

BUSINESS CONTINUITY - PRIORY FUNCTIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This procedure is one of a range supporting our [Business Continuity 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 The Priory.

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

1.3 This procedure assumes a 'worst case' scenario, i.e. that:

- no services at all can be provided from The Priory for a period of time because the building has been seriously damaged;
- no furnishings or equipment, including ICT equipment – main servers or individual pc's – can be recovered from the building;
- all 'hard copy' (paper) files and folders have been destroyed or seriously damaged.

However we recognise that there could possibly be a variety of situations that affect a proportion of the services only, e.g. fire or water damage to one or two rooms. The 'worst case' scenario will therefore provide a framework within which operational decisions can be taken according to the circumstances in each case.

1.4 This procedure has the following sections:

- Section 2 - Emergency Management Team
- Section 3 - Continuity Plan – First Week
- Section 4 - Continuity Plan – Second & Subsequent Weeks
- Section 5 - Monitoring and review

1.5 This procedure is supported by detailed action plans.

1.6 For our arrangements to deal with a disaster affecting a Care and Support service, see the Business Continuity – Care and Support procedure Ref: G25.

For our ICT security and backup arrangements, see the [Computer System Security, Email & Internet procedure Ref: G46](#).

2.0 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM

Membership

2.1 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Head of ICT will form the Emergency Management Team (EMT) who will implement the Business Continuity Plan. The Team may co-opt additional members as required.

The EMT will be led by the Chief Executive. In the Chief Executive’s absence the EMT will be led by the Human Resources Director.

Deputies

2.2 Should a member of the EMT be unavailable, a designated deputy will carry out their duties. The deputies are as follows:

SLT Member	Deputy
Chief Executive	Director of Finance/HR Director
Director of Care & Support	Assistant Director Care & Support
Director of Finance	Head of Finance & Head of Housing Services
HR Director	Head of OD
Head of ICT	ICT support company representative

2.3 Each EMT member & deputy will hold a copy of the Plan. A copy will also be held offsite at the designated temporary office, and on a secure page on the ARK website, accessible to EMT members and deputies only.

Injury etc. to EMT Members

2.4 Where the disaster occurs during working hours and results in injury or death to members of the EMT and designated deputies, a priority for the remaining EMT members/deputies will be to ensure, as soon as possible after the initial ‘trauma’ stage, that the duties of those not available are allocated amongst themselves or to relevant colleagues.

2.5 If necessary, the Chief Executive or those EMT members available will discuss with the Chair of the Board what assistance Board Members may be able to provide in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

3.0 CONTINUITY PLAN – FIRST WEEK

Initiating the Plan

3.1 The Plan will be initiated by the Chief Executive.

[NOTE: To avoid repetition in the rest of this procedure, where any post title is used it should be taken that in the post holder’s absence the action(s) will be carried out by the deputy or a designated colleague.]

3.2 The Chief Executive 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 time of the disaster, a staff meeting will also be held at a suitable location either later that day or at the beginning of the next day to confirm the initial action to be taken.

3.3 The role and responsibilities of the Chief Executive and of each member of the EMT in the immediate aftermath of a disaster are detailed in the EMT Action Plan – see Appendix 1.

Communications between Priory staff

3.4 During normal office hours, the Chief Executive (or the Chief Executive's PA) will contact any EMT members who are not present, and each Director will advise any of their staff not present.

3.5 In case it is necessary to initiate the Plan outwith normal working hours:

- the EMT will carry contact phone numbers for each other and the designated deputies.
- each Director and their designated deputy will carry contact phone numbers for the staff they are responsible for.

Members of staff may choose to provide either a landline or mobile phone number, or both.

3.6 Outwith normal working hours, staff will be contacted by a 'cascade' system. The Chief Executive will contact the remaining EMT members, then each EMT member will contact the staff in their department who are currently available to work (i.e. not on annual leave or ill).

