Business Continuity Management

What is Business Continuity Management?

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is an important component of good charity governance. Charities should have a process in place to identify risks to their continued operation and plan how to respond.

BCM is a holistic management process, which:

- identifies potential impacts that threaten your organisation.

- provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response that safeguards: • the interests of your beneficiaries and stakeholders,

- your charity's reputation & brand,

- your organisation's income-generating activities.

BCM brings together the disciplines of risk assessment, emergency response, disaster recovery and business continuity.

Why should we consider BCM?

BCM is important for the following reasons, all of which may impact on the continuity of your business:

- **Climate change impacts:** extreme weather events are occurring more often, e.g. flooding, snow, heatwaves

- **Terrorism:** the government says there is a sustained threat of terrorist events

- **Pandemics:** regular large-scale outbreaks of infectious diseases, e.g. COVID-19

- **Supply chain complexity:** longer supply-chains and outsourcing of services can mean that impacts can come from many sources

- **Digital technology:** greater reliance on any one resource - in this case IT and data - can increase vulnerability to disruption

- **Insurance:** insurance companies increasingly want to see evidence of business continuity planning

- **Governance:** risk management requirements, trustees' awareness

- **Stakeholders:** your service-users may need additional support and safeguarding

How to get started on BCM:

1. Introduce

Discuss the need for BCM at senior level and assign responsibility. BCM will require staff time and may involve additional expenditure. A senior person should have ownership of the business continuity plan and be able to assemble a small team to work on BCM.

2. Assess risks

Review your charity's activities and identify critical operations. Identify risks and how a worst-case scenario would impact each area.

3. Identify responses

For each risk, set out what action your charity will take. Prioritise critical functions.

4. Plan

Identify what processes and resources your charity needs to put place in order to achieve resilience and implement them. There may be additional costs involved, such as paying for backup services.

5. Document and communicate

Compile key information into a BCM pack (see below) inform staff and stakeholders about your BCM plans, train key staff.

6. Test

Don't assume; test your proposed measures. Testing can include regular fire drills, testing your emergency communications chains – e.g. a staff WhatsApp group and 'walking through' a specific risk scenario with a group of key staff to see how your planned response works.

7. Maintain

New and different threats will keep emerging, review your BCM plans at least annually and whenever new risks emerge, or your charity undergoes significant changes.

A basic business continuity pack

Your business continuity pack can be distributed to key staff in hard copy and electronically. You should also ensure that at least one copy of this pack is stored safely and securely in an off-site location.

Your business continuity pack should contain:

- A copy of your detailed business continuity plan
- Emergency contact details for all staff. This should include home, mobile phone numbers and email addresses, and any emergency contact chains.
- A site plan with information, including the shut-off points for utilities
- Emergency contact details and key details needed for: • Emergency services
- Local authorities
- Utility companies
- Key contractors, e.g. plumbers, glaziers
- Travel advisors
- Insurance

- Banks
- Legal advisors

Further guidance

The Government has prepared a Business Continuity Management Toolkit (PDF) which you can use to get started.

The British Standards Institute has published the standard ISO 22301 for BCM.

The Business Continuity Institute has a selection of resources on its website.

The London Resilience Partnership brings together over 170 organisations which have specific responsibilities for preparing for, and responding to, emergencies. Its website offers advice on protecting your organisation and planning for emergencies.