



**BUSINESS  
CONTINUITY**

**PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT  
AN OPERATIONAL APPROACH**

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# Document Control

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# 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1: Document Purpose

The intention of this document is to describe a suggested operational response to a Pandemic situation. It covers the internal response, as well as the response by, and with, main suppliers. (Also see Trigger Document in Appendix A).

The objective is to ensure a measured and outlined response to a future Pandemic outbreak.

## 1.2: Definitions of the current coronavirus 'COVID-19'

**Definition of a Pandemic:** *“Pandemic is any human disease affecting 25% or more of the global population and can have high mortality rates – causes social and economic disruption”.*

**Definition of an Epidemic:** *“An outbreak of disease that attacks many peoples at about the same time and may spread through one or several communities”.*

It is impossible for scientists to exactly forecast the exact path which any virus will take, although modern advances mean they have a much better chance of predicting the effects than in previous Pandemics.

At the time of writing, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has not yet announced that the COVID-19 is a Pandemic, but they may do so in due course, depending on the speed of the spread globally.

It's also possible that an epidemic will be announced by Public Health England.

## 1.3: Symptoms of Corona Virus / COVID-19 Virus

Note: symptoms of future mutations could be different.

The symptoms of this new coronavirus include fever and respiratory symptoms including coughing, sneezing, and shortness of breath. The current evidence is that most cases appear to be mild.

If anyone has a cough, or fever or shortness of breath and have visited any the following areas below in the last 14 days, they should stay indoors and call NHS 111 informing them of the country/city visited.

- China
- Thailand
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Hong Kong
- Taiwan
- Singapore
- Malaysia
- Macau
- Italy
- Iran

## 1.4: How a virus or Pandemic impacts Organisations and Suppliers

The impact of any disease is centred on ‘duty of care’ to staff, communication, and coping with the temporary loss of important resources and skills – both within the organisation and its suppliers. A pandemic is an unusual type of BC incident as it has a sustained impact – possibly over many, many months. Ultimately, you must be able to maintain service to clients and other stakeholders.

Below are the main factors to consider throughout a pandemic:

- Minimise spread (as far as possible) and make sure we are seen to take all reasonable and practical measures to do this increased cleaning regimes and personal hygiene materials readily available.
- Manage the communication and the fear; this is one of the biggest challenges when the media are prone to sensationalising situations:
  - Any response must be measured and fitting for the stage of impact (see APPENDIX A - Trigger Document).
  - The organisation has a duty of care to keep people accurately informed via appropriate methods of communication; any individual cases or concerns should be dealt with swiftly and tactfully (& confidentially, if appropriate)
- Be aware of any vulnerable staff (those more susceptible due to pre-diagnosed illness). Line managers need to be aware of confirmed cases in office and contact with any vulnerable staff; sending vulnerable staff home should be the managers decision, but no risks should be taken.
- Identify critical tasks & processes through normal the BIA (BC) process; team managers are responsible for ensuring there is sufficient cover and succession planning or cross training where appropriate. This will be an on-going process for the duration a pandemic is declared
- The organisations ability to carry out critical tasks which enable it to deliver service to clients is key for team managers; they need to manage this via BC plans and escalate early on any potential for failure. Contingency in a Pandemic is likely to be around additional or external resource, or potentially requests to clients or official bodies (such as courts) for an extension to deadlines, or in the case of suppliers, suspension of SLAs. This will be an on-going process for the duration a pandemic is declared
- Ensure there are no exposures to key technical (IT) expertise; all key technical roles should be able to be back-filled by another technician.
- Impact status, communication & co-ordination between the organisation and its suppliers should be regular, accurate and honest. Management of the situation between the organisation and its suppliers needs to be aligned to give a consistent and calm approach. (See APPENDIX A - ‘Trigger Document’ – Suppliers).
- In terms of suppliers, any potential impact due to loss of staff should be tracked and flagged up early by suppliers asap and ideally before it becomes a problem.

- Any potential impact on physical or logical (IT) security due to changes to accommodate the situation must be managed closely by the relevant support teams. There must be no raised risks to the organisation or its clients at all.
- Due to the unpredictable nature of a Pandemic and the many 'unknowns', it is impossible to plan a definite response. Any actions agreed with the incident management team should be considered a 'best guess' and subject to change. Decisions should be based on advice from official sources (WHO/UK Govt/NHS).

