



Apprenticeship Training Continuity Plan

Author/ Owner	Gemma Kennedy
Consulted with	WEC Group HR Department
Consultation date	14/10/2024
Date of approval	16/10/2024
Approved by	Group Managing Director
Next review	14/10/2025

Table of Contents

Plan Purpose	3
Plan Scope	3
Our Principles and Values	3
Key Objectives	3
Roles and Responsibilities	3
Apprentice Engineering Academy Management Staff	4
Apprentice Engineering Academy Staff	5
Implementation of this Plan	5
Academy Closure	5
How this information will be communicated to our employees Including apprentice	5
Disruptive events	7
How to respond to an Academy lockdown	7
Evacuation and Emergency action	8
Immediate security of building and salvage arrangements	8
Suppliers and contractors	8
Business recovery in the event of a loss to building or site space and using alternative work sites	8
Back-up systems and restoring data	8
Course work	8
Loss of IT data	9
Phone Communication	9
Monitoring and counselling	9
Transportation and additional travel costs	9
Incidents out of hours	10
Major incident- National pandemic/ Regional pandemic	10
Identification	10
Escalation	10
Critical escalation	11
Temporary closedown envisaged	11
Temporary closedown	12
Restoring business activity following a major incident	12
People Management Issues	13
Pay	13
Benefits	13
Attendance	13
Working arrangements	13
Employee support strategies	13
Record keeping of events	13
Review and Continuous Improvement	14
Appendix A	16
Definitions	16
Emergency	16
Disaster	16
Major Incident	16

Plan Purpose

The WEC Group is committed to delivering a successful apprenticeship programme for all apprentices across the Group. Our Apprentices are at the heart of our business and we must ensure that the training they receive is at a consistently high level. To ensure this high level of training is always achieved this plan sets out how the WEC Group Engineering Academy and the wider business will enable continuous operations in the event of major business disruptions like natural disasters and global lockdowns.

Plan Scope

This plan presents guidance and actions for all WEC Group employees including apprentices should they need to be implemented to deal with the immediate response to any interruption/ disruption to production and apprenticeship training across the Group.

Our Principles and Values

Our vision at the WEC Group is to deliver world class service and apprenticeships. In order to do so we must ensure both our service and training continues in the event of a major disruption. Our apprenticeship training continuity plan is strong and very much in line with our company values, which are;

- 1) **INTEGRITY**- We will operate ethically, reliably and honestly.
- 2) **EXCELLENCE**- We will exceed expectations and strive to be the best we can.
- 3) **POSITIVITY**- We will bring energy and enthusiasm to both our work and learning whilst being supportive of others, our processes, our customers and the Company.
- 4) **TEAMWORK**- We will work together to be more efficient and productive, resulting in increased innovation, higher morale and improved retention.
- 5) **SAFETY**- We will promote a safety culture within the workplace which is fundamental to our operational excellence.

Key Objectives

Through this plan, the WEC Group will:

1. Provide a continuity plan for apprenticeship training throughout the WEC Group
2. Minimise or limit the damage to the Apprentice Engineering Academy and its assets
3. Minimise disruption to our Apprenticeship programmes
4. Provide an outline for response
5. Provide guidance for planning the return to operational activities as soon as practicably possible

Roles and Responsibilities

The Management Team at the Apprentice Engineering Academy consists of the following and their contact details are as below:

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Person</u>
Managing Director/ Chair of Governors	Steve Hartley

Training Manager	Kris Mercer
Instructor	Alex Medlock
Instructor	Jason Bradder
Instructor/ Technician	Phil Hosey
Group Apprentice Coordinator	Edd Belshaw
Group HR Manager/ Governor	Gemma Kennedy

The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management staff are responsible for:

