



Introduction

The Business Continuity Plan for Homemaker Southwest sets out a process whereby we seek to identify, manage and reduce all risks either within the Organisation, or those risks which are external to the Organisation. It is not intended to be exhaustive but seeks to describe a process and a framework which we will employ to ensure a continuity of the business. We have identified eight core areas which are discussed below.

- People, skills and knowledge
- Premises
- Technology and data
- Suppliers
- Commissioners
- Insurance
- Reputational

There are two aspects to every risk to consider

- How likely is it to happen?
- What effect will it have on the Organisation?

People skills and knowledge

We acknowledge that our staff retain a huge repository of knowledge, skills and experience, they are critical to the organisation. We have a suite of policies designed to support and manage those staff so that they are able to deliver. We will regularly review those policies and bring them to the Homemaker Board for validation. We will monitor sickness absences so as to be able to support staff and do what we can to ensure their wellbeing. Each member of staff has a training log and is expected, with their line manager, to identify relevant training needs. The organisation undertakes to support the delivery of relevant training as much as possible. Training for each member of staff is reviewed during supervision and formally at annual appraisal.

Premises

We work from separate office premises as follows;

- At 17 Heavitree Road, Exeter where 9 members of staff are based.
- 3 offices at Tamar View Community Centre, Plymouth where 6 members of staff are based.
- 1 office at Kingsley House, Barnstaple where 2 members of staff co-locate with Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust.
- 1 office at Barnfield Road, Exeter where 1 member of staff co-locates with Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust.
- 4 members of staff work from home and are paid a small allowance.
- 2 members of staff are permanently co-located within local authority premises, EDDC and TDC

The variety of locations poses a challenge in respect of staff isolation and a lack of cohesion it does however provide a degree of security. We are exceptionally unlikely to lose all of these premises at the same time. All caseworkers now have business laptops and could in the short term work effectively from home. All Exeter based staff could, in the short term, share hot desking space at another charity at The Shilhay Community, Exeter. All Plymouth based staff

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Technology and data

This area of activity poses both the greatest threat and the biggest opportunity. All staff are required to share documents via Sharepoint or Groove and all casework notes should be on AdvicePro all of which are cloud based solutions. There is a legal requirement on us to preserve casefile data for 7 years. Older paper only files are stored at our two main offices.

Our telephone systems are provided by Vodafone and provide a OneNet solution. All members of staff also have access to a telephone which is both a mobile and landline at the same time.

In both Exeter and Plymouth all I.T. based data is backed-up to a separate hard drive and in each case there is an off-site back-up on a daily basis. We have not yet managed to devise a system whereby our current paper systems can be replicated in the case of catastrophic destruction such as fire. We have a Data Protection Policy and an I.T. Policy which guides all staff on security and operating procedures.

Suppliers

We are not currently reliant on any single supplier of any goods or services. It is our intention to have a multiplicity of suppliers as far as possible.

Commissioners

We have moved from a position where in 2008/09 we had contracts with 10 commissioners and 60% of our turnover came from one of them. In 2013/14 we have contracts with 16 commissioners and none of them exceed 17% of our total turnover. It is our intention to continue to spread our risks in this way, we do not want any single commissioner to become responsible for more than 20% of our income.

Insurance

We currently have in place insurances in respect of our I.T. equipment and all other contents, we have Professional Indemnity Insurance, Trustees Indemnity Insurance, Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance. In addition we have business interruption insurance as follows; loss of revenue £200,000, and additional expenses of £25,000. All staff laptops are insured under this policy.

Reputational

We accept that a reputation once damaged is difficult to rebuild therefore both the board, the Director and managers of the organisation are continuously monitoring and assessing the service delivered and any reputational risks which may arise.

We have a suite of policies to ensure all staff adhere to relevant professional standards these include a Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Data Protection policies. We also have Management and Decision Making Structure Policy which link into our Financial and Fraud Policy and procedure. Only managers are permitted to engage with the press after consultation with the Director. We aim to deliver high quality services at all times and by this limit our risk of reputational damage.

Staff often deliver complex advice to clients many of which have a variety of complex needs, therefore, we do this in accordance with Money Advice Protocol which is updated on an ongoing basis. We also have a Complaints policy which is designed to investigate fairly and swiftly, it also communicates regularly with the complainant. It is multi layered and is overseen by the Chair of the Board.

One major reputational risk would be our failure to deliver quality services to commissioners and clients. Therefore with each commissioner we have a bespoke Service Level Agreement which seeks to set out in advance both our objectives and our outcomes for the service, they also include dispute resolution protocols.

Review

The Business Continuity Plan will be reviewed and reported to the Board annually. It will be maintained by the Director and Management team.

Established/Last reviewed – Sept 2013

Review date – Sept 2014

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