# 2: SUGGESTED RESPONSE / IMPACT LEVELS

## 2.1: Pandemic Incident Team and Impact Levels

A representative (& deputies) from all of the following teams should form the 'Pandemic Incident Team':

- HR
- Facilities
- Health and Safety
- Business Continuity (assumes input from all business teams)
- IT (Remote working aspects)
- Incident Management Team (IMT).
- Communication (internal/staff & external including suppliers)

The suggested levels of staff impact to plan for (i.e. staff not able to work) are:

- Less than 10% staff impacted
- 10% staff impacted
- 20% staff Impacted (Suggest Incident Management Team is invoked at this stage)
- 30% staff impacted
- 50% staff impacted
- Post Pandemic Waves

## 2.2: Monitoring and Tracking

Prior to a Pandemic being declared, it makes sense to draw up a 'Trigger Document' (see APPENDIX A) which is based on the different levels of impact as stated above.

There are tasks around tracking and mentoring the situation, we well as escalation

In addition to the Trigger Document, a Case Tracking Document should be compiled which tracks the number of cases, including supplier staff who happen to be based at site (See APPENDIX B).

**Its suggested that all managers must report any cases in their teams to the HR team**, who should then notify either the Facilities Team and the

organisations Business Continuity Lead. On a regular basis, an updated Case Tracker Document should be issued to the key areas of the business.

**Important Note:** Due to the potentially severe impact of later stages, the organisation should only attempt to complete detailed planning up to ‘30% staff impacted’ as anything worse than that is difficult to forecast. Actions beyond 30% impact are likely to be based on advice from official sources – WHO/UK Govt/NHS. In any case, due to the unpredictable nature of the virus, all planning is considered ‘best guess’ and is subject to decisions made on the changing situation.

## 2.3: Incident Management – Invocation Incident Management Team

The BC Lead, Facilities Manager and HR Manager should check the Case Tracker and once 20% is reached they will collectively agree to alert the Incident Management Lead or their stand-in.

As per the Trigger Document, the Incident Management Team / Major Incident Plan\*\* should then be invoked. This will involve confirming the lead name for the IMT who will formally declare to the organisation that team is invoked, and why. As a minimum, the team should include the following:

- HR
- Health and Safety
- Facilities / Building Management
- Business Continuity
- Internal Communication
- Senior Management Representation / As per standard Incident Team Response

The Incident Management Team, as well as appointing key roles and responsibilities and actions, may also communicate upwards to a

controlling board or governing body. This should include a status update, as well as escalation of any potentially severe impacts to the organisation.

**Every effort must be made to anticipate serious later stage impacts. As Pandemic is a ‘creeping’ problem, early warnings for timely decision making are key to operational survival.**

**Frequency:** Meetings of the IMT are likely to be daily at first but could be reduced if the situation stabilises. However, if there is unexpected development, a meeting could be called at any time. This is the decision of the lead based on input from other team members. The meetings can be face to face but given the nature of the incident, phone conference calls are more advisable – and essential at later stages of the Pandemic.

**Note:** It is not the intention of this document to detail the entire Major Incident Plan. It should be referenced as a guide throughout the Pandemic period as appropriate

## 2.4: Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Incident Lead – <b>Incident Management Team (IMT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall steer &amp; direction for IMT Team</li> <li>• Specify ‘core’ team members</li> <li>• Communication up to Board/Governing bodies</li> <li>• Feedback from Board/Governing Bodies</li> <li>• Final decision where issues are contentious</li> <li>• Call exceptional meetings where necessary</li> </ul>
Incident Coordination <b>(Could be one of the members below)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall view of operational activity</li> <li>• Monitor &amp; track cases being diagnosed across the organisation.</li> <li>• Ensure any specific or individual issues are either managed to conclusion or escalated.</li> <li>• Communication with IMT on any key developments at operational level.</li> <li>• Communication with incident lead on internal status and any key external information or advice.</li> <li>• Support Incident Lead in ensuring any information requested by</li> <li>• Sign off official communications before release.</li> </ul>
Business Continuity Lead/Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with Team Managers, Business Continuity Reps &amp; HR on latest situation within the organisation.</li> <li>• Monitor cases (including with suppliers) and impact on business. Advise Incident Lead of any new information.</li> <li>• Ensure BIAs for are being constantly reviewed by Team Managers or their deputies. Any issues should be either managed by the Team Manager to conclusion or escalated.</li> <li>• Ensure BCPs are being checked by team managers to reflect the current situation and, as far as possible, all critical tasks can be fulfilled and deadlines met. Any issues should be either managed by the Team Manager to conclusion or escalated.</li> <li>• Work with IT team &amp; team managers to manage and monitor use of remote working in the event of increased number of home workers</li> <li>• Communicate with suppliers or their relationship managers on latest status and either or manage any issue which pose a threat to the continued provision of service to the end customer.</li> <li>• Monitor external situation (WHO/UK Govt etc) for any changes or new advice.</li> <li>• Escalate to IMT any general issues of concern or urgent individual problems which threaten the business operation.</li> </ul>

