

The NHS Confederation

Charity number 1090329

Company number 04358614

Business Continuity Policy

Date policy agreed by Chief Executive	January 2022
Date of policy review	January 2025
Owner of policy	Director of People and Governance

Contents

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction.....	3
Purpose of this policy.....	3
Scope	3
Responsibilities	4
Policy statement.....	5
Business Continuity	5
Key Principles	5
Guidance notes	6
Implementing the Organisation's Business Continuity Plan	6
Area Specific Business Continuity Plans	6
Monitoring and Review.....	7

Introduction

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure there is a framework for ensuring the NHS Confederation can respond and cope with an unexpected significant incident or major interruption. In doing so the NHS Confederation will be in better place to maintain ‘business as usual’ or minimise potential disruption. This will ensure business continuity is assured to our members and stakeholders.

This policy will also help to ensure that the concept of Business Continuity and our policy and approach is understood by all staff and stakeholders.

Scope

This policy applies to everyone working at or with the NHS Confederation¹. It applies to:

- all staff, including chief executives, directors, senior managers, employees (whether permanent, fixed term or temporary), seconded staff, homeworkers, agency workers and volunteers
- consultants and contractors
- trustees and committee members.

Any employing or contracting manager must ensure that all temporary staff, consultants, or contractors are aware of this policy.

By the NHS Confederation we mean the NHS Confederation charity, any subsidiary companies, and any hosted networked organisation.

The NHS Confederation has designated the Director of People and Governance as the individual who is responsible for ensuring that the NHS Confederation implements this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the organisation’s Risk Management Policy, Health and Safety Policy and IT Security Policy

¹ Collectively referred to as workers in this policy

Responsibilities

The NHS Confederation Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations and that all those under our control comply with it. The Chief Executive is responsible for setting the strategic context in which business continuity and service recovery procedures are developed, and for the formal review and approval of this Policy.

The accountable officer for this policy is the **Director of People and Governance**. The **Head of Governance and Compliance** leads the compliance and implementation of this policy and coordinates the Business Continuity Plan and Business Continuity Team.

A cross-organisation Business Continuity Team will be responsible for overseeing organisation-wide Business Continuity Issues, which includes

- developing an organisation-wide Business Continuity Plan and testing its appropriateness from time to time
- assessing the disaster or interruption to business and deciding the level of recovery necessary and whether to invoke a plan.
- reviewing the organisation's response to business continuity issues to identify lessons learned.

Each **Director** will oversee Business Continuity in their own directorate. They will be responsible for promoting a culture of business continuity within their teams and will ensure specific Business Continuity Plans are developed for major contracts, Networks, and functions within NHS Confederation.

All staff are responsible for operating in a way that enables their work to be continued by another team member, should they find themselves unexpectedly unable to work, such as through absence or IT outage.

Policy statement

Business Continuity

Business Continuity is the strategic and tactical capability of the organisation to plan for and respond to incidents and business disruptions to continue business operations at an acceptable predefined level

The International Standard for Organisation defines business continuity management (BCM) under ²ISO 22301:2012 as “an holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations those threats, if realised, might cause, and which provides a framework for building organizational resilience with the capability of an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities”.

Minor business interruptions occur daily and are dealt with using regular and familiar systems and resources within individual teams. This Policy focuses on setting a framework for how the NHS Confederation ensures continuity of business in the event of major or serious interruption.

The NHS Confederation has several contractual and reputational responsibilities and is therefore committed to ensuring the highest levels of business continuity, business continuity management, organisational preparedness, and effective response in the face of threat to (or interruption to) service across the breadth of the organisation.

This policy exists to ensure business continuity is embedded across all practices of the organisation and that individuals' roles and responsibilities in supporting our Business Continuity approach.

Key Principles

The NHS Confederation will take all reasonably practicable measures to ensure the continuation of its critical services during any period of service disruption. In doing so, NHS Confederation will:

- Embed a culture of business continuity and preparedness across the organisation and within all functions that
 - ensures the safety and welfare of employees
 - minimises the effects of disruption to NHS Confederation
 - identifies and address risks which may jeopardise operations and key business processes, financial and reputation position, or legal standing
- Support and invest in the cross-organisation Business Continuity Team to oversee plans to mitigate and respond to organisation-wide interruptions and, in doing so, develop an understanding of business-critical functions.
- Ensure Continuity Plans are developed and reviewed within each major function and identify key responsibilities.

² ISO 22301:2012 sets out the International Standard for business continuity management

Guidance notes

Implementing the Organisation's Business Continuity Plan

The Business Continuity Plan will be initiated when any disruption to service delivery is experienced. This may include, but is not limited to the following potentially disruptive events, which may not be mutually exclusive:

Within the Leeds/London/Cardiff/Belfast/Brussels office setting:

- internal incidents – fire, breakdown of utilities, act of terrorism,
- public alarm – a serious threat such as a developing infectious disease epidemic, a significant chemical or nuclear release developing elsewhere needing preparatory action

Across the organisation (not necessarily premises-based threats)

- Significant loss or downtime of IT capability or systems
- Cyber-attacks on systems likely to cause disruption and reputational and financial damage
- serious capacity/staffing crisis or industrial action

Activation of the Business Continuity Plan in full or part will be determined through discussion between the, **the Director of People and Governance** and relevant members of **Group Executive**.

Once the plan is activated, the incident will be managed by the **Business Continuity Team**. The Business Continuity Plan and Function- will detail how appropriate records of actions and key decisions are kept and who should be involved in or informed of appropriate decision making. The Continuity Plan will have identified business critical processes and their priority order in restoration. The Continuity Plan will also detail appropriate communications processes.

Area Specific Business Continuity Plans

All teams will produce an annex to the overall Business Continuity Plan to provide additional detail on specific risks and how essential processes can be restored quickly.

However, it is recognised that NHS Confederation is complex in its running of many networks and workstreams on behalf of other organisations. Where this is the case, it may be required for a specific programme-level Business Continuity Plan to be developed by the appropriate team. Where this is the case, the team shall work with the Head of Governance and Compliance to ensure plans are complementary and do not contradict organisation-wide position or this policy.

Monitoring and Review

The Director of People & Governance will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness, considering legal developments and changes in the organisation's business.