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# **The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework**

REFRESHED SEPTEMBER 2011

## **THE NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL CONTINGENCIES FRAMEWORK**

The following are the core principles on which the Framework is based:

- 1 Ministers and top management shall provide leadership, direction and support to civil contingencies processes, and shall ensure that appropriate funding and other resources are made available. Senior management shall include civil contingencies activities in their normal business planning activities, risk management frameworks and, where appropriate, audit and assurance arrangements.**
- 2 Organisations shall discharge their civil contingencies preparedness responsibilities in line with the principles set out in this Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework and in other relevant guidance issued at United Kingdom, Northern Ireland Regional, Sub-regional and Local levels.**
- 3 Risk assessments shall be carried out in a systematic manner, as a basis for prioritising civil contingencies activities and ensuring an effective use of resources.**
- 4 All organisations shall develop and maintain civil contingencies plans and other preparations in relation to their functions so that they can deliver those functions for the purposes of preventing an emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects or taking any other action necessary in relation to it.**
- 5 In developing and maintaining their own preparedness, organisations shall consult, communicate and co-ordinate with other organisations and shall participate as appropriate in regional, sub-regional and local co-ordination forums. All Northern Ireland public service organisations shall communicate and co-operate with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Maritime and coastguard Agency (MCA) and telecommunications providers in the discharge of those organisations' duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.**

- 6 Northern Ireland Departments shall, as far as they are able within statutory frameworks, require their associated organisations, such as Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) Boards, Trusts or District Councils, to develop their own civil contingencies arrangements. They shall provide any appropriate statutory measures and/or sector-specific guidance to enable them to do so. Where departments have policy responsibility for essential services which are primarily delivered by the private sector, they shall work with their private sector partners to promote resilience and shall make appropriate provision in legislation, licences, service level agreements etc for civil contingencies activities. Departments and other organisations shall also take account of expertise and resources available from relevant voluntary and not-for-profit organisations when undertaking civil continuities activities.**
- 7 All relevant organisations shall deliver, as far as is possible in the circumstances, their functions in response to emergencies and disruptions and shall participate in co-ordination arrangements for emergency response at strategic, tactical and operational levels as appropriate.**
- 8 All organisations shall deliver their functions in order to contribute to recovery and restoration of normality. All shall participate in the review of emergency preparedness and response arrangements in the light of experience gained in their use.**
- 9 All organisations shall undertake Business Continuity Management processes which will enable them to deliver their services in response to an emergency and to maintain essential services to the public through a business disruption. Public sector organisations shall promote and encourage Business Continuity Management in their public, private and voluntary sector suppliers, customers, licence holders and stakeholders.**
- 10 All organisations shall have a strategy for communicating with the public on relevant civil contingencies issues on an ongoing basis. All shall also have a strategy for communicating essential information and public safety advice in relation to their services when a particular emergency is imminent, is happening or has happened. All appropriate organisations shall participate in co-ordination arrangements for public information and media response.**



# **THE NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL CONTINGENCIES FRAMEWORK**

## **NOTE ON THE REFRESHED VERSION SEPTEMBER 2011**

The principles of civil contingencies policy and strategy in Northern Ireland as set out in this Framework are largely unchanged since it was published in November 2005. However there have been a number of changes in nomenclature and terminology in the intervening years. This document has therefore been refreshed to reflect current organisation names, terminology and civil contingencies structures.

**Personal Data**

**KEITH JAGELMAN  
CIVIL CONTINGENCIES POLICY BRANCH  
SEPTEMBER 2011**

## **FOREWORD**

We live in a complex and fast-moving society. Recent events in the UK and elsewhere have demonstrated the need for high quality, co-ordinated preparedness for, and response to, emergencies and disruptions. When emergencies or disruptions happen, despite the best efforts of everyone to prevent them, the public services are expected to respond and to continue to deliver the essentials of life to the community. This is a core responsibility for all public service organisations.

We cannot afford to be complacent about our civil contingencies arrangements or to think that they fall to someone else. Standards across the UK are being raised and arrangements improved. The public rightly expects an effective and professional response. Northern Ireland public service organisations must play their part in ensuring that the people of Northern Ireland receive the help and support they need, in the right place at the right time. This is a significant challenge and I believe that this Framework provides an environment in which that can happen.

I therefore welcome and endorse the Framework and will look to the NI departments, agencies, NDPBs and other public service organisations to implement it fully in delivering their functions in Northern Ireland.



**Personal Data**

**RT HON PETER HAIN MP  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
NOVEMBER 2005**

# THE NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL CONTINGENCIES FRAMEWORK

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## CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### Introduction

1. This document sets out the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework within which NI public service organisations will discharge their civil contingencies responsibilities. The Framework consolidates existing policy on civil protection in the public sector with developments arising from, among other things the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, guidance to GB departments, the UK Capabilities programme and the changing social and political environment in which civil contingencies activities take place. It is not, therefore, a new initiative but builds on what already exists in order to ensure that Northern Ireland civil protection arrangements meet the needs of the 21st century.
2. The Framework consists of ten high level statements on how public service organisations shall behave in relation to their civil contingencies responsibilities. These are supported by guidance on actions organisations may take in order to comply with the Framework. Exactly how the core statements are implemented will be a matter for individual organisations and will be dependant on their functions, the extent of their civil contingencies responsibilities and the legal and administrative frameworks within which they operate. In general, the response of organisations to the Framework should be proportionate to the risks they face and the contribution they can make to the safety and welfare of people and the protection of the environment. Organisations should allocate resources as required in response to risk assessments, the vulnerabilities of the organisation, its functions, its civil contingencies responsibilities and its agreed work programme.
3. This document is primarily about what organisations should do rather than how they should do it. It is not, therefore, intended to be a comprehensive guide to good practice in civil contingencies, – where necessary, practical advice can be found in the guidance documents referred to within the text of individual chapters and in the Appendices at the end of them.

## Aim

4. **The aim of the Framework is to ensure that the people of Northern Ireland receive a level of protection and emergency response which is consistent with that elsewhere in the United Kingdom and which meets their needs and expectations.**
5. This can only be achieved through the commitment of Ministers, departments and other public service organisations to having effective civil contingencies arrangements in place which are integrated across different organisations and between the NI regional, sub-regional and local levels. The Framework contributes to this by setting out the key civil protection policies and mechanisms which will be used by those organisations.

## Guiding principles

6. The UK government has established a set of guiding principles for the response to an emergency. It recognises that the response to an emergency needs to be managed flexibly to reflect circumstances at the time, but expects the response in all cases to be underpinned by the same guiding principles:
  - **Preparedness.** All those individuals and organisations that might have to respond to emergencies should be properly prepared, including having clarity of roles and responsibilities.
  - **Continuity.** Response to emergencies should be grounded in the existing functions of organisations and familiar ways of working, albeit delivered at a greater tempo, on a larger scale and in more testing circumstances.
  - **Subsidiarity.** Decisions should be taken at the lowest appropriate level, with co-ordination at the highest necessary level. Local responders should be the building block of response on any scale.

- **Direction.** Clarity of purpose should be delivered through a strategic aim and supporting objectives that are agreed and understood by all involved to prioritise and focus the response.
- **Integration.** Effective co-ordination should be exercised between and within organisations and tiers of response as well as timely access to appropriate guidance and appropriate support for the local or regional level.
- **Communication.** Good two-way communication is critical to an effective response. Reliable information must be passed correctly and without delay between those who need to know, including the public.
- **Co-operation.** Positive engagement based on mutual trust and understanding will facilitate information sharing and deliver effective solutions to issues arising.
- **Anticipation.** Risk identification and analysis is needed of potential direct and indirect developments to anticipate and thus manage the consequences.

7. The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework supports the application of these guiding principles in Northern Ireland.

### **Overall objectives for the central government response**

8. The guiding principles above allow for a clearly identifiable set of objectives for the central government response to all emergencies, including multiple incidents where a number of incidents occur close together in the same area or different parts of the country. The strategic objectives for the initial central government response are to:
- **protect human life and, as far as possible, property and alleviate suffering;**
  - **support the continuity of everyday activity and the restoration of disrupted services at the earliest opportunity; and**
  - **uphold the rule of law and the democratic process.**

9. These objectives are relevant for all levels of public service organisations in Northern Ireland, although an individual organisation may wish to add its own strategic objectives to this list, in line with its functions. This Framework supports the achievement of these objectives by organisations.

### **Objectives of the Framework**

10. By working within the Framework it is expected that:
- Public service organisations at NI regional, sub-regional and local levels will have a clear understanding of what is required of them in terms of civil protection and will be committed to fully playing their part in civil protection for Northern Ireland.
  - Organisations will work to the same set of policies, principles and standards, which they will apply flexibly depending on their functions and responsibilities.
  - Co-ordination will be facilitated by a shared approach. This shared approach will include a common system of risk assessment and contingency planning across the NI public services.
  - Communication will be encouraged as all organisations commit themselves to working together to achieve common goals.
  - Public service organisations will resource civil protection to the required level.
  - Commitment will be visible and standards will be auditable and consistent between and within Northern Ireland public sector organisations.

## CHAPTER 2: CIVIL CONTINGENCIES

### Civil Contingencies

11. Civil contingencies are the events and situations impacting on the community which may or may not occur, but would lead to an emergency if they did. Civil contingencies covers all the hazards and threats which could impact upon human welfare, the environment, national security or the continuity of essentials of life services. Civil contingencies activities are the activities undertaken by individuals and organisations to prevent emergencies and critical business interruptions, to mitigate and control their effects and to prepare to respond. These activities include horizon scanning, risk assessment, business continuity management, integrated emergency management, preparedness, validation, response and promotion of recovery and restoration.

### The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

12. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (referred to as “the Act” and available through <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/civil-contingencies-act>) consolidates good practice in civil contingencies in the UK. It introduces statutory duties to undertake civil contingencies activities and updates emergency powers provisions.
13. Part 1 of the Act specifies Civil Contingencies duties for local response organisations listed in Schedule 1 of the Act. For a range of practical and constitutional reasons it was not appropriate to use the Act to place statutory duties on organisations delivering transferred functions in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, there is an expectation that Northern Ireland will have a similar level of protection for its citizens as is experienced elsewhere. This Civil Contingencies Framework therefore takes the principles contained in the Act, as well as the principles which apply to UK-wide and GB regional civil contingencies activities (see below) and applies them in a way which is appropriate for Northern Ireland.
14. Because of the differences in Northern Ireland government structures and the existing civil contingencies arrangements in Northern Ireland, it is not possible to



make a direct correlation between the Act and this Framework. The key statutory duties under the Act and where they are reflected in the Framework and other guidance are set out in Appendix 1 to this Chapter. The Act is essentially enabling legislation. The details of how the statutory duties are to be discharged, and the exact responsibilities of individual organisations, are set out in The Civil Contingencies Act (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and the associated guidance document, 'Emergency Preparedness' (see <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience>). Much of the good practice guidance contained in the regulations, and particularly in the guidance document, is relevant to Northern Ireland organisations discharging their responsibilities under this Framework. Throughout the following chapters, cross-reference is made to relevant material.

## Definition of emergency

15. The definition of an “emergency” in the context of civil contingencies arrangements in Northern Ireland, including this Framework, is:

**“An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare, the environment or the security of Northern Ireland or the UK as a whole.”**

16. The definition of emergency is concerned with consequences, rather than with its cause or source. Therefore an emergency inside or outside Northern Ireland is covered by the definition provided it has consequences inside Northern Ireland. In the context of this Framework, the term “emergency” does not refer to the day-to-day incidents which organisations deal with within their normal operational procedures and resources. It does, however, encompass many of the terms already used by organisations, such as “Major Incident”, “Disaster” and “Major Emergency”.
17. “Damage” includes physical destruction, corruption of information, or loss of beneficial social phenomena (e.g. trust or affiliation). To determine whether damage is serious there are two tests (one of which must be met).

18. Damage would be “serious” if:

**the emergency would be likely seriously to obstruct an organisation in the performance of its functions;**

or

**if it is likely that the organisation:**

**would consider it necessary or desirable to act to prevent reduce, control or mitigate the emergency’s effects, or otherwise take action,**

and

**would be unable to act without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.**

19. This definition of “serious” provides continuity with the previous widely used definition of emergency in ‘A Guide to Emergency Planning in Northern Ireland’.

20. These definitions are used for this Framework and should be adopted by public service organisations, although they may well need to personalise the definitions of “damage” and “serious” to their own functions. A full glossary of civil contingencies terms and definitions is at **Annex A** to this document.

### **Identifying an emergency**

21. A procedure for determining when an emergency has occurred or is likely to occur must be written into business continuity and emergency plans. The procedure should enable the person who will make the judgement to be identified, and state how they will be advised and whom they must inform. The person will normally be identified by their role or job title and succession arrangements for when the nominated post holder is not available should be clearly stated. It is fundamental therefore that all organisations should have a mechanism by which events are monitored, developing emergencies identified, and decisions taken on the responses to be deployed.

## Resilience

22. We live in a society which is dependent on a continuous delivery of services by a complex web of infrastructure providers in the public and private sectors. The public expects that measures will be put in place to prevent emergencies happening and to minimise the impact of those that are not preventable. When something does go wrong, the public expect a swift and effective response from the whole of the public sector, without reference to individual roles or internal disagreements on responsibilities. The priority for an initial response is to preserve life, to treat the injured and to protect property and the environment. In addition, the public expect that essential public services such as benefits payments, water supply, electricity supply, social services and health services will continue to be delivered in some form, or will be quickly restored, whatever happens at world, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland or individual organisation level. In recognition of this, the government requires the public services to display resilience, both individually and collectively. Resilience demands that organisations have the capability to respond to an emergency that affects human welfare, the environment or security (see **Chapter 6**) and that they can sustain key services through disruption, or restore them in a timely manner following disruption (see **Chapter 11**).

### **United Kingdom, Northern Ireland regional, sub-regional and local arrangements.**

23. Civil contingencies activities in Northern Ireland, although largely focussed on ensuring resilience within Northern Ireland, are part of a larger framework of UK-level arrangements. Many emergencies have the capacity to affect the whole of the United Kingdom, more or less simultaneously, or indeed, have international effects. We have seen how quickly SARS and Swine Flu spread around the world, and have experienced the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease within the United Kingdom.
24. It follows that our arrangements for responding to emergencies must be consistent across the UK, that the response of individual regions should be integrated to enable sharing of information, equipment, staff and experiences and that for certain emergencies UK-wide plans will be required.

