BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

A GUIDE TO PREPARING A PLAN
FOR A PERSONAL CARE SERVICE

**PRODUCED BY DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL
EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICE**

CONTENTS

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

Amdt No	Date	Paragraphs/Pages Amended	Initials

1. DISCLAIMER

This guide and template has been produced by Devon County Council to provide general information and advice about developing a business continuity plan for a personal care service. It is not intended to provide detailed or specific advice.

If required you should seek professional advice to help you develop your own tailor made plan. Devon County Council will accept no liability arising from the use of this document.

2. BACKGROUND

The requirement for Devon County Council to promote business continuity advice to the business and voluntary sectors was introduced under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Specifically the Act requires local authorities to provide advice and assistance to those undertaking commercial activities and to voluntary organisations in relation to business continuity planning in the event of emergencies.

Business continuity planning is seen as a way of building 'community resilience', a way of helping local organisations to help themselves, to reduce the economic impact of emergencies and to reduce reliance on public sector bodies. The result will be stronger links with the business community and improvements in the local authorities own emergency management arrangements.

The role of the local authorities in business continuity planning is as a catalyst, to raise awareness in the public and to be a conduit for information for all interested parties. The Authority is not expected to be an expert in this field, but is expected to join up with other initiatives – e.g. town centre evacuation plans – and make this pertinent for local organisations.

At the time of writing it is not a contractual requirement for companies providing a service on behalf of Devon County Council to have a business continuity plan to be in place, but that is likely to change as contracts are renewed and organisations will be expected to prove they have adequately planned for disruptions to normal service.

If you do not feel able to devote the necessary time, or you lack the expertise to complete a plan you should consider bringing in consultants to help you develop a plan specifically for your organisation.

3. <u>METHODOLOGY</u>

A suggested methodology for producing a plan is:

- **Understand your business** by deciding which parts of the services provided are the most crucial. This doesn't mean that the other elements are superfluous, it just means that in a period of disruption when resources might be limited that they need to be concentrated in the areas where they have the greatest impact. For the personal care market this is likely to be for the most vulnerable clients.

- **Access the risks** by deciding how likely an event is to occur and what the impact might be to operations. This exercise may identify actions that can be taken to reduce the risk happening in the first place. Or to mitigate the impact. As an example clients living on Dartmoor are more likely to be disrupted by severe weather than those living in Exeter.

- **Develop a strategy and plan** based on your knowledge of the business and the risks involved. You might be willing to accept some risks but for others you need to make contingency plans. Use the templates in the accompanying document to develop a plan.

- **Test and review the plan**. All key staff must understand their role in the plan. Make sure the plan is tested and updated regularly. It is pointless having an out of date plan gathering dust on a shelf.

4. <u>GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS</u>

When determining your strategy you will need to make certain assumptions about the type of business interruption you might experience. For example:

- In the event of a minor disruption assume existing administration premises would be out of use for 24 hours. For a more significant disruption assume access would be denied for more than 7 days.

- How robust is your IT system? Could you cope without access to information stored on your computer? Do you have a maintenance contract in place? Assume you will not have access for at least a day.

- How reliable is your telephone network? In the event of a communications failure do you have a contract with a third party maintenance company? Could you get by with mobile phones if there was a fault with the landline? Plan to be without landline phones for at least 5 hours.

- In a pandemic it is not unrealistic for 25% - 35% of staff to be off work at any one time. Rates could be even higher in a small business. The absence rate will include those who are sick, those caring for others and the 'worried well' who are simply too scared to come to work. On average people will be absent for 5-8 days, but some may never

return. In a smaller business if is usually more difficult to cope with staff shortages. Who are the key people? Could you cope if you lost their experience and expertise?

- Loss of electricity supply across a region could last 24 hours, although in areas exposed to significant weather effects 3 days might be a more realistic assumption. On-site generators, where available, should allow for at least 10 days operations without re-supply.

- Assume that loss of water and or disruption to the sewerage services could last for 3 days.

