

# Nurse24<sup>TM</sup> BUSINESS CONTINUITY & EMERGENCY PLANNING POLICY

<b>Title of Policy Document</b>	Business Continuity & Emergency Planning
<b>Issue Date and Version</b>	September 2022 (Version 1)
<b>Author / Department</b>	Executive Management Team / Health and safety
<b>Signed off by</b>	Director
<b>Next review date</b>	September 2024
<b>Has Equality Impact Assessment been completed?</b>	N/A
<b>Distribution</b>	All services
<b>First issue date</b>	September 2022

# BUSINESS CONTINUITY & EMERGENCY PLANING POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 What is Business Continuity Management?

The sustained success of an organisation relies on it continually meeting the needs and expectations of its customers or clients. Business continuity management (BCM) is an ongoing process of planning and monitoring helping to protect an organisation from potential disruptions and maintains critical activities if disruption does occur whilst assisting in the recovery following any disruptions.

The ISO Standard 22301 (which replaced British Business Continuity Planning Standard 25999) states that:

Business continuity management is a business-owned, business-driven process that establishes a fit-for-purpose strategic operational framework that:

- Proactively improves an organisations' resilience against the disruption of its ability to achieve its key objectives.
- Provides a rehearsed method of restoring an organisation's ability to supply its key products and services to an agreed level within an agreed period of time after disruption.
- Delivers a proven capability to manage a business disruption and protect the organisations' reputation and brand.

BCM is an established part of the UK's preparations for managing the risks faced by organisations. The Civil Contingencies Act (2004) recognised its importance by requiring frontline responders to maintain internal BCM arrangements and local authorities to promote BCM to commercial and voluntary organisations.

### 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to formulate a Business Continuity Management Programme (BCMP) for Nurse24 Ltd and to provide guidelines for developing, maintaining and exercising business continuity plans. It will establish the basic principles and frameworks necessary to ensure sufficient emergency response, resumption and recovery, restoration and permanent recovery of Nurse24 Ltd's operations and business activities in an event of business disruption.

The BCMP will ensure that appropriate measures and plans are in place to:

- Identify critical business services that may be interrupted by such scenarios as those listed in section 1.3 below
- Minimise the risk of interruption or negative impact on the delivery of critical business services
- Minimise disruption and enable full restoration of services in the event of unavoidable interruption to services
- Ensure that business continuity and the associated policies, standards, procedures and plans are embedded in the day to day activities and culture of the business.

### **1.3 Scope**

This policy applies to all Nurse24 Ltd employees, facilities and IT systems at all locations nationwide. Nurse24 Ltd shall be prepared for scenarios including, but not limited to; natural disaster, power outage, severe weather conditions, hardware/telecommunications failure, data corruption, terror threats, loss of access to premises, disease pandemics. These events may be local or regional in nature, affecting a singular or collection of premises, or national affecting many or all premises.

## **2. POLICY**

Nurse24 Ltd recognises the potential strategic, operational, financial and stakeholder support risks associated with service interruptions and the importance of maintaining viable capability to continue the organisation's business processes with minimum impact in the event of an emergency. Nurse24 Ltd also acknowledges that the vulnerability of our clients puts extra emphasis on the need to resume business activities as quickly and efficiently as possible following a disruptive incident.

### **2.1 Statement of Policy**

The BCMP for Nurse24 Ltd will be developed to comply with the requirements of ISO Standard 22301.

Business continuity policy and planning are fundamental to ensure protection against organisational and reputational risk to Nurse24 Ltd in the case of business interruption. All working locations of Nurse24 Ltd, whether offices, housing projects, day centres etc., must develop, test, exercise and maintain plans for the resumption and recovery of business functions. The resumption and recovery plans must be based on a risk assessment that considers potential losses due to unavailability of service versus the cost of resumption. These plans shall anticipate a variety of possible scenarios ranging from local to regional crisis.

Business continuity policy and planning complement crisis management in recognising that Nurse24 Ltd Recruitment staff are the organisation's most important assets, and ensuring the necessary ability of Nurse24 Ltd to continue critical business processes in spite of an emergency, or to resume them before their unavailability disrupts the work of the affected premises or Nurse24 Ltd as a whole.

