

Business Continuity Planning Guidance to Local Businesses

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1. Introduction

As a statutory responsibility, the Council has a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to promote Business Continuity (BC) planning to local businesses and voluntary sector organisations.

This booklet has been produced by Kingston's Resilience Planning Team to support local businesses of Kingston to prepare and plan for disruptive incidents that could threaten the operation of their business. It will also provide advice on how to create your own arrangements to better prepare your business.

Disruptive incidents present major challenges to all businesses affected. It is estimated that 80% of businesses that suffer a major incident either never reopen or close within 18 months of the incident occurring. 90% of businesses that lose data from a disaster are forced to shut within 2 years.

Business continuity is about identifying and evaluating risks to the everyday running of an organisation and how to continue services during a disruptive incident. It helps you to prepare for disruption by planning different ways of working so that you can continue to deliver your priority services and get back up and running as quickly as possible.

Experience shows that developing a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) can help to reduce the impact and costs of a disruption. It means your organisation is much more likely to continue trading and delivering products and services within acceptable time frames at a predefined capacity during a disruption.

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Any incident, large or small, whether it is natural, accidental or deliberate, can cause major disruptions to your organisation. But if you plan now, rather than waiting for it to happen, you will be able to resume business operations as soon as possible. Delays could mean you lost valuable business to your competitors, or that your customer lose confidence in you.

The benefit of preparing plans and arrangements for your business includes:

- Gaining a greater understanding of your business by understanding and prioritising the key / priority activities
- Helping your business to continue operating effectively during an incident and to recover quickly reducing financial losses which may lead to business closure;
- Building or restoring customer confidence, and assuring current and potential customers that you can continue providing your services in most circumstances;
- Making your business more resilience to incidents, giving you a competitive edge over other businesses / organisations who may not have arrangements in place;
- Promoting confidence and reassurance within your business - Employees will appreciate you are considering how to protect their place or work; and
- Ensuring that your business maintains a good reputation.

2. Effective Business Continuity Management

The [Business Continuity Institute](#) has produced the Good Practice Guidelines V7.0 which outlines the 6 Professional Practices to implementing an effective BCMS, they are;

a. PP1 - Establishing a BCMS

Establishing a BCMS is how a Business Continuity Management System should be designed and implemented as a programme. The importance of a BC Policy and governance process to maintain a BCMS through an ongoing cycle of activities. Independent of the policy is the Scope of the project, determining if services are in or out of scope will help to streamline the process.

b. PP2 - Embracing Business Continuity

The Premise for embracing BC is designed to deliver outcomes that are the product of an organisation with a strong BC culture, where individuals and teams have a deeper and more empathetic understanding of the BCMS, its benefits and that BC is a core function. There may be individuals that are later identified as plan owners or department representatives / subject matter experts but the entire organisation needs to be aware of the BCMS and how it applies to them, Business Continuity is everyone's responsibility.

c. PP3 - Analysis

The two main techniques of Analysis are; Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and Risk Assessment (RA). The BIA estimates the impacts of disruption over time to determine the organisation's prioritised activities, response, recovery priorities, and resource requirements. The RA analyses relevant risks to prioritised activities to identify concentrations of risk or single points of failure that may result in disruption.

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The BIA helps to review the impact over time on the organisation if the product / service / activity is disrupted, and then the maximum length of time that the organisation can manage the disruption without it threatening the organisation's viability to continue operating (Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption - MTPD).

It is also important within the BIA to identify the minimum level of service or product delivery that is acceptable to the organisation to achieve its business objectives during a disruption (Minimum Business Continuity Objective - MBCO). The MBCO must be delivered before the MTPD / point of no return is reached and this is defined as the Recovery Time Objective (RTO).

If you are undertaking a Business Continuity Programme that doesn't determine the MTPD, MBCO and RTO then it isn't really Business Continuity.

d. PP4 - Solutions Design

Outlines the methodology to undertake a gap analysis comparing the current state capabilities and the BC requirements. Where gaps exist, the organisation must define strategies and solutions to resume business operations and mitigate unacceptable risks and single points of failure.

Strategies and solutions describe how the organisation can resume business operations when disrupted. The identification of solutions must always include a series of considerations that are relevant to the BCMS and the organisations as a whole. Solutions must meet the BC requirements but at the same time they need to be considerate of costs and benefits. For instance, the cost of mitigating the impact of a disruption should not exceed the cost of the disruption itself or introduce a secondary risk that negatively affects the organisation.

