An example template for a Public Health section in business continuity plans.

Public Health have developed a template you can use as a prompt to develop you own Public Health section in business continuity plans for businesses.

What is a Public Health Disruption?

Disruption to a business might occur due to an identified health risk or multiple cases of ill-health affecting the business population, which means that the business is not able to operate normally.

Types of Incident, (what might cause a public health outbreak disruption).

Listed below are some of the more common causes of disruption.

- Infection (viruses, bacteria)
- Disease and parasites
- Food-poisoning
- Contaminated water / food supply
- Smoke and air-borne pollution
- Off-site incidents, risks and threats in the wider community
- Dangerous drugs and substances in circulation
- Chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological contamination

Impact of a Public Health Disruption

- **Building / Service is the source of Public Health Outbreak** – Food poisoning, norovirus, flu, Covid-19, etc. heightened risk to staff / service users. Possible disruption to some or all services. Possible disruption or closure to buildings, utilities and use of resources and equipment.

- **Danger of infection, transmission, substances or contamination** – Heightened risk to staff / service users. Possible disruption to some or all services. Possible disruption or closure to buildings, utilities and use of resources and equipment.

- **Air-borne pollution / contamination** – Heightened risk to staff / service users. Resources to keep people indoors for a prolonged period of time. Disruption to some or all services, buildings, utilities.

Mitigating Actions

What can be done to minimise the impact on the operation of the business.

- Consider mitigating actions in other sections of the business continuity plan, in particular those for staffing and premises disruptions and communications.

- Review and revise risk assessments in the light of specific public health guidance and safety advice issued.

- Follow emergency service and public health guidance on managing the risk, for example remaining indoors, closing windows, washing clothes, sourcing food, opening doors/windows to increase ventilation, home-to-school transport and how to report and escalate issues.

- Work to the adage 'Prevention is the best form of cure – particularly when there is no cure'.

- Promote and enable frequent hand cleaning and good personal and respiratory hygiene such as 'catch it, bin it, kill it'.

- Brief staff on guidance and symptoms or issues to look out for and agree procedures for isolating and removing individuals from the business setting, if necessary.

- Discourage anyone with symptoms or who has been exposed to risks which could be transmitted to others, from attending the business setting.

- Regularly clean areas and equipment, following specific cleaning and cleansing guidance, increasing and changing cleaning regimes and focusing on priority areas, as necessary. Consider removing difficult-to-clean or high risk items/equipment from the environment.

- Implement social-distancing measures to minimise contact and mixing between people.

- Limit the number of external visitors to the business setting and postpone or cancel trips and visits to other sites.

- Plan how to increase the physical distance between people and limit the number of people within the business setting at any one time. Develop plans for reduced capacities – to limit the overall number of people in the business setting at any one time.

- Consider changing / staggering activities changing the length of the work day as necessary and using rota systems for who can be in and when.

- Change layouts and increase the space available to spread people out more, for example by using other available areas or temporary or alternative accommodation. Implement one-way systems and 'one in, one out' controls in order to reduce densities in high-use / communal areas such as corridors and toilets.

- Reduce the use of shared resources and equipment. Clean and disinfect equipment which needs to be shared more frequently.

- Follow public health guidance on the use of PPE. Maintain a small contingency stock of personal protective equipment (PPE), for example gloves, face masks and protective aprons. Ensure contingency stocks of PPE are 'in date' and replenish as necessary.

Once complete these considerations can be inserted into your business continuity plans.

Protection Health Team, DCC Oct 2023