Facilities Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinate building activity where specific hygiene or cleaning measures are required.</li> <li>• Where specific cases have been identified apply cleaning regime as appropriate.</li> <li>• Liaise with suppliers of materials for hygiene measures to ensure supply to the organisation</li> <li>• Liaise with cleaning company to ensure resource available and agree additional protection cleaner may need.</li> </ul>
Health & Safety Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise Facilities and IMT on correct cleaning materials and hygiene measures.</li> <li>• Advise on ‘duty of care’ requirements from a H&amp;S aspect.</li> <li>• Monitor external H&amp;S sources (e.g. IOSH) for new or updated advice.</li> </ul>
HR Co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as liaison point for managers to report cases</li> <li>• Capture cases and notify Incident Lead or BC Lead</li> <li>• Act as liaison point for any staff with personal questions or concerns</li> <li>• Act as a liaison point for managers needing advice on management.</li> <li>• Review &amp; amend HR policies in line with Pandemic (see Trigger Document – Appendix A)</li> <li>• Execute HR policies as required and appropriate for the situation</li> </ul>
Internal Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise on and draft internal communications as appropriate</li> <li>• Sign off draft with Incident Lead</li> <li>• Distribute communications within the organisation.</li> </ul>

## 2.5: Business Continuity Management

The BCM Specialists role in a Pandemic is to work with internal teams to ensure continuation of business operations. It is the Team Managers responsibility to ensure BIAs and BCPs are 'fit for purpose' and to specifically manage the resource available to complete critical tasks. The BCM will act as an advisor and oversee that actions are being taken.

The BCM Specialist should also work with the IT Team and the Team Managers and to co-ordinate the use the of remote working solution. This includes monitoring the network and checking licensing use, to ensure they are not reaching capacity.

Note: Where there is a risk that capacity is going to be exceeded, it will be incumbent on the BC lead and the Team Managers to ensure that use of the remote working solution is managed on a prioritised basis (based on critical tasks and deadlines).

A list of the BCMs main responsibilities can be found under '2.3 – Roles and Responsibilities'

# 3: MANAGING SUPPLIERS

## 3.1: Monitoring and Tracking Suppliers

As soon as a pandemic is declared, the BC Manager/Lead should start liaising with the critical suppliers on their impact. Dialogue should take place on a regular basis to establish latest status. This includes the number of confirmed cases within the supplier's organisation.

In terms of planning for later stages and how the suppliers and the organisation will work together, it's suggested that supplier's activity is tracked on the Trigger Document (see APPENDIX A) to reflect the challenges faced. It was also agreed to use the same Trigger points for suppliers as an indicator of impact ...

- Less than 10% staff impacted
- 10% staff impacted
- 20% staff Impacted (IMT Invoked by organisation BCM or Facilities Manager)
- 30% staff impacted
- 50% staff impacted
- Government Direction (assumes very serious country wide impact)
- Post Pandemic Waves

This approach needs to be developed with each individual critical supplier and the relevant internal Relationship Manager to take into consideration all the areas listed. For this reason, all the headings below are subject to the discussions with the suppliers, although in the meantime some key/basic points are noted ....

## 3.2: Incident Management between organisations and suppliers

It is the BC Manager/Leads responsibilities in both the organisation and the suppliers to monitor the situation in their respective companies; Once 20% impact is reached in either organisation, it is the BC Manager/leads responsibility to agree to escalate within their respective organisations.

As per the Trigger Document, the Incident Response plans should then be invoked for the organisation and potentially the suppliers. All other actions are then subject to discussion with the respective Incident Management Teams. The BC Managers/leads of the both the organisation and their suppliers should then be in constant communication on actions, decisions and developments as agreed by their respective Incident Management Teams.