- Supporting the approval of the policy and plan
- Directing and supporting the wider WEC Group leadership and management team as needed
- Ensuring the Engineering Academy carries the appropriate level of business insurance in line with the rest of the WEC Group (PIB Insurance brokers)
- Liaising with the HR department to notify our insurance company
- Liaising with the HR department to instruct solicitors/lawyers or other professionals as needed
- Agreeing/ arranging an emergency budget to cover costs as needed
- Arranging the use of other services/ facilities from across the Group
- Forming an initial crisis management team in the event of an emergency, disaster or major incident affecting the continuity of apprenticeship training and implementing the relevant section/s of the plan
- Making initial contact with the ESFA and notifying them
- Notifying key Service Centre Manager's across the wider business
- Development of overall business continuity operational plans
- Ensuring statutory compliance with regard to RIDDOR and working with the Group H+S Officer to ensure we remain compliant
- Ensuring an annual risk assessment is undertaken by WEC Group's Health and Safety Officer
- Maintaining records during the event, for example minutes of meetings and production notes
- Liaising with emergency services and/or organising assistance where needed for apprentices, visitors, commercial course delegates and staff
- Evacuating the Engineering Academy
- Taking steps to protect the site, building and contents
- Ascertaining the damage to any apprentice portfolios, course work or any loss of end point assessment data
- Ascertaining the damage to learner course evidence records (paper and computer based)
- Arranging temporary facilities (other WEC Group sites in the first instance) to enable operations to recommence
- Liaising with specialist contractors and suppliers as needed
- Disseminate information and notify appropriate key organisations
- Ensuring that a key contacts list of staff is available
- Working with the HR department to liaise with family members of any apprentices affected

- Co-ordinating any mid to long-term plans to re-establish normal operations existing prior to any disaster
- Retaining a copy of this policy for immediate reference purposes.

The Apprentice Engineering Academy staff are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the policy/ plan
- Co-operating with Management team/crisis management team
- Liaising with apprentices and identifying issues of concern to be addressed by the crisis management team (for example, the need for counselling, signposting to the designated safeguarding lead and mental health first aider)

In the event that WEC Group employees are sent home, they should remain available during working hours to assist with necessary tasks and, wherever possible, continue to carry out their normal duties including as close to normal apprenticeship support- temporary remote working may be implemented through the use of Microsoft Teams.

Implementation of this Plan**Academy Closure**

The Apprentice Engineering Academy may be disrupted due to events outside of WEC Group's control, which may lead to the closure both in the short term to medium term. The Apprentice Engineering Academy is owned by the WEC Group and therefore will continue to be maintained.

Events resulting in closure would include but are not restricted to:

- Power failure
- Water failure
- Failure of Heating Services
- Severe snow or other hazardous weather conditions
- Serious Security risk
- Serious health and safety risk
- Cyber attack
- Data breach
- Finance and process breakdown (third party risk)
- Fire
- Evacuation due to a nearby incident
- Other (loss of staff i.e. illness, pandemic/epidemic)
- An interruption to Group business systems
- Medical emergency
- National/local/regional emergency (for example, pandemic similar to the recent Covid-19 pandemic)

How this information will be communicated to our employees including our apprentices:

Information regarding the situation will be relayed to our employees including our apprentices and other key related persons associated with the Apprenticeship Engineering Academy through various methods:

- Email
- Phone call
- Text message
- Notices would be placed on the Company website including the apprenticeship page of the WEC Group website and where possible, signs of the closure would be put up on the entrances at the Apprentice Engineering Academy.

During these times, most employees including apprentices will be sent home or requested to stay at home until further notice; temporary homeworking rules may be implemented. Where possible our employees including our apprentices would be relocated to our old Training Centre facility in Darwen or to a different building in Rotherham.

It may be necessary to call on a number of key employees, and/or other members of the Crisis Management Team to remain at or attend the Apprentice Engineering Academy if possible to help oversee the remedial action and to maintain essential services as determined at the time.

Key employees required to attend (if reasonably practicable) under such circumstances may include members of the following departments, though this list is not exhaustive and particular arrangements will be made on the day/week or as conditions dictate.

- Group Training Manager
- Apprenticeship Programmer Leader and Commercial Training Officer
- Service Centre Managers
- Group HR Manager
- Group Apprenticeship Coordinator
- Instructors

For this group of employees, (unless previously agreed) messages left on the website regarding the temporary closure will not apply and communications will take place via mobile phones and email.

