

Version	Title	Author	Changes (Summary of changes made)	Authorised	Review Date
4	Business Continuity Plan	SD	Reviewed and updated	Board Mtg 12.02.2020	01/02/2020

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

### Introduction to the Policy

This Continuity Policy is designed to ensure that Healthwatch West Sussex services and Board can continue to operate (as far as possible) in the event of any unexpected disaster, incident or major occurrence which has the potential to de-stabilise the service, including the decision making function of the Board of Directors. This includes the links between the Board and the administrative and support functions delivered from the Healthwatch West Sussex office and any systems that the Healthwatch West Sussex services rely upon for day-to-day operations.

This Continuity Policy has been produced to include not only a “disaster” but also less severe (and shorter term) events such as power loss, bomb alerts etc. The assessment of these risks, and the subsequent planning for them, is similar to that needed for a major incident. The purpose of this Continuity Policy is to provide both a first response and a framework under which Healthwatch West Sussex may be managed, meet its statutory requirements and continue to operate under exceptional circumstances

Commissioned partners are responsible for ensuring that they have in place their own continuity plans for the delivery of Healthwatch services. This document provides a framework for these continuity plans.

### 1. Responsibilities

#### Independent and member nominated Directors:

Responsible for;

- Holding a hard-copy of the plan away from the main premises
- Contributing to the plan updates
- Initiating response / recovery action as detailed below
- Liaising with the press / media if appropriate

#### Partners, Staff and volunteers:

Responsible for;

- Contributing to the plan content
- Advising line managers of changes to personal circumstances to allow the plan to be updated.
- Complying with the activation of the plan as appropriate

#### Access to data

- All Healthwatch business critical data, policies and procedures are available and accessible on Office 365. This is a secure environment and accessible by staff in the event of need in an emergency. There is therefore no need for documents to be backed up. Any technical problems that may occur from time to time must be reported to the Administrator or Chief Officer who will aim to ensure speedy resolution of the problem.
- Critical data on paper (signed legal documents etc.) are scanned and stored on Office 365

**Contacts**

It may not be possible to contact the person you require in the event of an emergency. In the absence of any Independent Director or Chief Officer the following table indicates first contacts in their absence:

Contact	Contact in absence
Chair	Any Independent Director
Independent Director	Any available Independent Director
Chief Officer	Chair

**Communications**

There is a list of home telephone, mobile phone and email addresses for all Board members, Chief Officer and commissioned partners and their Healthwatch contacts/staff held on Office 365. All Board members will have a hard copy for use in the event that there is no access to the internet.

**The Communication Hub**

In the event of a critical communications failure the Chief Officer will act as the communications hub, failing which the Chair or any Independent Director. The role of the communications hub is to take whatever action is possible to resolve the critical communications failure.

**2. Immediate Responses Following a Significant Event**

**Buildings hosting Board support services - Long Term or Short Term Loss of Access**

The partner responsible for providing the administrative office space / support to the Board and Chief Officer must ensure that should the office become unavailable for use for any reason, suitable alternative accommodation will be identified for the purpose of relocation. If possible and safe, the most senior person on site must record a message on the telephone answerphone to inform people of the re-location and the reasons. In addition the website must be updated as soon as possible to publish the new location and contact details.

The partner organisation senior officer will be responsible for taking all immediate action as may be required. Staff may continue to work from home as agreed.

## **Action required:**

### **Evacuation of office base and the Emergency Services.**

This is in accordance with location Fire Policy. The most senior member of staff for the partner organisation will direct operations. The most senior member of staff will contact the Chief Officer/Chair as soon as possible to inform them of the situation.

### **Establishing an alternative temporary base for provision of Board support**

All partner staff/volunteers on duty will convene at the new designated office base as soon as possible following the event. Ideally, a minimum of one laptop or other suitable computer, printer and a telephone and fax machine should be allocated at the new location.

As soon as Internet access can be established then the senior staff member must restore data to the computer systems.

### **Immediate Communication Issues**

Partners should not make comments to the media and all enquiries should be referred to the HW Chief Officer/Chair in the first instance.

Once the temporary premises have been established the following should be advised of the situation, if not previously informed:

- West Sussex County Council Commissioner and any other Commissioning/Commissioned Partners
- HW Chair and Chief Officer

### **Damage Assessment**

The Chief Officer/Chair will liaise with the emergency services to conduct an immediate assessment of the situation and determine the extent and likely duration of the emergency. A decision will then be taken as to the duration of the event and the emergency steps to be taken.

The Chief Officer/Chair will liaise with other agencies to ensure that a swift and correct recovery is supported and achieved.

### **Communication with the public**

In the event of a major event, the Chief Officer/Chair will liaise with local commissioning and commissioned partners to agree a joint communication with the public through the media.

### **Incapacity of Staff.**

In the event of many members of Partner staff being incapacitated through ill health the service manager or senior staff member in the team must report this to the Chief Officer/Chair as soon as possible.

The Chief Officer/Chair may suspend the service but this will be a last resort, for example when the majority of partner staff are absent for example during a Flu pandemic. This decision will be reviewed twice daily and regular liaison will be established with local commissioner(s).

In the event of an official pandemic alert the Chief Officer/Chair will liaise with the local Emergency Planning Officer at the Primary Care Trust to ensure that Healthwatch West Sussex conforms and co-operates with the joint efforts being made across the region to respond to the emergency.

#### **Response to Major Incident - Accident / Terrorism**

In the event of a major incident the Chief Officer/Chair will liaise with the local Emergency Planning Officer at West Sussex County Council to ensure that Healthwatch West Sussex conforms and co-operates with the joint efforts being made across the County to respond to the emergency.

#### **Contact details for relevant staff / other services**

**See Office 365**

**(Hard copy to be attached to this policy)**