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Resilient organisations.

Business continuity and resilience planning

April 2025

Why plan ahead?

Modern day organisations are increasingly facing interruptions, and it makes sense to build resilience and safeguard your business from these risks.

Things such as: -

- more frequent and severe weather events driven by climate change
- energy supply failures
- cyber crime
- Public Health crises such as pandemics
- economic downturns affecting the value of GBP
- the departure of key personnel or shortages in critical skills
- the loss of a major supplier
- fire

can all have a real impact on how you deliver your products or services.

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How do we do this?

To mitigate these and other risks, we use Business Continuity Management and Resilience planning so that we can think about how to recover quickly and get back on track with minimum fuss.

How robustly you plan for and respond to interruptions can determine how quickly and to what level your business can recover.

Use the following information to guide you when considering the business continuity and resilience of your organisation.

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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**

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Business Continuity.

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

Effective planning

Creating an effective Business Continuity Plan (BCP) ensures that the important parts of your organisation survive and customers and others who rely on you, continue to receive service.

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

Resilience is the capacity to withstand or recover quickly from difficulties. Good planning gives you the best chance of achieving that.

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Checklist

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Business Continuity	Yes / List	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.

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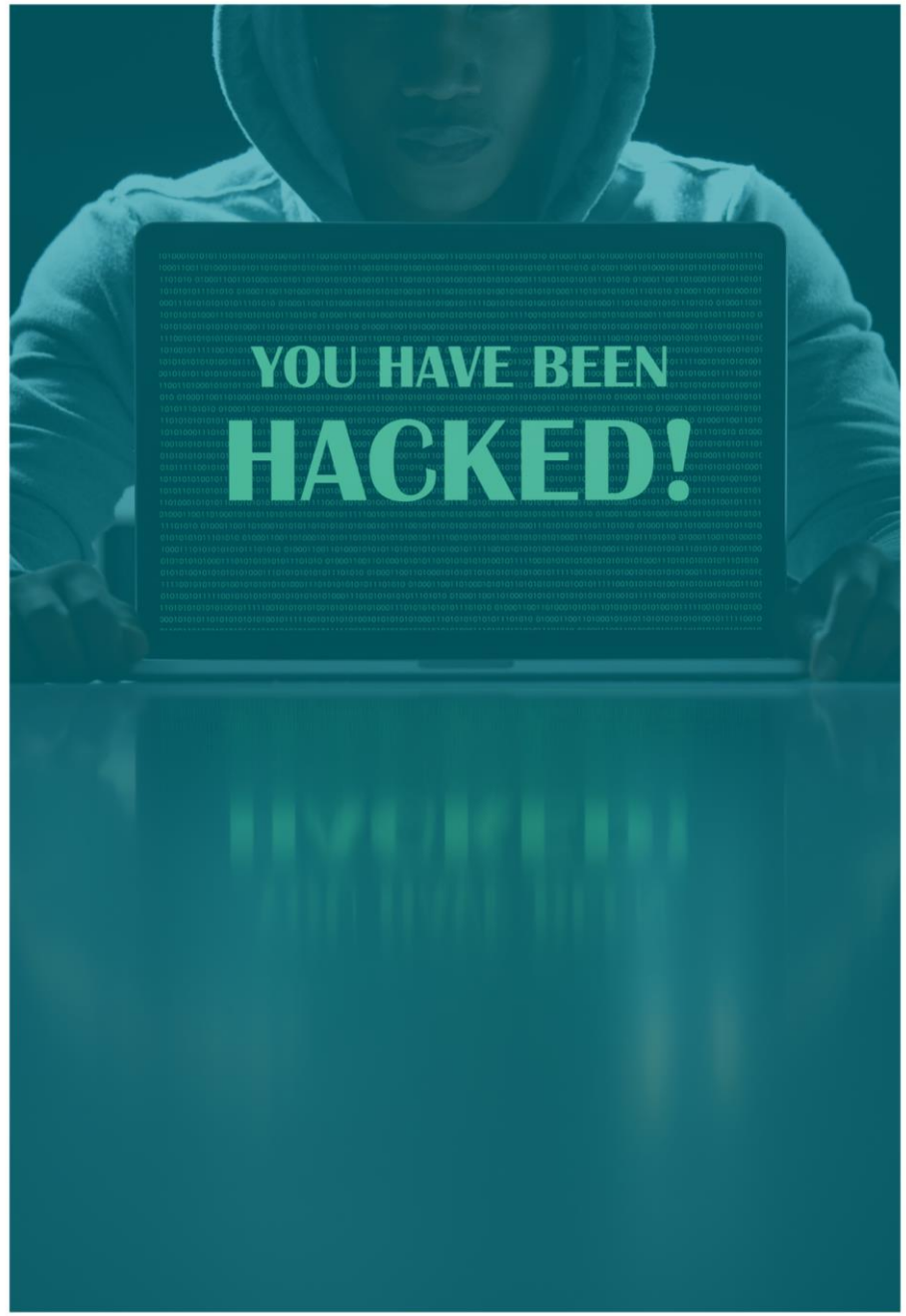