25. The Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat has identified three levels at which emergency planning needs to be carried out: National, Regional and Local.

**National** activities are those which are undertaken at UK level, and include central government co-ordination and crisis management arrangements, planning by Whitehall departments and planning for and delivering specialist responses which are economic only when provided at national level.

**Regional** activities are those which support the national arrangements, facilitate co-ordination, crisis management and mutual aid across a number of local areas and provide those responses which are best delivered at that level.

**Local** activities are those within an individual Police area which prepare for and deliver services direct to the public in an emergency. These include multi-agency co-ordination within the local area, delivery of emergency responses such as rest centres and flood relief and contributing to regional and national arrangements, for example by taking casualties from an adjacent area which is overwhelmed.

26. Because of the small size of Northern Ireland and the fairly centralised organisation of the delivery of public services, the GB model does not completely fit. For example, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 defines a Local Resilience Area, as the area covered by a single police service. In the Northern Ireland context, that would be the whole of Northern Ireland, which would not normally be defined as 'local'. Therefore in the context of this Framework the following scales are used:

- **Northern Ireland regional.** Civil contingencies activities at Northern Ireland level are generally comparable to Regional arrangements in GB. This includes the Northern Ireland inter-agency co-ordination and crisis management arrangements and the generic arrangements of NI departments and agencies and the emergency services. Northern Ireland regional arrangements are linked to the UK National arrangements through the Northern Ireland Office and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and through participation of Northern Ireland officials and Ministers in National-level committees. Regional arrangements are also closely linked to the

Northern Ireland sub-regional and local level arrangements through, for example, departmental structures and links with agencies, Health and Social Care (HSC) Bodies and Trusts, District Councils and other public bodies.

- **Sub-regional.** This is the geographical / structural level of Education and Library Boards and District Council Environmental Health Groups. Existing sub-regional arrangements in Northern Ireland include those of organisations such as Education and Library Boards, the arrangements of the sub-offices of departments and agencies and those activities of district councils which are undertaken at Group level.
- **Local.** This is the level of district councils and PSNI District Command Units. Existing local arrangements are those which are undertaken by individual PSNI Districts and district councils and the local arrangements of organisations which operate at that level, for example the Social Security Agency, the Housing Executive and the Post Office.

27. All these levels make an important contribution to resilience within Northern Ireland as a whole. Some organisations, such as district councils, focus on one level of response, while others, such as the emergency services and some of the NI departments operate at two or three of the levels.

28. This Framework focuses on civil contingencies arrangements at the Northern Ireland Regional level. However, many of the principles set out here also apply to sub-regional and local levels.

### **Northern Ireland public service organisations**

29. This Framework refers throughout to 'Northern Ireland public service organisations'. These are primarily the Northern Ireland departments, Agencies, Boards, Trusts, District Councils and Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) which deliver transferred functions in Northern Ireland, ie those services which would, during devolution, be funded by and report to, the Northern Ireland Assembly. However it also includes, where appropriate, organisations which deliver non-transferred functions in Northern Ireland, such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland

(PSNI), the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and telecommunications operators. The PSNI, the MCA and telecommunications operators are subject to specific requirements under Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, but in carrying out their statutory duties under the Act they should have regard to the overall public service arrangements in Northern Ireland, and it is anticipated that they will undertake their duties in a manner which is compatible with this Framework.

### **Core civil contingencies responsibilities of public service organisations**

30. There are six activities which are fundamental to an integrated approach to civil contingencies activities:

- Anticipation (horizon scanning)
- Assessment
- Prevention
- Preparation
- Response
- Recovery Management

31. This Framework deals mainly with responsibilities in relation to preparation and some aspects of prevention. However, effective prevention and preparation are dependant on having in place anticipation and assessment processes and the purpose of preparation is to enable an organisation to engage effectively in response and recovery processes.

32. Not all organisations have the same level of responsibilities in relation to emergencies, so the response of an individual organisation to the Framework should be proportionate to its functions and the degree to which it needs to engage in civil contingencies activities. However, all organisations should be able to demonstrate that they have assessed risks and taken appropriate action to manage any risks which are considered to be unacceptable.

33. **Chapters 3 - 12** of this document address the requirements of the individual high level Framework statements. The Framework is constructed in terms of the requirements on organisations in relation to their functions.
34. In this context, “functions” of an organisation are primarily those policies and activities for which an organisation has day-to day responsibility, but they also include the responsibility of NI departments at strategic level for functions which are normally delivered by associated agencies, NDPBs and private sector organisations. “Functions” also may be responsibilities which relate specifically to emergency situations and for which lead responsibility has been agreed.

### **Organisations with responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004**

35. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 confers statutory duties on a small number of organisations in Northern Ireland which deliver non-transferred functions or, in the case of the PSNI, which did deliver non-transferred functions at the time the act was made. The PSNI and the MCA are category 1 responders in Northern Ireland and telecommunications operators are category 2 responders.
36. Because these limited organisations do not represent the full spectrum of response agencies, not all the duties placed on organisations elsewhere will be appropriate in Northern Ireland. The following principles are reflected in regulations for those category 1 and category 2 organisations which operate in Northern Ireland:
- The regulations which relate to how individual responders should perform their duties apply to responders in Northern Ireland, but with some adjustments for the Northern Ireland situation.
  - The provisions which rely on bi-lateral co-operation etc between responders apply to Northern Ireland.
  - The provisions in the regulations relating to the Local Resilience Forum and its activities, including the production of a Community Risk Register, do not apply to Northern Ireland.

- Category 1 responders in Northern Ireland should have regard to the civil protection activities of other bodies in Northern Ireland.
- Specific provisions for Northern Ireland are set out in Part 10 of the regulations.

37. In practice, it is expected that the PSNI, MCA and telecommunications operators in Northern Ireland will undertake their individual and co-operative duties within the arrangements set out in the Act and associated regulations and guidance, but will relate to Northern Ireland public service bodies listed in Regulation 57 in line with the arrangements in this Civil Contingencies Framework and other Northern Ireland guidance and will participate in Northern Ireland co-operation, co-ordination and crisis management machinery.
38. This Framework places the Northern Ireland organisations under a reciprocal requirement to co-operate with the PSNI, MCA and (where appropriate) telecommunications operators in the discharge of those organisations' duties under the Act.
39. Part 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 applies across the UK and makes provision for emergency regulations to be made in circumstances where additional legislation is required for the purposes of preventing, controlling or mitigating an aspect or effect of the emergency. Part 2 is only used when an emergency has happened or is imminent. When emergency regulations are made, an Emergency Co-ordinator would be appointed to oversee the implementation of the regulations. NI departments need to be prepared to contribute to the making of emergency regulations, and where the potential need for regulations has been pre-identified they should be able to quickly implement any new powers and responsibilities.

### **Using this document**

40. The remaining Chapters of this document expand on the ten core principles and what is expected of public service organisations in relation to them. This document should be read in conjunction with other documents on UK policy and good practice in civil contingencies arrangements. **Appendix 2** to this Chapter lists some of the



core documents and websites which contain guidance to organisations on implementing the principles set out in this document. References to additional specialist guidance sources are provided within the text or as appendices to relevant Chapters. A glossary of civil contingencies terms is at **Annex A** to the document and a list of Acronyms and their meanings is at **Annex B**.

**THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT 2004: KEY STATUTORY DUTIES**

<p><b>Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Duties</b> (for the full legal wording refer to the Act, <a href="http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/civil-contingencies-act">http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/civil-contingencies-act</a>)</p>	<p><b>Cross-Reference With NI Civil Contingencies Framework and guidance documents</b></p>
<p>Assess the risk of an emergency occurring and of an emergency making it necessary or expedient for an organisation to perform any of its functions (section 2(1)(a) and (b)).</p>	<p>Chapter 5: Risk Assessment</p> <p>Also ‘A Guide to Risk Assessment in Northern Ireland’</p>
<p>Maintain plans to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that if an emergency occurs the organisation is able to continue to perform its functions (business continuity – section 2(1)(c)).</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Business Continuity Management.</p>
<p>Maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur the organisation is able to perform its functions for the purpose of preventing the emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects or enabling other action to be taken in connection with the emergency (Emergency Preparedness and section 2(1)(d)).</p>	<p>Chapter 6: Planning and Preparing for Emergencies.</p> <p>Also ‘A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland’ and ‘A Guide to Plan Preparation in Northern Ireland’.</p>
<p>Consider whether business continuity or emergency plans should be modified or added to as a result of risk assessments (section 2(1)(e)).</p>	<p>Chapter 5: Risk Assessment and Chapter 6: Planning and Preparing for Emergencies.</p>
<p>Arrange for the publication of all or part of assessments and plans, and provide information and advice to the public if an emergency is likely to occur or has occurred (section 2(1)(f) and (g)).</p>	<p>Chapter 12: Public Information</p>
<p>Regulations, guidance and directions (to, and in relation to, organisations listed in Schedule 1 of the Act) made under the Act may :</p>	

<p>Make provision about the kind of emergency in relation to which an organisation is or is not to perform a duty (section 2(5)(a)).</p>	<p>No equivalent in the Framework (this is a provision that would be used in specific situations as they arise). Decisions on this in NI would be taken by PSG / Ministers.</p>
<p>Permit or require an organisation not to perform a duty in specified circumstances or in relation to specified matters (section 2(5)(b)).</p>	<p>No equivalent in the Framework (this is a provision that would be used in specific situations as they arise). Decisions on this in NI would be taken by PSG / Ministers.</p>
<p>Make provision as to the timing of a performance of a duty (section 2(5)(c)).</p>	<p>No equivalent in the Framework (this is a provision that would be used in specific situations as they arise). Decisions on this in NI would be taken by PSG / Ministers.</p>
<p>Require an organisation to consult a specified person or body or class of person or body before or in the course of performing a duty (section 2(5)(d)).</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Consultation, Communication and Co-ordination for general principles. Specific requirements in individual circumstances would be a matter for PSG / Ministers to specify.</p>
<p>Permit or require a County Council to perform a duty on behalf of a district council (section 2(5)(e)).</p>	<p>No equivalent. Northern Ireland has a single tier of district councils.</p>
<p>Permit, require or prohibit collaboration by organisations in the performance of a duty (section 2(5)(f)).</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Consultation, Communication and Co-ordination.</p>
<p>Permit, require or prohibit delegation of the performance of a duty (section 2(5)(g)).</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Consultation, Communication and Co-ordination.  For NI departments, arrangements for delegation are set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p>

Permit or require an organisation to co-operate with another organisation in connection with the performance of a duty (section 2(5)(h)).	Chapter 7: Consultation, Communication and Co-ordination.
Permit or require an organisation to provide information to another organisation in connection with the performance of a duty (section 2(5)(i)).	Chapter 7: Consultation, Communication and Co-ordination.
Permit or require an organisation to perform a duty having regard to, or by adopting or relying on work undertaken by another organisation (section 2(5)(j)).	Chapter 7: Consultation, Communication and Co-ordination.'
Permit or require an organisation to have regard to activities of bodies (other than public or local authorities) whose activities are not carried on for profit (section 2(5)(k)).	Chapter 8: Non-departmental Public Service organisations.
Make provision about the extent of, and the degree of detail to be contained in, a plan (section 2(5)(l)).	Chapter 6 Planning and Preparing for Emergencies  Further information is in 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland' and 'A Guide to Plan Preparation in Northern Ireland'.
Require a plan to include provision for the carrying out of exercises (section 2(5)(m)).	Chapter 6: Planning and Preparing for Emergencies.
Require a plan to include provision for the training of staff and other persons (section 2(5)(n)).	Chapter 6: 'Planning and Preparing for Emergencies'
Permit an organisation to make arrangements with another organisation as part of planning for the performance of a function on behalf of the first person or body (section 2(5)(o)).	Chapter 7: Consultation, Communication and Co-ordination.
Confer a function on a Minister of the Crown, .....on a Northern Ireland department or any other specified organisation (and a function conferred may, in particular, be a power or duty to	This would be a function of the UK government.  In Northern Ireland, provisions in the

exercise a discretion) (section 2(5)(p)).	Northern Ireland Act 1998 would apply.
Make provision which has effect despite other provision made by or by virtue of an enactment (section 2(5)(q)).	This is specific to legislation.
Make provision which applies generally or only to a specified organisation or only in specified circumstances (section 2(5)(r)).	This is specific to legislation.
Make different provision for different organisations or for different circumstances (section 2(5)(s)).	This is specific to legislation.
Provide advice and assistance to the public in connection with the making of arrangements for the continuance of commercial activities by the public, or the continuance of the activities of bodies other than public or local authorities whose activities are not carried on for profit, in the event of an emergency (section 4(1))	In part Chapter 11: Business Continuity Management.  Other aspects of policy still under consideration.

## CIVIL CONTINGENCIES PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

The following Civil Contingencies publications and websites provide the core of guidance to public service organisations on civil contingencies in the UK generally and NI in particular. They are referred to extensively throughout the text of this document. Other documents and websites which focus on a particular aspect of civil contingencies are listed in the text and in bibliographies attached to individual Chapters.

### UK level guidance

**Emergency Preparedness** – the core Civil Contingencies Secretariat guidance document on local emergency response issues, particularly in relation to the duties set out in Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act. Available through the UK Resilience website, on <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-preparedness>

**Emergency Response and Recovery** – Civil Contingencies Secretariat guidance, aimed primarily at local responders, on good practice in responding to, and recovering from, emergencies. Available through the UK Resilience website, on <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-response-and-recovery>

**The Lead Government Department and its role – Guidance and Best Practice.** Civil Contingencies Secretariat guidance for Whitehall departments, setting out their responsibilities. Available through the UK Resilience website on <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lead-government-departments-role.pdf>

**UK Resilience website**, <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience> – Main UK website for civil contingencies issues. Contains extensive links to guidance and to other civil contingencies websites. Is also used to provide information on ongoing emergencies.

**Emergency Planning Society (EPS) website**, <http://www.the-eps.org>. The website of the main professional body for emergency planners in the UK. Contains civil contingencies news, information about the EPS, EPS publications and links to other sites, including these of the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland branches of the Society.

