

## Business Continuity – STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

**Communicate with Heads of Departments/ Chief Executives to ensure top level ownership of the BCP within your organisation.**

Your BCP should be a “living document” based on up to date analysis of the following:

- 1) **Specific risks to your organisation**, i.e. major incidents/disruptive events that could affect the operation of your organisation and the environment in which it operates. What impact would these events have on the ability of your organisation to continue functioning?
- 2) **Critical business functions**- Establish clearly what functions are critical to the survival of your organisation and how you can ensure operational recovery in the event of a major disaster/major disruption.
- 3) When analysing the risks to the critical business functions you should think in terms of the following:

IT/ Infrastructure failure (due to power failure)

Natural disasters – for example fire, flooding, storm damage.

Terrorism- International or dissident Irish republican groups. **Remember that terrorist activity can affect your organisation indirectly. For example you may be assessed as being in a “target area” or if there is an incident your building may be in an area cordoned off thereby restricting access.**

industrial demonstrations leading to civil unrest / disorder.

**4) Consider how the above events might affect your organisation and its business function. A major terrorist incident for example may present the following problems on top of any major impact.**

Long term damage to buildings leading to unavailability.

Loss of staff through death or injury.

Psychological effects on staff- stress, fear of travel, demoralisation.

Effect on staff complement through transport degradation.

Loss of main supplies, IT systems, records, telecommunications.

Loss of public confidence

Disruption to other organisation on which you depend i.e. DCMS

Changes in the business demands placed on your organisation and its function.

**5) Estimate resources required to maintain the critical business functions highlighted following a major incident/event. These are likely to include;**

Alternative accommodation to house core staff identified in the BCP (this accommodation should preferably be at least 5km away from your permanent premises)

Core staff with necessary knowledge and expertise in their field, i.e. heads of department or owner of critical business functions. The core staff will be of critical importance during invocation of the BCP and as such should be well versed in the re-building of "agreed core business" functions.

Access to key data and critical IT Systems.

Access to staff data and next of kin records.

Reliable means of communication with staff away from the office. I.e. communication via website.

Ability to continue to pay staff and suppliers

Ability to communicate with DCMS and answer enquires from the public/media.

Ability to produce goods/services for the business recovery process.

**6) Ensure that your plan conforms the following:**

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Concise                   | focussing on the agreed critical functions<br>Identified through the risk assessment process.  |
| User friendly             | easy to understand by core staff having to work in a stressful environment. Specific targets should be clearly defined together with the associated chains of command. |
| Specific                  | clear about the responsibilities/function of core staff and<br>Associated authority.   |
| Up to date                | regularly updated to incorporate and reflect changes.  |
| Tested/<br>proven to work | tested at least annually to ensure the integrity and workability of the plan   |
| Robust<br>(but flexible)  | able to cope with a number of contingencies  |

In addition to the above you will also need to consider the following:

**Staff awareness**

You will need to adopt a clear strategy regarding staff awareness of your plan. The number one priority is to ensure that your staff (your most important resource), are fully aware as to what is required from them in the event of your plan being invoked. New starters, temps and agency staff should be made aware of the plan and advised of procedures following invocation.

**Emergency Services/ neighbours**

Consideration will need to be given to notifying the emergency services/local authorities of the numbers of staff etc in your building. This information may be required for associated contingency planning in the event of casualties being sustained during a major incident.

**Other occupier / neighbours**

You may consider advising other occupiers of your building (if shared), as well as neighbouring properties of your BCP invocation flow. This be beneficial as invocation of your plan may have a direct impact on others thereby necessitating action on their part. You may even consider a co-ordinated approach in part when developing your BCP, however you should ensure that any associated provision in your BCP is reciprocated.

### Scenario based planning

Although your plan should be based on the worst case scenario (i.e. total loss of premises/ services) ,you should not base the plan entirely on scenarios as events rarely unfold in such an orderly way. You should ensure that your plan is flexible enough to adapt to unforeseen circumstance, but above all you should possess core staff focused on the main objectives and able to work in difficult conditions, prioritising accordingly.