## 3.2: Roles and Responsibilities – Organisation and Suppliers

Role	Responsibilities
<p>Organisation BC Manager/Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with supplier BC Manager/Lead on status and cases at both organisations.</li> <li>• Communicate with Relationship Managers on status of each respective supplier.</li> <li>• Confirm that BIAs involving suppliers are being constantly reviewed. Any issues should be either managed to conclusion or escalated.</li> <li>• Confirm BCPs are being checked by suppliers to reflect the current situation and, as far as possible, all critical tasks can be fulfilled and deadlines met. Any issues should be managed to conclusion or escalated.</li> <li>• Confirm technical resource is available at suppliers, and that there is no skills shortage</li> <li>• Confirm with suppliers that there is no threat to the continued provision of their service.</li> <li>• Liaise with Relationship Managers on any supplier concerns, especially with regard to SLAs</li> <li>• Escalate to IMT any general issues of concern or urgent individual problems which threaten the business operation.</li> </ul>
<p>Relationship Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with BC Managers/Leads on status and number of cases.</li> <li>• Monitor and track Pandemic impact on Service Levels and contractual obligations.</li> <li>• Assist BC Lead in developing Trigger Document, mindful of SLAs but taking into account exceptional circumstances.</li> <li>• Based on internal discussions and decisions, negotiate alternative arrangements with supplier as appropriate,</li> </ul>
<p>Facilities Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with their supplier counterpart where necessary.</li> <li>• Where possible, agree consistent approach (including communication) across form both companies.</li> </ul>

## 3.4: Business Continuity – Suppliers maintaining service

As mentioned previously, further discussion is needed to develop the supplier Trigger Document, but as minimum, the following basic principles must be applied by the suppliers:

- Both the organisation and the suppliers have a ‘Duty of Care’ to staff on each other’s sites to ensure all appropriate cleaning and Hygiene measures are in place, and that any Pandemic procedures are jointly agreed, communicated and followed.
- Business impact on activities they perform for the organisation must be constantly reassessed in light of developing (& constantly changing) situation.
- Business Continuity and contingency around available resource from the supplier must be managed in the organisations best interest; All key skills required by the supplier to fulfil its obligations must be available (including Technical skills).
- SLAs must be met as usual, unless agreed by prior arrangement that SLAs are temporarily suspended or changed.
- Contractual obligations must be met as usual, unless agreed by prior arrangement that SLAs are temporarily suspended or changed
- Security must be assessed in light of the situation (e.g. staff carrying out tasks which they don’t normally perform due to lack of resource). There must be no raised threat to the site, its staff, its information or its data as a result of the Pandemic situation.
- Any issues with any of the above should anticipated and alerted to the organisation as early as possible.

# 4: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

## 4.1: Post Pandemic Waves

History has shown that Pandemics typically come in several waves, with subsequent waves sometimes being worse. There can also be a lull in between waves where cases drop, and this can lead to complacency. We must therefore be prepared to revisit our planning and possibly even adapt it to take into consideration any new strain which may have different (possibly worse/more deadly) characteristics.

It is impossible for scientists to forecast how long a Pandemic will last and how it will develop in the following months. However, there is an almost certain prediction that Autumn / Winter will increase the number of cases, and this is also the most likely time a mutation will take place (as the virus could mix with the normal winter flu and create a new strain).

## 4.2: Conclusion

Pandemic is a unique situation presenting a unique BC challenge – i.e. the sustained impact accompanied by a great degree of uncertainty and unknowns. Even the scientists are still learning, and each strain of flu has its own characteristics. It is still very possible that the current strain will continue to have relatively minor symptoms for most people, will not mutate and will burn itself out as it takes its natural course. This would be the best possible outcome. The worst outcome is mutation into a new strain with much more deadly consequences. At this stage it is impossible for anyone to predict either way how the situation will develop.

The key to managing the situation is to keep an open mind to all planning and be prepared to change direction, if necessary, at short notice. We should be mindful that even official information can be amended in light of new findings.

The main challenges are to manage the fear, minimise panic within the organisation, and ensure that, as far as possible, we give the business and its staff the best chance of continuing to function as close to normal as possible.

# APPENDIX A - TRIGGER DOCUMENT

Examples – this is ‘live’ document and so changes as the situation and planning develops

**Internal Response** Trigger document showing staged response/actions for internal team’s operation:



# APPENDIX B - CASE TRACKING

Example – this is ‘live’ document and so will be updated regularly, possibly daily

This document captures individual cases as they are reported at the organisation (including supplier staff based at those sites) and includes EXAMPLE information



# APPENDIX C – FAQs / QUESTION AND ANSWERS FOR STAFF

Will need to be developed once a Pandemic is officially declared, based on advice from Public Health England and World Health Organisation.

# **APPENDIX D – USEFUL LINKS / OFFICIAL INFORMATION**

**World Health Organisation (WHO) – Information about Coronavirus / Covid 19**

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

**Public Health England**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

**NHS**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>