- In a fuel crisis some staff might struggle to get to work. How long could you reasonably expect to cope in this situation? The disruption to the transport network from a fuel crisis could easily last up to 10 days. Would all staff be able to get fuel?

5. <u>INSTRUCTIONS</u>

Before completing the plan template it is essential to fully understand the processes and to collate sufficient background information to justify how the decisions and actions contained in the plan were arrived at.

- Firstly decide what are the most essential services provided to clients. Where are operations most at risk? Deciding what is an essential service will depend on the impact it has on clients if it is not available. A **Service Impact Analysis** will help to determine the priority processes. Those services scoring highest will need to be prioritised in the plan.

- Use a **Risk Assessment** form to identify the risks that have the potential to disrupt normal operations and where it might be possible to take preventative measures to significantly reduce their likelihood and/or impact.

- It will be necessary to fully understand how the service operates to identify the strengths and weaknesses and to determine alternatives to cope with the loss of administration, a building; staff shortages; the loss of IT or telecommunications; the failure of utilities such as power or water, or disruption caused by weather conditions. This is a good opportunity to involve other member's of staff in the discussion.

The completed plan must provide the information needed to maintain or restore normal business following an incident but will also act as a useful reference document for dealing with day-to-day problems.

5.1 Service Impact Analysis

List each process / function or service identified in the left hand column. Complete the other columns according to the instructions below. You may decide that the impact upon some clients will be more severe and need to prioritise services to the more vulnerable clients.

Impact: Consider:
- Does the service provided, when considered overall, have a serious direct impact on clients? or
- Is there a significant financial impact?
- Are the duties statutory?
- How necessary is the service in an emergency?

5 = vital	4 = high	3 = medium	2 = low	1 = non-vital

Restoration Priority: Estimate the length of time you could operate before this service must be operating again:

5 = within 24hrs	4 = 3 days	3 = 7 days	2 = 28 days	1 = longer

Alternative delivery: Could part or all of the work be provided by alternative means, perhaps by a family member, a local voluntary organisation or by using temporary staff for a short period of time? Estimate how much of the service could be provided this way?

5 = none	4 = 25%	3 = 50%	2 = 75%	1 = 100%

Analysis

Process / function	Impact	x	Priority	x	Alternative	=	Score
e.g. Bathing	3	x	4	x	3	=	36
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	

5.2 Risk Assessment

The risk assessment should identify the standard control measures plus any additional actions that could be taken to reduce the likelihood and the impact of the risk. Where appropriate these actions should be incorporated in normal day-to-day operational procedures

Examples of control measures include:
- Standard policies and guidelines
- Additional staff training and procedure notes so that cover is available if key staff are absent.
- Security measures to prevent fire or theft.
- Reminding staff on good office practice such as not storing information on drives which are not automatically backed-up.
- Ensuring that essential paper records are securely stored in fire resistant cabinets or that electronic copies are available.
- Reciprocal arrangements with other organisations
- Interlinking with other emergency plans such as Parish plans where they may have already identified vulnerable people and volunteers that can provide temporary assistance.

Try to involve staff in identifying general control measures and further actions that can be taken to mitigate the risks. There may be other risks to consider such as a syndicate win on the lottery suddenly removing a whole team of people.

ASSESSING THE RISKS

Use this table to provide an assessment of the current risks. To reduce the risks make sure that all staff and clients are familiar with any policies designed to improve health and safety in the home.

