

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

THE 'GETTING STARTED' GUIDE

DRAFT

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INTRODUCTION

As Health agencies strive to ensure they have business continuity plans in place to satisfy the demands of the Civil Contingencies Act, and BS25999, it has become increasingly apparent that a Business Continuity Plan is not the only essential document required to underpin organizational resilience.

Health agencies should also have a Policy document which sets out the current level of preparedness of the organisation, where our shortfalls are, and what we are doing to enhance the robustness of our arrangements. In other words, what is our organisation's attitude towards Business Continuity Management and how are we integrating BCM into our organizational culture.

This document provides guidance on developing such a Policy, which we think will be useful to all agencies in strengthening current levels of preparedness, providing a clear direction for your Trust in preparing its business continuity plans, and providing a focus for any internal or external audit of business continuity arrangements.

The document has been produced to help those tasked with responsibility for BCM to ensure that their employer takes an integrated whole-organisation approach to improving resilience. It is intended as a starting point for those of you who have attended the Department of Health's Business Continuity Training Workshop.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDANCE

The guidance consists of two parts.

Part One is a list of headings which you may wish to include in your own policy and strategy document. For each heading we have given a purpose for its inclusion and an example of what your own policy might say in relation to the subject. Please use what you feel is useful and disregard the rest.

Once you have read through the document we suggest you make the decisions that are called for in Part 2: 'What to do Now'.

HEADINGS WHICH YOU MAY WISH TO INCLUDE IN A BCM POLICY AND STRATEGY DOCUMENT

- A. Policy Statement
- B. Links to Other Documents
- C. Person Responsible For BCM at Senior Management Level
- D. Person Responsible For BCM at Day To Day Managerial Level
- E. Internal Strategic Groups
- F. External BCM Groups
- G. Programme Management
- H. Risk Assessment
- I. Business Continuity Plan
- J. Training
- K. Continuous Improvement

A: POLICY STATEMENT

It is important right at the beginning to set out senior level commitment to the BCM process. Stakeholders, auditors, and staff all want to know what the **attitude** of the organisation is towards the subject. For BCM to be properly integrated into an organisation it must be included as one of the organisation's key goals.

Example 1:

Our organisation has a robust Business Continuity Management Strategy in place, the overall aim of which is to create an internal environment where risks to the organisation's business are minimised, and business interruptions are prevented as far as possible.

We encourage all staff to incorporate business continuity as a strand of their own thought-processes when going about their day-to-day work, in the same way as we encourage sound financial, health and safety, and personnel management practices.

Example 2 (for a Health Trust):

The Trust regards Business Continuity Management (BCM) as an integral part of the Trust's culture and adds value to the services that we deliver to the community. In this way BCM supports the strategic goals of the Trust.

The process of BCM is owned by the whole Trust, and is driven by Board Members and Directors. Each Service Area of the Trust has responsibility for managing its own business risk and business continuity arrangements; these are brought together under a corporate Business Continuity Planning framework.

B: LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

It is no good having a statement like the one above, which preaches integration into the business processes and culture of the organisation, if none of your organisation's other documentation has reference to BCM contained in them. Have a think first of all about which of your other policy documents have, or should have, a reference to BCM. Then think about the other types of documents which exist in the organisation which prove that BCM is alive and well and kicking and biting in your organisation. Then tell people about it in a statement like the one below:

Example:

BCM is included in the following policy documents:

- Our Mission Plan
- Our Three Year Performance Plan
- Our Business Plan
- Our Corporate Risk Register
- Our Health and Safety Policy
- Business Performance Indicators

BCM is also referred to in the following:

- Our Business Continuity Plans
- Our Business Continuity Training Programme
- Job Descriptions of Relevant Staff
- Civil Contingencies Plans
- Promotional Material

C. PERSON WITH SENIOR LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY FOR BCM

It is important that you make it clear that the responsibility for BCM lies with the top people in the company. This should be a **real** recognition of the importance of the subject, not just be a bland, 'lip service' type statement. It is no good having a nominated 'Business Continuity Champion', if this person knows nothing about the subject, does not attend meetings about it, and does little to promote its activity. If you say it, mean it.

Example:

The person with senior level responsibility for BCM is the Principal Finance Officer, who has established and Chairs our Corporate Business Continuity Management Board. The Principal Finance Officer has attended recognized business continuity courses and meets regularly with the organisation's Business Continuity Manager. In the absence of the Principal Finance Officer, the Assistant Principal Finance Officer will undertake the function as necessary.

D: PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR BCM AT DAY TO DAY MANAGERIAL LEVEL

You should also state who has responsibility for driving BCM on a day to day level. If you employ a full time Business Continuity Manager, this should be relatively simple for you to do. But even if your organisation is such that you can only afford this to be 0.25 of a person's job, then make it clear who that is, and what level of support they get from within other parts of the organisation.

Example 1:

The person with day to day managerial responsibility for BCM is the Business Continuity Officer (BCO). The BCO has six years experience in BCM and is a Member of the Business Continuity Institute.

Example 2 (for a smaller organisation):

The person with day to day managerial responsibility for BCM is the Risk Manager, who undertakes Business Continuity as 25% of their full time role. She is supported by Business Unit heads of service who contribute 10% of their time to the process – it is specifically included in their Job Description. We also hire in BCM consultants from time to time as appropriate.

E: INTERNAL STRATEGIC GROUPS

First of all, does your Trust have a Planning group which meets regularly to discuss BCM issues; things like near misses or real business interruptions, training events, amendments to your Plan etc? If so, then shout about it here. If not, do you need one?

