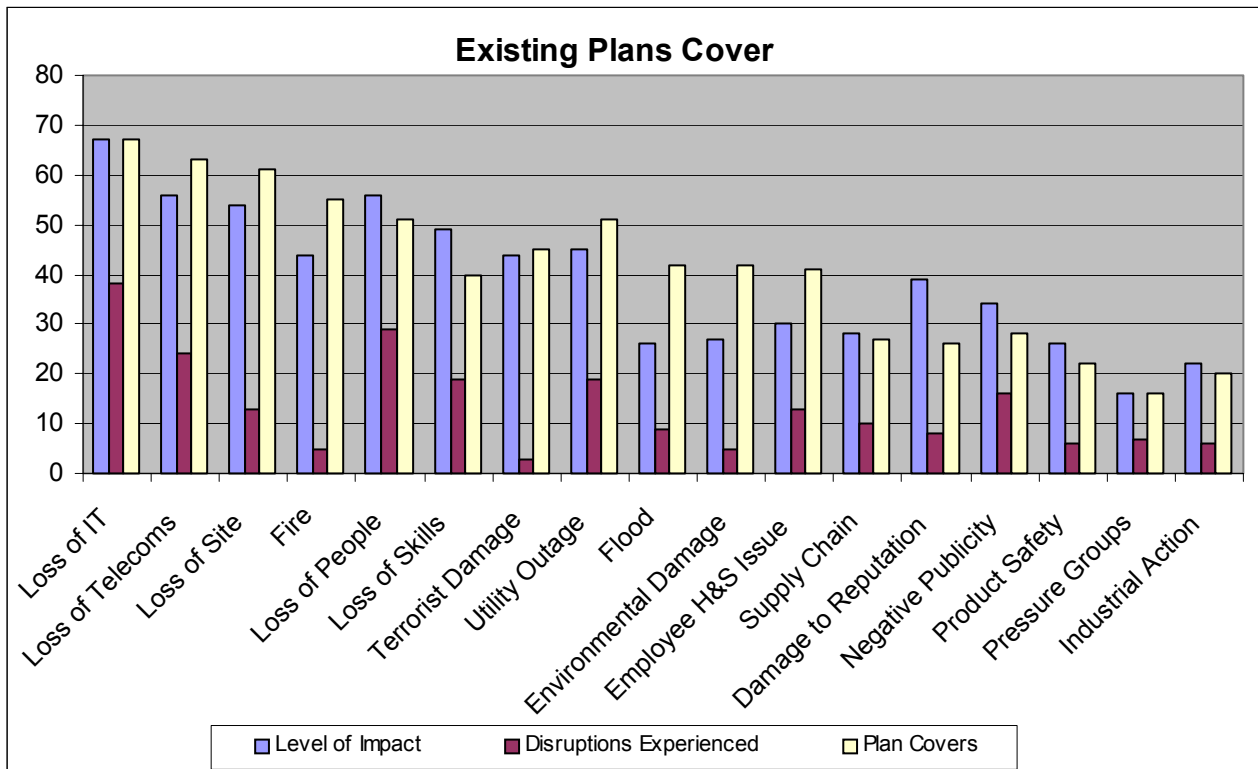
The CRR details many potential sources of disruption but all tend to produce similar unavailability to services of one or more of **the four listed below which become the impacts disrupting your critical services:**

- Damage / denial of access to your buildings / premises;
- Loss / damage to systems and data;
- Non-availability of staff, and expertise;
- Loss / damage to other key resources e.g. contractors' services; utility's supply, etc.

Consider vulnerability of critical resources and the security of those resources. Can you reduce the vulnerabilities and improve security?

It should now be possible to combine findings from the BIA and risk assessment to produce a ranking system identifying those areas where the initial BCM effort should be concentrated.

Disruptions experienced and what typical plans cover? Chartered Management Institute Research 2007



STAGE 2: BCM STRATEGIES

A decision has to be made as to what approach is to be taken to protect the operation once those areas most at risk have been identified. The nature of the risk - defined in terms of its likelihood & impact - will determine which business continuity strategy is appropriate and what, if any, action is required. Disruptions that are low likelihood and low impact may require no specific action and may be dealt with through generic arrangements. Risks that are high impact & high probability may need the development of specific plans and risk mitigation strategies.

Tolerate, transfer, treat and terminate describe strategies that could be adopted; i.e.

