

GP Business Continuity Scenario Discussions

Introduction

The following scenario based discussions are designed to complement your practices business continuity plans. Each scenario is designed to test elements of the practice's business continuity plans and explore differing elements of how an incident is responded to.

Each scenario can be looked at separately in a short session or taking longer to discuss each in turn. For each follow the steps below:

- Firstly consider the scenario and the implications for the practice and your services
- Once the scenario has been discussed consider each question and refer to your business continuity plan
- Once all the questions have been answered ensure you discuss elements that could be included in plans to improve future responses. A basic three question structure is laid out under post discussion debrief.

Each session, comprising of a scenario, discussion and debrief, can take as little as 30 minutes in recognition of competing staff priorities but could also be extended to longer if time allows.

Discussion questions

- What would your initial actions be in light of receiving the information given in the scenario?
- What services would you priorities and how would you mitigate the impacts of the incident?
- How would you respond to the incident to ensure continuity of services as much as possible?
- How would you inform patients and staff about the impacts of the incident? Which stakeholders would you inform?
- Once the impacts from the incident are diminishing what steps would you take to ensure an effective return to business as normal?
- What are the gaps you have identified that should be included in the practices business continuity plan?

Post discussion debrief

- What worked well in the scenario response and the plans?
- Where improvements could be sought in response to the scenario?
- What are the gaps in the current plans which would ensure a more effective response?

Scenarios

Below are five scenarios based on a variety of impacts of an incident which could affect services.

1. Premises

It is a Monday afternoon. There has been a gas leak outside your practice and you have been advised the building must be evacuated until further notice. Due to the severity of the leak it is expected to be Wednesday morning before you can access the building again.

2. IT Failure

It is Tuesday morning and having opened up the practice for the day it has been found that there is no internet access. Having discussed with your IT provider the cause is unknown currently however they expect analytics to discover the issue are likely to take at least 24 hours.

3. Staffing

Due to severe winter weather from Sunday night into Monday morning a large number of staff are unable to get into work. Your practice manager also injured themselves over the weekend in the icy conditions and is expected to be off work for a week. There are also higher than normal patients waiting to be seen due to the inclement weather as well as with seasonal respiratory symptoms.

Supplementary question: Consider how you would ensure services continue to run if there is a total absence of a cohort of staff e.g. receptionists, GPs, administrative staff.

4. Surge in Patients

A nearby fire on a landfill site has caused a large plume to spread over the community. Whilst not directly affecting the practice you are receiving a large number of self-presenters either with pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma as well as the worried well.

Supplementary question: If given postcodes of affected areas could you identify vulnerable patients in the community most at risk?

5. Utilities

At Wednesday morning a water main has burst in the vicinity of the practice which has caused a total loss of water supply. The water company has stated repairs are likely to take between 24 and 48 hours due to the complexity of the work with the mains sitting alongside other utility lines. The water company has delivered water bowsers to a nearby supermarket however queues are forming quickly.

Considerations: Does your water company prioritise delivery of water to the practice?