### Northern Ireland guidance

**A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland.** CCPB core guidance document on emergency planning for Northern Ireland organisations. Available on [http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf).

**Northern Ireland Standards in Civil Protection.** Guidance, primarily for NI departments but widely applicable, on good practice in preparedness. Complementary to this Framework. Available on <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/standardsincivilprotection.pdf>.

#### **Civil Contingencies Policy Branch (CCPB) website:**

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/making-government-work/civil-contingencies.htm>.

Website giving information and contact information for CCPB, access to publications and contacts with other organisations in the civil contingencies field.

### Others

#### **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), USA website,**

<http://www.fema.gov/>. Extensive website with information on FEMA, USA disaster news items, an extensive library of publications and advice and global links to other civil contingencies sites.

**Emergency Management Australia (EMA) website, [www.ema.gov.au](http://www.ema.gov.au).** Site of the Federal agency in Australia with responsibility for national level civil contingencies activities and providing support to individual States and Territories. Contains guidance and links to other Australian sites.



## **CHAPTER 3 - CORE PRINCIPLE 1: COMMITMENT, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT**

**Ministers and top management shall provide leadership, direction and support to civil contingencies processes, and shall ensure that appropriate funding and other resources are made available. Senior management shall include civil contingencies activities in their normal business planning activities, risk management frameworks and, where appropriate, audit and assurance arrangements.**

41. Effective civil contingencies arrangements for Northern Ireland depend on all organisations being committed to play their part in achieving resilience. For this to happen Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Chief Executives and other senior officers need to give a clear lead to their organisations on the priority which they attach to civil contingencies activities.
  
42. Their commitment, and the objectives which they have set, should be clearly communicated within their organisations. Means by which this could be achieved include:
  - Placing, where appropriate, a clear statement of civil contingencies policy and strategic objectives in the organisation's corporate business plan. This should be supported and supplemented by specific objectives in the plans of individual Business Units. In NI departments this would include the development and maintenance of objectives and targets within the departmental Business Planning Programme.
  - Ensuring that civil contingencies responsibilities are written into job descriptions and personal objectives at all levels within the organisation. In assessing job loadings, civil contingencies responsibilities should be taken into account.
  - Developing performance indicators and instituting arrangements for assessing the implementation and effectiveness of civil protection activities (see below).



- Allocating resources as required in response to risk assessments, the vulnerabilities of the organisation, its civil contingencies responsibilities and its agreed work programme. Resources include staff time, accommodation, supplies, equipment and budgets for training and exercises. Resources should be made available for internal activities and for co-ordination and multi-agency activities.
  - Having in place an agreed mechanism for managing and authorising spending on the response to emergencies, and for obtaining additional resources, for example through mutual aid and draw-down contracts.
  - Ensuring that an annual report on the organisation's civil contingencies activities and outputs is made to its Board, Chief Executive, parent department Accounting Officer and/or Minister as appropriate.
43. The degree to which civil contingencies activities should be reflected in high level strategic plans will be proportionate to the responsibilities of an individual organisation. However, in all cases where a business unit or member of staff has civil contingencies responsibilities, these should be reflected in business and personal activity plans.

## **Business Planning**

44. Civil Contingencies activities are not stand-alone actions which are unconnected to the day to day business of an organisation. They should be built into the normal business plans and performance management activities of the organisation. The Northern Ireland Standards in Civil Protection document (<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/standardsincivilprotection.pdf>) gives further information on how the Standards (which are compatible with this Framework) relate to some of the frequently-used performance management tools. As part of the performance management process, organisations will need to measure how they are performing in relation to this Framework.
45. Northern Ireland departments produce a set of actions and objectives within their development programmes, which should be integrated into their normal business planning arrangements. An annual review of progress with objectives will help departments to assess their progress.

## Corporate governance

46. All public service organisations are required to have appropriate governance arrangements in place, including business risk management processes. Standard risk management frameworks may include risk to continuity of business and risk that the business will not deliver what it is expected or required of it. In the context of civil contingencies this could include the risk of an organisation:
- failing to provide its planned level of protection to people and the environment;
  - not being able to deliver its key 'essentials of life' services;
  - failing to respond effectively to an emergency; and
  - failing to recover quickly from an emergency or a business interruption to essential services.

**Chapters 6 and 10** address these issues further.

47. Therefore it is expected that a department's or agency's civil contingencies obligations would be reflected as/if appropriate in corporate risk registers and other management tools. Risk register inputs and business plan objectives should be informed by the risk assessments carried out by the organisation (see Chapter 5). In this context, NI departments should be familiar with the requirements of HM Treasury's Orange Book ([http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/orange\\_book.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/orange_book.pdf)) and OGC/HM Treasury Guidance On Managing Risks With Delivery Partners' ([http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/managingrisks\\_deliverypartners.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/managingrisks_deliverypartners.pdf)) which deals with, among other things, handling external risks.

## Audit

48. One of the means by which the Accounting Officer assesses the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements in an organisation is through an audit programme.

## Northern Ireland departments

49. From an Internal Audit perspective, civil contingencies arrangements / activities are treated in exactly the same manner as other arrangements / activities. In that respect, they will be identified, prioritised for review purposes and included in a programme as appropriate. Internal Audit in some Northern Ireland departments have already included civil contingencies activities in their programme of reviews, especially where departments have significant civil contingencies responsibilities. It would be beneficial for there to be some degree of standard approach to audit of civil contingencies activities in Northern Ireland departments, although it is recognised that the extent to which departments are involved in civil contingencies activities varies greatly and that consequently, the appropriate level of audit will vary. In general, the audit guidance issued by the CCS to Whitehall departments in the guidance document “The Lead Government Department and its role – Guidance and Best Practice” (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lead-government-departments-role.pdf>) is relevant to the Northern Ireland situation, although some adjustments need to be made to take account of the different systems of government. In addition to guidance issued by the CCS, there are a number of civil contingencies tools specific to Northern Ireland which would provide further standards against which to measure performance. These include:
- departmental business planning and risk management programmes; and
  - guidance issued by CCPB, especially the Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland, the NI Standards in Civil Protection and the Guide to Plan Preparation.
50. Within any overall audit framework, different strategies for audit would be appropriate in different situations. Civil contingencies arrangements / activities could be audited on a departmental wide basis as a cross-cutting exercise or included as part of an audit of a system / branch / division. In an initial review of the subject, two strategies have been identified which could make a useful contribution to assuring Accounting Officers that their department was effectively managing the risks associated with its civil protection functions:

- A department's adherence to, and effectiveness in, progressing its development programme and associated objectives and actions could be assessed. This could be done on a department-wide basis as a cross-cutting audit or within individual business areas in respect of their actions within the development programme.
- The way in which a department undertakes its particular civil protection activities could be assessed against relevant UK and NI guidance on good practice and any references in the organisation's business plan. This assessment could be incorporated into planned audits of individual business areas. This approach would probably be most appropriate to business units and agencies which have a specific responsibility for delivering an emergency response or maintaining critical services and which have emergency plans and operating procedures which could be assessed.

51. In all cases, Internal Audit would not be expected to quality assure a plan itself; that should be achieved through regular testing and exercising of plans. What Internal Audit would be looking for would be evidence that a department had made an assessment of the risks it faced, had developed and implemented an action plan and that guidance and good practice had been identified and adhered to. The level of detail at which civil contingencies activities was reviewed would vary depending on the role of a business area and the maturity of its civil contingencies processes.
52. Within departments there may be business units which deliver specialist or technical services. For these, in addition to the normal Internal Audit arrangements it may be beneficial for civil contingencies arrangements to be included in peer reviews and/or specialist inspections.

#### Other Public Service organisations

53. Non-departmental public service organisations each have their own audit arrangements. For example, the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS), like the PSNI, comes under a national inspection programme. Health Service organisations, including the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) come



under an assurance regime determined by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), and Department of Environment (DOE) Local Government Division regulates the audit regime for district councils. Other organisations have their own audit arrangements. Where appropriate, audit programmes for individual organisations should take account of the organisation's civil contingencies responsibilities. This already happens in some cases; for example DHSSPS holds annual monitoring meetings with HSC Bodies and Trusts to examine their civil contingencies programmes.

### **Reporting of Civil Contingencies Activities**

**There shall be a system for reporting civil contingencies progress to senior management, Ministers and the Secretary of State / the NI Assembly as appropriate. This should be done through the normal corporate business plan reporting systems, but in addition all organisations with significant civil contingencies responsibilities shall provide a detailed report, usually annually.**

54. Depending on the extent of a particular organisation's civil contingencies responsibilities, this report could go to the Management Board, Chief Executive, Accounting Officer or Minister as appropriate.
55. Reports on activity in individual organisations should also be made regularly through the relevant Permanent Secretary to the Permanent Secretaries Group (PSG) so that it can take a corporate view on the preparedness of the NI public service as a whole. PSG would meet in a major emergency as the Crisis Management Group (CMG) and it is therefore important that it is satisfied as to the adequacy of civil contingencies arrangements should the strategic crisis management mechanism need to be implemented.
56. The Civil Contingencies Policy Branch (CCPB) will report to the Head of the Civil Service and to the First Minister and deputy First Minister on matters of NI policy and co-ordination arrangements. It may also collate information from departments and other organisations should an overall report be required on a specific issue or on civil contingencies activities generally in Northern Ireland.

57. **Appendix 1** to this Chapter gives links to further information on civil contingencies aspects of commitment and corporate governance.

## COMMITMENT, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

**Northern Ireland Standards in Civil Protection.** Guidance, primarily for NI departments but widely applicable, on good practice in preparedness. Detailed information on organisational commitment and senior management ownership. Available on <http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/standardsincivilprotection.pdf>.

**The Lead Government Department and its role – Guidance and Best Practice.** Civil Contingencies Secretariat guidance for Whitehall departments, setting out their responsibilities, and providing detailed advice on audit. Available through the UK Resilience website on <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lead-government-departments-role.pdf>

**The Orange Book: Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts.** HM Treasury, October 2004. Available at [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/orange\\_book.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/orange_book.pdf).

**Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good practice.** HM Treasury, July 2005. Available through <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/corpgovernancecode280705.pdf>.

## CHAPTER 4 - CORE PRINCIPLE 2: FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDANCE

### **Organisations shall discharge their civil contingencies preparedness responsibilities in line with the principles set out in this Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework and in other relevant guidance issued at United Kingdom, Northern Ireland Regional, Sub-regional and Local levels**

58. This Framework sets out the key policy and practice principles for civil contingencies activities in Northern Ireland. How these principles are applied in individual organisations will vary, depending on the responsibilities and structure of each organisation. However, in order to ensure that emergency plans across public service organisations are compatible and that any emergency response provides a coherent and seamless service to the public, there needs to be some consistency of approach. The basic principles of civil contingencies responsibilities of Northern Ireland public services organisations are set out in this Framework. However, detailed good practice guidance is contained in other guidance documents issued at a number of levels. Public Service organisations in Northern Ireland should adhere to relevant guidance when undertaking civil contingencies activities. Where circumstances require a departure from recommended good practice, the reasons for doing so should be clearly documented and agreed at senior level.
59. Good practice is not set in stone. New hazards and threats arise, and old ones change. The potential effects of events will change as the environment within which organisations operate changes. Exercises, near misses and actual incidents can illustrate where arrangements are deficient and suggest new, more effective ways of doing things. Organisations themselves have an important role in informing the development of good practice guidance. They should be willing to share experiences and successful strategies through co-ordination forums such as the Civil Contingencies Group (NI), and to participate in discussions surrounding the drafting of new policy and guidance. Organisations should also be aware of developments in civil contingencies policy and guidance and ensure that they incorporate these into their programmes.



60. Relevant guidance documents and websites are listed in individual Chapters of this document. The core documents which Northern Ireland organisations should be aware of, and take appropriate actions on, are listed below.

### **UK-level guidance**

61. Guidance at UK level is produced primarily by the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat. Other Whitehall departments also produce good practice guidance for their own sectors. Cabinet Office guidance applies to Northern Ireland in so far as it deals with national arrangements for ensuring effective civil contingencies preparedness and co-ordinating the response to national-level emergencies. Other guidance produced by the Cabinet Office and other departments may be specific to particular organisations or geographical areas, but the principles are generally applicable to Northern Ireland, even if they need to be modified to take account of Northern Ireland government structures. The primary civil contingencies guidance documents for the UK are:

- **Emergency Preparedness**

(<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-preparedness>) is directed primarily at organisations which provide a direct response to emergencies or which provide infrastructure to support the response, and which have statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. In Northern Ireland organisations subject to statutory duties under the Act are limited to the PSNI, the MCA and public network telecommunications operators. However, much of the guidance in the document is generally applicable to public service and infrastructure organisations and should be taken into account by all Northern Ireland organisations.

- **Emergency Response and Recovery**

(<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-response-and-recovery>) provides non-statutory guidance on delivering an effective, co-ordinated emergency response. It incorporates the command and control mechanisms agreed at UK level by the emergency services and is generally applicable to Northern Ireland.

- **The Lead Government Department and its role – Guidance and Best Practice** (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lead-government-departments-role.pdf>) – sets out expectations for the Whitehall government departments, as they are not covered by statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act. Much of what is in this document is relevant to Northern Ireland departments.
62. The above documents, and others issued by the Cabinet Office, are available through the UK Resilience website, <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience>.
  63. Other Whitehall Government Departments also issue guidance specific to their own areas. For example, the Home Office issues a range of guidance documents related to terrorist threats or incidents and the Department of Health issues extensive emergency planning advice to the NHS. Although structures for the delivery of services are different in Northern Ireland to GB, many of the principles contained in such guidance are relevant to equivalent organisations here. They can be accessed through links on the UK Resilience site or directly at departmental websites.
  64. Other guidance is produced by non-government organisations at UK or international level. The Emergency Planning Society (EPS) produces a number of guidance documents, copies of which can be obtained from the Society. Details of what is available and how to obtain copies can be found on the EPS website <http://www.the-eps.org/publications/>.
  65. Much of the guidance on Business Continuity Management is issued by the commercial sector. Good practice is set out in BS25999 – 1 and organisations should consider adopting this standard.

