

Business Continuity Planning Checklist in Response to a Pandemic or Public Health Emergency



The implications of a pandemic (or Public Health Emergency) could cause significant levels of absenteeism in the workforce potentially impacting on an organisation's ability to maintain business operations. New and emerging flu viruses with the ability to infect many people over a wide geographical area who have little or no immunity. Other novel viruses, such as the coronavirus, can emerge with widescale impacts.

It is prudent to include a focus on pandemic planning as part of an organisation's business continuity programme to enable an effective response to a 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. Teed's Checklist below has some practical steps you can take to start planning now. More information is available at <https://www.teed.co.uk/services/pandemic>

Pandemic Business Continuity Planning – Checklist			
Implications & Issues	Some Practical Actions to Consider	Required Y/N	✓
Effective management	1. Appoint an Incident Management Team for the pandemic / virus		
	2. Define a business continuity aim or objective appropriate to the situation faced		
	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 for reduced ability to operate	5. Identify critical activities/services and the resources required to support these		
	6. Identify alternative personnel, e.g. temps, recent retirees etc.		
	7. Adopt remote working		
	8. Check IT capability can support additional home working. Consider ramping up capability		
	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 for disruption to supply chain	13. Establish with key suppliers if they are likely to be impacted by travel restrictions / reduced workforce. Identify alternatives if necessary		
	14. Consider alternative methods of accessing service/product		
	15. Build up buffers of stock (particularly just-in-time)		
Potential for reduced demand	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	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			
Review policies	28. Clean work areas of sick staff promptly, thus reassuring other staff		
	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		
Effective communications	32. Review insurance arrangements to ensure levels of risk are appropriate and understood		
	33. Provide regular communications to staff providing reassurance and guidance via website, email, SMS, social media, mass communication methods		
	34. Communicate with employees regularly to provide information regarding their welfare and likely changes to business practices / policies		
	35. Consider employees who may be in countries impacted by illness or who may be travelling and provide appropriate guidance		
	36. Set up system for absence reporting and helpline for staff		
	37. Maintain contact with absent employees		
Employee welfare concerns	38. Communicate with suppliers, customers and other stakeholders to manage expectations		
	39. Ensure staff are aware of hygiene guidance available		
	40. Remind employees if they are unwell to stay at home and contact their medical centre		
	41. Provide counselling services if appropriate		
	42. Provide support to absent staff and consider care of personnel who fall ill at work		

World Health Organisation

<https://www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/en/>
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

UK Government

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pandemic-flu>

US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

European Centre for Disease Prevention & Control

<https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/seasonal-influenza/influenza-pandemic-preparedness>