Typically, there are the following options:

- Treat the risk: Attempt to reduce the risk by reducing the likelihood or the impact. For example, identifying secondary suppliers to contact if your primary supplier is lost.
- Tolerate the risk: Accept the risks and do nothing, this might be appropriate if the cost of doing something to reduce the risk was greater than the potential damage from the risk.
- Transfer the risk: The best response may be to transfer the risk through outsourcing, insurance, contractual arrangements.
- Terminate: Cease to provide a particular activity because of the large risk carried.

e. PP5 - Enabling Solutions

Outline the methodology to implement the agreed solutions. The solutions are supported by agreed response structures and business recovery plans. The resulting solutions are designed to be scalable and therefore able to be deployed in response to any incident type.

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Your business recovery plans will detail what you will do to continue the operation of your priority business activities or how you will recover from significant disruptive incidents. This includes:

- Emergency actions (evacuation, emergency grab bags)
- Staff roles and responsibilities
- Staff training
- Prioritisation of activities to determine what will be recovered first - identified within BIA
- Contact information for staff, suppliers and stakeholders / interested parties
- Media arrangements (if appropriate)
- Insurance and salvage arrangements

f. PP6 - Validation

Validation brings together all of the Professional Practices to test the cohesion of the BCMS and to prove or disprove the efficacy of the resource deployed to deal with incidents. This is achieved through a combination of exercising, maintenance, and review to ensure proportional and reasonable BC recovery strategies are set up to support response structures and BC plans.

Generally there are 5 main categories of exercises which all have their own costs & benefits:

- Discussion based
 - Simplest, least time consuming, low pressure discussions designed to build confidence in the workforce.
- Scenario (table-top)
 - A pre-planned storyline that drives an exercise as well as the stimuli to achieve exercise project performance objectives. Can involve a practical rehearsal of relevant response activities.
- Simulation
 - Imitative representation of the functioning of one system or process by means of the functioning of another. These are designed to be more realistic and challenging than scenario or discussion-based exercises.
- Live
 - Live exercises are always carried out in the normal operating environment, alternative premises or command centres. Live exercises are designed to include everyone likely to be involved in the response as if it were real.
- Test
 - A unique and particular type of exercise, which incorporates an expectation of a pass or fail element within the aim or objectives of the exercise being planned.

It is no use waiting for a crisis to see if your plan(s) work!

3. What are the risks to your business?

Businesses have their own individual risks which result from:

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- The activities taking place within the business;
- The people working within the business, especially in relation to ICT security;
- How the business operates; and
- The location of the business.

It is critical that you understand the disruptions that would be disastrous to the running of your business. Take the time to identify all the risks your business faces and then rank them in order of impact based on likelihood and consequences.

The table below is a list of generic foreseeable risks that may be applicable to your business. This list is not exhaustive, but is a useful start for you to consider what might impact your business.

Potential Risks	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Flooding • Acts of Terrorism • Unsafe building • Extreme weather conditions 	Loss of Workplace / Premises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Action • Pandemic Influenza or other communicable disease • Extreme weather causing transport difficulties • Acts of terrorism (fear of attending workplace) 	Loss of Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of server access • Loss of Power • Theft or crime • Cyber-attack or poor virus protection 	Loss of IT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power failure affecting phone exchange or server • Loss of service due to supplier issues • System overload 	Loss of Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phishing attacks • Lack of data security / encryption 	Loss of Information / Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contamination of water supply • Loss of supply - On Site • Loss of supply - Off site 	Loss of utilities (Gas, Power, Water)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplier going into receivership • Severe weather • Financial issues • Transport issues • Industrial Action 	Loss of Supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor decisions / actions taken • Poor media response 	Damage to Reputation

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor service 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial action or public protest at depot Scarcity of supply Technical problem with the fuel infrastructure 	Fuel Shortage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of sufficient budget or financial control 	Financial

4. Creating your plan

A [Template](#) to create your own plan is available on the Council's website. Please note that reference to a BC Plan does not always mean that it is just one document, depending on the size of your organisation there may be multiple BC plans in place for different areas of the business.

Carefully written, your plan(s) will ensure that your organisation is prepared for reasonable worst case scenarios that could keep your business from operating. It does not need to be a complex document(s), it need only contain the most critical business processes, the most important thing is to safeguard those processes that will keep you in business whilst things get back to normal.

The below information provides a basic overview of what should be included in your plan.

