

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY & DISASTER RECOVERY PROCEDURE**

 **Approved by the Management Committee**

 **At meeting held on 27th July 2021.**

 **Review date July 2024.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This procedure supports our Business Continuity Planning policy and details our arrangements for ensuring, so far as is possible, the continuity of services following a ‘disaster’ that prevents staff from working at our office.

1.2 We recognise that it is not possible to cover every eventuality in precise detail. This procedure provides a framework highlighting the key tasks to be undertaken especially in the immediate aftermath of a ‘disaster’.

1.3 This procedure covers scenarios where the office is not available due to a disaster, or is unable to open due to an epidemic, or similar incident such as a major loss of power supply locally. It also covers situations where there may be access to the office but there has been a major failure of our IT systems.

1.4 Although this procedure focusses mainly on a worst-case scenario, we recognise that there could be a variety of situations that affect a proportion of services only, e.g. fire or water damage to one or two rooms, or partial loss of staff due to illness etc. The ‘worst case’ scenario will therefore provide a framework within which operational decisions can be taken according to the circumstances in each case.

This procedure is set out in three main parts:

Section 2: Proactive steps taken in case of a disaster situation.

Section 3: Initial actions following a disaster.

Section 4: Recovery plan section to assist with planning for how to recover from a disaster.

**2.0 PROACTIVE STEPS**

**2.1 Emergency Management Team**

2.1.1 The Director, Housing Manager and Finance Manager will form the Emergency Management Team (EMT) who will implement the Business Continuity Plan.

2.1.2 The EMT will be led by the Director, or in the latter’s absence by another Manager.

2.1.3 If an EMT member is absent, another staff member can, if necessary, be approached to take their place for the period required.

**2.2 IT facilities**

2.2.1 All office-based staff have laptop computers with personal log in details to access our systems remotely. Staff have mobile phones/office mobile that can be used in an emergency. A call divert system can be put in place. Having these in place will make it much easier to switch quickly to remote working if necessary and facilitate communication between staff.

2.2.2 Our backup system allows for servers to be recreated quickly, therefore minimising any down time.

 Our SDM system is backed up daily by SDM under our user agreement.

2.2.4 We have external IT support to assist with any issues arising from the emergency.

2.2.5 All staff can access IT systems remotely.

2.2.6 We will communicate with tenants by letter, phone or email and any important information will be posted on our website.

2.2.7 Committee have been provided with tablet devices to enable them to act effectively during a period of having to meet via zoom calls.

**2.3 Reduce reliance on the office.**

2.3.1 We will work to reduce or remove the reliance on the office. Whilst our experience during Covid-19 showed us that most tasks can be undertaken without the office, there were some areas where this was not possible. These will be considered, and steps put in place to manage these areas in a situation where the office is not available at all to staff. Our Covid-19 response necessitated home working and staff are accustomed to spending some of their time working in this way.

**3.0 INITIAL ACTIONS**

 The Director will be responsible for leading on identifying initial actions and delegating tasks to other staff members.

3.1 **Communications between staff**

 Where a disaster occurs during normal office hours, the Director will notify all members of staff

If it is necessary to implement action out with normal working hours, the EMT have contact phone numbers for all staff which will allow for them to be contacted. Contact will be maintained by phone or email.

**3.2 First EMT meeting**

 The Director will arrange for the EMT to meet on the day of, or on the day after the disaster to agree the initial action required and confirm roles/responsibilities.

Depending on the circumstances this may be held virtually via zoom.

Depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary to identify and set up an alternative office for a small number of staff. The EMT will decide on this and agree who should take this forward if needed. It is expected that, due to the availability of home working, this will not be needed urgently.

**3.3 Staff – working from home.**

 All office-based staff will be asked to work from home until further notice.

 The Director will ensure that staff are kept up to date with the situation and regular briefings and updates are provided during the initial period after the disaster.

**3.4 Payroll arrangements**

 If the ‘disaster’ occurs around the point that staff are due to be paid, we should be able to get salary payments to staff via our online payroll system. Should this not be possible, the Finance Manager will contact our bank and initiate the agreed arrangements for the bank to process staff pay on our behalf.

**3.5 Communication with tenants**

 We will communicate with tenants any alternative arrangements via our website, by letter or text message. A call divert system will be implemented to enable tenants to contact us by phone.

**3.6 Communication with other agencies etc.**

 The Director will be responsible for making sure that appropriate external agencies are notified, depending on the circumstances. It is likely that the SHR will need to be notified via the Notifiable Events process. We may also need to notify insurers, the local authority, our auditors and other key partners.

**3.7 Communication with the media**

 The Director, as official spokesperson for the Association, will liaise with the Chairperson of the Management Committee and, as required, will issue information to the media and respond to requests for information etc. Any other staff who are approached by media representatives will refer them to the Director and will not issue any comments on behalf of the Association, unless they are specifically authorised to do so.

**3.8 Committee meetings**

 Management Committee or Working Group meetings due to be held in the first week following a disaster will be postponed or cancelled. Future meetings can be held via zoom.

**4.0 RECOVERY PLAN**

Once the initial steps have been taken to deal with the immediate aftermath of the situation, attention can turn to how to recover from the situation. It is not possible to prepare this in advance as each situation will be different. However below are some of the areas that may be relevant for consideration. The Director will be responsible for preparing a recovery plan and making sure that tasks within this are allocated and then reviewed.

**4.1 Replacement office accommodation**

If the office is out of action, and likely to be so for some time, consideration will be given to securing alternative office accommodation. This may not be necessary due to staff being able to work from home and communicate via zoom. As a minimum an alternative postal address would have to be set up, and all mail re-directed to this address.

**4.2 Committee meetings**

The Director will ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for any meetings of the Management Committee that require to be held during this period.

**4.3 Recording costs**

 The Finance Manager will circulate advice regarding the types of costs that will have to be recorded so that they can be reclaimed from the insurance company in due course.

 The Finance Manager will liaise with insurance company representatives as soon as possible to begin the process of identifying relevant costs and agreeing the process for resolving queries, making claims etc.

**4.4 IT alternative arrangements**

We have a robust IT setup that is designed to cover a wide range of circumstances. Part of the role of the EMT will be to consider what impact the emergency has had on our IT infrastructure and how to cover any gaps in provision. Appendix 1 sets out a variety of possible circumstances and how we propose to recover from these.

**5.0 IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW**

5.1 The Director is responsible for ensuring this procedure is implemented when required.

5.2 The Director will ensure this procedure is reviewed at least every three years.

**Approved by the Management Committee on 27th July 2021.**

**Next review due by: July 2024.**

**APPENDIX 1**

IT Disaster Recovery Scenarios

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scenario** | **Likely resolution** | **Responsibility** | **Likely timescale** |
| Cyber attack results in some or all systems being down | If necessary, re-build affected servers from backup. | ICT Provider  | 1 day |
| Emergency resulting in no access to office but servers are unaffected | Staff members will be able to work from home with mobile devices, so no downtime or specific actions required.  | ICT Provider  | No downtime |
| Emergency resulting in no access to office and server is down or inaccessible but not damaged (e.g. power or internet to office is lost for prolonged period) | Server will be restored by ICT provider.  | ICT Provider  | 1 day to restore plus time for staff to access. |
| Emergency resulting in no access to office and servers are destroyed (e.g. fire) | Server would be rebuilt by ICT provider and SDM and Sage would provide back up data to facilitate this process | ICT Provider  | 1 day to restore plus time for staff to access |