## Northern Ireland Guidance

66. CCPB produces a range of guidance documents:

- **A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland**  
([http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf)) is the main guidance document which is specific to Northern Ireland. It is complementary to 'Emergency Preparedness' and 'Emergency Response and Recovery'. The document covers the organisation of civil contingencies in Northern Ireland, including lead department arrangements and strategic co-ordination structures. It also covers general principles and good practice guidance, which should be read alongside that in the UK-wide documents. The current version of 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in NI' was issued in July 2004 and will be regularly reviewed and updated to take account of developments, including the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and this Framework.
- **The Northern Ireland Standards in Civil Protection**  
(<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/standardsincivilprotection.pdf>) sets out the civil contingencies behaviours and outputs expected of Northern Ireland departments and provides some guidance on how these might be achieved and demonstrated. The Standards have been incorporated into this Framework, but the Standards document still provides a useful summary and some practical examples.
- **A Guide to Evacuation in Northern Ireland**  
(<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/aguidetoevacuation.pdf>) gives guidance on preparing for, and carrying out large-scale evacuations. Evacuation is a particularly complex emergency response which involves a large number of organisations, all of which must work together to ensure the safety and welfare of evacuees.

- **A Guide to Plan Preparation**

(<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/planpreparation.pdf>) is a practitioner's guide to preparing emergency plans. It contains guidance on the activities which make up the planning/validation cycle and provides a template which can be used for emergency plans.

Other Northern Ireland organisations also produce guidance, much of it sector-specific. The emergency services have their own major incident planning manuals and operational procedures, which set out their strategies for responding to emergencies. These are generally in line with UK-level guidance to the individual services. Some Northern Ireland departments also provide guidance for their individual sectors or in relation to specialist aspects of their responsibilities.

### **Sub-regional and local guidance**

67. Sub-regional and local civil contingencies information usually relates to specific procedures and plans and to local or sub-regional risks. Such information is rarely published in guidance format, but is contained in plans, procedures and planning guides for specific sites, such as a sports ground, or events such as annual festivals or sporting events. This information is owned by the individual responder organisations, but should be shared with other organisations likely to be involved in a particular response.



## CHAPTER 5 - CORE PRINCIPLE 3: RISK ASSESSMENT

**Risk assessments shall be carried out in a systematic manner, as a basis for prioritising civil contingencies activities and ensuring an effective use of resources.**

68. Civil Contingencies is a huge field, and it is possible to conjure up a wide range of emergency scenarios and possible outcomes. It is neither possible nor helpful for an organisation to try to plan separately for all possible scenarios and responses. Even if very informally, organisations make some sort of assessment of what events or responses they should prioritise for civil contingencies planning purposes and what scale of event their plans should be able to deal with. Within the Framework, risk assessment should be carried out in a systematic manner so that there is consistency across public service organisations, particularly where those organisations would need to work together in planning for, and responding to a particular emergency. In such circumstances it is important that all partners share a common understanding of the risk of a certain event and the priority which should be given to planning for it.

### Principles of Risk Assessment

69. This Chapter provides generic guidance on the risk assessment methodology that should be used by NI departments and other public service organisations to undertake systematic risk assessments in relation to emergencies for which they are lead organisation or to contribute to risk assessments made by other organisations. It is supported by a separate document 'A Guide to Risk Assessment in Northern Ireland' which can be accessed through the CCPB website:

[http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/guide to risk assessment in northern ireland - \\_january 2010.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/guide%20to%20risk%20assessment%20in%20northern%20ireland%20-%20january%202010.pdf). The methodology in this Chapter and in the 'Guide to Risk Assessment' is consistent with that used in the national, regional and local risk assessment model which has been adopted in the rest of the United Kingdom.

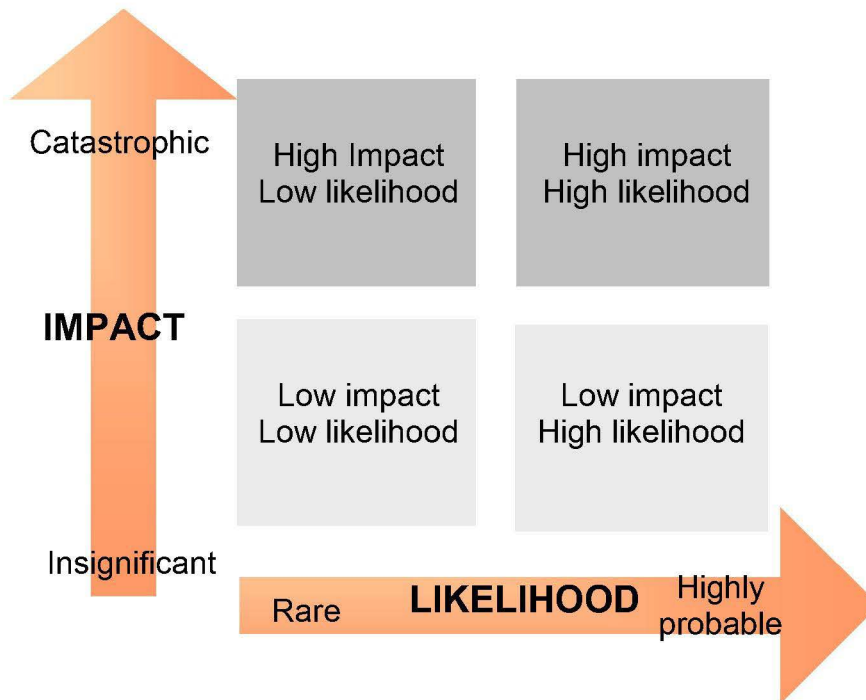
70. Key terms applying to the process are defined in the glossary (**Appendix 1**) at the end of this Chapter. Risk terminology is notoriously varied. However, the wording used here aims to be consistent with the main standards relating to risk management (see Bibliography at **Appendix 2**).

71. Risk is usually expressed as a product of the likelihood and impact of a given hazard or threat (**Figure 5.1**). In this Chapter, the events or situations that threaten serious damage (i.e. sources of risk) are described as hazards or threats, where:

- **a hazard** is an accidental or naturally occurring (non- malicious) event or situation with the potential to cause physical or psychological harm, damage or losses to property, and/ or disruption to the environment and/ or to economic, social, and political structures.
- **a threat** is the intent and capacity to cause loss of life or create adverse consequences to human welfare (including property and the supply of essential services and commodities), the environment or security.

72. The likelihood of a hazard will be determined by factors including nature, human fallibility and the reliability of mechanical systems whilst the likelihood of a threat will be determined by the capabilities and intent of an individual or organisation, together with the vulnerability of systems to different types of attack (e.g. physical attacks or electronic attacks). Impacts will be varied and often complex since the highly interconnected structure of UK society enables effects to spread from one sector or geographical area to another. However, in accordance with the definition of emergency used in this Framework, impact assessments should focus on human welfare, the environment and security issues, with the first two of these being most important to the majority of Northern Ireland public service organisations.

**Figure 5.1 Risk as a product of likelihood and impact**



73. Generally, higher risks are associated with hazards and threats that have a high impact and medium to high likelihood. Conversely, low risks will reflect hazards and threats where the impact is low and the likelihood is low to medium. The more difficult cases are those hazards and threats where the likelihood is low and the impact very high, or vice versa. These risks defy simple categorisation. They require a more sophisticated means of measurement involving judgements about the overall risk associated with certain combinations of likelihood and impact. Typically, these judgements are presented in a risk matrix, as seen in **Figure 5.1**.

### Horizon scanning

74. Most organisations are aware, through experience of previous emergencies or a review of their processes and operating environments, of the broad range of hazards and threats they face. However, organisations should be aware that these can change, in nature, source and size. Some changes may arise from internal sources, such as new procedures, properties or operations. Others come from outside, due to changes in the local, national and international environment in which organisations deliver their functions.

75. The Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) has a specific 'horizon scanning' function. It aims to identify and assess potential and imminent disruptive challenges to the domestic UK and to assist in the development of an integrated response. To do this, the CCS draws on the expertise of government departments, media reports and international information. Information from horizon scanning exercises is shared appropriately with departments and devolved administrations, and, where available, should be incorporated into risk assessments. Northern Ireland organisations should also have mechanisms for carrying out their own horizon scans at intervals to ensure that they are basing their risk assessments on up-to-date and relevant information.

### **Risk Assessment in Great Britain**

76. The UK government produces a national risk assessment register (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/national-risk-register>) which assesses risks against a number of categories of hazards and threats at UK level. In producing this risk framework, the government uses a standard methodology information on which is contained in 'Emergency Preparedness', available from <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-preparedness>.
77. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Category 1 responder organisations (emergency services, health services, Local Authorities etc) to carry out local risk assessments for the geographical areas for which they are responsible. Responder organisations are also required to co-operate in the production and regular review of a Community Risk Register (CRR) which brings together risk assessments produced by individual organisations into a coherent assessment for the Local Resilience Area.

### **Risk Assessment in Northern Ireland**

78. All Northern Ireland public service organisations shall carry out an assessment of the risks they face, taking note of the principles set out in this Chapter and in 'A Guide to Risk Assessment in Northern Ireland'. This risk assessment is not a one-off measurement but is part of a cycle of assessment and review (see 'A Guide to Risk Assessment in Northern Ireland':



[http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/guide\\_to\\_risk\\_assessment\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_january\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/guide_to_risk_assessment_in_northern_ireland_-_january_2010.pdf) ). A risk assessment should consider not only those threats and hazards for which the organisation has lead responsibility, but also those where the organisation would make a significant contribution to the response, or would support the lead organisation. The purpose of carrying out the risk assessment is to:

- Ensure that organisations have an accurate understanding of the risks that they face so that planning has a sound foundation and is proportionate to the risks.
- Provide a rational and defensible basis for the prioritisation of objectives and work programmes and the allocation of resources.
- Enable organisations to assess the adequacy of their plans and capabilities, highlight existing measures that are appropriate and allow gaps to be identified.
- Enable organisations to provide an accessible overview of the emergency preparedness context for Ministers, senior officials, stakeholder organisations and the public.

79. Where a number of organisations have an interest in a particular hazard or have information about the likelihood or impact of a hazard or threat, they should work together to produce an agreed risk assessment which they will all use. Organisations which are approached about contributing to a risk assessment should participate and provide relevant information, unless there is some over-riding reason for not doing so. Where a relevant risk assessment has already been made by one organisation, or group of organisations, other organisations may use that assessment in their own work, providing that they are satisfied that the assessment has been carried out in a systematic manner. All organisations shall co-operate with the PSNI and the MCA as those organisations discharge their statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 to carry out risk assessments.
80. At sub-regional and local levels, district councils should consider what role they can play in facilitating joint risk assessments and in co-ordinating the production of comprehensive risk frameworks to inform local planning and response. Other

organisations should co-operate with district councils and others in producing joint assessments of individual risks and in the production of comprehensive risk frameworks.

81. As at English regional level, the National Risk Register is applied to Northern Ireland through a Northern Ireland risk assessment process involving NI departments, emergency services, district councils and others. This process can also be applied at sub-regional level by the organisations which are involved in emergency planning and response.
  
82. 'A Guide to Risk Assessment in Northern Ireland' (see [http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/guide\\_to\\_risk\\_assessment\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_january\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/guide_to_risk_assessment_in_northern_ireland_-_january_2010.pdf)) sets out in detail the methodology which should be used by Northern Ireland organisations in carrying out their civil contingencies risk assessments.

## RISK MANAGEMENT GLOSSARY

Definitions in this glossary relate specifically to civil contingencies risk assessment. The terminology may be used in a broader or different way in other types of emergency.

<b>Capability</b>	A demonstrable capacity or ability to respond to and recover from a particular threat or hazard.
<b>Consequences</b>	Impact resulting from the occurrence of a particular hazard or threat, measured in terms of the numbers of lives lost, people injured, the scale of damage to property and the disruption to essential services and commodities.
<b>Damage</b>	Physical destruction, corruption of information, or loss of beneficial social phenomena (e.g. trust or affiliation).
<b>Hazard</b>	Accidental or naturally occurring (i.e., non-malicious) event or situation with the potential to cause death or physical or psychological harm, damage or losses to property, and/or disruption to the environment and/or to economic, social and political structures.
<b>Hazard assessment</b>	A component of the civil protection risk assessment process in which identified hazards are assessed for risk treatment.
<b>Hazard identification</b>	A component of the civil protection risk assessment process in which identified hazards are identified.
<b>Impact</b>	The scale of the consequences of a hazard, threat or emergency expressed in terms of a reduction in human welfare, damage to the environment and loss of security.

<b>Planning assumptions</b>	Descriptions of the types and scales of consequences for which organisations should be prepared to respond. These will be informed by the risk assessment process.
<b>Resilience</b>	Ability of the community, services, area or infrastructure to detect, prevent, and, if necessary to withstand, handle and recover from disruptive challenges.
<b>Risk</b>	Measure of the significance of a potential emergency in terms of its assessed likelihood and impact.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	A structured and auditable process of identifying potentially significant events, assessing their likelihood and impacts, and then combining these to provide an overall assessment of risk, as a basis for further decisions and action.
<b>Risk management</b>	All activities and structures directed towards the effective assessment and management of risks and their potential adverse impacts.
<b>Threat</b>	The intent and capacity to cause loss of life or create adverse consequences to human welfare (including property and the supply of essential services and commodities), the environment or security.
<b>Threat assessment</b>	A component of the civil protection risk assessment process in which identified threats are assessed for risk treatment.
<b>Vulnerability</b>	Susceptibility of individuals or community, services or infrastructure to damage or harm arising from an emergency or other incident.

## RISK MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES

**A Guide to Risk Assessment in Northern Ireland.** CCPB publication available on [http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/guide to risk assessment in northern ireland -  
\\_january 2010.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/guide_to_risk_assessment_in_northern_ireland_-_january_2010.pdf).

**Emergency Preparedness.** CCS publication available on <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience>.

**Risk Assessment** at national, regional and local level including the National Risk Register can be found at: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/risk-assessment>

**Orange Book: Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts.** HM Treasury, 2004. Available through [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/orange\\_book.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/orange_book.pdf).

**National Audit Office, Supporting Innovation: Managing Risks in Government Departments,** The Stationary Office, 2000:

[http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/9900/managing\\_risk\\_in\\_gov\\_depts.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/9900/managing_risk_in_gov_depts.aspx)

Other National Audit Office information available on [www.nao.org.uk](http://www.nao.org.uk).