The following internal departments/ organisations may need to be advised of the implementation, in full or in part, of the Business Continuity policy:

- WEC Group H+S Manager
- WEC Group IT department
- WEC Group Payroll/ Accounts
- WEC Group HR Department
- Insurers
- Police, Fire, Ambulance
- The HSE
- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- Employers –commercial course delegates
- Awarding organisations/ EPAO- TWI, Lincoln Electrical
- Blackburn with Darwen Council
- Information Commissioners Office

The nature of the emergency and/or incident will determine whether full closure is required. The decision to close the Apprentice Engineering Academy either in advance of a working day or during any other day, will be taken by the Managing Director, Steve Hartley. In the event of a national, local or regional emergency, Government and other public sector bodies instructions, advice or guidance will strictly be followed.

In the event of a planned (foreseen) closure, apprentices will be notified in advance with reasons given and an expected academy re-opening date. As stated above, in these circumstances, it is likely the apprentices will be located from one of our other sites across the Darwen, Blackburn and Rotherham areas.

In the event of a major emergency/incident requiring the Apprentice Engineering Academy to be evacuated/closed, apprentices and staff will assemble at the assembly points clearly indicated on the exterior of the building. If these are not usable, WEC Group employees will escort persons to the assembly points at WEC Machining, Walker Park, Blackburn and the assembly point in Rotherham. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the sites completely, apprentices will be asked to leave via safe exits and return home. Next of kin will be notified as soon as is practically possible to ensure the safety and welfare of all apprentices.

If the Apprentice Engineering Academy, or part of the Apprentice Engineering Academy, remains closed with no immediate alternative site available then the apprentices will be advised to remain at one of our other sites, ideally the old training facility in Darwen or a different section in Rotherham. Transport to other sites will be arranged accordingly by HR or the Training Manager by mini-bus, taxi, coach and/or trains, where possible.

Employees including apprentices will be expected to seek regular information updates by visiting the Apprenticeship page of the WEC Group website (if operative) and/or contacting the main telephone number 01254 773718.

The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team will be responsible for the format and content of all internal/external communications concerning any incident and its aftermath. When an alternative site is sourced or the academy is re-opened, all employees will be suitably briefed by the Apprentice Engineering Academy Management Team in order to be able to brief apprentices. Only the facts will be presented. The Managing Director will determine the nature of any communications to external bodies.

In the unlikely event that the Apprentice Engineering Academy has to permanently close following a significant event and we are unable to operate a Training function out of the facility we will then set up the Academy in one of our other buildings across the Group to ensure Training continues. Online training via Teams or Zoom will be a last resort, however full capability to deliver online is available since our emergence from the Cov-19 pandemic.

Disruptive events

How to respond to a Lockdown

In the unlikely event the Apprentice Engineering Academy may have to lockdown, to secure apprentices and other employees from an outside threat an alarm will be raised via the main reception to highlight the external threat. This circumstance is described as a 'lockdown'. The Managing Director and/or other members of the management team will make the decision to 'lockdown' and will ensure all external doors are securely locked.

Apprentices will be notified by a member of the management team and asked to remain in their designated areas. Managers will be expected to take charge of their respective group of apprentices.

Evacuation and Emergency Action

An evacuation occurs when a disruptive event poses a threat to a person's safety and it is necessary to move them to a safe place.

The procedures for safe evacuation of the premises and the alerting of emergency services are set out in Evacuation plan for the Apprentice Engineering Academy. This can be found on all the Apprentice Engineering Academy noticeboards.

Immediate security of building and salvage arrangements

The Managing Director, Steve Hartley, will arrange for the immediate security of the damaged area/s including arranging for temporary cover of exposed areas and storage of furniture, equipment etc. Taking advice from Service Centre Managers, our Insurance Company and appointed Loss Adjustor, the Managing Director supported by the Training Manager, Kris Mercer, will oversee any required salvage and recovery work, bringing in specialist firms where necessary.

Suppliers and Contractors

The Purchasing Department in Darwen maintains a list of suppliers who may make deliveries or who service the Apprentice Engineering Academy so that they may be contacted to advise their staff and/or suspend or redirect supplies as required to one of our other sites.