Nurse24 Ltd acknowledge that an effective BCMP is not solely focused on planning for disaster recovery, but also implementing control measures to reduce the likelihood or impact of interruptions. The act of analysing and planning itself will make it less likely that the recovery aspects of the plan will need to be invoked.

Every Nurse24 Ltd service must have its own localised business continuity plan, completed on the Nurse24 Ltd developed pro-forma.

## **3. STAFFING**

As a service provider to vulnerable people in the community, we are reliant upon maintaining a supply of high-quality staff who can provide a skilled and knowledgeable service. It is recognised that there may be times when there are pressures on our staffing resource due to either unexpected increases in demand or unexpected staff absences. The ways in which we respond to these pressures are as follows:

- i) Employing a team of staff that are able to respond sufficiently to changing work patterns and increases in demand. All staff are encouraged to be as flexible as possible within the limitations of their personal lives and good employment practice. We employ a combination of full and part time staff with different working patterns to facilitate flexibility and to enable staff to work overtime when required. Information about when staff are able to work overtime is retained in an accessible format for use by the manager and on-call services.
- ii) Operating a local 'bank' of staff who work hours on a casual basis as required. Bank staff are recruited according to the same high standards as permanent staff and undergo the same rigorous recruitment checks, corporate induction and local induction into the needs of the service and are trained in all key areas. Information about bank staff and their availability is maintained for use by the manager and local on calls and the Out of Hours service, which operate continually outside of normal office hours.
- iii) Relationships have been developed with a number of employment agencies, who specialise in the provision of care staff in all the areas we work. The telephone numbers of these agencies are readily available to access.
- iv) Our senior staff fully expect to respond to unforeseen staffing difficulties by providing hands on support when required and can illicit support from senior colleagues outside their service at times of particular difficulty.
- v) In the event of the unexpected absence of key senior employees, Nurse24 Ltd Executive Management Team will agree on and implement an appropriate strategy to maintain the continuity and quality of the service. This could involve seconding senior staff from elsewhere, re-organising senior staff responsibilities and workloads and prioritising the delivery of direct care and support.
- vi) The corporate Business Continuity Plan will contain contact information of departmental heads and key Head Office staff who may be contacted outside of their working hours in emergencies for advice and support.

#### **4. BUILDINGS, FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT**

We have identified the key risks to the office environment as follows:

- i) Fire, flood, sewage leak, gas leak infestation or criminal or other physical damage resulting in unsafe use of the building.
- ii) Loss of power or water.
- iii) Physical fault in construction of the building resulting in unsafe use.
- iv) Inability to access the office due to any of the above occurring in the immediate vicinity of the office, or following a terror threat or an act of terrorism.

Where the emergency services are needed and Nurse24 Ltd management Team identify that a building is unsafe to use due to any of the above, an assessment will be made by the local Manager as to the best way forward. This may depend on the likely timescale for restoring the building to safe use. Where an office is expected to be out of use for a short period of time (e.g., up to seven days) a temporary office base may be located which can be resourced by mobile phones and laptop computers. The temporary office base could be any suitable premises in a convenient location (e.g., church hall, community room, room in a hotel etc).

If an office is likely to be out of use for a longer period, alternative short-term office accommodation will be sought, such as a managed workspace or an office let on a licence agreement. Nurse24 Ltd maintains business insurance, which will enable the office to be temporarily relocated to new premises and which will cover the costs of acquiring new premises, IT services, relocation costs, etc.

Where the issue is a loss of heat, power or water, the Manager will make a judgement about whether it is safe and practicable to continue using the office while the matter is attended to. The decision will depend on several factors including the likely timescale for restoring heat, power or water, the time of day/year and the number of people likely to be affected. In the event of a central heating failure, temporary heating will be provided by Nurse24 Ltd's head office maintenance team who will provide electric heaters.

In the event of a loss of all water supplies for more than a few hours it is unlikely that the office will be able to remain open. Advice will be taken from the relevant body including the utility companies. In the event of queries regarding office safety and hygiene, the manager must consult environmental health and the Health and Safety Manager. Whilst it is important to maintain the smooth running of the service, the health and safety of employees and visitors must take a high priority.

Insurances will always be kept up to date including employer's liability, public liability and business interruption insurances.

Backup hard copies of key business data will be kept and made accessible to the Out of Hours duty manager for use in an emergency where digital systems are not available.

