



Business Continuity: Information and Advice



What is Business Continuity?

Business Continuity is the capability of a business to continue delivering products or services during an emergency at an acceptable level. Business continuity management is the process used for identifying threats to your business and how these threats can be managed to reduce the risk of them affecting your business. Basically, the whole process gets you thinking and planning about what you would do if you couldn't run your business as normal because an incident has had a negative impact, for instance you can't get into your work building, or you have a number of staff off sick, or the whole computer system was down for a day etc.

Why Bother?

A business continuity management system is vital for any business, but especially for a small business. If it is just getting started then business continuity might not be top of the list, but for it to become a well-established business it should be planning for unforeseen events that might disrupt business as usual. There are many benefits to having a business continuity programme; these are outlined in the box below.

Benefits of Business Continuity

- Understanding what's important to your business will allow you to make informed and more confident decisions.
- Better protection and assurance for your staff.
- Enhance the reputation of your business because you have arrangements in place to guard against failed delivery of products/services.
- Companies that invest in start-up/expanding businesses are risking their capital, but having business continuity arrangements will reduce this risk and they may be more willing to invest.

The Business Continuity Institute undertake research about perceived threats to different organisations. [The Horizon Scan](#) is the report that outlines the results of this research. Last year the outcome of the research showed that the top threat to businesses globally in 2015 was a cyber-attack; 82% of businesses who completed the questionnaire were 'extremely concerned' and 'concerned' about this threat. The second top threat was from an unplanned IT and telecommunications outage and the third was a data breach.

In a separate report, 87% of Managers whom activated their arrangements agreed that business continuity effectively reduced the disruption. This is a strong indicator that having business continuity arrangements in place might help reduce the impact of a disruption to your business ([CMI](#), 2013).

Business Continuity Management (BCM)

There is an internationally recognised way of undertaking business continuity. It is outlined in the International Standard Societal Security-Business continuity management systems (ISO 22301). At Peterborough City Council we try to ensure that our arrangements are in line with the standard.

ISO 22301 defines BCM as '*Business continuity management is a process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations and which provides a framework for building organisational resilience with the capability of an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities*'.

The diagram to the left shows the elements of business continuity management:



1. A) Business Impact Analysis
... B) Risk Assessment.
2. Business Continuity Strategy.
3. Business Continuity Procedures.
4. Exercising and Testing.
5. Overall operational planning and control of process.

1A) Business Impact Analysis

The business impact analysis (BIA) is a way of evaluating business processes and determining recovery priorities during a disruption.

The BIA should include:

- identification of products and services that are key to the business and the activities that are involved in delivering them;
- assessing the impacts of not delivering these activities;
- setting a timeframe (recovery time objective) for resuming these activities based on their importance;
- identification of dependencies and resources for the named activities.

The information for the business impact analysis can be gathered by a questionnaire or an interview that is completed by managers or members of staff responsible for the organisations key activities.

1B) Risk Assessment

The risk assessment part of the BCM looks at:

- identifying the risk of disruptive incidents to the organisation, these will be the risks to the delivery of prioritised activities;
- analyse these risks by looking at the impact and the likelihood of each risk occurring;
- evaluate how to treat the risk to minimise the likelihood and impact of the risk;
- identify risk treatments that are in line with the business continuity objectives and risk appetite.

A risk to an organisation might be loss of utilities to the building for a day, which might seriously impact on delivering activities.

2) Business Continuity Strategy

The strategy will be based on the business impact analysis and risk assessment and will be for;

- protecting the key activities;
- resuming key activities; and
- responding to the impacts of not delivering the activities.

To implement these strategies a number of resources will be required and these should be identified whilst considering the strategy. Some of the resources required might be

- People;
- Information and data;
- ICT systems;
- Suppliers; and
- Buildings/ work environments, etc.

Protecting the key activities will require treating the identified risks such as reducing the likelihood of disruption, shortening the disruption time and limiting the impact of disruption.

3) Business Continuity Procedures

The procedures would be used during an incident to manage a disruption and continue delivering its activities based on the recovery time objectives (RTO's) outlined in the business impact analysis.

Incident Response Structures

Management structures to respond to an incident using named personnel in the organisation, who has the authority to make important decisions during an incident.

Warning and Communication

Procedures for detecting an incident and regular monitoring, when information should be communicated to staff and how this would be done. Also information about recording all decisions and actions made during an incident via an Incident Log.

Business Continuity Plan

Procedures for responding to a disruptive incident and how to continue and recover activities within RTO's. Also has to include:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Activating the plan
- Manage immediate consequences i.e. welfare of staff, strategic/tactical/operational response
- When to communicate with staff
- How to continue activities
- Media Response
- Stand down procedures

Recovery

Procedures for returning the temporary procedures back to normal working.

4) Exercising and Testing

The business continuity procedures need to be exercised and tested to ensure they are consistent with the business continuity objectives. It's also a good way of raising awareness of the business continuity procedures. Ideally the procedures should be exercised as soon as reasonably practical after completion.

Schools - Business Continuity

The following website is recommended by the Government and contains a lot of information about developing business continuity arrangements in schools. The website contains;

- Business Impact Analysis and School Emergency Plan Templates;
- Guidance documents;
- Risk Assessment Templates;
- Information about Grab Bags;
- How to train your staff;
- Exercises to test your plan.

To access the resources please follow this [link](#).

Case Study - SME

Yvonne Martin Beauty Clinic

No of Employees: 5
Location: West London
Sector: Health and Beauty

Background

Small business that offers specialist beauty treatments using state-of-the-art equipment. It is located in an older building under privately owned apartments. The business is split over 2 levels sectioned into several different parts to house the different treatments. Each section has a different ambiance to reflect and enhance the treatment.

Incident

- 6 separate flooding events, first occurred 6 weeks after opening;
- Most occurred in the flat above the business when the tenant was absent, making access extremely difficult.
- Last incident happened in September 2011, worst incident to date;
- Closure of business for 4 days following the incident.

To find out what the business did to recover please follow the [link](#).

More Information

SME's

'[Business Continuity on a small scale](#)' by Nigel Allen, Continuity Magazine p23.

'[Small and Medium Sized Business Sector](#)' section of the Continuity Central website.

'[Business Continuity for Dummies](#)' is a brilliant book for anyone who is new to business continuity. Written in partnership with the Cabinet Office, Emergency Planning Society and the Business Continuity Institute (BCI), it is written in an informal way without all of the complicated jargon.

General

The BCI's '[Good Practice Guidelines](#)' is another good document for learning about business continuity. It's about BC in general so doesn't go into depth like the standard does, but has a bit more detail than the Business Continuity for Dummies.

[Continuity Central](#) will provide you with information about what's happening in the Business Continuity community at the moment. They have interesting articles about BC arrangements for different aspects of business such as IT data loss and loss of communications.

The [British Standards Institute \(BSI\)](#) provides information about the ISO22301/22313 and other standards that might be applicable to your business. It is also where you can buy the International Standard.

The Government have a [Business Continuity Management Toolkit](#) that can be used to learn more about business continuity.

London Prepared have created a [10 minute self-assessment](#) for business' to use who already in place some business continuity arrangements. The self-assessment allows you to see where you are in terms of business continuity within the organisation.

For more information about Business Continuity please contact the Resilience Team on 01733 453464 or email businesscontinuity@peterborough.gov.uk .

