



BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING



Business Continuity Policy			
Last Reviewed	March 2023	Next Review	June 2026
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive		

Policy Statement: We shall endeavour to minimise disruption to our tenants in the event of a major incident affecting housing stock and to minimise disruption within each operational area to enable normal working to be resumed in a timely manner.

The **Chief Executive** has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of any recovery plans. In the event of an occurrence(s), the Chief Executive shall mobilise and co-ordinate the relevant Business Continuity team(s).

Each member of the Business Continuity Team(s) is expected to retain a copy of this Policy and **The Freebridge Business Continuity Plan** away from their work premises and in their possession. An electronic copy will be stored and accessible from a secure corporate cloud-based repository.

The role of the team(s) is to maintain or recover our operations and services that are subjected to a sudden emergency and/or catastrophic event arising from:

1. The natural world i.e. storm, flood, utilities failure
2. Man-made events i.e. fire, civil unrest, terrorism, reputation
3. The Economy i.e. fiscal or banking collapse, Government budgetary impact; and
4. Legislative changes i.e. the legal or regulatory regime.

These may separately or in combination require urgent actions to address:

5. Injury or death to persons i.e. tenants, Employees and/or Members of the Public)
6. Significant disruption, damage or destruction to assets and property i.e. Homes, Offices, Depot and/or other premises; and
7. Impact on the fundamental delivery of Freebridge services i.e. financial, ICT or legal operations.

Policy Detail:

A set of practical business continuity actions and guidelines for each operational area can be found in: **The Freebridge Business Continuity Plan**. Copies are held with each Head of Service and team manager.

The **Chief Executive** has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of recovery plans and, in the event of such an occurrence(s), will mobilise and co-ordinate the following Business Continuity teams (overleaf), as appropriate.

Business Continuity Teams	Supported by:
STRATEGIC (GOLD) TEAM: Chief Executive Director of Operations Director of New Homes and Commercial Chief Finance and Technology Officer	Tactical (Silver) Team members, as required & Subject Matter Experts
TACTICAL (SILVER) TEAM: Head of Customer and Communities Head of Finance Head of People Head of Communications and Marketing Head of Safety Operations Manager - DLO	Operational: (Bronze) Team members, as required & Subject Matter Experts
OPERATIONAL (BRONZE) TEAM: ICT Business Partner HR Advisor Tenancy Manager Lettings Manager Planned Maintenance Manager Contracts Manager (Property Services) Stores and Fleet Manager (Property Services)	Administrative staff, Operatives, as required & Subject Matter Experts

In the absence of the **Chief Executive**, overall responsibility will be delegated to the relevant Service Director, or combination of Service Directors, according to the nature of the disaster, incident and availability.

In the event that the **Chief Executive** and/or **Service Directors** are unavailable, responsibility for the implementation of the Business Continuity teams passes to the **Chair of the Board**.

Each member of the Business Continuity Teams will need to be familiar with their role and how they should liaise with others. They should also consider the roles of staff within their teams/department in dealing with events or incidents.

The **Chief Executive** (or, in their absence, the nominated Chair of the Business Continuity Team) shall notify either the **Chair** or **Vice Chair** of the Board immediately they have been informed of a situation. If this is not possible, an attempt should be made to contact the chairs of the Board's committee(s) and continued contact should be attempted with either the **Chair** or the **Vice Chair** of the Board.

It may not be advisable for all members of the Business Continuity Team to make their way to an agreed management or operational location. The **Chief Executive** or nominated **Chair of the Business Continuity Team** will agree this and those members will provide remote support and be kept informed.

Authority to Act:

In the event of a sudden emergency and/or catastrophic event, it is anticipated that temporary authorisations may have to be granted to key staff engaged in the recovery process. These authorisations will be granted by the Business Continuity Team and thereafter reviewed regularly by the **Company Secretary**. The **Company Secretary** will be responsible for rescinding or confirming the temporary authorisations at the end of the incident event period or sooner if appropriate.

However, Freebridge's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations may also be suspended, and the following provisions utilised to ensure appropriate business continuity activity:

- Standing Order 2, Board Procedure: Section 3, Urgent Action
- Financial Regulation 6, Ordering & Payment of Goods & Services: Section 3, Ordering of Goods & Services
- Financial Regulation 7, Tenders & Contracts: Section 6, Selection Process

Information and Contacts

A vital part of the work of the Business Continuity Team(s) is to have relevant contact details for appropriate access to key staff and/or organisations and/or suppliers in order to assist with recovery.

These details can be found in: **The Freebridge Business Continuity Plan**. Copies are held with each Head of Service and team manager and will be updated on a regular basis and will include:

- Members of the Business Continuity Team(s).
- Emergency Services liaison contacts.
- Local authority emergency contacts for temporary accommodation.
- Freebridge's emergency repair number.
- Freebridge's Insurers contacts.
- Contacts for all Freebridge staff (i.e. **Subject Matter Experts**); and
- Details/contacts in respect of Freebridge's ICT systems and back-up arrangements.

Media and Communications

All contact with and questions from the media will only be undertaken by the **Chair**, **Chief Executive**, and/or **Head of Communications and Marketing**, as appropriate.

The **Head of Communications and Marketing** will prepare media statements from the **Chief Executive** or other nominated officer as appropriate and will issue this to the media in a timely manner, depending on the nature of the event.

The **Head of Communications and Marketing**, working with and on behalf of the **Chief Executive**, or other nominated officer as appropriate will manage communications and key messages with tenants, Board/Committee members, stakeholders, contractors, consultants, suppliers and other contacts with appropriate contact numbers.

Freebridge's media information should be shared with any partners involved in the disaster including the out-of-hours call centre contractor. Ongoing media contact will be maintained with updates given outlining developments in the event and key information such as contact numbers. The overall tone of the media information will be proactive and positive, underlining Freebridge's commitment and effort to rectifying the situation.

Recording and Review

It is recognised that during a business continuity incident there will be a need to act and respond quickly to ensure that there is minimum delay in the resumption of services. It is, however, important that all actions are fully documented by the Business Continuity Team and, if possible, backed by photographic evidence. This is necessary both for future liaison with the Association's insurers and to ensure that the procedures followed have been effective.

After all services have been resumed on a permanent basis the Chief Executive will lead a review of the procedures followed with the aim of highlighting any shortcomings and, if appropriate, amending processes and/or procedures accordingly.

The review will also seek to identify the cause of the incident and action to be taken to minimise or mitigate the risk of the event recurring.

The Business Continuity Team(s) will undertake walk through testing of this Policy and **The Freebridge Business Continuity Plan**, as appropriate, on a regular basis.