

Version	Title	Author	Changes (Summary of changes made)	Authorised	Review Date
5	Business Continuity Plan	ZH	Reviewed. Updated footer, removed references to an office as all staff working remotely, changed references from Chief Officer to Clerk.	Approved	15/05/24

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 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 copy of the plan.
- 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 Clerk 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 Clerk, the following table indicates first contacts in their absence:

Contact	Contact in absence
Chair	Any Independent Director
Independent Director	Any available Independent Director
Clerk	Chair

Communications

The Clerk holds a list of email addresses for all Board members, commissioned partners and their Healthwatch contacts/staff held on Office 365.

The Communication Hub

In the event of a critical communications failure, the Clerk 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.

Communication with the public

In the event of a major event, the Clerk/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 staff being incapacitated through ill health the service manager or senior staff member in the team must report this to the Clerk/Chair as soon as possible.

The Clerk/Chair may suspend the service but this will be a last resort, for example when the majority of 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).

Response to Major Incident - Accident / Terrorism

In the event of a major incident the Clerk/Chair will contact West Sussex County Council (01243 777100/publichealth@westsussex.gov.uk) to ensure that Healthwatch West Sussex conforms and co-operates with the joint efforts being made across the County to respond to the emergency.