- Have a defined purpose and scope: why has the plan been created and what will it do?
- Be accessible and understood by all who will use it.
- Be owned by a named person(s) who is responsible for the plan approval and an identified person(s) responsible for reviewing and updating the plan.
- Be aligned with the arrangements of partner organisations/businesses, if appropriate.
- Have defined roles and responsibilities for people and teams having authority during and following an incident.
- Details of when the plan is to be used (trigger points) and how it is activated.
- Contact details for staff, suppliers, partners, stakeholders / interested parties, etc.
- Procedures to be followed during disruptive incidents, including:
 - Welfare of staff and individuals;
 - Options to maintain business delivery, where possible;
 - Prevention of further loss of business activities;
- Details of how and under what circumstances the business will communicate with employees and their relatives, key stakeholders and emergency contacts.
- Resources required to continue business operations during the incident and business recovery after the incident.
- What business activities are to be recovered, the time it will take to recover the activities and the minimum level of activity required.
- Details of the business media communication during disruption through websites, social media, spokesperson, etc. Consider template statements to be readily issued.

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5. Loss of Premises and equipment:

Premises can be lost due to both direct and indirect impacts to the space the business is operating within. Your premises can be essential to your business and it is often taken for granted that they can be accessed when required. You need to consider a loss of premises within the context of your business, following a fire, flooding, loss of utilities, etc. Impacts to the surrounding area may also cause you to lose access to your premises, particularly where emergency services need to place cordons to evacuate and ensure public safety.

The same applies to critical machinery and equipment, if an essential piece of equipment or machinery is stolen or vandalised how would it affect your business.

The severity of a loss of premises varies depending on the activity of a business. Physical businesses (High Street retailers, call centres, office workers, construction companies, etc) rely upon the premises to operate business activities, whilst digital businesses (online buying / selling, advertisement, etc.) are often more mobile and less reliant.

If your premises are lost you need to consider what resources, equipment and information are required for you to operate your prioritised activities from an alternative location.

Prior to an incident, you could consider the following options:

- **Identify an alternative work location:** This is often termed 'Work Area Recovery' (WAR) and involves moving from the primary location to a predetermined location when this becomes unavailable. This could involve agreeing office space with providers or seeking arrangements with third party organisations that provide WAR arrangements.
- **Relocation of staff:** Staff located in other accommodation owned by your organisation. Alternatively, working from home arrangements could be explored but requires identifying the equipment and information staff would need to access and ensure access to ICT systems is possible, if relevant.
- **Mutual aid arrangements:** Seek a location within another organisation or business to deliver part or all of your priority services. This could include reciprocal support from other organisations, including partners and suppliers.
- **Transferring work:** This includes temporarily outsourcing your business to other organisations that can deliver your business. This may incur a cost but will maintain the provision of your business, parts of your revenue and maintain your reputation.
- **Construction of temporary premises:** If your premises are unavailable for a long period of time and sufficient space is available, a temporary building could be an option. This would include temporary structures, such as portacabins, and be provided through external companies.
- **Ensure adequate insurance cover:** Where you have business interruption insurance or commercial property cover, ensure you understand what your policy includes.

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- **Seek support from your local Chamber of Commerce:** Your Chamber of Commerce can support you with disaster recovery planning.
- **Ensure staff are aware of the arrangements:** Whatever option you decide, ensure your staff are aware of what to do and where to go when necessary.

Some situations can be relatively easy to deal with. Regularly maintained fire and security systems, maintaining a data back-up system off site and a spare mobile phone (with credit) are just a few simple steps to take that go a long way to safeguarding your business and assist in recovery following a crisis.

6. Loss of Staff

Your staff are integral to your business and losing them greatly undermines your business activity. This is particularly important to staff who provide / deliver your priority activities. If staff that have specific knowledge or qualifications become unavailable this could become a single point of failure (SPOF).

The loss of staff can be both temporary (short-term) or prolonged (long-term). For example, scenarios for loss of staff include:

- Short-term:
 - Domestic issues (childcare, household utility disruption, etc)
 - Transport disruption
 - Sickness / illness.
- Longer-term:
 - Acute medical conditions
 - Loss of family/friends
 - Pandemics

Whilst the impact of losing staff varies between different businesses, key strategies for handling such a loss include:

- Train staff to undertake key roles: This provides the flexibility to your business that if one of your key staff is absent, you are able to move another employee into that position that is trained to undertake that role.
- Re-task staff from non-essential roles: Similar to the above, where other staff are trained to undertake the key role who usually operate in non-essential roles or elsewhere in the organisation, these can be re-deployed.
- Consider use of agency staff or contractors: There are multiple agencies that can be contacted who may have personnel available to work in the role. Likewise contractors may also have staff that can be seconded to your business.
- Postpone any non-essential activities: Particularly relevant when multiple critical staff are absent from the business. Prioritisation would be assigned to your priority business activities and where staff are re-deployed from non-essential activities, it may require completely suspending that non-priority area.

