

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT 2004

Identifying and disseminating good practice....

As we reported in the last edition of Blueprint, local responders across England and Wales have made good progress in implementing the duties in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. However, there is still a long way to go in many areas, particularly in relation to the newer duties of the Act (business continuity management, advice and assistance to business and the voluntary sector, communicating with the public, and local responder risk assessment).

To help local responders meet this challenge, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) is leading a project to identify and disseminate good practice. The aim of the work is to provide local responders with a suite of good practice examples they can draw on, thus preventing them from having to reinvent the wheel and stumbling over issues that others have cracked. The aim of the project is simple – to help all local responders to become as good as the best. There is some genuinely world-class work going on across the country and we need to make sure we capture and share the learning.

An overarching project board has been established to steer the work. The membership of the board includes senior representatives from key stakeholder organisations including the Local Government Association, Association of Chief Police Officers, Chief Fire Officer's Association, Ambulance Services Association and the Emergency Planning Society. As well as being responsible for the overall direction of the project, board members have also been tasked with facilitating a two-way dialogue with the communities they represent. The board met for the first time in June, fully endorsing the rationale for the project and ways of working, as well as giving valuable advice on how the project should be taken forward.

It was agreed by the board to establish working groups to take forward good practice in relation to business continuity management, advice and assistance to business and the voluntary sector, and communicating with the public

duties. Each working group will be led by the central government expert, steered and advised by practitioners and other stakeholders. These working groups will complement regional, responder specific and discipline specific working groups that already exist, and providing them with a route to raise issues or disseminate good practice across the civil protection community.

Business continuity management

This group will include representatives from most Category 1 responders, together with the Business Continuity Institute and the Continuity Forum, who have done considerable research on how business continuity has been embedded across the country. The group will provide a valuable steer on the sorts of issues that local responders are finding challenging in this area. The group will meet for the first time in September, but some of the issues that local responders have raised with me directly include:

- Securing buy-in within organisations;
- Effective programme management;
- Specimen plans and worked examples of processes to be followed;
- Building resilience into the supply chain; and
- Building a continuity culture.

Advice and assistance to business and the voluntary sector

This group will include a broad range of local responders from LRFs that are already active in this area. But it will also engage representatives of the business community and business support organisations directly as well as involving a marketing professional. Further input could be sought from businesses through the Business Advisory Group on Civil Protection (BAGCP), managed by CCS.

The group is likely to meet for the first time in August, but ideas raised with my team, colleagues in the Regional Resilience Teams and during recent BCM promotion courses at the Emergency Planning College include:

- Using existing networks and resources to the full;
- Marketing messages to businesses, particularly SMEs; and
- Establishing the scope for centrally provided skeleton materials that could be tailored to local need.

We are also working with members of the BAGCP to raise the profile of local responders' BCM promotion work with business representative organisations (e.g. Confederation of British Industry) to help ensure that doors are open for local responders.

Communicating with the public

This group will work closely with National Steering Committee for Warning and Informing the Public (NSCWIP), and will bring together experience from across Category 1 and 2 responders as well as the media. The group is meeting for the first time in August, and this will be used to determine which specific issues local responders would like us to look at. But research undertaken by NSCWIP and discussions I have had with responders in various forums have indicated the following issues are of particular interest to local responders:

- Developing lead responder protocols;
- Engaging vulnerable groups and transient populations;
- How to formulate messages;
- Technology – analysing existing capabilities; and
- Exercising warning and informing capabilities.

We will also give consideration to whether there is a need to develop centrally provided materials or frameworks which could be tailored to local need.

Risk assessment

Having provided a fairly prescriptive methodology in *Emergency Preparedness*, distributed the Local Risk Assessment Guidance to all Category 1 responders and worked closely with local responders through the regional resilience network, our impressions are that local responders have achieved excellent outcomes when compiling Community Risk Registers. With this in mind, we have opted for a slightly less resource intensive approach in gathering good practice in this area.

The Local Risk Assessment Guidance (LRAG) is issued annually giving centrally provided generic national risk information and advice on how to use it. The LRAG 2006 will be distributed in August and is being used to seek additional good practice examples against the following themes:

- Engaging expertise from across organisations to feed into the risk assessment process and linking in with wider business processes;
- Publication of risk assessments as part of a wider public awareness strategy;
- Using risk assessments to influence priority setting, resource allocation and capability development across the spread of civil protection work (particularly on a multi-agency basis);
- Embedding risk management in the culture of the emergency planning function; and
- Maintenance and review.

This feedback will be assessed by CCS, in collaboration with practitioners who have expertise in assessing risk, and good practice disseminated.

Getting messages out

We have a variety of mechanisms for sharing the outcomes for this work including

<http://www.ukresilience.info>,

articles, presentations and participation in a wide range of networks and forums. Another key player in this work is the Emergency Planning College

(EPC). Not only can they offer a vehicle to disseminate good practice, but they also have a good idea of what the key issues are, due to the number of local responders they get through their doors. Michael Charlton-Weedy, Chief Executive is a member of the Project Board, and there is EPC representation on each of the working groups.



Do you have a good story to tell about the way you have gone about implementing these duties? Or are there specific stumbling blocks that you have come up against that you would like the project to look at?

We would like to hear from you. We can be contacted at

ccact@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk



DANIEL GREAVES

Head of the Local Response & Civil Contingencies Act Team

Civil Contingencies Secretariat