

Business Continuity Plan

Procedures and Guidelines

A) INTRODUCTION

The Board of Directors for Healthwatch Derbyshire must consider the implications of a range of possible 'disasters', which it is possible might occur and which could have a significant impact on the work of our organisation, in the short, medium and even longer term.

This plan considers some of these possible 'disasters' and how we might eliminate or reduce their impact, insure against such a disaster happening, or draw up plans to ensure we could continue the important work of the organisation, if such an event ever did happen.

The chief executive of Healthwatch Derbyshire must inform the chair of any events that might have a significant impact on the work of the organisation, as soon as reasonably possible. It is the responsibility of the chief executive to assess the impact of any particularly disastrous events, with input from the Board of Directors, and notify staff of the actions they need to take.

Whilst this plan puts heavy reliance on the use of telephone and IT systems, it is recognised that for some staff members and/or volunteers living in certain remote areas of Derbyshire, IT connectivity/accessibility can be restricted/interrupted or, in some cases, non-existent.

B) COMPUTERS & COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Our business is dependent on the daily use of personal computers, the systems loaded onto our computers (such as the financial package) and the information stored on our computers (such as the comments database).

The organisation takes the following precautions:

- Computer security systems updated regularly to reduce the risk of a virus affecting our systems
- Regular back up of all important systems, so that if computers were inoperable for even a short time we could load the information onto another PC, or buy new computers, and continue to work as normal within 24 hours, or as soon as possible thereafter.

C) TELEPHONES

Should our telephones be cut off, for example because of damage to overhead lines or underground cables being accidentally cut or a terrorist attack, we would need to resort to using mobile phones for the period until normal service is resumed.

The telephone system has a call forwarding system installed which allows staff to remotely answer calls being made to the Healthwatch office, using their mobile phones. Additionally, staff can make calls using the same system which does not incur call charges to individual staff members.

D) ELECTRICITY

If our electricity supply is lost for more than one hour, leaving the offices with no light, heat or computers, staff will work from home for the duration of the power failure - if this is possible.

The chief executive has the responsibility to decide if staff should close the offices and work from home, and contact them when power is restored and they can return.

If power is down for a prolonged length of time, e.g. due to a terrorist attack or other major event,

we will address as outlined in section F) below.

E) PETROL SHORTAGES

There could be petrol shortages at garages, such that staff could not drive to our offices, or conduct community engagement, for a few days or even weeks.

Healthwatch would request that staff work from home and use other means of engagement e.g. telephone, email, promotion of the website feedback centre, social media and distributing surveys, until full service can be resumed. All additional costs would be paid by the organisation through the usual expenses claim forms.

F) OUR OFFICES

Our office base could be seriously damaged or even totally destroyed by floodwater, fire, a lightning strike, storm damage, or terrorist attack, etc. If our office could not be used for a few days, a few weeks or possibly even a year (in the event of total destruction by fire), we would need to find and pay for alternative accommodation very quickly.

If the office is destroyed or becomes unusable, Healthwatch would request that staff work from home, until suitable accommodation can be found, and full service resumed. All additional costs would be paid by the organisation through the usual expenses claim forms.

The contents insurance policy covers the organisation for the full cost of damage, repair and replacement of the contents of the office.

Alternative premises to rent would be located as soon as possible.

G) PLANNING FOR A PANDEMIC

Healthwatch Derbyshire's acknowledge the need to plan for a pandemic as part of the normal plan for responding to any emergency, in order to protect all staff and volunteers.

Our planning is twofold, both for operating during a pandemic and for possible closure of services. We will be guided throughout on the basis of national guidance from the government and from the local authority. Plans for responding to a pandemic will be reviewed regularly.

- Roles and responsibilities

In the event of a pandemic, the directors and senior staff will arrange an emergency meeting to put into action the Continuity Business Plan.

Closure may arise as a result of:-

- Insufficient staff being able to run the service safely
- Advice from the government that services in affected areas should not take place.

- Communications

Communication is vital. IT systems can be accessed remotely by all staff in times of emergency.

- Information

In the event of a pandemic, all staff and volunteers will be issued with up-to-date general public health messages to minimise the risk of catching or spreading the infection during a pandemic, and to ensure that all individuals who feel unwell know what action to take and in particular to ensure that contact is minimised where this could pose the possibility of catching or spreading the infection.

Healthwatch Derbyshire will ensure that regular updated information is published on the HWD website.

- **Staff working arrangements**

During a pandemic, flexible working practices may be needed, e.g. working from home. Arrangements will be put in place to support those staff who need time off to care for dependents. Staff will be made aware of government advice that they should not come to work if they think they are unwell throughout the pandemic.

- **Arrangements during restricted/reduced services**

In the event of the service being restricted, the health and safety of all within Healthwatch will be paramount and it may be desirable to reduce physical contact between staff, volunteers and members of the public to prevent the spread of infection. In this event, other means of communicating and engaging remotely will be explored.

This plan was adopted by the Board of Directors on the 13th October 2014, reviewed on the 12th October 2015, 10th October 2016, 11th October 2017, 8th October 2018, 14th October 2019, and 29th September 2020, 09 August 2021,

Signed by the Chair:



Date: 09 August 2021

This plan is reviewed annually.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN CHECKLIST

- Initial assessment of situation by CEO and/or Chair
- Communication to all staff and board giving key contact number/email for all communications
- Consider staff welfare and offer suitable/appropriate support
- Salvage any equipment from site if safe/practical to do so and take to a central point
- Assess what critical equipment has been lost/damaged
- Notify and discuss options with key suppliers/stakeholders - Damian, DCC, landlord
- Notify insurance
- Reassess situation
- Set up temporary working arrangements from home and/or other suitable office space
- Plan wider communication with other suppliers/stakeholders and members of the public, giving key messages