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- Consider outsourcing activities where applicable: Could any of your suppliers, contractors or partners provide the priority activity? Alternatively, there may be separate businesses who could support the delivery of that priority activity.
- Process documentation: Staff can gain an understanding of the priority activities by studying pre-prepared documentation. Processes and procedures relating to the priority activity are important. Additional information could include user manuals for machinery, job descriptions and role profiles, contact information for partners/customers, etc.
- Keyman Insurance: Particularly useful for some organisations where sudden loss of a key senior figure within the organisation would have detrimental effects on how the organisation runs. Keyman insurance will help pay the costs of temporarily filling the role until normal recruitment procedures can take place.
- Regularly assess workplace risks; ensure that all employees are aware of workplace hazards and the safety guidelines and procedures in place and that they are followed.

7. Loss of Supplier

A loss of suppliers can completely stop your business activity. Consider what the impact would be to your business if your in scope critical suppliers, contractors or partners were unable to supply the goods or the service you require to operate.

From your perspective, you need to understand who your key suppliers, contractors and partners are, where they are located and which ones you rely on to undertake your priority business activities? This could include anything from the supply of goods such as, stationary, raw materials and utilities, to outsourced services such as IT, call centres or transport.

For suppliers and partners with short RTO's, it should be encouraged that contractual obligations allow the organisation to:

- Attend / participate in exercises
- Review plans and exercise reports
- Be advised of any material change the supplier or partner is planning related to the delivery of the service.

At the end of the day, if your organisation is not within a critical supplier's Business Continuity scope then it is unlikely that the required products or services will be delivered.

The below list provides options to make your business more resilient to losing a supplier:

- **Have resilient suppliers:** Have your suppliers got plans to protect their business and are these tested to ensure they work? It is worth considering encouraging or requiring your suppliers, contractors and partners to have such plans to ensure they can provide you the good/service when they are impacted by the disruptive events.
- **Contract clauses:** In addition to requiring a supplier to have plans to protect their business, you could consider adding penalty clauses within your contract if a supplier fails to deliver. However, it could be your reputation which suffers if a supplier lets you down.

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- **Multiple suppliers:** Where you have goods or services that are critical to your business that you buy in or outsource, consider having dual supply or sourcing from several suppliers. This ensures if a key supplier is disrupted, you have alternatives to maintain your business.
- **Identify alternative suppliers:** Who else could provide you with the goods or services your priority activities require? Identify them and have their contact information.
- **Consider the location of your suppliers:** Using more local suppliers can help, but not so close that they may be affected by the same incident.
- **Build relationships:** Understand the implications and options available within the supply chain. What are the risks to your supplier?

8. Loss of Utilities

There are very few businesses that operate without utilities to support them, which include electricity, gas and water supplies.

Prior to utility supply disruption:

- Ensure you have the emergency contact details for suppliers to report disruption and ensure these details are shared widely across the organisation.
- Locate all metres and stop-taps and understand how to operate the systems. Localised utility outages to your premises may originate from electrics being tripped, defective wiring / pipes, etc.
- Ensure equipment is regularly serviced by competent and qualified staff.
- Have manual workarounds for electronic activities.

During disruption to any utility:

- Notify and seek advice from your utilities supplier to establish the extent of the disruption, remedial action being taken and the length of time before the utility is restored.
- Turn off stop-taps if applicable.
- Invoke manual / alternative workarounds.
- Consider the impact on staff and the health and safety of the public. E.g. Loss of power affecting fire alarms, lighting, heating, swipe cards; or loss of water affecting sanitation and catering.

For electricity utility failure:

- Consider purchasing a generator to maintain power. Alternatively, there are companies that can be contracted to deliver and set-up a generator at your premises when notified.
- The cost of the generator can be considerable for smaller businesses, so consider sharing that cost with neighbouring commercial premises or those co-located within your premises.

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- Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) can be purchased and installed to power hardware during a power failure and allow you save / recover any data before this is lost during the power cut. UPS can often last for over 4 hours.

For water utility failure:

- Consider having a stock of bottled water for staff and the public but note that health and safety regulations state that staff are to be sent home or to an alternative location in the event welfare facilities become unavailable.

9. Loss of Telecommunications / IT infrastructure:

Most businesses rely on computers to some extent, whilst some will only use them for processes such as accounting or email communications, others will base their whole business on them, telephones are equally important.