**Identifying People Who Are Vulnerable in a Crisis -** Guidance for Emergency Planners and Responders, Civil Contingencies Secretariat – February 2008

[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/identifying-people-who-are-vulnerable-crisis-  
guidance-emergency-planners-and-respon](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/identifying-people-who-are-vulnerable-crisis-guidance-emergency-planners-and-respon)

**Emergency preparedness, Chapter 14 – ‘The role of the Voluntary Sector’:**

[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep\\_chap\\_14.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep_chap_14.pdf)

**Others**

**Emergency Management Australia - Approaches to Emergency Management, Manual 1.**

Available online at:

[http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/Publications\\_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries\\_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/Publications_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries)

**Emergency Management Australia – Emergency Risk Management, Applications Guide.**

**Manual 5.** Available online at:

[http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/Publications\\_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries\\_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/Publications_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries_AustralianEmergencyManualSeries)

## **CHAPTER 6 - CORE PRINCIPLE 4: PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES**

**All organisations shall develop and maintain civil contingencies plans and other preparations in relation to their functions so that they can deliver those functions for the purposes of preventing an emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects or taking any other action necessary in relation to it.**

83. All public service organisations in Northern Ireland are required to put in place civil contingencies arrangements which are appropriate to their functions. This means that they should be aware of how their normal functions may be affected by, or required to be exercised in, an emergency. An emergency will, by definition, require functions to be delivered in difficult circumstances and to an extent not normally experienced in everyday life. An emergency will also require functions to be delivered which are not part of the everyday work of organisations. Involvement in multi-agency co-ordination is an example where departments and other organisations have agreed to participate in special emergency arrangements and this has become part of the functions of those organisations. There are other situations where an organisation has agreed, for example through discussion in the CCG (NI) or (PSG), to undertake an emergency-specific function.

### **Capabilities**

84. In the context of civil contingencies, a capability is defined as 'A demonstrable capacity or ability to respond to and recover from a particular threat or hazard.' A capability includes 'hardware' such as personnel, equipment and supplies and 'software' such as training, plans, doctrine and the concept of operations.
85. Traditionally, public service organisations have delivered a capability level in emergencies that is determined by their normal functions. When an emergency occurs, this function-based capability is deployed to deal with the problems posed. If that capability is insufficient, the organisation will seek assistance, for example from neighbouring responder organisations, contractors or suppliers.

86. However, when a risk assessment is carried out, it will indicate what capability is needed to deal with the identified risk. That capability may be greater than what is available in functional terms, especially in the case of a catastrophic emergency. This risk-based capability for dealing with emergencies should be the basis for emergency preparedness. However, this does not necessarily mean that an organisation must obtain additional resources to deliver a new risk-based level of capability, although some organisations may choose, in the light of their risk assessment, to do so. For example, DHSSPS, the PSNI and the NIFRS have all purchased equipment and supplies to increase their capabilities in response to the risk of CBRN terrorism. In other cases organisations may make a judgement on what capability it is reasonable for them to have and make plans to fill any gap between that and their risk-based capability requirement through draw-down contracts, mutual aid etc.
87. Civil contingencies arrangements enable an organisation to deliver its capabilities in an emergency situation. These arrangements are summarised below.

### **Responsibilities of public service organisations**

88. Public service organisations in Northern Ireland should have a capability, the level of which is determined by risk assessment, to respond to the needs of the public in an emergency. An organisation should have plans and other arrangements which will enable it to prevent an emergency, to reduce, control or mitigate its effects or to take other actions in relation to specific outcomes of the emergency.

### Preventing an emergency

**All public service organisations shall have arrangements in place to deliver their functions so as to prevent an imminent emergency from happening.**

89. This does not refer to the background policy, legislative, regulatory and enforcement functions of organisations, many of which are designed to prevent injury, loss of life or damage to the environment. That said, where the civil



contingencies activities of an organisation show that risks can be reduced by such means, the relevant organisation should consider taking strategic action to implement improvements. Nor does this require organisations to prevent all emergencies or to undertake remedial works which might prevent a possible emergency at some future date (although that may be a logical next step to the risk assessment process in some cases).

90. In the context of this Framework, prevention means carrying out the functions of the organisation in such a way as to prevent an emergency which is imminent, or which might be predicted, from occurring at all. An everyday example would be where Roads Service becomes aware of road subsidence or damage to a bridge and closes that road or bridge to prevent an accident happening. It follows that in order to exploit opportunities to prevent imminent emergencies, organisations need to have arrangements for monitoring the environment in which they deliver their functions so that they pick up the early signs of a developing emergency.

#### Controlling, reducing or mitigating the effects of an emergency

**All public service organisations shall have appropriate arrangements to undertake their functions for the purpose of controlling an emergency and for reducing and mitigating the effects of an emergency.**

91. This should form the core of the civil contingencies activities of many organisations, and is normally discharged through the preparation of one or more emergency plans, and associated arrangements such as 'on-call' rotas.
92. A plan provides a framework for bringing **control** to the chaos that surrounds an emergency, for example by providing a framework for management and co-ordination, by establishing how information will flow and setting out agreed roles and responsibilities.
93. Emergency plans may also provide for taking actions which **reduce** the effects of the emergency by addressing the cause of the emergency and bringing the situation back to normality quickly and with the least possible consequences. This

could be achieved, for example, by fighting fires, locating and shutting off the source of a chemical release, containing the spread of disease through public health measures and managing river and lake water levels so as to minimise flooding.

94. In many cases it will not be possible to prevent an emergency happening or to reduce its effects sufficiently to prevent effects on human welfare or the environment. In acknowledgement of this, plans should also provide for organisations to exercise their functions so as to **mitigate** the effects of the emergency. Such plans may provide for direct interventions which protect people or the environment from the full impact of the emergency or help them to deal with it. This may be achieved, for example, by rescuing people from the scene, treating injuries, providing shelter and comfort and arranging help with clearing up afterwards.
95. In addition to mitigating the immediate effects of an emergency, many organisations will need to exercise their functions to mitigate the long-term effects of an emergency by providing for recovery and support of affected communities and environments. This is as important in an emergency as the immediate response, and organisations should have plans which recognise the need for early action to promote recovery, often while the immediate response is still going on.

Other actions in relation to an emergency.

**All public service organisations shall have arrangements to undertake their functions in relation to other aspects of an emergency response.**

96. One of the characteristics of large-scale emergencies is that they have secondary effects which will also require intervention. For example, a Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak may result in a large number of animals having to be culled. The resulting carcasses need to be disposed of, but any method of disposal will create some form of environmental hazard, with a potential knock-on effect on human health. Thus in addition to the animal health responses there is a need for environmental protection and public health responses. A flooding emergency may

require a large number of people to be evacuated out of flooded homes. This creates a need for shelter, food and welfare services to be provided for the evacuees while the flooding persists and for cleanup, public health and restoration services to be available afterwards to help the affected community return home.

97. The civil contingencies preparedness responsibilities of the public services extend to being prepared to deal with the secondary effects of emergencies where they affect the welfare of people or the environment. To do so, organisations will need to be thorough in identifying not only the direct but also the secondary effects of an emergency.

### **Practical preparedness**

98. Emergency preparedness is a systematic and ongoing process, preparing organisations for emergencies. It evolves as lessons are learnt and circumstances change. Preparedness is much more than just writing a plan.
99. It is usual to view emergency planning as part of a cycle, which involves both developing plans and maintaining and embedding them within the management culture of the organisation. The figure-of-eight diagram at Figure 5.1 (page 54, Chapter 5) in 'Emergency Preparedness' illustrates the steps in the cycle ([http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep\\_chap\\_05.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep_chap_05.pdf) <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/emergency-preparedness>).
100. Emergency planning should be carried out within the framework of Integrated Emergency Management as set out in Chapter 2 of 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland'.
101. The main activities in which public service organisations should engage in order to be prepared are set out below. Further guidance on these is available in 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland', [http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf), and 'Emergency Preparedness', <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/emergprepfinal.pdf>

## Anticipation / Assessment

**All public service organisations shall have arrangements and structures in place to assess the potential for emergencies to occur in the short-to medium terms and to detect when an emergency is imminent or has occurred.**

102. Having arrangements to assess the environment in which an organisation operates for potential emergencies has two advantages. Firstly, an organisation can track long-to-medium term changes in its operating environment and adjust its state of preparedness and the capability which it maintains for dealing with emergencies to meet new challenges or an increased risk profile of an existing hazard. This is why public health organisations at International, United Kingdom and Northern Ireland level track the potential for epidemics such as an influenza pandemic or an outbreak of SARS. Secondly, an ability to identify an imminent emergency opens up the possibility of preventing it from happening, as set out above. In many cases, a little resource applied at the right time can result in a huge saving in the time, money and staff needed to respond to the emergency once it has happened.
103. Public service organisations are not well structured to be proactive and quick acting. They are constrained by statutory duties, regulatory regimes and the need to ensure proper use of public funds. Nevertheless foresight, assessment and monitoring are inherent in not just good civil contingencies practice but in good performance management generally and in the business risk management which is required of all organisations.
104. Monitoring systems should be able to detect and assess both sudden-onset emergencies (eg transport accidents, explosions, snow-falls etc) and slow-building emergencies (eg animal and human disease epidemics, cumulative effects of prolonged severe weather, climate change or increases in workload leading to service delivery failures) which have potential implications for an organisation. Systems should also be capable of assessing response needs in a highly dynamic situation, such as the early stages of an emergency so that the organisation can adjust its response accordingly.

## Planning

**All relevant public service organisations shall have at least a generic plan for emergencies, plus any specific plans which the functions of the organisation in an emergency require.**

105. An emergency plan is not simply a matter of having a written document which sits on a shelf and is taken down every few months for the contact list to be updated. Rather, it is a dynamic system of arrangements, systems and agreements designed to enable an organisation to get its emergency response going and to provide a management framework for ensuring an effective and co-ordinated response. There will normally be one comprehensive written record of arrangements, commonly referred to as “The Plan”, supported as necessary by subordinate documents such as action cards, contact lists, resource registers and summaries.
106. Guidance on the making of emergency plans is available from the CCPB publications, ‘A Guide to Plan Preparation’ and ‘A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland’ ([http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf)) and from the Civil Contingencies Secretariat document ‘Emergency Preparedness’ (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/emergprepfinal.pdf>)
107. All Northern Ireland public service organisations should have a generic plan, sometimes known as a Major Emergency Response Plan or Major Incident Plan, which sets out the organisation’s arrangements for assessment, for identifying an imminent or actual emergency, for activating the organisation’s planned response, for managing the response and for co-ordinating with other organisations involved in the response.
108. In addition to a generic plan, an organisation may need to make specific plans for particular aspects of its functions or for particular risks. More information on generic and specific plans is available in the publications listed above.

109. The preparation of plans is not a one-off activity. A plan is a living document which will need to change in response to changes in the organisation, developments in the environment in which the organisation operates and experience of exercises, actual emergencies or near misses. Planning is therefore a cyclical activity involving review, consultation, amendment and re-publication. The length of the review cycle will depend on the type of the plan and how dynamic the environment is in which it is to operate.

## Training

**All public service organisations shall ensure that staff are adequately trained to carry out the functions which will be expected of them in an emergency.**

110. A plan is not in itself sufficient to ensure that an organisation will be able to make an effective response to an emergency. The staff who will implement the response need to be aware of their part in the response, how that fits with the role of other players and how management and co-ordination mechanisms will work. In many cases, staff will have a response role which is related to their everyday work and they will adapt easily to the different circumstances of an emergency. However, there will be some tasks, such as log keeping, emergency management or co-ordination activities, which do not have a direct everyday equivalent. It is important therefore, that staff have adequate training for the roles assigned to them in emergency response plans, especially where they have to perform functions which are different from their everyday ones. In addition, all staff in an organisation should be aware of the role of the organisation in an emergency and of the existence and outline of the generic plan and any relevant specific plan.
111. Staff training needs for emergency response should be an integral part of an individual's Personal Development Plan or equivalent and of the organisations' Training Needs Analysis. Training should not just be delivered in formal settings, but should be included in induction arrangements, and informal training such as job shadowing and skills sharing.

112. Training may take a number of forms and be sourced from a range of providers. In many cases in-house resources and expertise will be the best source, especially for less formal, experience-based training. More formal training courses are available from both public sector and private sector providers and from professional bodies and societies.
113. All opportunities should be taken for staff to be trained alongside their counterparts in other organisations, especially where organisations would be expected to work closely together in response to an emergency. This might involve, for example, inviting other organisations to participate in training, or sending joint teams to training.

### Validation

**All public service organisations shall ensure that their plans are validated to ensure that:**

- **they will be capable of delivering the response, and**
- **the response delivered by the plans will be adequate to address the emergency situation.**

114. Validation will normally follow training, as it is important that it is the plan which is being tested, not the competence of staff. Validation can be achieved in a number of ways, the most common of which is through an exercise or a programme of exercises. Nevertheless, exercises give staff the opportunity to experience some of the stresses of an emergency situation which it is not possible to reproduce in other training. Therefore exercises should as far as possible be played with the staff who would undertake the response in a real emergency. The participation of senior staff in exercises is particularly important. Not only does it demonstrate the commitment of top management and the importance which they place on civil contingencies activities, but it provides an opportunity for them to validate the arrangements for their role. Whenever possible, exercises should be carried out on a multi-agency basis, so as to test the interfaces between organisations and ensure that arrangements mesh seamlessly.



115. Lessons learnt from exercises should be captured by a post-exercise debrief and an action plan developed for review and amendment of plans in the light of experience. Where a multi-agency exercise has been held, there should be a multi-agency debrief in addition to any internal organisational debrief.
116. Guidance on validation can be found in the CCPB document 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland' ([http://www.ofmdfmini.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmini.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf)) and in the CCS publications 'Emergency Preparedness' and 'Exercise Planner's Guide' (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience>)

### **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, poverty and social inclusion**

**In developing their preparedness, all organisations shall ensure that their arrangements are compliant with the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and with other statutory requirements and policy objectives.**

117. The guidance document 'Emergency Preparedness' requires responders under Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to have regard to the needs of vulnerable people, who would be less able to help themselves in the circumstances of an emergency than other, more self-reliant people.
118. In Northern Ireland, unlike in GB, all public authorities are required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine specified groups of people, when carrying out their functions.
119. In general, emergencies are not discriminatory in terms of where and when they happen or who they affect. However, different Section 75 groups may experience the emergency and the public service response to that emergency in different ways. For example, facilities provided for evacuees may not be accessible to disabled people, or food provided may not be compatible with the cultural practices or religious beliefs of some evacuees.