- Do nothing;
- Change, transfer or end the process;
- Insure;
- Mitigate;
- Plan for business continuity

Developing a BCM strategy

- Identify and evaluate recovery options;
- Identify and evaluate the risk reduction;
- Define an appropriate overall strategy;
- Seek senior management support for that strategy.

STAGE 3: DEVELOPING & IMPLEMENTING A BCM RESPONSE – THE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) provides the framework for the BCM process. It should address:

- Solutions - how will the BCM event be managed?
- Objectives - what are the recovery objectives; and when should they be achieved by?
- Tasks & Activities - what needs to be done in order to meet the recovery objectives?
- Procedures & Processes - for delivering the response?
- Personnel - who is involved in delivering the response? What are their roles and responsibilities? - How will they be notified?
- Command & Control - who has the authority to make which decisions? How will these be communicated?

See Part 2 for a fuller guide for writing a Service Level Business Continuity Plans

STAGE 4: EXERCISING, MAINTAINING & REVIEWING BCM

Exercising

Arrangements to exercise BCPs will ensure they are effective. Exercises should focus on impacts & test capabilities. While there is an infinite number of scenarios & possible responses, the list of impacts & capabilities is limited as has been argued above: -

Impacts and Capabilities

Impacts

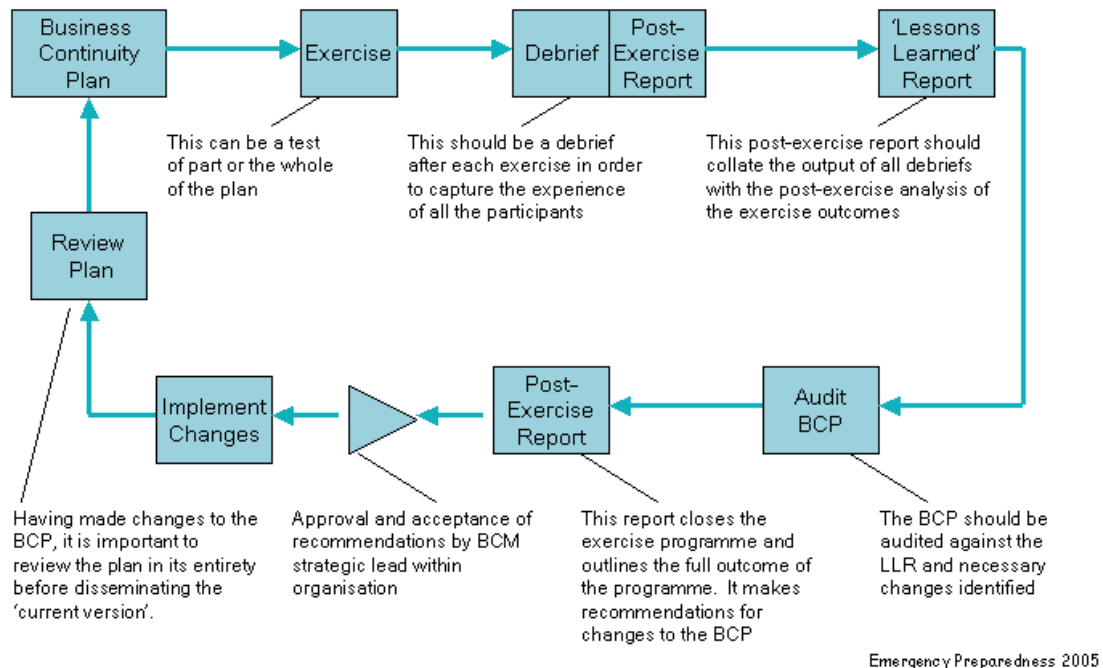
- Denial of access or damage to facilities
- Loss of key staff/skills
- Loss of critical systems
- Loss of key resources including supplies

Capabilities

- Mobilisation (e.g. invoking the plan and assembling the key players)
- Command and Control (e.g. crisis/incident management)
- Communications (e.g. media and stakeholder communications)

Exercising can take various forms from a test of the communication plan, a desktop walk-through, to a live exercise. The programme shall have the full support of the Board and be involved in endorsing the outcomes.

