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BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY



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Version	Date	Owner	Summary of Changes
V0.1	10.08.2021	Business Operations and Governance Lead	Moved policy out of BCP to create separate document. Amendments in line with implementation of the Business Continuity Group superseding the Disaster Management team.
V0.2			Additions to section 1 - planning assumptions Additions to section 4 – business continuity incidents
V0.3	01.04.2022		Addition of section 3 – Business continuity group and responsibilities
V0.4	03.05.2023	Business Operations and Governance Lead	Section 1.7 – review and approvals section added
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1. Introduction & background

1.1 Context

This is the Business Continuity Policy for Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS). It lays out the approach, planning, and testing of Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The Business Continuity Plan is a separate document located here: **XXX**. It is managed by the CHS Business Continuity Group who meet at minimum each quarter, if not more frequently.

The Business Continuity Plan is subject to quarterly review and will be submitted annually, with this Policy, to the CHS ARM Committee for consideration, assurance, and approval of any substantive changes in approach. The Plan will also be shaped and improved as we learn from managing actual Business Continuity Incidents (BCI).

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is to ensure CHS is able to continue to deliver its essential services in the face of a disruptive incident or emergency by providing a reference tool for the actions required during or immediately following an emergency or incident that threatens to disrupt normal business activities. This purpose frames the activities to be prioritised when managing an incident and for resources to be allocated accordingly.

An **emergency** is an actual or impending situation that may cause injury, loss of life, destruction of property, or cause the interference, loss or disruption of an organisation's normal business operations to such an extent it poses a threat to its ability to operate/function.

An **incident** is any event that may be, or may lead to, a business interruption, disruption, loss and/or crisis. The plan will help to ensure the continuation of business critical services by minimising the impact of any damage to staff, premises, equipment or records. The plan will help to include an adequate level of detail used to maintain the business functions.

1.3 Objectives

In order to ensure services are maintained with minimal interruption, CHS' Senior Management Team (SMT) is committed to identify major business continuity risks that threaten the continuation of the delivery of products and services, and to develop, implement and maintain effective preventative and responsive recovery strategies.

The objectives of this policy and the BCP are to:

- Provide basic information about the business and its activities;
- Provide an overview and prioritisation of essential services delivered by CHS and associated supporting functions;
- Identify and manage any risk to key services in order to protect the operating functions of staff, Panel and Area Support Team members, and respond promptly to re-establish those services when interruptions occur;
- Provide the SMT with a framework and strategies for identifying and assessing potential and actual risks that threaten key systems and services and for responding to any disruptive incidents (incident management);

- Provide staff with procedures to minimise or prevent exposure to business continuity risks and identify some of the key actions staff can take in a disruptive incident;
- Contain the cost and volunteers community impact of business continuity risks by developing action plans that respond to a broad range of identified risks;
- Ensure that a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is developed, implemented, regularly tested, and updated as appropriate;
- Provide a framework for return to 'business as usual' (resumption and recovery).
- Learn from incidents to improve response/operations.

1.4 Remit

The BCP takes into account those core functions and services carried out by both CHS staff and the panel community which are essential to our ability to deliver our legislative requirements for children's hearings.

The following functions are covered by this Plan:

- Finance
- Facilities and ICT
- HR and staff support
- Volunteer services and support
- Internal and external communications

The following sites are covered by the BCP:

- Thistle House
- Staff and volunteer's remote working/working from home

The operation of SCRA Hearings Centre's are covered by their own Business Continuity arrangements with close engagement at National and local levels should they be subject to Business Continuity measures. SCRA and CHS share their BC Plans annually to provide assurances and ensure alignment.

1.5 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made within the BCP:

1.5.1 Generally used assumptions

Business continuity plans will cover three phases of an event:

1. Crisis management: for up to 72 hours following an incident, or until controls are re-established.
2. Continuity: for 72 hours up to two weeks
3. Recovery: 2 weeks and beyond following an incident. (Recovery plans needed to cover longer periods would normally be developed during the first two to four weeks of an incident.)

Post crisis review, analysis, and improvements will be developed by the Business Continuity Group.

1.5.2 Detailed Planning Assumptions

The following assumptions have been taken into account when developing the plan:

- In the event of a major incident existing business premises would be out of use and there would be significant staff disruption for more than 7 days.

