CONVID-19

This guidance is to allow ECA Members to consider aspects of their commercial risks and to what extent the current UK and global COVID-19 situation will impact on their ability to operate in these areas.

ECA Members should consider the exercise outlined below a 'Business Continuity Planning', 'Disaster Recovery Planning' or 'Incident Response Planning' exercise.

The NHS also provide some useful information about Coronavirus:

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Government Toolkit for Business Continuity Management:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/137994/Business_Continuity_Managment_Toolkit.pdf

The Government have created some useful guidance on Business Continuity Planning. A good introduction and step-by-step guide to planning for disruption to your business.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-continuity-planning

Government advice to employers and businesses on how to respond to the Coronavirus outbreak:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19

1. Self-assessment checklist for your business continuity in light of the impact of COVID-19

In the event of biological contamination – Coronavirus – man made or otherwise - , all businesses have a business, moral, operational and legal imperative to maintain critical services and managing the risks to the health and safety of their workforce.

Making your way through the checklist contained in the business continuity plan below will help you consider methodically, if you have addressed all the relevant issues.

Government has identified the following stages to its Coronavirus planning:

a) Contain
b) Delay
c) Mitigate

Your business continuity plan should address issues arising under both (b) and (c) above.

Your business continuity plan is designed to provide a framework for managing the business during catastrophic events and should be consistently revised in line with the overarching plans

outlined by the Government.

However, you will also need to consider, as a management team, whether you will only initiate the plan in line with Government advice or choose to proactively lead on the issues ahead of the Government's position. In doing so, you will wish to also consider the impact on any insurance policies/cover you may have which may only become operative in line with Government edicts rather than guidance.

Whilst the plan envisages a project manager to lead on the compilation of the plan, it also envisages management team sign-off/approval for revisions and implementation. This team-based approach should meet consistently and drive operational team implementation of the plan.

2. Business Continuity Plan

This precedent helps you plan your strategic response to an incident of biological contamination.

The plan envisages two clear risk scenarios in line with the current Government phased plan:

- **Delay** - minimising the risk of exposure of employees and visitors/stakeholders to infection.

- **Mitigation** – dealing with the impact on volumes of employees, workers and visitors/stakeholders being affected.

It addresses the following **Key areas of risk:**

- Employees
  - o Office
  - o Factory
  - o Site
  - o Networking/training
- Visitors and stakeholders
- Impact on overall capacity and capability of the business
- Operational sustainability
- Financial sustainability
- Supply chain and strategic clients

Summary of Business Continuity Plan

Catastrophe: Biological contamination (natural and/or manufactured)

Application: Group wide?

Project Manager: [name]

Version: [date and approval]

This version was approved on [date] by [management team] and replaces previous versions listed in reverse chronological order below:

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You should answer the checklist questions based on both (a) delay, and (b) mitigation, i.e. give answers for both planned scenarios so that you have clear delineation of when to move from delay measures within your plan to mitigation measures.

You should then reality test your answers within the business and know how long the business can last under each phase of the plan in critical survival mode.

The project manager should identify who, from within the leadership team, will lead on:

- organisational communications
- external communications
- finance
- decisions by the leadership team in enacting the plan
- conduit for feedback on successful plan implementation for self-improvement
- health & safety risk assessments
- multi-locational issues

What will trigger your actions within the plan:

- Positive diagnosis for worker or worker dependant?
- Government edicts?
- Known concentrations in a locality of your business?
- Client mitigation – client action beyond your control?

Delay = avoiding the risk of contamination of your business

Government guidance will be issued that means some degree of self-isolating and minimising contact with the wider population, but you will need to apply that guidance to your business model in the following likely areas:

- Working from home
- Minimising face-to-face meetings
- Minimising site visits/client meetings
- Avoiding busy public spaces
- Avoiding public transport, transport hubs, confined spaces with large groups of people
- Avoiding public events
- Postponing or rearranging events

Mitigation = minimising the impact to your business of contamination

Government guidance may not be issued in time and you will need to apply leadership in addition to Government edicts -v- guidance to your business model in the following likely areas:

- Do you extend business critical measures to all?
- Does the business prioritise and divert resource to critical business areas for survival?
- Can functionality be outsourced in order to overcome obstacles?