Exercising the Business Continuity Plan - The learning cycle



There should be a 'debrief' after each exercise in order to capture the experience of all the participants. It is important the captured data is recorded & considered as part of the post-exercise analysis. The analysis considers the objectives & aims of the exercise against this data & from it a 'lessons learned' report can be compiled. This report will drive the implementation of changes to the BCP, as well as form part of any future exercising programme. It will also form the key supporting evidence of the post-exercise report. This will also include all the captured data & post-exercise analysis & be presented to the Board. It will make recommendations for the Board to approve or support. Following approval, the changes can be implemented to the BCP. This process will be guided by Emergency Planning Services to provide an audit trail of BCP maintenance & testing.

Maintaining

The purpose of the BCM maintenance process is to ensure that the organisation's BCM competence and capability remains effective, fit-for purpose and up-to-date.

The organisation changes, contact details, suppliers, partners, customer and clients are continually changing. It is important that processes exist within the organisation to ensure that these changes are recorded and the Service Level BCPs are adjusted accordingly.

The maintenance programme should also identify any new key services and their dependent activities that need to be included in the BCM programme.

Where changes to BCPs have been made then the up to date plans should be subject to version and distribution control within the organisation.

Reviewing

At appropriate intervals the organisation should make arrangements to ensure that the BCM process is reviewed to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. This can be done via:

An independent audit of BCM competence and capability to identify actual and potential shortcomings should be carried out. It should establish, implement and maintain procedures for dealing with these.

A BCM self-assessment process plays a role in ensuring that an organisation has a robust, effective and fit-for-purpose BCM competence and capability. It provides the qualitative verification of an organisation's ability to recover from an incident. Self-assessment is regarded as good practice and should be conducted against the organisation's objectives

BUILDING & EMBEDDING A BCM CULTURE.

To be successful BCM must be established as part of the organisation's normal operations. Ensure a continuity culture is embedded in an organisation by raising awareness throughout the organisation & its key stakeholders, & offering training to key staff on BCM issues.

The success of a BCM strategy depends upon:

- Implementation of the recommendations made
- A programme of training & exercising for those involved in the execution of the plan
- A comprehensive education & awareness programme.

Organisations have an interest in ensuring their suppliers & contractors have in place robust BCM arrangements. It is necessary to ensure other aspects of the delivery chain are resilient too. It is important to build BCM into procurement & contract management processes. [The Office of Government Commerce](#) provides detailed advice on its website.

Training of staff in the procedures & actions outlined in the BCP is essential if the plan is to be effective during an incident. Roles & responsibilities need to be clearly identified & communicated to the relevant parties. All staff need to be involved at different levels of responsibility. An exercise programme implemented by Emergency Planning Services will help demonstrate the effectiveness of the training & identify any weak spots requiring additional attention.

PART 2: WRITING A SERVICE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

BS25999 defines Business Continuity Plans as “documented collection of procedures and information that is developed, compiled and maintained in readiness for use in an incident to enable an organisation to continue to deliver its critical functions at an acceptable pre-defined level”

The Service' Level Business Continuity Plan (BCP) provides the framework for the BCM process. The plan should address: -

- Implementation - how will the BCM event be managed in the service area?
- Objectives - what are the recovery objectives; and when should they be achieved by?
- Tasks & Activities - what needs to be done in order to meet the recovery objectives?
- Procedures & Processes - What is the route map for delivering the response?
- Personnel - who is involved in delivering the response? What are their roles and responsibilities? - How will they be notified?
- Command & Control - who has the authority to make which decisions? How will these be communicated?

In defining and reflecting the recovery objectives of the service, the BCP should have regard to the key resources which underpin the delivery of its critical functions; e.g.:

Key resources

Key resource	Description
Data	The use, location and protection of critical information and documentation
Facilities	The requirements for workspace covering critical functions
Communications	The information and communications technology (ICT) requirements of the operations
People	The essential personnel requirements to deliver the agreed level of service
Equipment	The equipment requirement, who supplies it and where it is stored for each critical activity

In the event of an incident, some critical functions may need to be enhanced, reduced or suspended. The BCP needs to describe the management process for making these decisions.

- Where a service needs to be enhanced, where will the additional resources come from?
- Where a service needs to be scaled down, how will demands on it be managed?
- Where a service is to be withdrawn, how will staff and customers be informed?

THE SERVICE LEVEL BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The plan should be action orientated, be easy to reference at speed and should not include documentation such as the Business Impact Analysis that will not be required during an incident.