Business Recovery in the event of a loss to building or site space and using alternative work sites

Replacement of the building (whole or part) and facilities that have been damaged or made unavailable will be the responsibility of the Managing Director in liaison with the insurance company and Company secretary, Andrew Sedgley.

Depending on the extent of the damage, the Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team will operate from another Division of the WEC Group in the Blackburn, Darwen and Rotherham area and will take instruction from the Managing Director.

The aim will be to re-establish apprenticeship programmes within one week – except in the event of a national, regional or local emergency where Government (or other public sector body) guidance and rules will be adhered to.

Back-up Systems and Restoring Data

1. Course Work

The Apprentice Engineering Academy is required to keep copies of all essential learner work and in the event of an emergency, every effort will be made to retrieve course/paper-based work for safe storage. The Group Apprenticeship Coordinator, Edd Belshaw, will take instruction from the Training Manager to carry out communication and liaisons with awarding organisations/ EPAO, taking advice for any interruption to learner course work.

At the WEC Group the majority of learner files are stored electronically on our Apprenticeship Management system, however, the paper apprentice portfolios are kept in secure storage in the offices at the Apprentice Engineering Academy. In the event of an incident, the Training Manager and the Apprenticeship Programmer Leader and Commercial Training Officer will arrange for safe retrieval and secure storage, off site, if possible and as necessary.

The Apprenticeship Programmer Leader and Commercial Training Officer will liaise with awarding organisations/ EPAO to seek advice on damaged or missing portfolios of evidence. Apprentices will be offered individual advice sessions with the Apprenticeship Programmer Leader and Commercial Training Officer to discuss the concerns about the effects the emergency/incident or disaster has had on their work and any extra measures (as advised by awarding organisations/ EPAO) which are required to enable them to complete their programme.

1. Loss of IT Data

Disaster Recovery

Our critical IT systems are housed in a secure computer room at our main production site in Darwen. These systems are replicated to another offsite WEC Group location in Darwen. Data is replicated every 5 minutes. In the event of a significant event the systems are started from this alternate location.

Backup and Restore of Data

All our IT systems are backed up using Veeam backup and Replication software using daily and monthly cycles. The backups are saved to a network disk storage device and are replicated to another device at an alternate offsite WEC Group location in Darwen.

Test restores are performed monthly.

Backups are monitored daily by our Central IT Team based in Darwen.

Phone Communication

In the event of any loss of the Xchange phone system within WEC Group, the Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team can speak to the HR department who hold authorised emergency contact phone numbers for all employees which can be accessed immediately without delay. Data on the IT network can be accessed remotely and immediately to also gain phone details of all Apprentices.

Monitoring and Counselling

If the emergency/incident has involved violence, injury, loss of life or other stressful situation including mental health concerns, a member of the management team will make arrangement for Counselling advice to be made available to employees including apprentices. The support of the Engineering Academy designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr Edd Belshaw)/ officers (Mr Kris Mercer, Mr Phil Hosey, Mr David Jubb, Me Luke Stacey and Ms Gemma Kennedy) and Mental Health first aider (Ms Gemma Kennedy) will also be immediately offered and where necessary or requested, appropriate referral to a suitably resourced external supportive agency. The Companies confidential counselling helpline number will also be made available immediately.

In the event of a major emergency/incident, advice will be given to employees including apprentices on how to look for signs that the distress caused is having on others (colleagues, learners) and to signal to the safeguarding lead.

Transportation and Additional Travel Costs

Where agreements have been reached with other WEC Group Divisions for temporary training environments, the Apprentice Engineering Academy will support where feasible the safe transport of apprentices if required. This would include supplying emergency travel funds to apprentices which would be paid on a weekly basis through wages or alternatively through the petty cash float available through Lisa Cooper, PA to MD.

Incidents out of Hours

The member of the Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team called to site in response to an incident will carry out an initial assessment, only when deemed safe – and will then consult with colleagues. The information will be reviewed and the appropriate course of action determined.

