

Business continuity and resilience planning

Introduction

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a process that helps manage risks to the smooth running of an organisation or delivery of a service, ensuring continuity of critical functions in the event of a disruption, and effective recovery afterwards. It is about identifying those parts of service delivery that the organisation cannot afford to lose. Planning and exercising minimises the impact of potential disruption. It also aids in the prompt resumption of service. To be successful, BCM must be regarded as an integral part of an organisation's normal ongoing management processes and in doing so, it safeguards the interests of the key stakeholders and the reputation of the organisation.

STA has specific resilience plans for loss of key staff through:

- Sickness
- Secondment
- Resignation
- Redundancy

Any resilience plan covering the safety certification function includes:

- who is responsible for the plan
- key roles and how they will be covered
- clear job descriptions
- competency and training requirements.

To promote consistency and show how compliance with the resilience plan is monitored and measured, STA demonstrate that:

business continuity plans are documented and regularly reviewed and tested to ensure resilience;

- plans are regularly reviewed by senior management with an emphasis on continual improvement;
- staff resilience planning is in place to ensure continuity of the function; and
- staff are aware of what will be required of them to ensure continuity and staff have the necessary training and experience to undertake the roles they could be expected to perform.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The roles and responsibilities of any deputy/deputies should be clearly identified.

Training and Competency

There is a training plan in place, which includes factors such as identifying how the successor receives the necessary training and knowledge development along with how training needs are identified.

STA is aware of what training is available, which could include:

- job shadowing
- attendance at relevant courses
- shared working.

Competency could include:

- Testing the plan.

Arrangements can be split into three main parts:

Preparation: This is the planning which we do in advance of an incident. It involves the identification of key business functions and of the ways in which they might be disrupted by foreseeable major incidents. The time periods for recovery of business functions are agreed and strategies for recovery determined. Recovery plans are then prepared.

Response: This is what we do in the minutes and hours immediately following an incident. It involves liaison with the emergency services and the steps we take to gain control of what could be a fast-moving situation to minimise the risks of further damage. We have developed plans for the range of responses which might be required.

Recovery: Having gained control of the situation, we would then implement our plans to restore those business functions which have been disrupted by the incident so we can resume teaching and the provision of our other services. Plans have been developed detailing their recovery arrangements.

STA has an overarching Emergency Management Plan for response and recovery. We have an Emergency Management Team which would oversee both the response and recovery phases. The Plan would be invoked following a major incident which cannot be handled using the normal day to day management structures and decision making processes of the Company.

Policy

It is the policy of STA to: -

- Maintain a strategy for reacting to, and recovering from, adverse situations which is in line with senior management's level of acceptable risk
- Maintain a programme of activity which ensures the company can react appropriately to, and recover from, adverse situations in line with the business continuity objective
- Maintain appropriate response plans underpinned by a clear escalation process
- Exercise response and recovery plans at least annually
- Maintain a level of resilience to operational failure in line with the risk faced, the level of negative impact which could result from failure and senior management's level of acceptable risk
- Maintain employee awareness of the company's expectations of them during an emergency or business continuity threatening situation
- Take account of changing business needs and ensure that the response plans and business continuity strategy are revised where necessary
- Remain aligned with best practice in business continuity management.

Business Impact Analysis

Critical business processes have been identified and required resources determined to keep these processes running effectively. This analysis will be maintained over time to take account of the changing business.

Risk Assessment

An assessment of the threats which could prevent key offices being utilised has been conducted and appropriate, cost justified controls have been put in place to manage those threats should they occur and to reduce the likelihood of them happening in the first place.

Business Continuity Strategy & Plans

Operations can continue to be supported in the event of a complete loss of a single office, contents and infrastructure through utilizing a combination of unaffected offices and data centres together with business recovery secured under a contract agreement.

Formal emergency response and business continuity plans exist to allow incidents to be managed effectively and for return to 'business as usual' status in the optimum time. This includes a technical plan for recovering IT systems, telephones and data communications. Plans are tested at least annually and reviewed at least quarterly to provide confidence that they would work in practice should they need to be used in earnest.

Crisis Management

Emergency Response and Crisis Management Teams are in place, comprising a mix of key individuals and managers, to oversee the appropriate response to any adverse situation, supported by a clear and fast escalation process to ensure that incidents are assessed quickly and dealt with correctly.

Policy Owner

This policy is owned by Stephanie Ball, Business Continuity Manager, on behalf of the Board of Skills Training and Assessment Ltd.