Temporary office accommodation

3.7 In the period immediately following a disaster a key priority will be to set up a temporary office. The purpose of the temporary office will be to ensure that key activities can be carried out and that service users, tenants, other clients, Board Members and the general public are able to make contact with ARK, and vice versa.

3.8 The temporary office will be located in rooms at the Southhouse service office, Edinburgh (see Appendix 2).

3.9 The following staff will re-locate to the temporary office:

- HR Director
- Payroll Business Partner
- Finance Officer
- Housing Services Officer
- Maintenance Officer
- HR Business Partner
- Maintenance Assistant (Business Continuity Support)

3.10 The HR Director and Head of ICT will liaise with the Southhouse Services Care and Support Manager to bring the temporary office into use within 2 working days of the disaster, purchasing or leasing phone, fax, ICT, copier and other office equipment as required. Other members of the EMT will assist as required.

3.11 The HR Director will co-ordinate the arrangements to re-direct phone calls and mail to the temporary office.

3.12 The EMT will decide when staff should relocate to the temporary office. The aim will be to have the temporary office in operation by the end of the second working day following a disaster, at the latest.

Other staff – working from home

- 3.13 All staff other than those listed in para. 3.9 above will be asked to work from home until further notice. Those that require access to the back-up ICT servers will do so via the Citrix software.
- 3.14 The Head of ICT will ensure that relevant staff who do not already have Citrix are provided with it as quickly as possible.
- 3.15 Each Director will ensure that their staff are kept up to date with events and that staff meetings are held as often as required during the initial period after the disaster.
- 3.16 Staff working from home will be entitled to claim any additional costs incurred as follows:
- a) to offset the additional costs of electricity, heating etc., staff may claim a 'Home Working Allowance', calculated as detailed in section 7.3 of the [Mobile Working policy ref: HR13](#);
 - b) for business travel, staff may claim for any mileage each day that is greater than the distance they normally travel on one return journey between home and The Priory.

Telephone calls will normally be covered by the supply of 'pay as you go' mobile phones, for those staff who do not already have a mobile phone provided by ARK.

Communication with services staff

- 3.17 The Director of Care and Support will provide initial information to Assistant Directors by phone or email. This will normally happen on the first day following the disaster.
- 3.18 The Director of Care and Support and appropriate colleagues will provide additional information to Assistant Directors at regular intervals as this Plan is implemented. Information will then be cascaded through the Area Manager team.

Communication with mainstream tenants

- 3.19 A standard letter giving details of the temporary office and how to contact it etc. will be held on the ICT system. The Head of Housing Services will arrange for the relevant information to be added and the letter sent to all mainstream tenants by the end of the third working day following the disaster, at the latest.

Communication with other agencies etc.

- 3.20 Within 2 working days of the disaster, each EMT member will inform the relevant statutory agencies, professional services and other priority organisations, as detailed in their individual action plans.

Area Managers will inform relevant contacts in their local authorities.

Communication - general

- 3.21 The Chief Executive will liaise with the Head of ICT and, unless there are circumstances that result in a delay, will by the end of the second working day following the disaster arrange for an appropriate statement and contact information etc. to be added to the ARK website. The Chief Executive will ensure that the statement is updated as required.

Communication with the media

- 3.22 During the first week following the disaster, and as often as required thereafter, the Chief Executive will liaise with the Chair of the Board of Management and, with the assistance of ARK's PR Consultants if required, will respond to enquiries from local Press or radio etc., or to issue information to the media. Should the Chief Executive be unavailable, e.g. through injury, the PR Consultants may be asked to take on a more pro-active role with regard to the media.

EMT meetings

- 3.23 The Chief Executive will ensure that the EMT meets frequently to monitor progress in implementing the Plan and to discuss future arrangements, depending on how seriously The Priory has been damaged.

Initial meetings may be held at the Chief Executive's home, or at another suitable location.

Meetings with clients and tenants

- 3.24 Any meetings between Priory staff and individual clients or tenants will be held either at the nearest service office that has an available room, or in another Housing Association's office, by arrangement.