120. In developing strategies for preventing, controlling, reducing or mitigating the effects of an emergency, or for taking other actions in relation to it, organisations should be aware of the needs of Section 75 groups and should make appropriate arrangements within their plans. Where appropriate, consultation should include groups likely to have an interest. Organisations should take note of their own equality scheme in developing their civil contingencies strategy. Where indicated by the Equality Scheme, emergency plans and other civil contingencies arrangements should be screened for possible Section 75 discrimination or unequal treatment and an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) should be prepared where necessary.
121. Again, emergencies do not normally target people on low incomes or who are socially excluded. However, these people may be less able to respond to emergencies or to deal with their consequences; for example low-income households may not have adequate insurance or socially excluded people may not have access to information and advice in an appropriate and accessible format. The potential need to make arrangements to meet the needs of such people when they are involved in emergencies should be taken into account by public service organisations when they are developing plans and responses.
122. In an emergency situation, when time is limited and resources stretched, it may be necessary to prioritise actions which provide the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people, and it will not always be possible to give the level of consideration to Section 75 and other groups as would be the case in delivering day-to-day services. Nevertheless, by identifying and taking account of possible needs at the planning stage it should be possible to improve the experiences of these people. For example, when possible rest centres are being pre-identified, disabled access can be considered. Similarly, basic information on the response to known risks, such as information on actions to take if tap water is not safe to drink, can be pre-prepared in a number of languages.

## Voluntary organisations

123. Not all the resources necessary for preparing for and responding to emergencies lie within the public sector. The voluntary and not-for-profit sectors have resources and skills which could contribute to many aspects of emergency response and recovery. As these skills and resources are normally community-based, they are particularly useful in helping local communities during and in the aftermath of an emergency.
124. Some voluntary organisations are already an integral part of emergency response plans, usually through associations with the emergency services. These include the RNLI, the mountain search and rescue teams and the voluntary first aid societies, such as St John Ambulance. Others are not normally involved in day-to-day incidents but would be able to contribute to the response to an emergency. For example, charity shops may be able to provide clean, dry clothing for people who have got wet during severe weather.
125. In developing their emergency preparedness (and their business continuity arrangements), Northern Ireland public service organisations should take account of the resources which may be available from the voluntary and not-for-profit sectors and should engage with them at the planning stage.

## PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

**A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland.** CCPB publication, available from

[http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf).

**Northern Ireland Standards in Civil Protection.** CCPB publication, available from

<http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/standardsincivilprotection.pdf>.

**A Guide to Plan Preparation.** CCPB publication, available from

<http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/planpreparation.pdf>.

**Emergency Preparedness.** CCS publication, available from

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/emergprepfinal.pdf>.

**The Lead Government Department and its Role – Guidance and Best Practice.** CCS

document available from <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lead-government-departments-role.pdf>.

**The Capabilities Programme website:**

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/capabilities-programme> - Information on the Whitehall Capabilities Programme, including a list of the workstreams.

**LESLP Major Incident Procedures Manual.** Procedures manual for emergency planning and response in London developed by the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP) and the Metropolitan Police Service

([http://www.leslp.gov.uk/docs/Major\\_incident\\_procedure\\_manual\\_7th\\_ed.pdf](http://www.leslp.gov.uk/docs/Major_incident_procedure_manual_7th_ed.pdf)). Many of the principles apply elsewhere.

**Emergency Planning Society website,** <http://the-eps.org/>. Provides information on society meetings (including meetings of the Northern Ireland Branch) publications and events.

**Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.** Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. Available from Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Equality House, 7 - 9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP or go to <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/PracticalGuidanceEQIA0205.pdf>.

### Others

**Federal Emergency Management Agency, USA preparedness website**

<http://www.fema.gov/prepared/index.shtm>. Access to a range of advice and publications on preparedness.

**Australian Emergency Manual Series (AEMS).** Advice and Guidance from Emergency Management Australia, available through

[http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian\\_Emergency\\_Manual\\_Series](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian_Emergency_Manual_Series)

## **CHAPTER 7 - CORE PRINCIPLE 5: CONSULTATION, COMMUNICATION AND CO-ORDINATION**

**In developing and maintaining their civil contingencies arrangements, organisations shall consult, communicate and co-ordinate with other organisations and shall participate as appropriate in regional, sub-regional and local co-ordination forums. All Northern Ireland public service organisations shall communicate and co-operate with the PSNI, MCA and telecommunications providers in the discharge of those organisations' duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.**

126. Consultation, communication and co-ordination are essential to all aspects of civil contingencies preparedness. Risk assessments need to draw from a wide range of information sources and should be discussed and agreed among stakeholder organisations. Preparedness must be co-ordinated within organisations, between organisations in the same sector (for example a department and its associated boards, trusts and NDPBs) and between organisations across the public and private sectors with inputs to the same response. Response and recovery are only effective when the public services deliver their functions in a seamless manner - which requires co-operation and co-ordination. Communications with the public, either on routine civil contingencies matters or in an emergency situation must deliver a consistent message.
127. This Chapter deals primarily with consultation, communication and co-ordination in relation to preparedness, but the principles are the same for all aspects of civil contingencies activities. Supplementary information on working together is included in individual chapters.

### **Consultation**

**Civil contingencies arrangements of public service organisations shall include wide consultation with stakeholders, both internally and externally.**

128. Good practice on policy development generally applies to developing civil contingencies policies and plans and should be followed as for any other activity of

the organisation. Effective consultation is about more than circulating written copies of a document to an anonymous contact name in another organisation and asking for comments. Effective means of consulting on civil contingencies arrangements include:

- Bilateral meetings to explore matters of mutual interest.
- Multi-agency meetings, focussed on a particular issue or a certain set of arrangements.
- Seminar-style presentations to inform stakeholders and get feedback from them.
- Questionnaires, backed up by sufficient information to ensure that organisations understand what is being asked for and why.
- Presentations at regular inter-agency meetings such as the (CCG (NI)).
- A Working Group which includes representatives of other business areas and/or other organisations which would be involved in the response.
- A Project Management Group or Steering Group which includes representatives of other business areas and/or other organisations as appropriate.

129. Organisations should consult on all stages of their civil contingencies preparedness with those organisations which it knows to be stakeholders in any given issue. In addition, at certain critical stages it may be advantageous to conduct a wider consultation exercise, so as to identify any unexpected stakeholders. For example when making an impact assessment, there may be “knock on” effects of an emergency which are not immediately identifiable by the lead organisation.

130. Inter agency forums, such as the CCG (NI) are useful vehicles at NI Regional level for the lead organisation to use to explain what it is doing in relation to a potential emergency and to gather information on the impacts on a wide range of organisations. Local and sub-regional inter-agency forums set up by district councils are also useful means of consulting effectively at those levels.

## Communication

**All public service organisations shall ensure that their civil contingencies activities include effective communication with other organisations with which they will need to work in an emergency.**

131. Effective communication between organisations must take place at all stages of the civil contingencies processes.
132. In preparing for emergencies, an organisation must make sure that it has made proper contacts and has consulted fully with stakeholders internally and externally. Effective communication at the planning stage should ensure that there are no surprises about responses, resources or procedures during an emergency. This means that information relevant to a potential emergency needs to be shared between the organisations involved.
133. At least as important as formal communication between organisations is the informal communication between individuals that happens at meetings, training events and exercises. Building personal relationships at the preparedness stage results in more effective communication then and during a response phase. For this reason, opportunities to attend meetings, events and exercises should be an integral part of the personal development plans of not just emergency planners and managers but of all those who would have to work with internal and external stakeholders during an emergency.
134. An emergency within the definition in **Chapter 2** will not normally require a response by only one organisation. Any large-scale emergency is likely to have secondary impacts as well as the most obvious direct ones, and to involve a significant number of organisations. All of this means that in any emergency situation an effective response will be dependent on organisations working together effectively under very difficult conditions.
135. An invariable outcome of exercises and actual incident debriefs is that communication between responders was inadequate. There are two aspects to communications which can create problems in emergencies:

- The physical means of communication may be disrupted. Public service radio systems are currently organisation-specific, although this will change over the next few years, for the emergency services at least, as a new radio system is introduced. Telephone land lines are prone to overload and disruption, as are mobile networks, with the additional problems of poor reception in some areas.
- Information may not be passed to the right person, at the right time or in the right format. In any emergency, accurate information is hard to get, and there always seem to be more pressing tasks than gathering and communicating information. Nevertheless, unless people know what the problems are and what resources and actions are needed, the response will be inadequate.

136. It is important that planning for both these aspects of communication is an integral part of civil contingencies preparedness. Plans may, for example, include checklists of information which first responders should gather and communicate back to their management, contact lists for all the organisations likely to be involved in a response, arrangements for dedicated phone lines for communications between partner organisations and arrangements for supplementing communications resources.

137. Not all information that organisations hold is suitable for open sharing. Some information will have security implications and some will relate to commercial sensitivities. Whilst the general principle is that essential information should be shared freely, organisations will need to make judgements about what they share, the format they use and the security classification they apply. Those organisations which receive sensitive information in the context of civil contingencies activities must ensure that they are able to store and handle that information appropriately. Information shared for civil contingencies purposes should not be used for other purposes and should be destroyed or returned to the originator when no longer required. In sharing, storing and using information, organisations should have regard to relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.



## Co-ordination

**All public service organisations shall co-ordinate their planning with that of other organisations with related functions. Where appropriate, organisations shall engage in joint planning to ensure an effective and seamless response to emergencies.**

138. The public does not care who provides a response to an emergency, only that the public services respond to the needs of the occasion in a timely and effective manner. In order to do so, it is important that planning and response are co-ordinated across all the agencies, public and private sector, which would respond to a given event of outcome. This co-ordination should be achieved through consultation and communication at the planning stages and through a multi-agency approach to training and validation.
139. Where the co-operation required between organisations is very close, they should consider developing a joint or multi-agency plan, which all the organisations involved would contribute to and use. The creation of such a joint plan would normally fall to the lead organisation for the plan, but where there is no single lead organisation a joint working group may be formed. At local and sub-regional level, such a joint group may be facilitated by an emergency service or the district council, depending on the response in question.

## Participating in co-ordination forums

**All public service organisations shall participate in, and contribute to, UK, Regional, Sub-regional and/or Local co-ordination forums as appropriate to their functions and the geographical basis on which they are organised.**

140. There are a range of national forums dealing with emergency planning. There is a UK Ministerial committee which gives overall direction to civil contingencies policy and activities in the United Kingdom, on which Northern Ireland is represented. Below that, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) facilitates a number of Official level committees, steering groups and working groups. Northern Ireland

departments are usually represented by CCPB on those groups which deal with cross cutting issues. Both the CCS and other Whitehall departments also facilitate UK-level co-ordination of specific issues. For example the Department of Health organises official level meetings with the devolved administrations to consider the health service response to such things as disease epidemics. In such cases, Northern Ireland is normally represented by the lead department for the particular subject matter of the group. Northern Ireland departments should monitor activity in their policy sectors at UK level, for example work being undertaken as part of the Capabilities Programme, and should be prepared to contribute to UK-level discussions and planning as appropriate.

141. At the Northern Ireland regional level, the senior inter agency forum is PSG, which would meet during or in anticipation of a serious emergency as the Crisis Management Group. For day to day matters, and for those emergencies which do not require the direct participation of Permanent Secretaries, there is CCG (NI), which draws its membership from the emergency services, the NI departments, district councils and other key organisations. Further information on these NI regional forums is in 'A Guide to Emergency Planning arrangements in NI', [http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf).
142. Inter agency forums at sub-regional and local levels are being developed by district councils, as a focus for locally-oriented co-ordination of preparedness. All organisations should co-operate with district councils in these groups and should attend inter-agency meetings when invited. Some local and sub-regional organisations have specific co-ordination responsibilities.
143. In addition to these standing forums, subject or function specific groups may be established to discuss and co-ordinate policy, plans or other arrangements. Such groups would normally report to one of the standing groups or to a steering committee. All organisations should be willing to contribute to such groups, and to take the lead where appropriate.

## **Co-operation and information sharing with the PSNI, MCA and telecommunications providers**

**All Northern Ireland public service organisations shall co-operate and communicate with the PSNI, MCA and telecommunications providers in the discharge of those organisations' duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.**

144. The PSNI, MCA and, to a lesser extent, telecommunications operators have statutory duties under Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) to prepare risk assessments, to maintain arrangements to prevent emergencies and to reduce, control or mitigate their effects and to take other actions in respect of emergencies. They are also required to maintain arrangements to communicate with the public on emergencies for which they are the lead organisation. These duties are set out in detail in the Act, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and the guidance document 'Emergency Preparedness' (all available from <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience>).
145. These organisations cannot effectively discharge their statutory duties without co-operation from Northern Ireland public service organisations. Therefore all organisations shall co-operate with the PSNI and MCA in the preparation and maintenance of risk assessments and emergency plans. They shall also share information and co-operate as necessary with the PSNI, the MCA and telecommunications operators to enable them to discharge their other duties under the Act, including communication with the public.
146. The regulations made under the CCA require the PSNI, MCA and telecommunications operators to have regard to the civil contingencies arrangements of Northern Ireland organisations in discharging their duties under the Act.
147. In addition to the organisations mentioned above, there are a number of other organisations which operate in Northern Ireland but are organised on a UK-wide basis and / or deal with non-devolved matters. These include the Northern Ireland Office and the Meteorological Office. Northern Ireland public service organisations should consult and co-operate with such organisations as necessary.