Understand your information / data

You need to understand:

- What data you hold: For example, documents with supplier contract information and contracts, staff shift rotas, customer information, etc.
- What format data is held in and where it is stored: Hardcopy, electronic (saved to computer drive, data server, cloud?)
- Why you are holding the data: Consider the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- How this data is used: For example, organising workforce shifts, re-ordering stock and supplies, etc.
- What is important to your priority activities: What information is absolutely needed to continue the priority business activities?
- How the data or information can be lost: Consider the risks to your data- fire, flooding, utility failure, theft, etc.

Disaster Recovery Plans (DRPs)

The Disaster Recovery Plan should state the procedures a business is to take before, during and after an incident to protect and recover the ICT infrastructure; minimising priority activity downtime and data loss. Your organisation may already have this in place via its IT department and their IT Disaster Recovery planning.

Prior to an incident consider how you could prevent data being lost. For example:

- Ensure electronic devices are encrypted;
- Ensure passwords are not shared and are regularly updated;
- Keep security software up-to-date;
- Secure confidential documents (password protect, securely store);
- Keep hardcopy back-up documents in a secure and accessible location; and
- Only giving access to information to those who need to have access.

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During an incident, your plan needs to detail the actions you are to take to maintain your priority activities. Following the incident, your plan will detail the process for recovering data and restoring normal business activity. Both the incident response and recovery processes should consider the maximum tolerable period of disruption to your priority activity and the order in which your data will be recovered (starting with the most critical data).

Like with any contingency or communications plan, once it is created it needs to be tested.

10. Useful Contacts

If you require advice developing your Business Continuity plans and arrangements then contact the Council's Resilience Planning Team who may be able to assist further:

Email: becc@kingston.gov.uk

Additional information / resources are also available from:

- Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames - "Business Continuity Management advice for businesses and voluntary organisations"
- [London Prepared Business Continuity Resources](#)
- [Cross-sector Safety and Security Communications Mechanism Membership](#)
- [Business Continuity Management Toolkit - Cabinet Office](#)
- [National business resilience planning assumptions - Cabinet Office](#)
- [Resilience in Society: Infrastructure, Communities and Businesses - Cabinet Office](#)
- [Business Continuity Guide: Achieving Rapid Results and Quick Wins](#)
- [Protect your business - Local Authorities' Panel](#)
- [Protect your business Template - Local Authorities' Panel](#)
- [Business Resilience Health Check](#)
- [ISO 22301 - Business Continuity Management](#)

Appendix 1 - Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Activity	One or more tasks with defined output.
Business Continuity (BC)	The capability of an organisation to continue the delivery of products and services within acceptable time frames at a predefined capacity during a disruption.
Business Continuity Management (BCM)	The elements of BCM are as follows; a) Operational planning and control b) BIA and Risk Assessment c) BC Strategies and solutions d) BC Plans and procedures e) Exercise Programme f) Evaluation of BC documentation and capability
Business Continuity Plan	Documented information that guides an organisation to

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(BCP)	respond to disruption and resume, recover and restore the delivery of products and services consistent with its BC objectives.
Business Impact Analysis (BIA)	A process of analysing the impact over time of a disruption on the organisation.
Civil Contingencies Act 2004	The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 establishes a single framework for civil protection at the local level, establishing a clear set of roles and responsibilities for local responders.
Crisis	An unstable condition involving an impending abrupt or significant change that requires urgent attention and action to protect life, assets, property, or the environment.
Incident	An event that can be, or could lead to, a disruption, loss, emergency or crisis.
Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD)	Time frames within which the impacts of not resuming activities would become unacceptable to the organisation.
Minimum Business Continuity Objective (MBCO)	The minimum capacity or level of service or products that is acceptable to an organisation to achieve its business objectives during a disruption.
Prioritised Activities	Activity to which urgency is given in order to avoid unacceptable impacts to the business during a disruption.
Priority Suppliers	Priority suppliers are those who support prioritised activities and are identified as having the greatest impact if they fail to deliver resources, thereby impacting the organisation's ability to deliver its own products or services.
Recovery Time Objective (RTO)	The time frame within the MTPD for resuming disrupted activities at a specified minimum acceptable capacity.
Risk Assessment (RA)	Risk assessment is the overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. Risk assessment should be conducted systematically, iteratively, and collaboratively, drawing on the knowledge and views of stakeholders. It should use the best available information, supplemented by further enquiries as necessary.
Stakeholder	This is a person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a

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	decision or activity. The term 'interested party' can be used as an alternative to 'stakeholder'.
Top Management	A person or group that directs and controls an organisation at the highest level.