- In the event of a less significant disruption some of the existing premises would remain in use and most staff would be able to flex around the business needs.
- Availability of the SCOTS and @chscotland (cloud based) IT network historically has not been impacted by loss of facilities. In the event of a partial failure of a SCOTS server the network could be unavailable for up to 4 hours. For @chscotland 36 hours (based on suppliers own continuity planning). Any incident that exceeds 4 hours would initiate the Digital Disaster Recovery Plans.
- If the SCOTS server suite were to be completely lost it could take a number of days to restore a limited desktop and telephone service (Microsoft package, E-mail and Internet access). Other software could take even longer to restore. The organisation could utilise the @chscotland e- mail and Teams tenancy to support communications meantime.
- In a pandemic/major event 25% - 30% of staff/volunteers could be off work at any one time. This will include those who are sick, those caring for others and those affected by other means or external factors. On average people will be absent for 5-10 days.

1.6 Scope

While all parts of our business are important, if an incident did occur, priority must be given to the restoration of the processes that are deemed to be business critical to the performance of the organisation, namely, the ability to deliver panel members to support the children's hearings system. Critical operational or support activities have been identified that, without which, CHS would not be able to achieve its objectives. The BCP illustrates how CHS will maintain services and minimise disruption in the event of:

- Reduction in staff or staff capacity
- Reduction in volunteers or volunteer capacity
- Loss of key premises or disruption to key premises (including home offices)
- Loss of IT & telecommunications connectivity or access (cyber or digital incidents are covered in the Digital Recovery Plan)
- Financial process
- Communications crisis

1.7 Review and approvals

The CHS Business Continuity Plan policy will be reviewed and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee every two years, or earlier if there is a process change which requires an amendment.

2. Business Continuity Management (BCM)

The Business Continuity Management defines the scope of CHS' approach to maintaining continuity of support for the conduct of its business.

2.1 What is Business Continuity?

Business continuity provides a framework for creating resilience that will enable CHS to continue to fulfil its role in adverse conditions. It also provides the capability for an effective response should a serious incident occur. This resilience is delivered through a programme of work known collectively as **Business Continuity Management**.

BCM increases the resilience of the organisation by:

- ✓ maintaining a capability for responding to incidents or disasters;
- ✓ minimising the extent of subsequent damage by developing an exercise recovery plan aimed at resuming activities within a pre-agreed timescale;

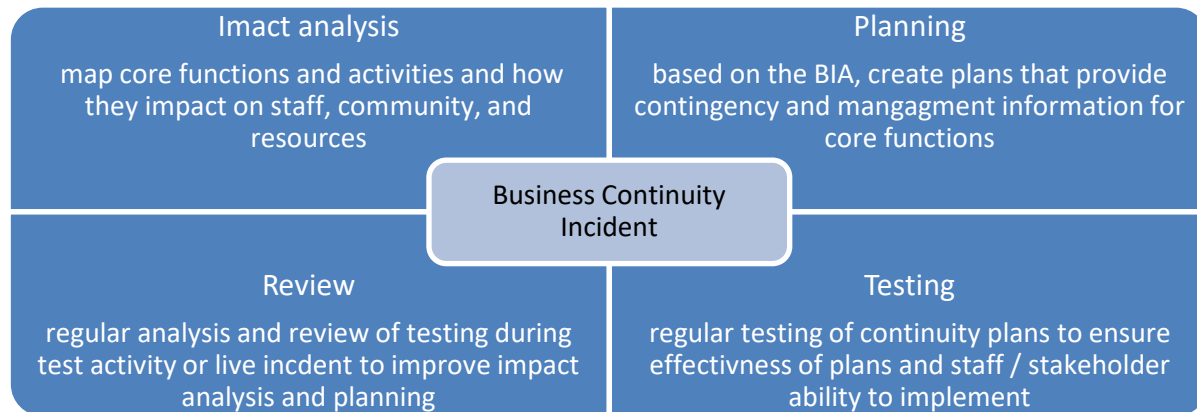
- ✓ setting priorities by identifying those processes which, if lost, would most rapidly damage the organisation ability to deliver its essential services.

2.2 Business Continuity Team

The Business Continuity Team have overall responsibility for management, control and activation of the business continuity plans during live incidents. Member of the team take responsibility for BIA review, writing and revising continuity plans, and regular review of the policy and BCP.

More information on the Business Continuity Team can be found in [section 3](#).