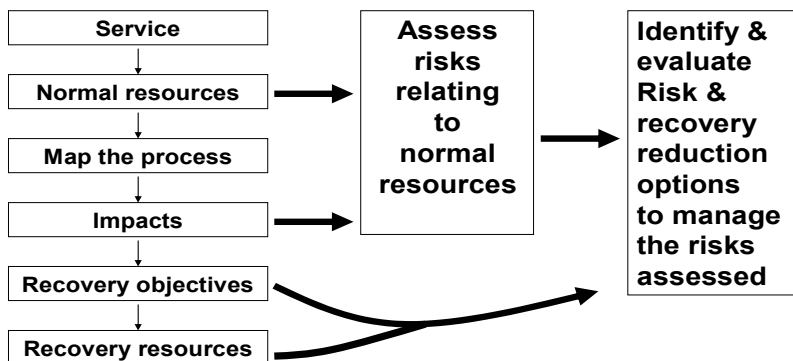
Consideration should be given to:

- Keeping the plan short, simple & user friendly;
- Ensuring the assumptions contained are realistic;
- References to other sources of information & supporting documentation;
- What action plans & checklists should be provided;
- Ownership of key tasks;
- Version control and Communication arrangements.

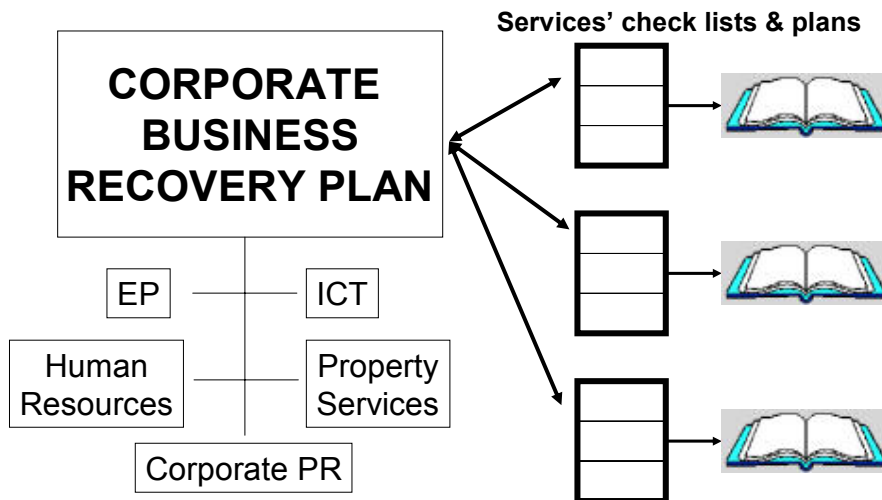
Service Level Business Continuity Plans need to provide answers to:

- What? – the tasks are;
- When? – the timescale for recovery;
- Where? - the alternative location(s) are;
- Who? – the BC and support teams, team members and deputies are;
- How? – what methods, procedures, configurations, references to manuals, etc. are involved?

Services' Planning



The Corporate Plan



STEPS FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT

1. List the Service functions.

2. Rank the functions for criticality. A function is critical if its withdrawal would have a serious impact on staff, of the service to internal and external clients and would significantly impair the successful fulfilment of the Council's aims.

3. Assign a priority to each function. What would have to be done immediately after an incident? What could be postponed? How long can the identified critical services be inoperative? A numeric scale (of 1-5, for example) can be used to show the length of time a service/function or resource can remain disrupted:

- Immediate = priority 1
- > 24 hours = priority 2
- 2 – 7 days = priority 3
- >7 days = priority 4

4. Develop a planning objective and target recovery time frame for each service or function. The objectives for resuming each service, function or resource should be stated together with the specified level of service and the target recovery time frame. Some examples are:

- To substitute paper forms and procedures for electronic versions during IT outage.
- To have in place alternative information processing arrangements to meet critical computer requirements within 48 hours of a contingency.
- To staff essential or designated positions at an alternative site within four hours of a contingency.

5. Determine minimum needs for initial resumption.

- List key positions within the service that are needed for recovery.
- List essential equipment needs (telephones, computers, stationery, etc) and sources of alternative equipment.
- List essential information sources (instruction manuals, databases) and alternative sources.

6. Obtain approval for the proposed approach. This allows the service plan to be integrated into the Council's BCP and for the identified critical functions, priorities, objective statements and the proposed approach of the plan to be approved.

7. Delegate planning assignments to the staff that carry out the critical functions on a day-to-day basis. Specify dates for completion.