## Relationships and co-operation outside Northern Ireland

148. Emergencies do not respect political and geographical boundaries, so civil protection arrangements should take account of UK, North-South and EU dimensions. Northern Ireland organisations should ensure that they have adequate arrangements for communicating and co-operating across boundaries. In the case of relationships within the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland organisations should be aware of the civil contingencies arrangements in place in organisations in England, Scotland and Wales with similar policy or service delivery roles and should regularly exchange information with them. In respect of the Republic of Ireland, communication is important not only at service delivery level in border areas but also at a corporate level. It is therefore expected that NI departments and other public sector bodies for which they are responsible will have formal and informal civil contingencies liaison arrangements in place as necessary with counterpart departments and agencies in the Republic of Ireland. If there are areas where it proves difficult to put these arrangements in place, CCPB in Northern Ireland and the Office of Emergency Planning in the Republic of Ireland will help to facilitate the development of relationships.
149. Relationships with the European Union in relation to civil contingencies are normally mediated by the Cabinet Office. Some NI organisations have already taken part in EU-sponsored activities and projects, eg the emergency services have participated in the Exchange of Experts scheme and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) are participating in the EU-funded Emergency Response to Oil Chemicals and Inert Pollution from Shipping (EROCIPS) project. Organisations should be aware of EU developments in their own fields, such as the environment or agriculture, which may have implications for civil contingencies arrangements.

## CONSULTATION, COMMUNICATION AND CO-ORDINATION PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

**A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland.** CCPB publication, available from

[http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf).

**Northern Ireland Standards in Civil Protection.** CCPB publication, available from

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/standardsincivilprotection.pdf>.

**A Guide to Plan Preparation.** CCPB publication, available from

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/planpreparation.pdf>.

**The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and associated Regulations,** available from

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/civil-contingencies-act>.

**Emergency Preparedness.** CCS publication, available from

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-preparedness>.

**The Lead Government Department and its Role – Guidance and Best Practice.** CCS

document available from <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lead-government-departments-role.pdf>.

**Emergency Planning Society website,** <http://the-eps.org/>. Provides information on society meetings (including meetings of the Northern Ireland Branch) publications and events.

### Others

**Federal Emergency Management Agency, USA preparedness website**

<http://www.fema.gov/prepared/index.shtm>. Access to a range of advice and publications on preparedness.



**Australian Emergency Manual Series (AEMS).** Advice and Guidance from Emergency Management Australia, available through

[http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian\\_Emergency\\_Manual\\_Series](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian_Emergency_Manual_Series)

## **CHAPTER 8 - CORE PRINCIPLE 6: NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANISATIONS**

**Northern Ireland Departments shall, as far as they are able within statutory frameworks, require their associated organisations, such as Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), Boards, Trusts or District Councils, to develop their own civil contingencies arrangements. They shall provide any appropriate statutory measures and/or sector-specific guidance to enable them to do so. Where departments have policy responsibility for essential services which are primarily delivered by the private sector, they shall work with their private sector partners to promote resilience and shall make appropriate provision in legislation, licences, service level agreements etc for civil contingencies activities. Departments and other organisations shall also take account of expertise and resources available from relevant voluntary and not-for-profit organisations when undertaking civil continuities activities.**

### **Public service organisations**

150. Public Service organisations in Northern Ireland other than Northern Ireland departments are governed by a wide range of legislation which is prescriptive to varying degrees as to the responsibilities and duties of individual organisations. It is recognised that the relationship between departments and their associated bodies varies greatly and the ability of departments to influence those organisations may be constrained by statutory and governance arrangements. Therefore the extent to which departments can require compliance with the framework will vary and the process is likely to be an ongoing one over a number of years. Nevertheless, Departments should take opportunities when new organisations are being set up or when legislation for existing organisations is being amended to consider making appropriate provision for civil contingencies activities. The extent to which non-departmental organisations should undertake civil contingencies activities will vary greatly in relation to their functions and the risks they face. The

requirements placed on organisations by departments should be proportionate to need.

151. To a large extent, business continuity management and emergency preparedness are integral to the effective function of all organisations, and there should not be any need for special measures to be taken to empower non-departmental organisations to undertake the actions set out in the Framework. However, departments can take steps to ensure that their associated organisations adhere to this Framework, and may need to make statutory provision in some cases. Steps which departments could take include:

- Write to Chief Executives, Chairmen, Directors and Chief Operating Officers as appropriate of associated / funded / sponsored public service organisations to confirm the department's commitment to adhering to the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework and encourage non-departmental organisations to adhere to the Framework.
- Issue guidance, regulations or directions, where this is provided for within legislation and business agreements. For example, DHSSPS has already issued Emergency Planning Functions Directions under provisions in the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972.
- Provide assurance that money spent on civil contingencies activities within the context of this Framework will be acceptable within the organisation's audit regime. If necessary the department should consider making adjustments to the legislation or other principles governing the funding and audit regime of an organisation. Departments should give appropriate consideration to funding bids from associated organisations.
- Consider whether it would be desirable to make new legislation or amend existing legislation governing the functions of an organisation, where this is



necessary to enable the organisation to adopt this Framework. It is recognised that it may not be an effective use of resources to make or amend legislation for this purpose only and that it may be necessary to wait until a suitable legislative opportunity is available. In the interim, departments and their associated organisations should agree in principle that the organisations should be able to undertake civil contingencies activities in line with this Framework. For example, DOE Local Government Division has made Local Government legislation which, among other provisions, permits district councils to engage in emergency planning activities.

- Ensure that provision is made when new organisations are being set up, or the constitutions of existing organisations reviewed, for civil contingencies responsibilities in line with this Framework to be included.

### **Private sector organisations**

152. Northern Ireland departments often have relationships with private-sector organisations. Examples would be:

- Departments may have policy and regulatory functions in relation to some services which are delivered by the private sector, especially utilities such as electricity and gas.
- Departments may depend on private sector contractors to deliver internal services such as catering and IT support or to implement departmental schemes such as road building and pipe laying.
- Departments or associated bodies may have financing agreements with private sector companies for the supply and maintenance of office accommodation, schools and other infrastructure elements.

- Departments may appoint some or all of the Management Boards of Government Owned Companies or other bodies which operate as commercial companies.
153. Many private sector organisations will have their own Business Continuity Management and emergency planning programmes, particularly the utilities. Departments should make sure that they are aware of, and appropriately included in, the plans and arrangements of their private sector partners. Departments should also ensure that they include private sector partners in preparing their own emergency plans. When licences or contracts are being set up or reviewed, appropriate provisions for civil contingencies activities should be included. This is particularly important when there is a significant change, such as privatisation or the involvement of new licence holders in the utility sector. In these cases the licensing departments should ensure that good practice in civil contingencies in the relevant sector is built into licences, operating agreements and legislation.
154. The utilities, such as energy, communications, water and transport, have a particularly important role to play in emergency planning and response. Public Service organisations which have policy responsibility for these sectors, or which have significant relationships with them, should ensure that they develop good working relationships with the relevant companies.

### **Voluntary and not-for-profit organisations**

155. Northern Ireland has a well-developed voluntary and not-for-profit sector, and many departments and other service providers work in partnership with these organisations to deliver services. For example, the housing associations have a central role to play in the creation and management of social housing, in association with the NI Housing Executive. Voluntary and not-for-profit organisations are especially active in the areas of social welfare (including first aid) and the environment, both of which are key to the definition of an emergency. It follows that these organisations are potentially a useful resource in emergencies for

public service organisations delivering services in those areas. However, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations may not have the skills or organisational structures which enable them to contribute in a way which is consistent with the plans of the statutory bodies. There may therefore be a need for public service organisations to work with associated voluntary and not-for-profit organisations to develop their capacity and expertise in civil contingencies responses.

156. In preparing for and responding to emergencies, departments and other public service organisations should identify voluntary and not-for-profit organisations which have relevant expertise and resources and should work with them to develop integrated arrangements which make best use of that expertise and resources. Where voluntary and not-for-profit organisations are included in the plans of other organisations, they should ensure that they are able to deliver the agreed response or resources and that staff and volunteers have appropriate specialist qualifications (for example in first aid), safety training and personal protective equipment.

## CHAPTER 9 - CORE PRINCIPLE 7: RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

All relevant organisations shall deliver, as far as is possible in the circumstances, their functions in response to emergencies and disruptions and shall participate in co-ordination arrangements for emergency response at strategic, tactical and operational levels as appropriate.

157. Guidance on the principles of emergency response and frameworks for command, control and co-ordination are contained in:

- Major incident procedures, standard operating procedures, operational orders and sector-specific good practice guidance. These are normally produced by individual organisations, but some national groups, for example the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) issue good practice guidance, and some departments issue guidance for organisations in their sector, for example the Department of Health issues guidance to the health sector in England and Wales.
- 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland', ([http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf)) issued by CCPB.
- 'Emergency Response and Recovery', (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-response-and-recovery>) guidance issued by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat.

158. All organisations should be familiar with any organisational or sector-specific guidance and frameworks relevant to them and with the main guidance documents, especially the two listed above.

159. When an emergency occurs, a public service organisation shall be able, where possible and appropriate, to:

- Detect that an emergency is about to occur, is occurring or has occurred.

- Assess the outcomes, or potential outcomes, of that emergency and decide whether or not it needs to activate emergency arrangements either in direct response or in support of another responder.
- If emergency arrangements are to be activated, implement callout and alert arrangements to deploy the appropriate resources at the right time and inform everyone who needs to know that the deployment has been made.
- Co-ordinate and manage its own response at an appropriate level.
- Co-ordinate the response of the organisation with that of other responders, and engage with others in crisis management mechanisms at operational, tactical and strategic levels as appropriate.
- Monitor the emergency and the response, assess effectiveness, anticipate any additional outcomes and adjust the response as necessary.
- Make a planned and managed exit from response and recovery activities at an appropriate time.

160. For any given emergency, not all organisations will be involved in all of these processes. However, all should have arrangements to permit them to undertake at least the first two steps.

### **Detecting an emergency**

161. Detecting an emergency requires organisations to have monitoring systems in place. This is covered in **Chapter 6: 'Planning and Preparing for Emergencies'**.

### **Deciding to deploy**

**A public service organisation shall be able to assess the outcomes, or potential outcomes, of an emergency and decide whether or not it needs to activate emergency arrangements either in direct response or in support of another responder.**

162. An organisation will need to activate emergency arrangements and deploy resources if a given situation requires it to exercise its functions (see **Chapter 6**) and the situation requires it to change normal day-to day deployments or operations (see the definition of 'emergency' in **Chapter 2**). The generic plans made by an organisation should include some indication of emergency outcomes (people injured, people evacuated, property damaged, roads blocked etc) which would require the organisation to deploy resources in response. Specific plans enable an organisation to identify much more precisely the outcomes from particular types of incident and the response they need to make. However, not all of the outcomes of any particular emergency can be accurately predicted in advance, so all organisations should have additional arrangements which will enable them to identify unexpected outcomes of emergencies and respond to them as necessary.
163. Not all public service organisations have direct roles in responding to emergencies. Some will have support functions for those who do deliver the direct response, for example providing staff, supplies, welfare support to responders, or financial services. These organisations should also be able to identify that they have a role to play, even if that role may only be necessary if the emergency is of a particular scale or where support will be required for the recovery process rather than for the direct response.
164. A decision to activate emergency arrangements would normally be taken by a nominated senior manager, with defined succession arrangements if that person is in leave or otherwise unavailable (although there should be some flexibility in urgent cases).
165. If an organisation does need to deploy resources, it should activate its emergency plans at the first possible opportunity. There is a temptation to "wait and see how things develop", but it is far better to put people and equipment on standby or to deploy resources early and then have to stand them down than to have to try to

“play catch-up” later. By taking a proactive approach an organisation should be able to deliver its functions for the purpose of preventing the emergency, as well as for reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects, or taking other action in connection with it. An early, decisive response may be able to prevent a minor incident from escalating, for example by isolating a farm which has had an outbreak of a contagious animal disease or by identifying a source of pollution.

166. Not to deploy resources should be a positive decision, and not the default option.

### **Callout and deployment**

**If emergency arrangements are to be activated, public service organisations shall be able to implement callout and alert arrangements to deploy the appropriate resources at the right time and to inform everyone who needs to know that the deployment has been made.**

167. Effective deployment, especially in the immediate response phase requires effective preparedness. Organisations must have arrangements to alert and deploy staff and to access equipment and supplies within the timescale required for their response. For some organisations this may mean an immediate response, with the maximum possible resources needing to be deployed either before an emergency has occurred (where it is possible to foresee it) or within the first few hours after the start of the emergency. Most non-emergency service organisations, especially departments, find that their response is required not within minutes but hours, days or months after the emergency. The timescale on which resources will need to be deployed should have been identified at the planning stage, and appropriate arrangements made. If this has not happened, deciding what resources need to be deployed and when, and making arrangements for this to happen should be a priority once an emergency has been detected.

168. Once staff have been deployed, the organisation must make arrangements for their health and safety, including providing breaks, managing working hours, providing proper protective equipment and ensuring access to debriefing and counselling services. Equipment and supplies should be monitored and replaced as required.
169. Other responders need to know who else is responding, when and with what resources. Alert procedures should include informing other relevant organisations about deployment arrangements. In particular, where there is a pre-identified lead organisation, it should be informed of any other organisation which is deploying staff and resources. This information flow about deployment should continue throughout the response, and when staff or other resources are stood down, all the organisations which were informed of the deployment in the first place should be informed of the stand down (see below).

### **Internal Co-ordination and management**

**Organisations shall co-ordinate and manage their own response at an appropriate level.**

170. Not all business units in an organisation will be equally involved in the response to an emergency. It may be that only one business area is directly involved or the emergency may affect a geographically limited area. Other business units or geographical areas will, however, be involved in indirect ways, including supporting other parts of the organisation, supporting Ministers and senior officials, and liaising with the media. It is important that this internal activity is co-ordinated at organisational level so as to ensure effective use of resources, to ensure that front-line responders are adequately supported and to provide senior management with a complete picture of the organisation's activities.
171. All organisations should therefore have their own emergency management machinery to provide the necessary level of intra-organisational co-ordination. This



mechanism should be included in an organisation's generic emergency plan and should be activated as soon as resources are deployed in response to an emergency (including the deployment of resources in response to the indirect effects of an emergency). Arrangements should provide for co-ordination to be at a level consistent with the emergency response which is being made. While day to day responses to events may be co-ordinated at operational level, an event which constitutes an emergency within the definition in **Chapter 2** will normally require co-ordination at tactical level. In addition, large emergencies will require co-ordination and management at strategic level. Strategic co-ordination and management should involve senior officers of a grade appropriate to the scope of the emergency. In emergencies with widespread effects or which have caused death or injury, it would be expected that Chief Executives / Permanent Secretaries and Ministers would be involved.

