MAZARS

COVID-19

CONTINUITY PLANNING AMIDST A PANDEMIC

*This briefing note has been created by **Mazars** to support **IoD Ireland** members to ensure they can protect their businesses against the worst effects of the COVID-19 crisis.*

The consequences of COVID-19 for people and businesses requires continuity planning to be enacted wherever possible. Below you will read about the importance of continuity in the face of a pandemic, and the methodology of Mazars' business continuity pandemic resilience programme.

Governments around the world continue to try and control the outbreak of Coronavirus. In addition to its massive impact on our lives, the virus is causing massive disruption to the supply and demand concerning goods and services. Such disruption is manifesting itself through the breakdown of supply chains; customers cancelling or postponing orders and unforeseen fluctuations for cash flow and funding.

IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND PANDEMIC RESILIENCE

To reduce the impact of a pandemic on your business operations, employees, customers and the general public, it is important for all businesses and organisations to begin – or follow - continuity planning for a pandemic now. A lack of continuity planning, or resistance to follow it, can result in a series of failures as employers attempt to address challenges of a pandemic with insufficient resources and employees who might not be adequately trained in jobs they will be asked to perform. Proper planning allows employers to better protect their employees and prepare for changing patterns of commerce and potential disruptions in supplies or services.

Employers have an important role in protecting the health and safety of employees and limiting the impact of the current crisis. As we continue to adjust to the coronavirus pandemic it is important to continue the business operations through a robust Business Continuity and Pandemic Resilience Programme.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PANDEMIC RESILIENCE PROGRAM: MAZARS METHODOLOGY

The Mazars BCPR programme is focussed on:

1. Ensuring management is aware of business-critical process, people, skills and minimum staffing arrangement through organisational Business Impact Assessment;

2. Establishing an emergency preparedness planning and communication strategy;

3. Preparing for employee absences through Business Continuity Planning;

4. Amending existing policies to reflect greater flexibility to normal working arrangements, such as:
   - remote working
   - telephone or video conferences
   - reducing the number of people in the workplace at any one time
   - provisions for employees with children or unwell adults at home
   - reducing activities involving large groups of people.

5. Reinforcing internal peer support or counselling to assist employees with health concerns;

6. Ensuring workplaces still open have adequate supplies of cleaning and hygiene products in accessible and visible locations with signages as required;

7. Creating awareness among employees, customers and suppliers on an organisation's pandemic continuity strategy and possible alternative working arrangements;

8. Monitoring official information sources, advice and assistance from the government, health and other relevant agencies and watching out for any rumours or false news spreading within the organisation regarding the pandemic;

9. Updating staff on recent developments on the pandemic outbreak via newsletters or other organisational communication channels.

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