8. Compile the Service BCP.

THE SERVICE LEVEL BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN FORMAT

SECTION 1: FORMAT

Footer	Version control, date and page number
Front Page	Title, Service area and Service Manager's sign off
Distribution List	Numbered copies to include copy to be kept off site
Table of contents	

SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION

- Identify the scope of the plan and its structure
- Provide and define clear aims (purpose) and objectives
- Explicitly declare the assumptions and principles on which the plan is based
- Explain how the plan is invoked and the use of the plan
- Include endorsement for the BCP by the Service Manager
- Glossary to ensure consistent service terminology (could be an annex)
- Reflect the BIA, critical functions and their dependencies
- Establish reporting procedures and requirements
- Contains version control and distribution management to ensure plans in circulation are the latest version the plan
- Names person responsible for maintaining the plan

SECTION 3: ACCOUNTABILITY, ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY

- Identify team leaders and their deputies and the team members
- Assign roles and responsibilities of team leaders and team members
- Instructions, advice and guidance and process concerning the authorisation of financial expenditure
- Mandatory instruction or advice, process or guidelines concerning staff welfare

SECTION 4: NOTIFICATION, INVOCATION AND ESCALATION

Incident notification checklist

Identifies key appointments within the Service and the Council to be informed of incidents that have the potential to disrupt critical functions

Invocation process checklist

Call out cascade;
Assess incident (damage to property/equipment, staff absence) to estimate duration of disruption to the critical functions.

Escalation process checklist

Detail procedures and process to activate teams or place them on standby following an incident

SECTION 5: CONTACTS

- External
- Internal
- Service subject experts

SECTION 6: RECOVERY ACTION PLAN FOR CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

- Identify and prioritizes tasks, actions and functions to be undertaken for recovery
- Identify vital databases, documents and materials, including backups, and specifies how to access them
- Identify resource requirements and how they will be provided and established with the timescale for their provision
- Supplier / sub-contractor resource requirements and contact details
- Contract information

SECTION 7: RECOVERY RESOURCE PROFILE

- Standard workstations inc chair, desk, phone, PC;
- Computer peripheral equipments
- Software applications
- Backed up data
- Vital/unique documents /records
- Stationery

SECTION 8: EMBEDDING AND MAINTAINING THE PLAN

- Service and Staff training
- Testing of alternative methods for providing critical functions to familiarise staff and test effectiveness
- Update contact lists
- Confirm and update procedures
- Specify if and where plan copies are to be kept off site

FINAL COMMENTS

You have to assume the plan will be used under stress and it might be all you'll left with. So, make sure it works, that it's complete, that it's up to date, and that it stays that way.

You'll know your plan 'fit for purpose' because it:

- **Is maintainable** and constructed to facilitate regular update to ensure its viability.
- **Verifiable** the plan should be able to be, and must have been tested.
- **Agreed** by senior managers and team members
- **Goal oriented** and about the achievement of specific recovery objectives
- **Communicated** to those who have a role in it
- **Complete** with all the instruction, advice and information required for critical function recovery
- **Usable** under stressful conditions

The creation of a Business Continuity Plan is a vital step for services to take to maximise their resilience following an incident. There is also an economic advantage to be gained from the information that is produced during the process. It is an opportunity for an organisation to scrutinise its present & future ability to achieve its aim & objectives. A BCP can be as simple or as far reaching as required. Some potential hazards may have such a low risk of occurring that the action may be to do nothing at all. However, at least the risk will have been properly assessed creating a useful audit trail.

It is important to focus on the consequences of an incident rather than the causes, as these may be entirely out of your control. In addition, it is also a good idea to be kept informed of general day-to-day events. Flooding, severe weather, transport problems & utility supplies are probably the most likely events that will have the potential to affect your service. Similar principles may be applied for contingency outcomes from internal restructuring e.g.: the organisation's priorities or changes that might occur as a result of possible local government reorganisations.

REFERENCES

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Pt 1

HM Govt: Emergency Preparedness Pt 1

British Standards Institution Code of Practice BS25999-1 Nov 2006

Chartered Management Institute BCM Research 2007

The Business Continuity Institute web site: <http://www.thebci.org>

Business Continuity Institute Business Continuity Management: Good Practice Guidelines

Business Continuity Institute Business Continuity Management: A framework for BCM

The Emergency Planning College <http://www.epcollege.gov.uk>