2.3 Business Continuity Framework



The Business Continuity Framework provides a structure for carrying out BCM within CHS. There are four steps within the framework:

2.3.1 Step 1: Understanding what CHS does and Business Impact Analysis

Provide basic information about the business and its activities. This is done through mapping out CHS core activities and functions. These activities are then framed in terms of staff, premises and other resources used to successfully carry out those activities. While the core functions of CHS are comparatively static, that does not mean that CHS is unaffected by change. As such the process of mapping these activities -known as **Business Impact Analysis (BIA)**- is carried out annually. This usually involves confirmation that the current documentation is still valid and making minimal changes. The BCP details the Business Impact Analysis. A Business Impact Analysis should also be carried out as part of any initial implementation of a business continuity event.

2.3.2 Step 2: Business Continuity and Contingency Plans

Within the BCP there are specific and detailed Business contingency and continuity plans for the six major incidents identified as business critical within the scope. The plans outline what steps should be taken and when to;

- Communicate with staff and stakeholders
- Analyse the impact on business, deliverables, staff, community, and stakeholders
- Outline priorities in line with business continuity events
- Continue to manage and recover from an event

2.3.3 Step 3: Implementing the Business Continuity Plan

Members of the CHS Business Continuity Team implement the Plan. The team assesses which activities need to be restored and influences how resources are allocated to facilitate a quick resumption of CHS' relevant activities.

To ensure continuity of service, staff will receive relevant training by Leads and training requirements will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

2.3.4 Step 4: Testing, maintaining and reviewing the Business Continuity Plan

The Business Continuity Working Group reviews and tests the BCP. The Group is made up of staff and panel community member primarily involved with business continuity on a day-to-day basis. The group will also be involved if a Business Continuity Incident is occurring. Exercises take a particular scenario as a training opportunity that test the six key plans for suitability during potential incidents such as severe weather (loss of facilities), total IT failure (loss of IT), pandemic flu (staff and volunteer capacity), etc.

Exercises allow members of the CHS Business Continuity Group, and other CHS staff, to become more familiar with their roles and to develop the Plan, to identify gaps in resources and skills that may be needed, and to effectively respond to an incident. Exercises will be undertaken quarterly and findings reported including recommendations for resources, additional plans, and relevant policies.

2.3.5 Training

In addition to the steps above, training staff and stakeholders in the use of the business continuity plan and policy is essential to maintaining a team equipped to handle an incident. CHS will conduct regular training on business continuity for all staff and essential AST members as part of its business continuity management system.

2.4 Audit and risk management

There is a close relationship between the Business Continuity Plan and Risk Management, particularly when risk mitigation is being undertaken. Introducing mitigation measures - reducing the likelihood of a particular risk occurring – typically involves introducing measures that improve resilience for a function or activity. The mitigation of one particular risk can often improve mitigation against other risks and improve the business continuity response.

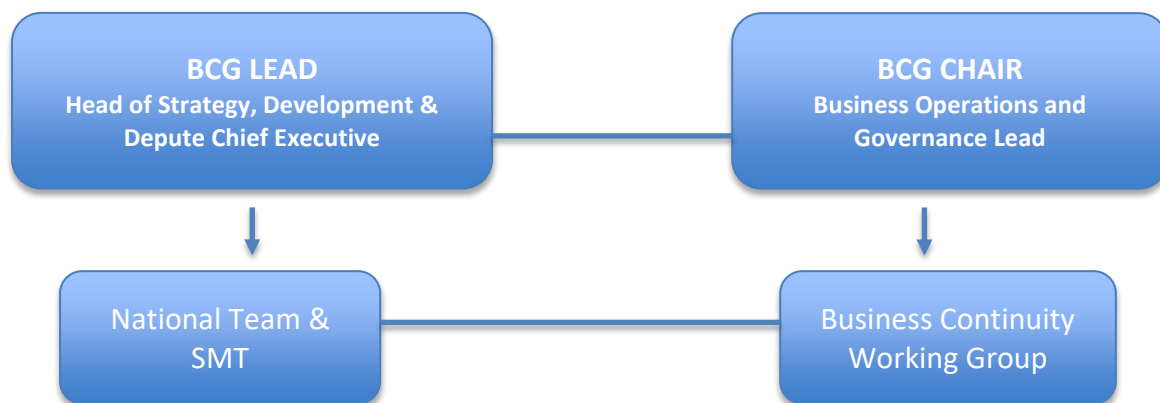
2.5 Testing & feedback

The CHS Business Continuity Group meet at least quarterly to review and test the Business Continuity Plan(s) making amendments and recommendations as appropriate. In the event of major change to the service or environment the BCP will be reviewed, tested and amended accordingly. All such changes will be recorded in the plans version controls.

