

## Questions & Answers NHS Resilience Project

### What is the NHS Resilience project?

The aim of the NHS Resilience Project is to build resilience within the NHS ensuring continued operational delivery of healthcare services when faced with disruptive challenges. The project's focus initially is to pump prime Business Continuity Management (BCM) in the health care system. In simple terms the NHS needs to be able to *survive* as an organisation to enable it to *operate* core services there by continuing to provide patient care – in other words '**Survive to Operate**'

The NHS Resilience project will link with on-going work between the Emergency Preparedness Division and other government departments as part of the CONTEST strategy as well as wider supply chain resilience. The project is been supported by the three most senior people in the Department - David Nicholson (NHS Chief Executive) Sir Liam Donaldson (Chief Medical Officer) and Hugh Taylor (DH Permanent Secretary)

### Why does the NHS have to do Business Continuity Planning (BCP)?

The UK faces an increasing number of disruptive challenges from a wide range of hazards and threats. These range from extremes of weather to acts of terrorism, and can be both external to the organisation (i.e. bombings producing large number of casualties) or, disruption from off-site incidents to internal business processes, for example loss of telecoms. In some cases, for example Influenza Pandemic, the NHS has to deal with both an increase in the numbers of patients and the disruption to business and support services especially staffing.

Due to the complexity of modern supply chains, these threats and hazards often have interdependencies between suppliers. The NHS, as the largest organisation in Western Europe is no exception. Understanding these interdependences will ensure that risks can be identified and contingency plans are put in place where necessary.

The NHS Resilience project is based on a whole systems approach to healthcare focusing on the trusts becoming individually robust whilst making the NHS collectively resilient.

This recognises main providers of healthcare are NHS organisations **BUT** there are also a number of third sector providers delivering healthcare. This will require the NHS Resilience project to consider aspects of Business Continuity Management (BCM) within healthcare commissioning, and the ability to both contract resilience and audit capability across a number of healthcare organisations.

## What are the three key aims of the Project?

- The aim is to build resilience within the NHS ensuring continued operational delivery of healthcare services when faced with disruptive challenges from a wide spectrum of risk
- The project's main focus initially is to pump prime Business Continuity Management (BCM) in the health care system
- The NHS Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a dedicated area of work within the Emergency Preparedness Division

## Why are we doing this?

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a responsibility on the NHS (as Category 1 and Category 2 responders) to demonstrate robust business continuity management. Therefore, any BCM process within the NHS should ideally meet the requirements as set out in the British Standards Institute (BSI) publicly available specification BS25999-1. BS25999 Part 2 has now also been launched. Officially titled BS 25999-2:2007 '*Specification for business continuity management*' it joins and complements Part 1, or BS 25999-1:2006 Business continuity management. Code of practice. For further information see the link

<http://www.bsi-global.com/en/Shop/Publication-Detail/?pid=00000000030169700>

## Why use a standard?

The NHS is one of the largest organisations in Europe, providing healthcare services to a diverse population over a wide geographical area. The British Standards Institute has developed a standard for business continuity (BS25999-1) which can be used by any organisation to develop resilience to a wide range of disruptive challenges. The NHS, as a complex organisation, using the BS25999-1 standard will provide a unified and cohesive approach to business continuity resulting in collectively resilience across the NHS.

It will allow the NHS to develop a resilient healthcare system which can be bench marked against other similar sized organisations. Applying a standard across the NHS will provide commissioners and providers of health care services with a realistic framework to ensure resilience. It will also assist healthcare organisations meet their requirements under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 for BCM.

## What are the Details of the Project?

The NHS Resilience project is initially a three year project which is been lead by the Department of Health Emergency Preparedness Division (EPD). The three-year project plan is aimed to implement BCM across the NHS within the following timeframe:

- Immediate – mid-term (0-18 months)
- Mid-term (18–36 months)
- Long term (36 months +)

## What is happening next?

The project team have finalised the project plan. This project plan interfaces with the Essential Services (health) workstream, which is one of 18 workstreams that develop resilience as part of the UK Capability Programme.

A project board chaired by Dr Penny Bevan, Director, Emergency Preparedness at the Department of Health has been established along with a stakeholder group chaired by Phil Storr head of the NHS Resilience Project. Both these groups met for first time in September 2007.

Lessons learnt from various local, regional and national exercises will also feedback into the project and ensure the long-term aim of the project remains beneficial to frontline healthcare organisation.

## Where can I find further information?

You can find further information on contingency planning, UK resilience and health emergency planning at the following email sites. These sites often act as a portal to other technical sites

<http://www.bsi-global.com/en/Shop/Publication-Detail/?pid=00000000030169700>

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Emergencyplanning/index.htm>

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

For further information on the progress of the NHS Resilience Project you can contact the project team direct on

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