Likelihood
Negligible
Low
Medium
High

Impact
Insignificant
Low
Medium
High

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	General Control Measures	Possible Further Action
Fire completely destroying all of part of the administration premises	*Low*	*High*	*e.g. Fire alarms and smoke detectors. Regular evacuation exercises. Staff and resident vigilance. Staff trained in use of fire extinguishers, Safety checks on all electrical equipment. Fire proof cabinets for vital records.*	*e.g. Enforce measures to reduce risks. Ban on use of candles or smoking in non specified areas.*
Loss of staff (Pandemic)				
Loss of staff (Serious incident / accident)				
Loss of Electricity either locally or regionally				
Loss of Gas				

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	General Control Measures	Possible Further Action
Loss of Water				
Loss or corruption of IT data				
Loss of telecommunications				
Theft of computer or office equipment				
Severe weather - Flooding / Storms / Snowstorms				
Fuel Shortage				
External factor preventing access to premises e.g. fire, police incident, traffic accident, terrorist incident				
Others				
Others				

6. <u>OUTLINE RECOVERY STRATEGIES</u>

This section of the guide will explain what background information needs to be collected and some of the options that could be considered. It will be worthwhile trying to identify some of the strengths, weaknesses and possible breaking points.

6.1 Loss of Administration - including loss of building

If the building has been damaged, utilities have been severely disrupted or access has been prevented for some other reason then alternative accommodation may need to be found. Options could include working from home, or reciprocal agreements with other local businesses. Although not too local as they could be affected by the same disruption. Perhaps have a secondary back-up.

Whatever the incident a process for communicating with staff is essential. A staff list with full contact details will be required as will a list of all clients in case they need to be advised of alternative contact numbers or a change to their services.

If the office accommodation is not accessible then all office equipment and hard data will probably also be unavailable. So you will need to consider how, and for how long you would be able to maintain services.

At the earliest opportunity staff should be briefed on the following points:

- What has happened
- What has been done
- What is planned
- How the incident will affect them

6.2 Loss of Staff

Unless there was an event such as a fatal fire or explosion any large scale reduction in staffing, and the loss of key staff, is unlikely to occur without warning. A greater risk is a pandemic where up to 25 - 35% of the workforce could be absent due to sickness at any one time.

Document any steps that have or could be taken to reduce the impact of staff shortages, either in administration, management or field staff.

Plans need to consider measures to minimise the impact of the temporary or permanent loss of key staff. Staff training should ensure that specialist knowledge and skills are transferred so that in the absence of a key person somebody can fulfil their role.

Staff performing key tasks should be encouraged to write procedure notes so that less experienced staff would be able to perform these important duties in their absence.

Perhaps other staff could be used to supplement those performing front line roles. Or perhaps agency staff or recently retired staff could be used. All of these options could be considered.

6.3 Loss of utilities

The temporary loss of power is likely to be the most important consideration in terms of utilities. Staff need to be aware of the problems any disruption to utilities might cause and where possible take steps to reduce the potential impact.

This applies not only to office administration but also to the needs of clients who may not have heating if the power supply has failed.

Without power many daily tasks such as laundry, cooking and cleaning would need to be delivered by alternative means.

Failure in the gas supply could disrupt heating and cooking facilities.

Disruption to the water supply could present a hygiene issue.

6.4 Loss of telephone landline services

Again disruption to telephone services could be a problem with the provider or due to the loss of the administration building.

Do you have maintenance contracts in place to provide a prompt response to a telecommunications failure?

If the problem was isolated could calls be transferred to alternative numbers or a mobile number?

List actions that would be taken to cope without the telephone network. This could involve the use of personal mobile phones. The cost of any calls made by staff with personal mobile phones would need to be reimbursed.

6.5 Loss or corruption of IT

Disruption to your computerised information could be in isolation, due to a power failure, a computer crash or because of damage to the building. We tend to take IT access for granted, but consider the actions that could be taken to cope without this information for a period of time.

Do you have maintenance contracts in place to provide a prompt response to any computer failure?

If you rely on computerised information could it also be stored on a back-up disk or even as a paper copy? What would happen if you were unable to update rosters?

It is worthwhile reminding staff not to store important data on any drive that is not backed up on a daily basis. Otherwise all the information could be lost if that pc was damaged. Daily computer back-ups should always be stored at an alternative location.

Could manual processes be used as a short-term measure if IT access was unavailable? Is the temporary use of paper records a viable alternative until data can be transferred? Decide how records will be kept until they can be transferred onto the system.

