****

**News release**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PR 149/15** | **8 October 2015** |

**Helping Herefordshire businesses prepare for any disaster**

No one expects to be affected by a major incident or disaster, but would you or your staff know what to do in the event of an emergency such as a flood or fire?

The Business Continuity Institute suggests that only 27% of small businesses in the UK have a business continuity plan in place to help them deal with an incident or disaster. In Herefordshire, the flooding in 2014 highlighted that some local businesses took a long time to recover simply because they didn’t have a sufficient plan in place.

To help address this, Herefordshire Council has secured funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to carry out a business continuity project, which will enable local Small Medium Enterprise (SME) businesses to avoid, reduce or mitigate the risks to their company, particularly those who may be affected by flooding, as we head towards the winter months.

The council is inviting local businesses to attend a **free** business continuity planning session at Hereford Town Hall on Wednesday 28 October from 9:30am to 12:30pm or 1:30pm to 4:30pm. The sessions, which will be facilitated by Biscon Planning Ltd, will provide general advice on how a business can ensure it’s able to operate in the event of an emergency along with a business continuity plan template.

Councillor Philip Price, Cabinet member for infrastructure and a local business owner, said: “As a local farmer living on the banks of the River Wye, I know only too well how much the weather impacts on my business and livestock. I appreciate that smaller businesses may not have the money, time or resources to prepare for disruptions, but the cost of dealing with them when they do arise can be significant.

“Whilst a good insurance policy helps in these situations, it doesn’t provide all the answers should your business suffer a disruption; but these free sessions will enable business owners to prepare for unforeseen circumstances during and after disaster situations and protect their employees, clients and profits.

“This is a great opportunity for businesses and I would encourage them to attend and not wait until an incident occurs and it’s too late. It’s important that we can all stay in business, whatever the emergency!”

To book a place at one of the two sessions, please visit the [Eventbrite website](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/business-continuity-writing-your-bc-plan-tickets-18678482845?aff=es2).

If you would like further details regarding the sessions, please contact Steve Lambert, Biscon Planning Ltd, at [stevelambert@biscon.co.uk](mailto:stevelambert@biscon.co.uk).

**Ends**

Sharon Amery (01432) 260658