

Business Continuity Planning Checklist in Response to a Pandemic



The implications of a pandemic could cause significant levels of absenteeism in the workforce potentially impacting on an organisation's ability to maintain business operations. The current threat of a pandemic is from new and emerging flu viruses which have the ability to infect many people over a wide geographical area who have little or no immunity to the virus.

It is therefore prudent to include a focus on pandemic planning as part of an organisation's business continuity management programme to enable an effective response to a pandemic virus which could vary in both severity and spread. A suggested worst case scenario would be to plan for up to 25-50% absenteeism, based on the cumulative impacts of illness, holidays, potential school closures and self absenting for other reasons, e.g. for fear of infection.

Advice from Government and industry bodies is that all companies should review their objectives for the continuity of business in a pandemic situation and develop practical contingencies. Pandemic planning can also be helpful in ensuring continuity of personnel in other situations which could potentially impact on business continuity, for example, industrial action or an outbreak of a different type of virus.

| Pandemic Business Continuity Planning – Checklist | | | |
|--|--|--------------|------------|
| Implications & Issues | Some Practical Actions for Consideration | Required Y/N | Complete ✓ |
| Situation is managed effectively | 1. Appoint Pandemic Management Team | | |
| | 2. Define a pandemic business continuity aim or objective | | |
| | 3. Design and run a tabletop exercise that involves relevant parties responding to an evolving pandemic scenario | | |
| | 4. Develop or update pandemic business continuity plan/s | | |
| Potential reduced ability to operate | 5. Identify critical activities/services and the resources required to support these | | |
| | 6. Identify alternative human resource e.g. temps, recent retirees etc. | | |
| | 7. Adopt remote working | | |
| | 8. Check IT system is robust to support additional home working and sufficient "dial-in" facilities | | |
| | 9. Reduce or cease non essential activities | | |
| | 10. Redeploy staff if appropriate (recovered staff could be a useful resource) | | |
| | 11. Identify key personnel | | |
| | 12. Cross train and share knowledge | | |
| Potential disruption to supply chain | 13. Talk to key suppliers and/or identify alternatives | | |
| | 14. Consider alternative methods of accessing service/product, e.g. online, home delivery | | |
| | 15. Build up buffers of stock (particularly just-in-time) | | |
| Potential reduction in income or service requirements | 16. Consider whether there could be reduced or increased demand for your services | | |
| | 17. Establish a financial 'cushion' | | |
| | 18. Consider potential business opportunities | | |
| Workplace hygiene issues | 19. Display appropriate hygiene guidance e.g., washing hands, disposing of used tissues, etc. | | |
| | 20. Remind staff that good personal hygiene is an effective way of reducing infection spread | | |
| | 21. Consider providing isolation facilities | | |
| | 22. Implement social distancing measures | | |
| | 23. Provide tissues, waste bins and hand wipes/gels | | |
| | 24. Increase cleaning regimes, particularly for communal areas | | |
| | 25. Encourage staff to keep personal workspace clean | | |
| | 26. Consider alternatives to direct meetings and visits, e.g., phone and video conferencing | | |
| | 27. Review provision of catering facilities | | |
| | 28. Clean work areas of sick staff promptly, thus reassuring other staff | | |
| Policy issues | 29. Review policies for sickness, compassionate leave, working time directive, travel, home working, etc., to ensure they are appropriate for a pandemic situation | | |
| | 30. Ensure health and safety duties to employees are discharged | | |
| | 31. Ensure compliance with legislation and regulations | | |
| | 32. Review insurance arrangements to ensure levels of risk are appropriate and understood | | |
| Effective communications | 33. Provide regular communications to staff providing reassurance and guidance via website, email, text messaging | | |
| | 34. Set up system for absence reporting and helpline for staff | | |
| | 35. Maintain contact with absent employees | | |
| | 36. Communicate with suppliers, customers and other stakeholders to manage expectations | | |
| Employee welfare concerns | 37. Ensure staff are aware of hygiene guidance available | | |
| | 38. Remind employees if they are unwell to stay at home and contact the National Flu Service or NHS Direct or NHS24 | | |
| | 39. Provide counselling services if appropriate | | |
| | 40. Provide support to absent staff and consider care of personnel who fall ill at work | | |

Information Websites:

National Pandemic Flu Service
Foreign Office
Department of Health
Cabinet Office
Teed Business Continuity

www.directgov.co.uk/pandemicflu
www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/swine-flu
www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm
www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/pandemicflu.aspx
www.teed.co.uk