6.6 Loss of hard data / paper records
List any steps taken to preserve important data/records and how they can be retrieved.

The loss of vital data or records could be a serious setback. Fireproof storage could help to protect records or electronic copies could be the solution.

6.7 Disruption by industrial action
You may not have any control over the industrial action. What would happen if a fuel crisis stopped you either making deliveries or receiving supplies? Or what impact would an extended postal strike have on you ability to bill customers.

6.8 Loss of a key partner or supplier
Does your business rely on partners or suppliers?
- What would happen if a key partner went into administration, or the service was disrupted by industrial action?
- Could you source an alternative supplier at short notice?
- Could their loss disrupt the business or is there an alternative?
- Do key partners and suppliers have their own business continuity plans?

Also consider in what circumstances key partners or suppliers need to be told about any disruption to your business?

6.9 Severe Weather
With more and more extreme weather events it makes sense to think about how you would cope if staff cannot get to work, either as a direct result of the weather, or if they need to look after children where schools are closed. What if supplies or deliveries are disrupted?

7. FINANCIAL ISSUES

There may be additional costs involved with the recovery. This could include new equipment, special payments, overtime etc. The authorising of any additional expenditure in relation to the incident will need to be controlled. All expenditure should be monitored and recorded as it may be needed for insurance purposes.

8. MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

A major incident, such as a fire, may attract media or public interest and demand for information. The way that media and public information is managed will have a bearing on the public perception of the incident and

possibly the reputation of those people involved. Staff should be aware that only authorised individuals should speak to the media.

9. **RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT**

9.1 Initial Response
The initial response to an incident that threatened the administration offices or the safety of staff would be to evacuate the building, or part of a building. Once the immediate danger has passed a decision will need to be made on whether it is feasible to return or whether the business continuity plan needs to be activated.

The initial response to an incident that affects the ability of your management or field staff to provide a service will be quite different and may include a prioritisation of services to the more vulnerable clients or a re-assignment of some staff.

9.2 Invoking the plan
Staff need to be aware under what circumstances the plan would be invoked - by whom and why.

A very localised incident might not class as a full scale emergency but still represents a business risk and as such needs a prompt response and assessment. Some incidents will be dealt with as a day-to-day issue, but others due to their potential impact will need the business continuity plan to be invoked.

9.3 Action Checklists
For ease of use the plan may include checklists for dealing with the initial incident and then for the response to keep the service operating as normally as possible. **Form A – Immediate Actions Checklist** & **Form B – Response Actions Checklist** suggest some of the actions that should be taken immediately an incident occurs and during the recovery phase. The lists are not prescriptive, exclusive or prioritised since any incident will require a dynamic assessment of issues and actions required. Include additional actions which are appropriate to your business needs.

10. **COLLECTING THE BASIC INFORMATION**

It is important to have all the essential information readily to hand in the plan so it can be used immediately an incident occurs, effectively providing a priority list for the restoration of the essential processes. The following forms are merely our suggestions on what is required, you may delete, adapt or add to this list.

- **Form C – Essential Services** is a list of the essential services or processes that must be maintained or quickly restored in the event of a disruptive incident.

- **Form D – Summary of Post Incident Resources & Equipment** summarises the minimum resource levels and equipment needed to maintain services.

- **Form E – Staff Details** lists all staff, indicating those business critical staff that will be required if an incident occurs. Even if the listing in the plan only includes key staff a full listing of all employees should be accessible.

- **Form F – Key Contacts** a list of those people that may need to be contacted in the event of an incident. This could be clients, key partners or contacts within the local authority.

- **Form G – Plan Summary** provides a summary of the main recovery options for possible disruptions. This will never cover all options but will cover the majority of the options to aid recovery.

11. TESTING AND REVIEWING THE PLAN

Once the plan has been completed staff may need to be trained and tested on their roles and responsibilities. Someone will need to be made responsible for deciding how and when staff will receive training and making sure it happens.

