

## Information and Guidance for Business Continuity and Flu Pandemic Planning in Ophthalmic Services

### Background

Business Continuity Planning (BCP) is necessary to allow optometry practices to overcome any untoward event affecting the premises, key personnel or to any important systems that it relies upon in its day to day operations.

This guidance will assist providers of General Ophthalmic Services by outlining the importance of planning for unexpected events such as:

- i. Adverse weather (e.g. flooding)
- ii. Power failure
- iii. Loss of computer system/essential data (including clinical records)
- iv. Loss of telephone system
- v. Loss of main premises and/or facilities (e.g. lighting/heat/water/security)
- vi. Pandemic Flu
- vii. Other disease outbreak

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other issues which occur to interrupt normal business in optometry practice. GOS contractors should formulate a plan to ensure that business continuity is in place in the event of any or more of the above occurring.

### Business Continuity Plan

In the ideal situation the responsibility for the development of the Business Continuity Plan will rest with one nominated individual, for example; the practice owner or the practice manager. The plan should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis (6/12 months) or, in the event of changes to key staff or personnel in the practice.

The plan is designed to enable the practice to resume activities whether the situation is one of major significance or, whether there is simply partial loss of certain facilities/capabilities.

As such, it covers a broad spectrum of potential situations that may impact on the ability of the practice to continue its normal business either short term or, long term. In addition to ensuring that plans are in place to deal with an emergency situation which may be of an expected 'short' duration, the practice should also make business plans for any 'longer term' issues which may arise, such as any incapacity of staff and professionals working in the practice.

In order to provide for the necessary business continuity the plan should identify:

- i. The actions which will be taken which may include such eventualities, for example: the diverting of telephone calls, the re-direction of mail.
- ii. The relevant personnel who will implement the actions
- iii. Evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency
- iv. Procedures for direct contact with patients for continuity of care and access to clinical records
- v. Procedures for back-up of IT systems.
- vi. The relevant contact details for all essential and support facilities in the practice, for example: IT support, electricity, heating and water providers.

In consideration of the planning required for a Pandemic Flu optometry practices should take into account advice from Health and Social Care Organisations and professional bodies such as the College of Optometrists. Guidance for optometrists in relation to Pandemic Flu is available on: <http://www.college-optometrists.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm/docid/471DE367-C056-4B8E-AE3277818A6A641D> (click here).

Optometry practices may also consider the use of a 'buddy' arrangement for business continuity. This approach is adopted within general medical services and is a useful mechanism to ensure immediate business continuity can be provided for emergency situations. A 'buddy' arrangement allows optometry practices to make reciprocal arrangements for ophthalmic service provision.

It is essential that the business continuity plan is disseminated and made readily available to all practice staff thereby ensuring that all staff are aware of which staff members have key responsibilities in regard to the development, implementation and maintenance of the plan.

A copy of the plan should be held on the premises but an additional copy should be held off-site, for example, with the nominated lead in the eventuality that the premises become inaccessible, for example in the event of a fire.

Appendix 1 of this guidance (suggested business continuity plan template) may assist in formulating an approach to the collation of important information to allow practices to develop their own tailored business continuity plan identifying the approach which will be taken in the event of unforeseen circumstances which interrupts provision of ophthalmic services in the practice.

# **BUSINESS CONTINUITY & PANDEMIC FLU PLAN FOR OPTOMETRIC PRACTICE**

**Optometrist/Practice Staff Member responsible for  
update, maintenance and implementation of this  
plan:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GOC Registration No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Premise Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name and Address of Optometric Practice:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact mobile number:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 Practice information

- Number of Optometrists/OMPs normally working in the practice
- Number of other staff normally working in the practice
- Number of Health Service (GOS) patients normally seen per day in the practice

## 2 Business Continuity and Pandemic Flu Arrangements

In the event of the practice having to close unexpectedly due to a major event such as:

- i. Adverse weather (e.g. flooding)
- ii. Power failure
- iii. Loss of computer system/essential data (including clinical records)
- iv. Loss of telephone system
- v. Loss of main premises and/or facilities (e.g. lighting/heat/water/security)
- vi. Pandemic Flu
- vii. Other disease outbreak

The following arrangements are in place for patients of this practice:

### **Business Continuity Arrangements in the event of the loss of Main Premises and/or Facilities**

For consideration:

- Evacuation procedures
- Contacting staff
- Contacting/notifying patients
- Contact with Facility providers
- Alternative accommodation / Buddy Arrangement
- Remote access to clinical system
- Redirection of Mail

**Business Continuity Arrangements for Communication with Patients in the event of an interruption to normal business**

For consideration:

- Diversion of phone lines to mobiles
- Mechanism for notifying patients
- Use of alternative phone lines
- Use of mobiles/email service

**Business Continuity Arrangements in the event of loss of essential data/clinical records**

For consideration:

- Arrangements paper clinical records
- Back up of electronic clinical records
- Safe storage offsite of backup tapes
- Storage of HS21 pads (IP Optometrists)

**3. Dissemination and Review**

The practice will update and regularly review the business continuity plan

The practice will have in place procedures to ensure that all staff have sight of relevant information concerning the management of patients and the practice environment during an interruption to patient care.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name (and position): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## LIST OF ESSENTIAL PRACTICE CONTACTS

### Activation of the Plan

Practice BCP Lead	Name	Position	Contact Number ( Home / Mobile )
Primary			
Deputy			

### Optometry and Practice Staff Contacts

Name	Position	Contact Number ( Home / Mobile )

### HSC Board & BSO Contacts

Position/Name	Email address	Contact Number
Practice Support Manager, HSCB local office		
Ophthalmic Services BSO		

### Utility and other Services

Service	Provider	Contact Number
IT systems		
Telecommunications		
Electricity		
Water		

### Providers of other Professional Services

Service	Provider/Company	Contact Number ( Home / Mobile)
Electrician		
Plumber		
Heating Engineer		
Builder		
Joiner		

### Optometry 'Buddy' Practices

Name	Practice Contact	Contact Number