Under no circumstances will any WEC Group employee enter the site where a possible security breach or health and safety risk has been identified. The Police must be called.

In the event of a Major Incident such as a National Pandemic / Regional Epidemic (*For e.g. Covid 19 Virus*)

Stage 1 – identification

- **Identify** initial hazard/s, **assess** the risk/s, **control** the risk/s as far as is practicable; review and update any relevant existing documentation
- Identify any work which places others at risk of infection
- Seek advice from Government sources including Public Health England
- Seek advice from the HSE
- Seek advice from GMLPN through our membership (Greater Manchester Learner Provider Network)
- Seek advice from business insurers
- Display any relevant safety information on the noticeboards, intranet and email
- Brief all employees including apprentices on the nature of the issue and the steps they will need to take
- Instruct the WEC Group cleaners to deep clean key areas and purchase appropriate amounts of cleaning and antibacterial materials as needed (and where available)
- Issue guidance to employees including our apprentices and remind re steps to take if unwell (refer to the Company handbook/Company Policies/ line managers as needed)
- Ensure employees including our apprentices are fully briefed on steps to take to mitigate risks
- All our employees and others (visitors, contractors) are to leave the Apprentice Engineering Academy if they are exhibiting signs of illness – actual symptoms or similar as guidance issued by the Government.

Stage 2 – Escalation

- We would issue a policy statement re business operations- this would be sent out by the HR department via personal and work email

- We would keep the policy statement under constant review depending upon severity- regular communication from the HR Department- daily/ weekly as appropriate
- Hold daily/ weekly staff meetings– face to face and remote
- Ensure staff understand options and implications of the situation where leading to major business interruption
- Check business insurance policies and take further advice if needed
- Establish options for remote working and enable, wherever possible, homeworking
- Liaise with our sub contractor and refer to their Apprenticeship Training Continuity Plan for apprentices carrying out their functional skills
- Ensure that staff taking on other roles (staff numbers depleted) are fully briefed/trained as required; to be actively monitored by the Department Manager and the HR Department.
- Review risk assessments and safe operating procedures
- Identify any 'at risk' categories of staff and follow Government guidance
- Identify any potential and underlying disclosed employee health conditions associated with known/ unknown virus (Annual Employee Medical Questionnaire)
- Check compliance with working time regulations
- Maintain deep cleaning regime and seek staff support and involvement
- Reinforce good hygiene practice with visible signage throughout the business

Stage 3 – Critical Escalation

- Follow Government advice and activate instructions/recommendations
- Continue with staff briefings and check individual wellbeing
- Explore options for shut down – full or in part
- Notify employers re operating position
- Make arrangements for immediate remote working at home; issue relevant guidelines, policies etc.
- Identify staff whose roles cannot accommodate remote working
- Advise staff of options i.e. layoff, short time working, use of paid leave etc.
- Continue to risk assess and ensure staff follow procedures regarding sickness reporting
- Maintain deep cleaning regime
- Issue any recommended safety equipment if available
- Maintain effective communications

Stage 4 – Temporary closedown envisaged

- Notify staff by appropriate means
- Ensure remote working is fully activated as far as is possible
- Notify all apprentices and employers, third parties, associates etc.

- The Managing Director to allocate specifically adjusted roles to other members of the management team/ senior managers/assigned departmental heads
- Notify Service Centre Managers
- Check financial situation and risk assess
- The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team to conduct a risk assessment to reach decision
- Close building down in line with lock down procedures (above)
- Notify business insurers

Stage 5 – Temporary Closedown

- The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team are to maintain close communications using appropriate technology as needed
- The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team are to ensure all staff are contacted at least once daily
- The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team are to ensure staff are following remote working/temporary homeworking guidance
- If possible, the Managing Director along with other Service Centre Managers are to visit the premises to check building safety and security
- Notify business insurers
- The HR Department are to ensure payroll runs as normal and key accounts are paid as needed in order to maintain relationships
- The Finance Director, Wayne Tierney, is to monitor the financial health of business throughout
- Monitor Government and any other relevant external guidance and instructions as required
- Put a plan in to place for reopening after a 'closedown' in line with guidance given