Think about

how your organisation could continue with business in the event of an incident and:-

- **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 telecommunications** – interruption to or loss of
- **financial issues**
- **transport or fuel disruption**
- **sources of help and advice**

What is critical for your organisation?

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 products/services are 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 are the impacts if the interruption lasted for:

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

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 information up to date, practicing and learning lessons from incidents you may have already encountered. Put simply, think about:

- Assessment of impacts and risks
- Critical requirements to deliver services
- Supply chain – alternatives, if supply interrupted, key contacts
- Restoring key processes – how? where? what resources are needed?
- Safeguarding

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Starting your plan...

- Communication – staff, media, suppliers, stakeholders, up-to-date contact details
- Health and safety
- Staff welfare
- Keeping plan information up to date and adding any lessons learned from any incidents that occur
- Regularly reviewing the plan to ensure it is up to date and relevant

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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 do you work to?**

2. Assess the risk

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

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Six steps to plan...

3. Develop a strategy

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

4. Write up your plan

- Use the information you have gathered to write the plan
- Templates with guidance notes can be found on our business continuity and resilience web page

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Six steps to plan...

5. Test your plan

- You should regularly test your plan by carrying out an exercise to see if your assumptions work
- Staff must become familiar with the plan 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 need it!

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Plan considerations checklist

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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/ List	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?			

Buildings and People	Yes / List	No	Don't Know
Does your business premises have an emergency evacuation procedure? Are there fire safety procedures in place?			
If yes, are the procedures documented clearly and easily accessible?			
Do you have access to the premises at all times?			
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?			

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IT	Yes / List	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 or cloud based?			

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			

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Help and advice

Templates with guidance notes can be found on our business continuity and resilience web page.

Could your business become a key part in enhancing resilience in its community? Email emergencyplanning@milton-keynes.gov.uk to find out more.

Further advice 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

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Emergency pack contents

In case of emergency evacuation, having some key information at hand or stored off-site can make a difference in how quickly you can react. An emergency pack could contain:

- ❑ Business Continuity Plan, including incident logs
- Contact details for staff, insurance, customers, suppliers, landlord (these should be included within your BCP)
- ❑ Building plans (if appropriate)
- ❑ Laminated action cards
- ❑ High visibility vests
- ❑ Salvage inventory
- ❑ Basic toolkit
- ❑ Phone chargers
- ❑ Pen and paper to write down anything important

Exercise scenario 1 - 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

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This scenario means that supporting staff resources are affected because of contagious illness, strike, transport, outage, adverse weather etc

Remember to update your plan with any lessons learned from this exercise.

1. What are the immediate effects of the 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 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?

Exercise scenario 2 - Loss of IT or data

Consider: -

- Do you have IT system back-ups?
- Are all your contacts/plans/critical data only stored digitally? Can they be accessed elsewhere?
- 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

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IT systems can be affected in many ways. Whether its network or application outage, telecoms failure or cyber-attack, the result can mean major short or long-term disruption.

Remember to update your plan with any lessons learned from this exercise.

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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