DIGITAL SERVICE CONTINUITY REHEARSAL / ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Could the team make its recovery decisions in time?

The management decision

Rehearse the decisions that determine when service can resume. Where staff have to wait for authorisation, name a deputy and repeat that part of the exercise.

A recovery plan on paper may leave staff unsure who can approve a workaround, which dependency needs attention first or what to tell affected users. A guided rehearsal surfaces those issues while people have time to fix them. It gives managers a way to prioritise changes before a real interruption.

Worked example

The team’s recovery rehearsal takes 95 minutes against a 60-minute target. The 35-minute difference gives the service owner a specific problem to investigate. Record which decisions consumed that time.

Example figure	What it represents
60 min	Target time
95 min	Rehearsal time
35 min	Time above target

What changes the answer

If a deputy removes 20 minutes of waiting, the exercise still takes 75 minutes, or 15 minutes over target. The sponsor can then prioritise another change or revisit the objective.

Digital service continuity rehearsal

What to commission

Run a remote rehearsal for one service outage with its decision makers, including a missing primary contact.

We work through the decisions in order, record who acts at each point and note any missing backup, approval or communication route. The exercise focuses on coordination, timing and workarounds with the people who would use them.

How to judge the result

The team has a timed sequence, named owners and a follow-up action for each delay that threatens its recovery objective.

Compare the revised rehearsal time with the agreed target. Validate technical recovery separately before making commitments to customers or other teams.

Decision worksheet

Project detail	Starting point for your team
Decision owner	Business continuity owner. Name the person who will approve the next step.
Records to gather	One critical digital service, its recovery procedure and the people who would respond.
Agreed output	A record of the exercise, an indicative recovery timeline and a list of improvements.
Decision date	Record the deadline, any unresolved assumption and who will confirm it.

Discuss this case

Tell us which service would cause the most disruption if it stopped and how long the business can work without it. Identify who would lead the response and who relies on the output. We can use those details to discuss an exercise scenario and who should take part.

Email info@oxetc.co.uk and mention IT-16. All figures in the worked example are illustrative.