3. Self-assessment checklist for formulation of a business continuity plan

By scoring your answers from 0 - 10 and making notes under each of the following questions you should have a more realistic picture of the sensitivities surrounding your business' strategic and operational model:

Strategic

a) Who will have overall responsibility for planning and preparedness in the event of a disease outbreak – project manager?

b) Do you know where to obtain key information from e.g. ECA, Public Health England (PHE), World Health Organisation (WHO), Government, Health & Safety Executive (HSE) – see other ECA relevant guidance notes for details?

c) Have you mapped your stakeholders (internally and externally, e.g. clients (framework clients and public sector ultimate clients) and suppliers) you would need to consult with?

d) Have you carried out an impact assessment on your organisation e.g. financial assessment (cash-flow models) and strategically prioritised what needs to be done and in what order?

e) Have your management team agreed a strategy and plan for your organisation?

f) Have you established clear lines of authorities and procedures for implementation of your plan (including the identification of what events/circumstances/issues will trigger your contingency measures)?

g) What parts of the business are critical to survival if headcount, and therefore capacity, is reduced?

h) What happens of competitors and/or clients experience the same difficulties?

i) Have you carried out a contractual/legal audit to ensure you have a familiarity of how to mitigate/off-set your legal risk under contracts already in place?

Operational planning

a) How does the plan operate across multiple locations?

b) Have you identified your organisation's critical activities and the resources required to support them - e.g. IT, office and field people (directly employed and self-employed), processes, fleet, plant, materials and tools? Is there a requirement for skeleton staff to remain in situ in certain locations?

c) Are your IT systems capable of remote access? Do you have sufficient devices for all personnel to take calls and work remotely? Do you have sufficient software licences for remote access to specialist software packages?

d) Have you considered the possible impact of labour force absence and how you can manage and mitigate those risks?

e) Have you considered the possible impact of disruption to your supply chain – both materials and sub-contractors (including labour-only self-employed sub-contractors)?

f) Have you considered which circumstances will trigger your need to scale back or suspend operations in which areas of your business activity?

g) Have you examined the likely impact of biological contamination on your market(s) and on your key client requirements?

h) Have you assessed the realistic need for face to face meetings -v- digital by default, against your stakeholder map? What can be cancelled or postponed? At what cost (if any)?

i) Are you paperless? If not, how will you print and store records (which may be commercially sensitive (including personal data falling under GDPR)?

j) Do you still receive and/or send post/paper? For contractual notices or statutory compliance? How will this be re-directed, or can you go paperless – including for payment processes?

k) Who authorises payments and how? Are cheques still relevant or can they be eradicated from your operations? Are paper processes still driving payment systems?

l) Have you carried out an audit of your people to establish any special needs or those of their dependants which may affect your people? Do you have a list of where they will be based/located?

m) Do you have any temporary staff that can be suspended with minimal business interruption?

n) Do you have deliveries -if so, how can you re-divert or suspend them?

o) Have you considered the needs and requirements issues for business related travel – locally, nationally and internationally?

p) To what extent are others dependent on your organisation in the event of biological contamination – this may include client stakeholders/users as well as your work force?

Alternative planning

a) If you have certification, regulatory or audit requirements, can you proactively put contingency measures in place where possible?

b) Have you identified your organisation's critical activities and the resources required to support them - e.g. IT, office and field people (directly employed and self-employed), processes, fleet, plant, materials and tools?

c) Have you considered alternative/contingency resources (and costs) to keep critical activities running – how else could you operate critical functions, even if at a higher temporary cost?

d) Are you prepared for an increase take-up of employee/volunteer welfare/community and support (especially if you already have a volunteering policy in place with your employees)?

e) Have you prepared policies on; sick, compassionate, bereavement and emergency dependency leave?

f) Have you put in place arrangements with alternative suppliers – agency, materials, plant hire, fleet etc.?

g) Have you considered, as an alternative to more contentious situations with clients and suppliers, alternative offerings to clients, work force and suppliers, in order to ensure continuity?

h) Have you prepared an emergency communications plan using your stakeholder map?

i) Are plans to protect workplace locations (office and/or sites) in line with the latest advice from Government and key industry bodies: ECA, World Health Organisation, Government, HSE? (monitoring of current advice is necessary as the situation unfolds).

For example:

(i) Have you prepared policies on hygienic workplace behaviour?

(ii) Are plans in place for hand washing, hand hygiene, tissue disposal and other facilities?

(iii) Are plans in place for frequent and effective cleaning of the workplace?

(iv) Have you prepared policies on attendance by employees/ visitors who are infected, or are suspected to be infected?

(v) Have work measures been identified to reduce potential for employees/volunteers who are in the workplace to infect each other e.g. social distancing?

(vi) Are plans in place to reduce face to face contact with customers, suppliers and between employees/visitors from different locations/sites?

(vii) Are policies in place on flexible work locations and flexible working times?

(viii) Do you have the appropriate IT infrastructure to support remote working and interaction? And have you tested the load if the volume of remote working is increased at scale?

Take some time to test key elements of your plan. If it involves working from home, for example, make sure people can work from home.

Try to adopt an approach which identifies and assesses each aspect of your risk mapping the progress as your plan evolves – for example:

Issue	Delay	Mitigation

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