Board meetings

- 3.25 Board or Sub-Committee meetings due to be held in the first week following a disaster may be postponed.

Payroll arrangements

- 3.26 A priority during the first week will be to ensure that the payroll function is re-established as quickly as possible. This will be partly achieved by transferring the Payroll team to the temporary office where they can access the back-up ICT network and continue to receive payroll input information from local services etc.
- 3.27 Should there be any difficulties in processing staff pays immediately after a disaster the Director of Finance will initiate the support arrangements available from our bank, by which bank staff will manually process payments through to individual staff bank accounts.

Given the volume of payments to be processed, consideration will also be given to payment by other means such as issuing cheques or cash, or late payments.

4.0 CONTINUITY PLAN – SECOND & SUBSEQUENT WEEKS

Replacement accommodation

- 4.1 It is assessed that the working arrangements described in paras. 3.9 and 3.13 above could be sustained for up to 2/3 months if required, although it would clearly be desirable if the period was shorter.
- 4.2 As soon as it becomes clear that The Priory will not be available for at least 2 months or longer, the Chief Executive will start the process of identifying suitable alternative office accommodation.

- 4.3 Initially the aim will be to lease a purpose-designed office unit for a temporary period. The length of the lease will depend on the estimated time for completing repairs to The Priory.
- 4.4 Proposals will be considered initially by the Senior Leadership Team and thereafter recommendations will be submitted to the Board for a decision.
- 4.5 Depending on the extent of the damage and whether or not The Priory can be repaired and re-occupied, it may also become necessary to start the process of identifying permanent new offices.

Recovering paper files

- 4.6 Depending on the type and extent of the disaster, some or all of the information held in paper files will have been partially damaged or completely destroyed. Following the establishment of the temporary office, each Director will initiate the process of identifying the information that has been lost and implement the agreed arrangements for recovering the items that need to be replaced.
- 4.7 The work involved in replacing paper files may require the appointment of temporary staff, with the costs being covered by the 'business interruption' element in ARK's insurance policy. Any such appointments will be authorised by the EMT, following discussion with our insurers and confirmation that the costs will be recovered.

Staff Meetings

- 4.8 The Chief Executive and each Director will ensure that departmental staff meetings are held at least once each week. The purpose of these meetings will be to provide an opportunity for staff to exchange experiences, discuss any relevant issues, ensure that the required work is being carried out and review progress in recovering the paper documents that need to be replaced.
- 4.9 The Chief Executive will arrange for all available staff to meet together at least once each month for an overall review of how the organisation is coping following the disaster and discussion of any changes required to the arrangements currently in place.
- 4.10 Meetings may be held in a local hotel, local authority meetings room, or another housing association meetings room etc.

Board meetings

- 4.11 The Chief Executive will ensure that there is appropriate accommodation for any meetings of the Board and/or Sub-Committees that require to be held during this period.

Meetings may be held in a local hotel, local authority meetings room, or another housing association meetings room etc. A list of other Associations that have agreed the reciprocal use of meetings rooms is given in Appendix 4.

Recording costs

- 4.12 The Director of Finance will circulate advice and information to all staff via the SLT regarding the types of costs that will have to be recorded so that they can be reclaimed from the insurance company in due course.
- 4.13 The Director of Finance will meet with the 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.

5.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 5.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is implemented as required.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive will ensure that the EMT meets as often as required during the initial and subsequent phases of a disaster recovery situation, and will designate one or more members of staff to attend EMT meetings to record their decisions and assist in drafting a report on the action taken in due course.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive will ensure that this procedure is reviewed every two years at the same time as the policy is reviewed.
- 5.4 The Chief Executive will ensure that selected aspects of the overall plan are tested through 'desktop exercises' at least annually, and that the results of each exercise are reported to the Board.

Approved by SLT in: September 2016
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Next review of policy due by: September 2018

Complies with: Performance Standard GS4.4 - Raising Standards Chapter 17 – Risk Management