Restoring business activity following an a major incident

- The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team are to agree a plan for a safe and phased Academy re-opening based on safety, critical business needs and financial considerations; staffing levels determined to meet critical business needs ('skeleton staff' initially); visitor restrictions to be determined
- The Group Health and Safety Manager, Mark Horton, is to visit the Apprentice Engineering Academy to inspect the premises and give advice on re-opening and safety measures; review relevant supporting documentation and produce risk assessments
- The Managing Director must approve the operational plan for re-opening prior to any decisions being made
- Business insurers to be notified
- Hold staff meeting/briefing (face to face or remotely over Microsoft teams) as soon as possible to debrief; notes should be kept (in case of a claim); staff training to be identified and delivered within week 1 of re-opening; key resources to be issued

- Deep cleaning of the Academy is to be undertaken in advance of staff return if possible
- Building alarms and security to be checked by the Maintenance team; security arrangements to be revisited and agreed
- Legal liabilities and obligations to be checked by the Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team and actioned as required
- Notify employees, apprentices, external support agencies and other relevant third parties
- Review relevant policies and procedures; issue updates as soon as possible (if not possible beforehand)
- Ensure any required PPE or other resources are issued as required
- Ensure any staff who completed training, during the period of lockdown, record this on their CPD records

People Management Issues

We will ensure the provision of essential HR Support during and after a disruptive event. The HR team will provide support and guidance in the areas of:

1. Pay

- Overtime and additional payments
- Advancements
- Change of work location
- Reductions/ Increase in pay
- Death in Service award in the event of a death arising from the event
- Life insurance/ pension entitlements arising from the event

2. Benefits

- Fairquid loans (Jubilee Credit Union, Darwen)
- UK Healthcare cash back scheme

3. Attendance

- Management of annual leave
- Sickness absence
- Timekeeping
- Compassionate leave
- Time off for dependants

4. Working arrangements

- Work location
- Working hours

Employee support strategies

We will support the wellbeing of our employees during and after a disruptive event. The UK Healthcare confidential counselling service will provide support for individuals through an incident or disruptive event. Our Mental Health first aider will also be readily available for our employees to meet with and/ or call, details of which are on all noticeboards and the staff intranet.

Record keeping of events

The Apprentice Engineering Academy Management team shall ensure that an accurate written record of events is compiled for future reference. Each member of the Apprentice Engineering Academy Management

team (and the broader crisis management team) will be encouraged to keep a diary during the crisis so that there are notes of specific times that key actions were instigated and completed. Diary records can then be used during meetings (including governors' meetings) to confirm specific actions or instructions and help to provide crucial information for any interim/final report to Insurers and any other relevant body.

Review and Continuous Improvement

The safety and protection of all our employees including our apprentices is key and is a fundamental core value here at the WEC Group and is part of our culture.

This Apprenticeship Training Continuity Plan will be reviewed annually- additional reviews may be needed during the year in the event of any threats to continuation of the training we deliver.

Appendix A - Definitions

Emergency

An emergency is any event that causes, or has the potential to cause, injury, loss of life, damage to physical or digital property or significant business disruption to the learning, training and assessment of WEC Group Apprentices and commercial client's i.e. commercial course delegates, apprentices and other persons/organisations using WEC Group Engineering Academy.

Disaster

A disaster is the escalation of an emergency to the point where normal conditions are not expected to be recovered for at least a 24 hour period.

Major Incident

A major incident is defined as an unplanned event which immediately put parts of WEC Group's Engineering Academy assets or business activities at risk, for example a fire in the Academy or a local/regional/national emergency such as the recent Coronavirus Pandemic and homeworking instruction.

In some instances, the loss of individual room/s such as the main classroom and other office space or services such as the welding plants may not in itself be crucial; however, the loss of a number of these may constitute an emergency.

Should a major incident occur during routine working hours, then the safety of our apprentices, commercial course delegates and staff are the priority. If deemed, appropriate, then evacuation will be the immediate priority. Staff and Apprentices are trained in evacuation procedures (which are visible throughout the Academy) with alarm testing weekly.