

Business Continuity Management for Further and Higher Education institutions

What is Business Continuity Management?

In simple terms, Business Continuity Management (BCM) is an approach to help an organisation plan for the activation of an effective response to a range of potential business interruptions. This will help enable further and higher education establishments to stay up and running and then get back to 'normal operations' as soon as possible.

Critical incidents impacting on organisations are now calculated as a 1 in 5 year event.

Why is a plan essential?

Your institution is potentially vulnerable to a number of different types of incidents that could impact on the ability of the institution to educate pupils, such as:

- fire
- flood
- malicious attack
- loss of IT services
- widespread illness
- an incident on an educational trip.



Business Continuity Planning will help to ensure that there is a coordinated response to likely incidents and also a clear strategy for recovering as quickly as possible.

Planning ahead for the potential of a major interruption occurring is vital in helping the response. It is important to take reasonable steps to help protect your critical assets.

Failure to perform Business Continuity Planning could lead to increased risks for staff and students, with delays to the recovery process and a subsequent impact on performance. In addition to the increased costs, there may be a potential issue to reputation through the perception that the organisation has not responded well.

Business Continuity Planning may end up being the responsibility of someone who already has a very busy role. Whilst this may be the case, it is vital that Business Continuity does not become a 'bolt on' to the institutions activities, but an integral part of the institution that is reviewed on a regular basis.

All our Education establishments are unique. With this in mind there is no "one size fits all" approach to building a pragmatic approach to Business Continuity.

Developing an effective strategy

It is important that there is a clear and coordinated approach to developing an effective BCM strategy relevant to your institution. It is crucial for the leadership group of a higher or further education institution to agree on:

- 1 The statement of intent**
A short statement signed by senior management that outlines the institution's commitment to developing a plan and why it is important.
- 2 The contents of a plan**
Ensuring that the contents of the plan are fit-for-purpose and can be kept up-to-date. As a minimum the plan should contain the following information:
 - **Incident Management Plan** – identifying a meeting point to coordinate a response, plus the team responsible and an appropriate escalation protocol where necessary
 - **Key Contact Details** – of the people and organisations that are key to the implementation of your plan
 - **Incident Response Plans** – to identified threats with reasonable potential to impact the institution
- 3 Key roles and responsibilities**
The resources required in order to develop, test and maintain the plan.
For example:
 - a plan owner
 - a plan deputy that helps the plan owner to maintain the plan
 - senior managers who will be responsible for implementing the plan and testing that it works.
- 4 Timescales**
Agreed timescales for:
 - the development of the plan
 - frequent testing.

Case Study

Business Continuity Test Exercise – Major UK University

A business continuity plan cannot be considered effective until it has been proven, with this in mind Zurich's Strategic Risk Practice was tasked by the university to design and facilitate a business continuity test exercise.

To provide an effective solution and to minimise impact on the wider University, but still adding universal benefit the test took the form of a round the table exercise. A scenario around an evolving scenario based around a transport incident in the vicinity to the University was designed. Selected members of the University were invited and were presented with this scenario, being asked to consider how they would respond to the initial incident and the longer term recovery. During the exercise actions and key learning points were identified and where applicable planning assumptions were positively challenged by the Zurich consultants. The Zurich consultants produced a resilience improvement 'road map' which in conjunction with the University is being implemented, thus persevering and enhancing its reputation.

Working with an expert

As a leading provider of risk and insurance to further and higher education institutions, Zurich Municipal is acutely aware of the critical need for effective Business Continuity Management and the impact that an incident can have on your ability to continue to provide high-quality education.

How can we help you?

You can also read interesting newsworthy articles around business continuity planning at newsandviews.zurich.co.uk

 @ZurichMunicipal on Twitter

For more specific questions on business continuity or our related consultancy services, please speak to one of our Risk & Insurance Consultants. Alternatively you can arrange a call back by emailing us at info@zurichmunicipal.com.

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