

Business Continuity 101 –

Business Impact Analysis (BIA), identification of priorities and writing plans

These steps will produce a business impact analysis, identify priorities and allow accurate and useful plans to be drawn up. This guide supports the BIA and plan/action card templates.

Step 1 – dig out your current plans and work done previously

Don't throw away the time and effort you've already put in; have a look at existing plans, questionnaires, Business Impact Analysis and it should help you understand your part of the business and where you sit in the wider organisation.

Business Impact Analysis (BIA)

This is the part where you analyse what your team does, who does what, who you depend upon for delivering the service, what IT, communication and other requirements are involved and based on those you identify key contingencies and timeframes for response and recovery.

Step 2 – work out what's in your team and write it down

Make an initial list of all activities you can think of taking place in your team and think of what the impact would be to the delivery of service if they were to be disrupted. Common areas for consideration are patient safety, service delivery, statutory/ legal duties, financial, reputational, staff safety etc.

Step 3 – look at the impact over time on the activities

You'll need to decide how long it is acceptable for each activity to be disrupted; the time it reaches that level is the maximum tolerable period of disruption (MTPD). You can now list your findings in the appropriate column in the BIA template (section 6).

Step 4 – identify what is needed to complete the activities

Work out what you need to support the activities (e.g. staffing, resources, premises, suppliers) and complete the appropriate sections in the BIA template (sections 7-13). You'll need to include normal levels of work including single points of dependency (is there only 1 person who can do a particular task?) and minimum levels of service. Please also include what backup options you currently have (e.g. using an alternative location).

Step 5 – look at the impact over time on the resources

Assume you are working with the minimum resource requirements for this step.

Go to the **Recovery Time Objective (RTO)** section (section 14) and decide on the time when you need to have recovered by, which should be less than the MTPD Write the RTO (in hours) at the end.

That's the BIA done.

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

Step 6 – complete the business continuity plan template

This is the plan those in your team will need when something goes awry. Using the plan template, fill in the sections explaining who does what (including internal and external teams you are dependent on), which particular sites/resources it refers to, what it's priority and supporting processes are, the command/contact structure.

The action cards will be for generic problems (e.g. loss of electricity) and specific problems as highlighted in the BIA (e.g. loss of a certain vital piece of equipment). Don't get too creative, keep it simple and build them on everyday processes. If your everyday processes don't work when pushed to extremes then you might want to rethink your everyday processes.

You might have interdependencies with other departments, talk to them about it, don't make assumptions.

Step 7 – train people and test it

You'll need to show the plan/action cards to people who would use them and talk them through it. Put about 1.5-2 hours aside for a training/testing session – you're testing the plan not the people. Ideally, use scenarios that have actually happened and they are familiar with.

Work through the scenarios using the plan and action cards. Work out if you need to add something, take something out or change wording. Make sure the group know you are doing it - they will then have a connection to something they have helped build. Broadcast the new version of the plan.

Step 8 – on-going training

There is no point putting in all this work if no one knows about the plans. When you get someone new in, show them where they are, tell them when they should use them, show them they are day-to-day processes so they have confidence in using them

Step 9 – exercise is good for you

Situations keep changing so you'll need to make sure your plans are up to speed. They should be tested at least once a year. This can be supported by the EPRR lead/ manager of your division and the EPRR practitioner of the Trust.

Step 10 – and if it happens for real.

The point of a BC plan is that it supports real situations so they might just happen! If they do, report on Datix as usual then have a debrief. Your EPRR lead can support you with this. Get the staff involved, find out if they used the plan (if not, why not?), if it worked, what could be improved. Write it all down (post incident report). Celebrate the bits that went well, it's success in adversity. Action plan anything that needs to be changed and make sure it gets done, publicise the update. Add the post incident report to Datix and store with the BC paperwork for evidencing.

Speaking of evidencing...

NHS England require NHS organisations to show they have done a BIA and have plans, that they train and exercise. This is done as part of the self-assessment for the EPRR Core Standards. It will also be included in an annual board report including the number of exercises that have taken place.

Jargon

Business Impact Analysis (BIA)	Identify and prioritise activities which contribute to the processes that deliver the most urgent products/services, determines the resources required
Process	Interacting activities that transform input to output eg output is Inpatient care (Service), input could be provision of nursing staff, IT, telephony etc (activity)
Activity	Action or resource that is needed to perform a process to achieve provision of a service. These should be listed in order of recovery or availability priority
Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD)	<p>The time it takes for adverse impacts to reach an unacceptable/unrecoverable level. Factors to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damage to reputation/interested party confidence• Damage to financial value/visibility• Failure to fulfil organisational objectives <p>e.g. health implications from not collecting/disposing of waste, breach of statutory/regulatory requirements</p> <p>Look at the cause happening at the time when the department/division is under most stress e.g. winter/holiday period</p>
Recovery Time Objective (RTO)	The time following an incident within which the product/activity must be resumed/resources recovered. It is less than the MTPD by a sufficient amount. The time between RTO and MTPD is a safety margin and should not be factored into the recovery planning.