## **5. TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNICATIONS & DATA**

Having assessed the risk, the key areas to consider here are:

- i) Telephone and fax
- ii) Computer hardware and printer
- iii) Computer software and data files
- iv) Laptop and other mobile computing devices.

If the telephone system should fail, immediate steps will be taken to establish the cause, i.e., whether it is the line or equipment which is at fault. If it is the line, staff will be empowered to use the mobiles phones provided by Nurse24 Ltd for lone working purposes as the main form of telecommunication until the fault is resolved.

Broken equipment can be replaced with new equipment.

If a fault arises in computer hardware or printers, our IT staff at Head Office will endeavour to support staff in resolving the problem. If this is not possible, replacement hardware can be provided, such as a temporary laptop.

If computer software or data files become corrupted, our IT staff will again endeavour to advise staff as to how to resolve the problem. Site visits can be organised within 24 hours where there is an urgent need to restore computer facilities. It is the responsibility of the Service Manager to follow the instructions for organising and backing up data daily.

Nurse24 Ltd's business interruption insurance covers loss of computer data and files and includes the cost of engaging specialist companies to rebuild and restore computerised data. All Head Office computer systems are backed up daily by a third-party provider.

## **6. SUPPLY CHAIN**

The most significant resource utilised in the provision of services is staffing, which is addressed in Section 3 above. Other resources utilised include office equipment, consumables, paper and other items used in the office environment. Enough stocks of these should be maintained so that normal business can proceed in the event of an interruption to the supply of such products. Petty cash is made available at a sufficient level to allow small purchases from local suppliers in the event of disruption to Nurse24 Ltd's major suppliers.

## **7. TRANSPORTATION & FUEL**

Nurse24 Ltd recognises that the efficient transportation of staff is essential in the provision of a reliable community support service. Where public transport networks suffer unexpected disruption or cessation, staff will be given advice about alternative means of travelling to work.

In the event of a scarcity of fuel for staff cars caused by strike, fuel shortage or other during periods of severe weather, it is likely that staff will experience difficulties attending work and appointments with clients. The Service Manager will put appropriate arrangements in place wherever possible. This may involve encouraging staff to walk or cycle to work, rescheduling visits to allow for walking or cycling or encouraging car sharing.

## **8. FLU OR ANOTHER EPIDEMIC**

In the event of a flu or other epidemic, it is likely that significant numbers of service users and/or staff may be affected. In a particularly serious epidemic, it is possible that there could be major disruption to public transport provision, public service delivery and local infrastructure. The priority will be to maintain the service in respect of the most vulnerable service users and their needs or personal circumstances.

The Manager (or person assuming this role) will use their best judgement to prioritise the service to these individuals in greatest need, using what staffing and other resources are available.

Where the difficulties are on a substantial scale, advice will be sought from the appropriate body with responsibility for providing advice to the public and co-ordinating emergency services. All of the measures outlined in the staffing section above will be utilised to cover staff absences in the event of flu or another epidemic. Where appropriate virus protection is available, the Manager will ensure that all staff have access to this on a priority basis. Planning and communication will be vitally important in the weeks building up to a full-scale epidemic as will liaison with all the appropriate advisory bodies.

Services where specific health risks are identified as being more likely to occur (for instance in older persons' extra care services) and these should be planned for accordingly, and

should refer to the corporate Infection Prevention and Control policy.

## **10. GENERAL RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES INVOLVING SERVICE USERS, STAFF OR THIRD PARTIES**

Nurse24 Ltd operates local on call services, and an Out of Hours service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which can offer advice and support to staff working in all our services. In addition to providing advice and assistance across all areas and in event of any of the emergencies outlined above, these can offer advice on matters of individual service user welfare. The Out of Hours service is staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced senior staff who have the necessary training and understanding to give advice in a range of scenarios. In more serious situations, it will be necessary to contact the Senior On-Call Service for further advice. Our on-call services are helpful and valued but are not a substitute for contacting emergency services, i.e., fire, ambulance or police, when required. In certain situations, consultation with other outside agencies and professionals may be required, e.g., environmental health, social services, emergency duty team, NHS Direct/GP, etc. Concerns regarding vulnerable adults or children should immediately be notified to the local authority's adult or child protection office as per local policy.

## **11. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis as circumstances change or as the range and level of services develop and will in any event be reviewed no less every three years