3. CHS Business Continuity Group

Chaired by the Business Support and Governance Lead, or the DCE, this group will oversee the management, testing, and implementation of the plan. The group membership is flexible consisting of a cross section of the National Team with responsibility for service delivery and Area Conveners. Additional expertise may be sought on a flexible basis dependent on the business continuity activity being undertaken.

3.1 The CHS Business Continuity Group (BCG) structure



The Business Continuity Group have overall responsibility for management, control and activation of Business Continuity Plans. The BCG Lead has overall accountability for Business Continuity within CHS, while the BCG Chair is responsible for ensuring impact analysis and adequate planning is in place via the Business Continuity Plan and Policy.

During business as usual operations, the Chair of the BCG leads the testing and review of the Business Continuity Plans with the BCG members. During a live incident, the BCG Lead will take responsibility for mobilisation and implementation of plans. The Chair and Lead will call upon members of the BCG as needed during incidents, and for consultation on any review or planning.

3.2 BCG Membership

- **Chair – Business Operations and Governance Lead** – Rachel Kavish Wheatley
- **Lead - Head of Strategy, Development & Depute Chief Executive** - Lynne Harrison
- Deputy - National Convener/CEO - Elliot Jackson
- Head of Area Support and Community Improvement – Carol Wassell
- Head of Learning (HoL) - Christine Mullen
- Head of Practice and Policy (HoP&P) – Stephen Bermingham
- Digital Strategy and Delivery Manager – Martin O’Brien
- HR/Organisational Development Lead (HROD) - Jo O’Leary
- Business Operations and Governance Lead (BOGL)– Rachel Kavish Wheatley
- Communications and Engagement Lead (CEL)- TBC
- Business Continuity Working Group - All members of the Business Continuity Team above and:
 - Practice and Policy Lead (P&PL) – Laura Conachan
 - Quality and Performance Lead (QPL) - Michael Beardmore
 - Area Conveners
 - Area Support and Improvement Partners (ASIP)

Please see [The BCP](#) for Business Continuity Group contact details.

3.3 Business Continuity Group (BCG) responsibilities & roles

Member	Role in Group and during an Incident
Chair - Business Operations and Governance Lead	<p><i>The Business Continuity Chair is responsible for leading the BCG, ensuring quarterly testing and review of the BCP meets the requirements of this policy. They are responsible for the review of BIA & BCP annually or when changes to working or business plans impact business arrangements. During a live event they are responsible for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the Lead to fulfil their duties and maintain the action log; • Coordinate emergency financial payments (in line with the BCP plans); • Hold daily Sit-Rep meetings; • Act as primary liaison with the emergency services (as required).
Lead - Head of Strategy, Development & Depute Chief Executive (DCE)	<p><i>The BC Lead is responsible for ensuring a business continuity plan is in place and that it is kept up to date and reviewed. They are the accountable officer for the business continuity plan and call the plan to actions as necessary. During a continuity incident, the BC Lead will take responsibility for operational implementation of plans. In addition, should the Chair be unavailable, they may take responsibility for their role dependent on the scale of the incident.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the plan to action when needed, informing SMT, Board, and the BCG; • Leads the BC Group through enacting any business continuity plans; • Main point of contact during an incident and recovery phase; • Maintain overview of incident, taking the lead on resilience and recovery planning which exceeds the BCP time frames. • Liaise with the CEO, Board, and key partners as required.
Deputy - National Convener/ CEO (NC/CEO)	<p><i>The BC Deputy is responsible for supporting the BC Chair and Lead, as well as standing in for either role should one be unavailable during an incident.</i></p>
AST Operations - Head of Area Support and Community Improvement	<p><i>The Head of Area Support and Community Improvement is responsible for continuity of AST operations. In addition, should the Chair or lead be unavailable, they may take responsibility for either role dependent on the scale of the incident.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular meetings with AST members as required; • Act as primary liaison with SCRA and operational partners; • Link actions and activities of continuity plans with AST's and support their core functions.
Digital Recovery – Digital Strategy and Delivery Manager	<p><i>The Digital Strategy and Delivery Manager is responsible for the annual review and testing of the CHS Digital Disaster and Recovery Plan and/or any digital recovery necessary during a live event.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Digital Disaster and Recovery Plan as needed; • Establish replacement telecommunications network and IT services; • Liaise with Scottish Government, SCRA, and CSAS ICT teams; • Dictate any communications in relation to ICT to be shared with CHS community.
Media, External, and Internal Communications - Communications & Engagement Lead	<p><i>The CEL is responsible for the communications during an incident including liaising with and responding to press enquiries. If the incident involves an accident or other risk to health, the police or emergency services' communications teams assume the lead role in relation to providing factual information about the incident. Only the police should issue casualty or fatality numbers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a CHS community-wide communications plan using an email-shot and/or Teams; • Draft responses for use internally and externally at key points during the enactment of the BCP; • Communicating with local and national media and for establishing a response centre; • Respond to and log all media calls giving all media the same information and tell them when new information will be available.
Staff Welfare - HR/Organisational Development Lead	<p><i>The HR/Organisational Development Lead is responsible for staff welfare.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce impact analysis and planning; • Coordinate and support alternative accommodation/arrangements; • Liaison with Thistle House, Site Emergency Management Team (SEMT) Lead the BC Group through review and testing of any business continuity plans; • Staff wellbeing, welfare, and safety.