Consider desktop exercises:

- To simulate a real crisis situation for the benefit of those taking part.

- To identify errors, omissions and areas of improvement in the plan.

- The plan should also be reviewed annually or when there are major alterations in the organisation or responsibilities.

- The plan should identify who is responsible for maintaining and reviewing the plan.

- The plan revision should also include a progress report on actions taken to reduce the threat from individual risks e.g. enforcing a smoking ban in certain areas to reduce the risk of a fire.

12. POPULATING THE TEMPLATES

Form A – Immediate Actions Checklist
The checklist in the skeleton plan is not prescriptive, exclusive or prioritised; any incident will require a dynamic assessment of issues and actions required. Include additional actions which are appropriate to your business needs.

Form B – Response Actions Checklist

The checklist in the skeleton plan is not prescriptive, exclusive or prioritised; any incident will require a dynamic assessment of issues and actions required. Include additional actions which are appropriate to your business needs.

Form C – Essential Services

What are the essential services or parts of the service that are required within 24 hours?

List the priority services / processes / functions that must be quickly restored. The service impact analysis will help to determine the priority. It may be just one process or it could be several.

What are the essential services parts of the service that are required within 2 – 7 days?

List the additional services / processes / functions that must be restored within 2-7 days. These are over and above those that are required within 24 hours.

Form D – Summary of Post Incident Resources & Equipment

Only include the minimum requirements.

Requirement	Within 24 hrs	2 – 7 Days
People		
Number of Managers		
Number of field staff		
Number of admin staff (FTE)		
Accommodation & Equipment		
Office space		
Chairs		
Desks		
PC		
Computerised records		
Telephone		
Printer		
Office		
Photocopier		
Paper records / files		
Other items as necessary		

Form E – Staff Details

This information may be available in an alternative format but you need access to both a paper and electronic version.

NAME	POSITION/ROLE	KEY	ADDRESS	HOME	MOBILE
A Manager	*Manager – would be responsible for reorganising the rota in an emergency.*	*Yes*	*12 Swallow Road, Exeter, EX4 2DD*	*01392 222222*	*07929 121212*
A Carer	*Providing the service to support the most vulnerable clients*	*Yes*	*10 Rook Close, Exeter, EX5 3FF*	*01392 333333*	*07813 212121*
A Clerk	*Office Clerk*	*No*	*53 Kestrel Avenue, Exeter EX2 5HH*	*01392 444444*	*07801 313131*

Form F – Key Contacts

This information may be available in an alternative format but you need access to both a paper and electronic version.

(Other internal staff contacts, external contacts).

NAME	POSITION/ROLE	E-MAIL ADDRESS & OR BUSINESS PHONE	HOME	MOBILE
Devon County Council	*Key contact in Social Care*	*AN.Other@devon.gov.uk 01392 777777*	*01392 222222*	*07929 121212*
A Press	*Reporter on local paper*	*Apress@myco.co.uk*	*01392 279999*	*07929 454545*

Form G – Plan Summary

The following are all possible disruptions to the service, consider the preventative measures already in place plus those that could be added to reduce the risk. It may be necessary to have differing contingency plans depending on the extent of the incident.

