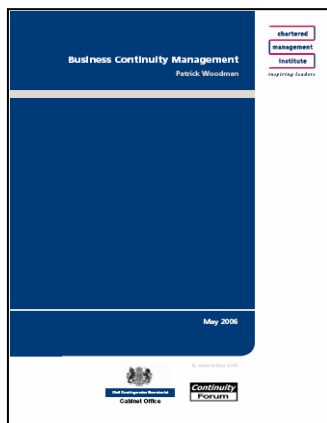


Business Continuity – Frameworks for Support at Local and National Levels

Effective business continuity management is critical for organisations of all sizes in all sectors. But evidence suggests we can all do more to improve the take up and quality of business continuity planning. The Government has developed frameworks at local and national levels to support planning in the public, private and voluntary sectors. It is crucial that organisations from all sectors work together and share good practice in order to secure the resilience of the UK.

The Evidence.....



The Chartered Management Institute recently carried out their annual business continuity survey of managers from across the UK. The survey, which was supported by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and Continuity Forum, received an excellent response from across all regions and sectors of the country, from all sizes of organisation, and at all levels of management seniority. It provides a sound evidence base upon which we can develop and improve our approach.

First and foremost, the survey shows that the UK still has some way to go on business continuity. The number of organisations with a business continuity plan still stands at only 49% - a figure which has changed little over the past 4 years despite a large number of high profile emergencies.

The survey also reiterated the importance of...

- Planning for people. Many organisations are moving beyond the traditional BCP focus on IT and facilities, and are thinking about how they would cope with loss of staff – a particularly pertinent question in relation to the risk of a human flu pandemic.

- Planning for a pandemic. The Government is working closely with the World Health Organisation and others to prepare for the risk of a human flu pandemic. But all organisations need to be prepared for the potential impact on their staff and business operations. Only 16% of managers believed their organisation's plans were robust in the light of the planning assumptions, while 43% reported that they had no plans which addressed this challenge.
- Rehearsing and testing the BCP. Only 37% of managers with plans in place reported that they rehearsed them once or more a year. A BCP cannot be considered reliable unless it is exercised regularly and proves to be effective.
- Engaging the supply chain in planning. Two thirds of those surveyed reported that their organisations outsource some of their facilities or services. Yet very few worked with their suppliers on business continuity planning, or required their suppliers to have plans at all.

So, what are we doing to drive the BCM agenda forward?

The Local Level.....

Business continuity management (BCM) is a key component of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The legislation requires front-line responders (such as emergency services and local authorities) to put in place arrangements so that they can continue to exercise their critical functions in the event of an emergency, and for local authorities to promote business continuity in their communities.

BCM Promotion

In the event of an emergency, local responders will do everything they can to ensure that any emergency is brought under control quickly and that its impact is minimised. However, evidence from past incidents has shown that there is real merit in ensuring that communities themselves are resilient.



Buncefield – A classic illustration of the need for all organisations to have effective business continuity management.

To help achieve this, the Act requires local authorities to work with local partners to provide advice and assistance to commercial and voluntary organisations in their communities in relation to business continuity management. It mandates them to provide generic advice to these communities at large (e.g. via websites, leaflets, forums) and gives them the flexibility to undertake more detailed work with organisations on a one-to-one basis if they feel confident and competent to do so.

Local authorities are ideally placed to carry out this function as they have a good overview of the civil protection arrangements in their area, and the risks and hazards that are likely to affect organisations' ability to operate normally. It also provides local authorities with a good mechanism to cement the excellent relationships that many already have with commercial and voluntary organisations.

The rationale for the duty is obvious – to bring together all sectors to work together and share good practice. There are already good examples of collaborative working in places like Leeds, Berkshire and Norfolk. London Prepared is another classic example – a single framework for the promotion of BCM across London. Whilst providing common branding, common messages and a common toolkit for local authorities to use, it gives individual authorities the flexibility to meet the very different needs of the communities they serve.