Training - Head of Learning	<p><i>Ensure training of business continuity is provided within CHS and business continuity and risk management training feature in training planning. In addition, should the HROD be unavailable during an incident, the Head of Learning may be called upon to assume their role within the BCG.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand in for DCE and fulfil their role within the BCG should they be unavailable during an incident; • Coordinate CHSLA to ensure training functions continue.
Practice and Policy - Head of Practice and Policy	<p><i>Ensure continuity of practice and policy standards during incidents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand in for DCE and fulfil their role within the BCG should they be unavailable during an incident; • Recommend and manage any changes to practice including training and communication for the community; • Liaise with Scottish Government, SCRA, and Sponsor Team on any practice and policy related issues.
Business Continuity Working Group	<p><i>Takes responsibility for quarterly review and testing of the BCP, reporting on findings and making recommendations as necessary. Membership of the group is fluid, allowing for staff and community members with experience/expertise to be brought in as needed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the testing and review of continuity plans; • Support the implementation of plans during an incident, as directed by the Chair or Lead.
All Staff	All staff are required to familiarise themselves with arrangements to deal with an incident

3.4 Incident communications

The Lead of the BCT informs SMT, staff and the Board as appropriate that the Plan has been activated and communicates the following information:

- The nature of the crisis and, *if relevant* to the situation, an estimate regarding the length of time the office will be inaccessible;
- How staff and the Board will be updated (social media/phone/email) and when (frequency).

ANNEX D of the BCP identifies contact details for CHS Board and Team and members can be contacted via CHS Teams Tenancy and platform. Hard copies are printed quarterly and distributed to key members of the team.

4. Factors that may trigger the Business Continuity Plan

4.1 People – Staff

Any incident that reduces capacity or availability of National Team or Board.

The Business Impact Analysis within the BCP identifies minimum staffing required to ensure a minimum level of essential services within CHS. Please see the BCP for full plans detailing actions to be taken during times of reduced staff capacity.

4.2 People – Volunteers

Any incident that reduces AST and/or Panel Member capacity in any area, or nationally.

The Business Impact Analysis within the BCP identifies minimum volunteer numbers required to ensure a minimum level of essential services within CHS. Please see the BCP for full plans detailing actions to be taken during times of reduced volunteer capacity.

4.3 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Plans are triggered once CHS are made aware of/or experience any incident resulting in the loss of ICT functions or connectivity for over 30 % of the National or Community Team lasting more than 6-8 hours.

The Plan acknowledges that the IT systems that CHS uses are dependent on supplier delivery (such as iTECS for SCOTS network, and Microsoft for the Community Hub). Lose of either of these supplier services is covered in the iTECS Business Continuity Plan or the CHS Digital Disaster Recovery Plan. The Business Impact Analysis within the Business Continuity Plan identifies key services and time frame for recovery. Please see the BCP and CHS Digital Disaster Recovery Plan for full plans detailing actions to be taken during an ICT incident.

4.4 Financial & HR systems

Any Business Continuity incident is likely to have an effect on Financial and HR systems.

Please see the BCP for full plans detailing actions to be taken during times of reduced access to or capacity of finance and HR systems.

4.5 Media and communications

Any incident affecting CHS is a potential communications issue and, where appropriate, communications will be required for the CHS community. It is important that we ensure consistency of message and a clear line of responsibility for sign off and dissemination.

The Communications & Engagement Lead (and in their absence the BCT Lead) is responsible for handling a communications plan and messaging for issue management. In the instance that communications are required for the CHS community and National Team, the Communications & Engagement Lead will liaise with the appropriate lead and BCT.