	Problem	Trigger & Disruption	Preventative Measures	Contingency Plan
1	**Loss of all or a significant part of the administration building**	**Could be due to a fire, power cut, gas leak, virus outbreak (legionnaires disease), storm damage, flooding or vandalism** Staff may need to be moved to alternative accommodation for a few hours or possibly days this could lead to a financial loss.	*Fire alarms, smoke detectors, annual servicing of all electrical and gas appliances, stringent cleaning and hygiene standards, normal security measures.*	*If the damage is limited it may be possible to continue normal operations. Consider a reciprocal arrangement with another local business. This can be with any type of business. Or you may decide that people can work from home if they have broadband access and suitable software.*
2	**Disruption to IT**	**Loss of IT network or corruption of data** The complete loss of a pc or the information held could cause disruption to the records and information held on residents and staff. Systems would be unavailable until they are restored.	*Maintenance agreement with IT specialist.* *Daily back-up of IT system with tapes held off site.* *Details of all licensing agreements stored off site*	*If a single pc becomes inoperable use another pc if available.* *If data is corrupted refer to back up disks.* *If possible get the pc repaired or replaced and loaded with back-up disks.* *Restore data on a home pc or at office premises made available through a reciprocal agreement.*
3	**Lack of Staff**	**A number of staff report sick or do not turn up for their shift due to an accident or a pandemic.** There may be insufficient staff to provide administrative support. Or there may be a shortage of trained field staff to meet all of the	*Off duty staff may be asked to provide cover at short notice if they are available. Must have regard to when they were last working and / or when they are next rostered to work. It is essential that all relevant employment protection*	*In a Flu pandemic projections of 35% of staff being ill or off caring for sick relatives are not unreasonable.* *In normal circumstances you could consider temp agencies for some roles, or staff from Residential Homes may be willing to provide cover for staff shortages.*

	Problem	Trigger & Disruption	Preventative Measures	Contingency Plan
		scheduled contracted visits.	*regulations are complied with relating to the number of hours worked within a specified period and breaks between periods of working.*	
4	**Loss of telephone network**	**Staff and clients are unable to make or receive telephone calls.** Unable to contact clients to check on their position or for them to contact business.	*Emergency mobile phone numbers provided to all clients.*	*Establish whether the fault is inside the building or outside.* *If the fault is with the network contact the supplier.* *Request that all calls be diverted to a nominated mobile telephone until the fault can be fixed.*
5	**Severe Weather**	**May include storms, heavy snow or flooding, any weather condition that makes it difficult to reach clients safely** It may be difficult to reach some clients. Safety of staff must be as big a consideration as that of clients.	*Monitor weather reports and if required check on the condition of vulnerable clients living in isolated locations* *Keep a list of all staff with 4WD vehicles.* *Forge links with local garages, voluntary organisation or the military that may be able to lend 4WD vehicles.*	*Advise clients appointments may be late due to conditions.* *Borrow 4WD vehicles to reach cut-off clients who need assistance. Depending on the extent of the disruption this may mean a reduction in the frequency of services to some clients.*
6	**Loss of paper records**	**Loss of essential paper records.** Personnel and personal information relating to staff and clients could be	*The files are kept in a secure, fire proof cabinet.*	*Copy documents may be available from DCC.*

	Problem	Trigger & Disruption	Preventative Measures	Contingency Plan
		lost causing potential operational difficulties.		
7	Localised disruption to utilities	**A major utilities failure such as a power cut could mean additional demands upon resources.** Isolated locations may not be a priority for reconnection and could be without power, gas or water for an extended period.	*There is little that individual businesses can do to prevent such a disruption*	*Check the extent of the problem with utility companies. Vulnerable clients may need additional support.* *A disruption could affect administration see above.* *Additional advice may need to be given to clients to keep warm if heating is disrupted.*
8	Industrial Action	**An example could be a fuel shortage or industrial action by bank staff disrupting your finances** Staff may not be able to get to work if they are not classed as priority users. A cashflow problem could mean bills and staff may not be paid on time.	*Care staff would be given priority access in the event of a fuel crisis. Make sure all the information required by the authorities in available in advance.*	
9	Loss of a key partner	*What is the process if a key partner is unable to deliver a service?*	*Justify how this decision was made.*	*Are there any other alternatives?*

13. ANNEX

Emergency Operations Log

Team / Section:		Date:	Sheet ….. of …..
Time	**Event**		**Action**
	Use this to record actions taken if an emergency Incident occurs		

You could also include a copy of fire / evacuation or other standard processes in this section so they are readily to hand in the event of an incident occurring.

You may decide to specify here in advance how the most vulnerable clients would be identified and how services would be prioritised in the event of severe staff shortage or bad weather preventing access to all.

END