Business Continuity Management

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Local Authorities can provide advice and assistance to local businesses and voluntary organisations regarding Business Continuity Management (BCM).

'Business Continuity Management' is a flexible framework designed to help organisations to continue operating in the face of a wide range of different types of disruptions. Business Continuity is the capability of an organisation to plan for, and respond to, incidents and business disruptions, in order to continue with their normal business operations, at an acceptable predefined level. It involves the management of:

- The recovery or continuation of activities in the 'event of a disruption' so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Having a Business Continuity Plan in place;
- Training, exercising and reviews of their plan;
- Ensuring Business Continuity Plans stay current and up-to-date.

BCM is applicable across public, private and voluntary sectors. Its overall aim is to make an organisation resilient, working to maintain the essential business services in an emergency, and through a range of disruptive challenges. BCM is the process that seeks to protect, preventing damage to reputation and financial viability of an organisation.

Organisations should not only look at the resilience of their internal structures and processes, but also those of organisations they rely on, or deliver services through.

Having a Business Continuity Plan in place is necessary for the purposes of preventing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency and having an effective organisational response.

Considerations for the Plan:

- Identify critical activities, assets and resources that support the delivery of key products and services.
- Assess the impact and consequences of failure of these activities and assets.
- Identify and evaluate the threats that could disrupt these.
- Impact on staff, client or public wellbeing.
- Impact of damage to, loss of, premises, technology or information.
- Loss of key staff through illness, pandemic.
- Environmental and community damage.
- External services and suppliers.
- Identify actions and solutions.

People

- Multi-skill training, separation of core skills, use of third parties, succession planning and knowledge retention.

Training & Education

- Awareness to ensure understanding, including internal and external stakeholders.

Exercising

- Essential to developing teamwork, competence, confidence and knowledge, vital at the time of an incident.

Premises

- Alternative premises and locations, working from home and remote sites

Technology

- Communications and IT, geographical spread, emergency replacement (old equipment & spares), remote access.

Information

- Access & availability, confidentiality and integrity.

Supplies

- Storage of contingency stocks, third party arrangements, Business Continuity capability of suppliers and service level agreements.

Stakeholders

- Protect the interests of key suppliers and good relationship management.

Business Continuity Planning is at the heart of the BCM process. The Business Continuity Plans provide a response to a BCM challenge in the event of an emergency.
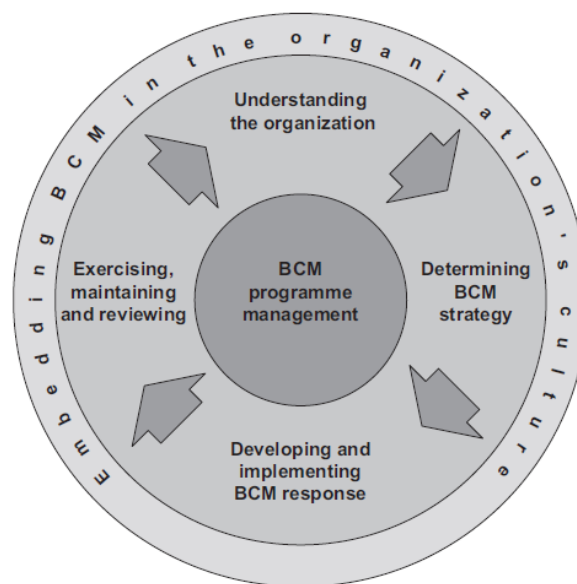
Good Points when producing a Business Continuity Plan:

- Keep it short, simple and user-friendly.

- Ensure the assumptions contained within it are realistic.

- Include action plans, checklists, templates and details of key contacts.

And…..

- Maintain effective communication at all times.

The Business Continuity Management Lifecycle

If you would like more advice regarding Business Continuity, please contact your local council Emergency Planning department via:

Emergency.Planning@halton.gov.uk

EmergencyPlanningTeam@cheshiresharedservices.gov.uk

emergencyplanning@warrington.gov.uk