Secondly, is BCM a regular item for discussion at any strategic management groups which your organisation has established? Groups that are not business-continuity-specific, but which discuss items (re-structuring, service performance) on which BCM will have an impact. And, if not, should it be?

Example:

Our Corporate Business Continuity Management Board meets quarterly to discuss ongoing BCM issues. In addition BCM is a regular agenda item on our Business Strategy Group, and our Customer Focus Group.

F: EXTERNAL BCM GROUPS

Business continuity practitioners are often accused of being internally-focussed and failing to see the wider external environment. If any BCM groups exist to which your staff contribute, then say so.

Example:

Our Business Continuity Officer is a member of the regional Business Continuity Institute forum and contributes to the Emergency Planning Society's Business Continuity Professional Issues Group.

G. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

It is worth setting out in your Policy Document the way in which the overall BCM programme is managed in your organisation. We recommend that you do this in the form of a series of short statements which describe the things that you do as a matter of course:

Example:

The organisation:

- Uses a combination of internal expertise and outside consultants in delivering its business continuity management programme. Professionally qualified BCM practitioners are involved in all stages of the process.
- Has identified the overall organisational accountability and responsibilities for the management of the process by establishing the Trust's Corporate Business Continuity Management Board.
- Documents all of its business continuity management activities. This includes its business impact analysis questionnaires, training events, draft business continuity plans, and notes of decisions taken at meetings.
- Has regard for the Civil Contingencies Act, and supporting guidance.
- Is working towards BS25999 accreditation.
- Is in the process of identifying all of its Mission Critical Activities, and the interdependencies of functions where these exist.

H. RISK ASSESSMENT

Most people within the organisation will be unclear as to the similarities and differences between risk assessment and business continuity. Again, it may be worth including a series of relevant statements which clarify the situation.

Example:

The Trust:

- Has a defined and documented risk assessment strategy, and there is a clear link between the BCM process and the Corporate Risk Register.
- Has a clearly defined set of risk preventative, minimisation and mitigation measures.
- Keeps a record of business interruptions.
- Has identified its areas of high risk concentration.
- Has a clearly defined and consistent business impact analysis process

I. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Your Policy and Strategy document should also include some factual statements about the Plan and/or the Planning process.

Example:

The organisation:

- Has a clearly defined and documented BCM planning process
- Has an up-to-date set of response arrangements to enable it to recover from a business interruption.
- Has a generic business continuity plan with clearly defined and structured notification, invocation and escalation procedures
- Has a clearly defined process for integrating the plan into organisational culture
- Has a well documented plan review and maintenance process
- Has a well documented training and exercising strategy
- Has supplementary specific business continuity plans for specific risks, hazards, and events

J. TRAINING

Business Continuity Plans should be living documents which are constantly being monitored and updated. In addition, your Plan should be supported by a training and exercising strategy which targets all relevant sections of the workforce. Your policy document should summarise your strategy with a few statements which set out your organisation's commitment to training.

Example:

The organisation:

- Has developed a training programme which meets the needs of our BCM staff, those with operational roles in our Business Continuity Plan, senior management staff, and staff who have need of a general awareness of the Plan.
- Has made our BCM Policies and Plans available on the intranet for all of our staff to view.
- Ensures that the lessons learned from exercises are implemented throughout the organisation

K. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Very few organisations will ever be wholly happy with their current business continuity arrangements. For that reason, it is also worth stating here what improvements you are considering making in the future, or what improvements you have already committed to making. This should be in a series of short statements which set out what these considerations are. This has the additional benefit of the organisation not becoming complacent about BCM or believing that the job is finished just because you have a plan in place.

Example:

The organisation is currently considering the following recommendations:

- Ensuring that all of our major suppliers have a BCM capacity
- Formalising all of our informal out-of-hours callout and standby arrangements
- Implementing a clear desk policy
- Establishing succession planning to ensure that specialist knowledge is not lost to the organisation when staff with specialist expertise leave
- Ensuring that there is an improved level of awareness of IT resilience issues amongst all staff
- Considering the provision of an emergency generator to protect the IT server room
- Putting procedural notes (standard operating procedures) in place for all Priority functions

PART TWO: WHAT TO DO NOW

A: Draft your Trust's Policy Statement

This should state where your Trust is **NOW** in terms of BCM and where your Trust is **INTENDING TO BE** in terms of future preparedness.

B: Identify all Relevant Documents

This should list all documents which **currently** have a reference to BCM in them; and which documents **should have** a reference to BCM in them.

C: Identify the Persons with Senior Level Responsibility for BCM

This should be someone at **Board level**.

AND the person who deputises for them in their absence.

D: Identify the Persons with Day-to-day Responsibility for BCM

This should be the person who is the **driving force** (i.e. the person who is making sure the Plans are being prepared) behind BCM in the Trust and all of **the Trust's supporting people** (i.e. the people who are contributing to the preparation of Plans).

E: Identify all of the Internal Groups where BCM is discussed

This should be all of the groups where BCM is **currently** discussed and all of the groups where BCM **should be** discussed.

F: Identify all of the External Groups to which your Trust may find it useful to belong.

G: Describe How BCM is managed in your Trust.

Or how you Intend to Manage BCM in the future.

H: Describe How BCM is linked to Risk Assessment Processes

I: Describe How Your BC Plans Have Been Created or Are Being Created

J: Describe Your Training and Exercising Strategy