London Prepared has also produced standard presentations, plan templates and leaflets which are available to all local authorities in London when they promote BCM.

If you would like further information on the Civil Contingencies Act and the BCM promotion duty please visit <http://www.ukresilience.info/ccact>. If you would like to know how to access local sources of advice in your area please visit <http://www.pfe.gov.uk/business/local.shtm>

Identifying and disseminating good practice....

The Civil Contingencies Secretariat has recently initiated a piece of work in collaboration with local responders to identify and disseminate good practice in relation to the newer duties of the Act.

As part of this work, practitioner working groups are being established in relation to BCM and BCM promotion to determine which specific issues local responders would like us to look at and to identify and promote good practice in dealing with them.

Are you a local authority who has driven forward successful work to promote business continuity?

Are you a business or charity who has benefited from working with local authorities and others on business continuity? Or do you have a good story to tell about your own planning?

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

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

The National Level.....

A collaborative, UK-wide drive for effective business continuity for all organisations needs support and leadership at the national level across all the sectors. The Government works closely with business representatives and voluntary organisations through a number of forums.

In addition to sector-specific forums on business continuity in areas such as the financial and energy sectors, the Government has set up a Business Advisory Group on Civil Protection through which effective dialogue between business and government on civil protection issues will be pursued, and through which the Government is seeking to provide guidance and support to the business community to assist them in implementing business continuity management. The group is attended by a wide range of business representative organisations such as CBI, Federation of Small Businesses and British Retail Consortium. You can find more information about the BAGCP, including its core membership and recent meetings, on our website at <http://www.pfe.gov.uk/business/bagcp.shtm>. We have asked that all attending organisations cascade information from the group to their memberships and work in partnership with us to spread the message on business continuity.

In addition, the Government has published a wide range of guidance for businesses and voluntary organisations to assist them with business continuity planning. The Chartered Management Institute research told us that businesses want practical user-focused guidance which

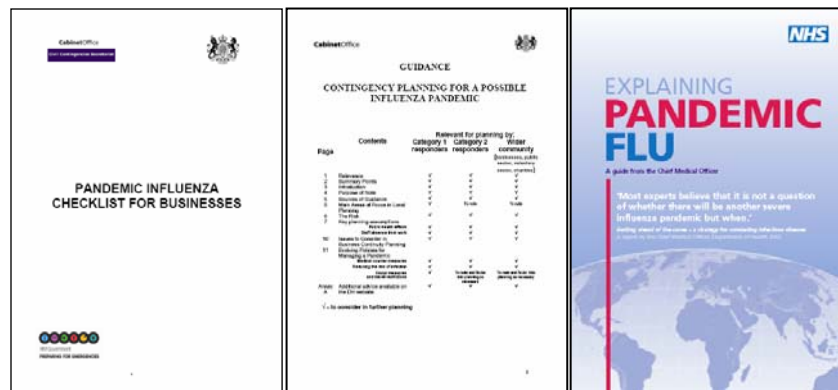


is available on the web. We have responded to this by making available guidance on creating a BCP, checklists, case studies, information on potential disruptions, and information on the business case for BCM. All of these are available on the Preparing for Emergencies website (<http://www.pfe.gov.uk>), which was re-launched in March, and is delivering a single portal for advice on

What You Can Do	>
What Businesses Can Do	>
What Voluntary & Community Groups Can Do	>
What Government is Doing	>
Advice on Specific Emergencies	>
More Information	>

emergencies and business continuity. The website contains information specific to businesses and to voluntary organisations, and pulls together information from across government, as well as providing links to

regional and local sources of support.



The Preparing for Emergencies website includes information and guidance on planning for specific risks, like pandemic flu.

We are keen to ensure the website provides a useful resource for all organisations. That means we're always on the look-out for your feedback, and for fresh content such as case studies. So if your organisation has a business continuity story to tell, please contact us via

<http://www.pfe.gov.uk/feedback.shtm>.



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