## **External co-ordination and management**

**An organisation shall co-ordinate its response with that of other responders, and engage with others in crisis management mechanisms at operational, tactical and strategic levels as appropriate.**

172. As well as co-ordinating and managing its own response, an organisation engaged in the response to an emergency (even an indirect response) should ensure that it has arrangements for co-ordination of its efforts with those of other responders and that it participates in central management mechanisms. If it is the lead organisation for that emergency, it should manage co-ordination at the appropriate level, or consider whether it is necessary to invoke central strategic management arrangements. Further information on lead departments and the use of central strategic crisis management is available in 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland' ([http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland - refreshed september 2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf)).

173. An emergency within the definition in **Chapter 2** will normally need to be co-ordinated at least at operational and tactical levels. In any emergency affecting a large part of Northern Ireland or likely to cause large numbers of casualties or deaths, an early decision on activating strategic management arrangements should be taken. It is easier to stand down these mechanisms should the situation not be as bad as anticipated than to try to establish them when the emergency is already well established.

### **Monitoring and adjusting the response**

**An organisation shall monitor the emergency and the response, assess effectiveness, anticipate any additional outcomes and adjust the response as necessary.**

174. Many emergency plans, especially generic plans, focus on alert and deployment processes. This is necessary because it is the early response which is most important and decisive action in the initial stages of an emergency can influence the future course of the event. However, organisations should also have arrangements to continue to monitor the progress of an emergency, even one in which they believe they have no direct involvement. This will allow an organisation to identify if the response it is making is effective, to match resources to needs and to make any necessary adjustments to its deployment. Continued monitoring will also pick up any unexpected outcomes or indirect effects of the emergency to which the organisation needs to make a response.

### **Exit Strategies**

**An organisation shall make a planned and managed exit from response and recovery activities at an appropriate time.**

175. Just as an organisation should have systems for identifying an emergency and for

deciding to deploy resources, it should have a system for identifying when its services are no longer required in an emergency response or a recovery process. However, it is important that it does not unilaterally withdraw from a multi-agency response or that it does not leave tasks unfinished without arranging for another organisation to take them on. This is particularly so in the case of a lead organisation, which needs to ensure that in withdrawing it does not leave an unfilled co-ordination role.

176. The move from direct response to an emergency to recovery is a process which particularly requires management to ensure continuity whilst the organisations involved change. An example of good practice in this respect is the protocol covering the move of responsibility for tactical level co-ordination of local incidents between the PSNI and the District Council.
  
177. When an organisation has withdrawn its resources and 'stood down' its response, it should inform other responders that it has done so, and provide information on how it intends to handle any residual issues and who should be contacted in relation to the response and any long-term issues arising.

## RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

**A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland.** CCPB

publication, available from

[http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf).

**Emergency Response and Recovery.** CCS publication, available from

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-response-and-recovery>

**The Lead Government Department and its Role – Guidance and Best Practice.** CCS

document available from <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/lead-government-departments-role.pdf>.

**LESPL Major Incident Procedures Manual.** Procedures manual for emergency planning and response in London developed by the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESPL) and the Metropolitan Police Service

([http://www.lespl.gov.uk/docs/Major\\_incident\\_procedure\\_manual\\_7th\\_ed.pdf](http://www.lespl.gov.uk/docs/Major_incident_procedure_manual_7th_ed.pdf)). Many of the principles apply elsewhere.

### Others

**Federal Emergency Management Agency, USA** response and recovery website

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/index.htm>. Access to a range of advice and publications on response and recovery.

**Australian Emergency Manual Series (AEMS).** Advice and Guidance from Emergency Management Australia, available through

[http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian\\_Emergency\\_Manual\\_Series](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian_Emergency_Manual_Series)

## **CHAPTER 10 - CORE PRINCIPLE 8: RECOVERY, RESTORATION AND REVIEW**

**All organisations shall deliver their functions in order to contribute to recovery and restoration of normality. All shall participate in the review of emergency preparedness and response arrangements in the light of experience gained in their use.**

### **Recovery and Restoration**

**In parallel with the response, an organisation shall assess what it can do to minimise the long-term effects of the emergency and promote recovery.**

**Appropriate action shall be taken in co-operation with other organisations.**

178. When an emergency has occurred, the usual objective is to restore the affected location, community or infrastructure to as close as possible to normality as quickly as possible. In order to achieve this it is necessary to have a planned recovery and restoration strategy. The contributors to this strategy may be different from those directly involved in the response. For example, the direct responders to an incident involving the release of chemicals will mainly be the emergency services, but restoration and recovery of the environment and the community will involve non-emergency service organisations such as social services, the district council, the NIEA, health and safety experts and public health professionals. In other situations, the direct responders will also be involved in longer-term restoration and recovery activities. For example, in a flooding situation the organisation involved in the direct response such as clearing blockages and providing sandbags will also be involved in pumping water out of affected areas after the water levels have fallen and in working with those affected to reduce the risks of a repeat.

179. Although restoration and recovery may involve different organisations, the actions of the initial responders will have an influence on the long-term effects of the emergency. For example, the NIFRS is very aware of the need to contain the runoff water from fire-fighting or chemical incident responses so as to avoid wider

environmental pollution. Similarly, the way in which the first responders treat those affected and their families can affect how well and how quickly they come to terms with what has happened. All organisations should therefore assess what their contribution could be to recovery and restoration, and plans should be adjusted or made accordingly.

180. Restoration and recovery is not something that happens after the direct emergency response is over. Because the response can influence the recovery process and because some of the arrangements necessary take time to establish, restoration and recovery planning and activity should occur in parallel with the response. Organisations should therefore assess their role in restoration and recovery, make contact with other organisations similarly involved and begin to make co-ordinated arrangements at the earliest possible stage.
181. The restoration and recovery response may extend over a period of months or years. An organisation should ensure that it continues to resource the ongoing response and recovery processes for as long as is necessary, something which may represent an ongoing burden on an organisation and require a re-assessment of business objectives and priorities. As with the direct response, there should be a planned and managed exit at an appropriate time. In some cases the restoration and recovery processes may become part of the long-term activities of the organisation. Where this is not the case, the exit strategy should include a clear understanding of responsibility for any residual issues or for issues which arise at a later date, such as marking an anniversary or unexpected long-term public health issues.
182. Further information on restoration and recovery issues is available in the publications 'Emergency Response and Recovery':  
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-response-and-recovery>



## Review

**An organisation shall gather information on potential and actual emergencies, in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, and use this to refine its civil contingencies arrangements.**

183. Where an organisation is aware of a 'near miss' or of an emergency happening elsewhere in the UK or worldwide which is relevant to its responsibilities in Northern Ireland, it should review its own civil contingencies arrangements and assess as far as possible whether they would have been effective if the emergency had happened in Northern Ireland. Organisations should be aware of good civil contingencies practice outside Northern Ireland in relation to their functions and should take account of lessons arising from emergencies elsewhere.
184. If an organisation has experienced a 'near miss', has been involved in the response to an emergency, or has contributed to recovery processes, it should carry out an internal review of its actions so as to identify good practice and opportunities for improvement. It should use this information to review and revise its emergency plans and other arrangements. The review will normally take the form of a debrief, which may be either a 'hot debrief' immediately after the emergency, when issues are fresh in responders' minds or a 'cold debrief' a short time later when staff have had an opportunity to reflect on the response. Some organisations may use only one type of debrief, and some may use both, for example holding a hot debrief with the direct response staff and a cold debrief later which also includes management level staff. The purpose of this type of debrief is to review the response of the organisation, not to assess the actions of individual staff or to help members of staff come to terms with the event (see below).
185. Debriefing to learn lessons for the future needs to be a structured process that involves the full range of people involved in the organisation's response to the emergency. A number of debriefing models are available, and organisations

should consider having at least one member of staff trained in debriefing techniques. If it does not have someone trained, an organisation should consider employing someone with training and experience to facilitate its debriefing process.

186. Where there has been some form of multi-agency co-ordination of the response and / or recovery process, a multi-agency debrief should be held to complement the internal debrief held by individual organisations. The lead organisation should make arrangements for the inter-agency debrief and should involve all the organisations which participated. Whether the direct response and the recovery process are debriefed separately or together will depend on the connection between the two processes and the timescale for recovery – if recovery will be a long-term process the debrief of the response should not be held up.
187. All debriefs, whether internal or multi-agency, should result in a report setting out the lessons learned and an action plan for incorporating those lessons into civil contingencies arrangements. Progress with the action plan should be monitored as part of an organisation's business management process.

### **Personal debriefing and welfare**

**An organisation shall provide all staff, not just those directly involved in the response to an emergency, with the opportunity for individual debriefing, and shall provide access to other welfare services as necessary.**

188. Individual debriefing (also sometimes called defusing) or counselling may be necessary to help staff deal with the emotional and social effects of the emergency and their involvement with it. It is not only direct responders who can be affected but also support staff and back office staff dealing with reports or claims. Even staff not involved in any way in the emergency may be covering for colleagues who are involved, and the additional stress may be more than they can cope with. When an emergency happens in a community, staff are likely to be members of that



community and to know, or be related to, those who have been adversely affected.

189. Not all staff will need welfare services, but each organisation should develop its own policies on identifying those who would benefit and on how services will be delivered. The emergency services and other front line response organisations usually have standing contracts for the supply of crisis counselling services. Other organisations may be able to call on their occupational health provider or welfare officers. The need for counselling may only become apparent weeks or months after the emergency, so support should be offered to staff over a long period, and information on access to services should be repeatedly publicised over a period of at least months. Welfare arrangements should also be considered at times such as anniversaries, inquests and enquiries.

## RECOVERY, RESTORATION AND REVIEW PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

**A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland.** CCPB document available from

[http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf).

**Emergency Response and Recovery.** CCS publication, available from

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/emergency-response-and-recovery>

**National Recovery Guidance.** CCS publication, available from

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/national-recovery-guidance](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/national-recovery-guidance).

### Others

**Australian Emergency Manual Series (AEMS).** Advice and Guidance from Emergency Management Australia, available through

[http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian\\_Emergency\\_Manual\\_Series](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/PublicationsAustralian_Emergency_Manual_Series)

**Focus on Recovery: A Holistic Framework for Recovery in New Zealand.** Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, New Zealand. Available through

[www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz).

## CHAPTER 11 - CORE PRINCIPLE 9: BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

**All organisations shall undertake Business Continuity Management processes which will enable them to deliver their services in response to an emergency and to maintain essential services to the public through a business disruption. Public sector organisations shall promote and encourage Business Continuity Management in their public, private and voluntary sector suppliers, customers, licence holders and stakeholders.**

### Background

190. The previous chapters have focussed on what an organisation needs to do in preparation for, in response to, and in order to recover from, emergencies in the community. However organisations also need to have arrangements in place which will ensure the continuity of their key essentials of life services, including their ability to respond to the emergency. These arrangements are known as Business Continuity Management (BCM).
191. Good business management practice requires all businesses to have arrangements which will enable them to continue to deliver their services during periods of business disruption. This disruption may be internal to the organisation, for example the loss of a key building because of fire, the loss of IT services or a staffing crisis, or may be external, for example the loss of power supplies or disruption to transport. An internal business disruption normally only directly affects the organisation itself, but it may have indirect effects on the community if it prevents essential public services from being delivered. An external business disruption normally affects more than one organisation, and may affect the whole community. For a public service organisation an external disruption may not only make it difficult to deliver normal essential services, but may also affect its ability to deliver a response to the cause or effects of the emergency. Business Continuity Management is a management process that helps manage the risks to the smooth

running of an organisation or delivery of a service, ensuring that the business can continue in the event of disruption. It enables an organisation to anticipate, prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from disruptions, whatever their source and whatever aspect of the business they affect.

192. This Framework deals primarily with Business Continuity Management for those disruptions which may affect an organisation's ability to:
- a) continue to exercise its civil contingencies functions, in particular its ability to respond in a coherent and co-ordinated manner to an emergency (whether or not that emergency is related to the cause of the business disruption) and to warn and inform the public, and
  - b) continue to perform its 'essentials of life' functions in relation to human welfare, protection of the environment and security, and to the continuance of the critical NI infrastructure and essential functions of government in support of these.
193. All Northern Ireland public service organisations shall put in place appropriate business continuity arrangements to ensure that they are able to deliver a) and b) during disruptions. If an organisation, having carried out a risk assessment, decides that it does not need to undertake Business Continuity Management processes to ensure its ability to deliver a) and b) above, it will almost certainly still need to do so in order to meet corporate governance requirements, but that is outside this Framework.

### **Business Continuity Management principles and practice**

194. Business Continuity Management (BCM) involves organisations identifying their vulnerabilities to business interruption and making arrangements to reduce risk and mitigate against the effects of any disruptions. They also need to have plans for recovery of business processes if such disruptions do occur.

195. BCM is not a one-off special project for organisations. It is a management process which should be integral to the good governance arrangements of each public service organisation, as it provides the strategic framework for improving an organisation's resilience to interruption. Its purpose is to facilitate the recovery of key business systems and processes within agreed time frames while maintaining the organisation's critical functions and the delivery of vital services – in the context of this Framework that means its essentials of life functions and emergency response / recovery as set out in a) and b) above.
196. BCM should be part of every manager's normal responsibilities, and should be reflected in job descriptions and resource allocations. However, it is also important that senior management show ongoing support for the process and that a BCM co-ordinator is identified to ensure consistency of standards and timescales across the organisation and to bring together cross-cutting and strategic level issues.
197. The British Standard on business continuity, BS 25999 – 1, sets out a 5-stage process for implementing good practice in business continuity. Although BCM is a generic management framework that is valid across the public, private and voluntary sectors, much of the drive and development of methodology has come from the private sector, for which the protection of profits and the need to remain competitive are paramount. These are not normally issues for public service organisations, where key drivers are the need to meet statutory obligations, to provide services to the public and to deliver Government policies. This different focus means that public service organisations can find it difficult to relate to some of the literature on BCM. However, there is now a growing body of guidance which focuses on the public sector, but which is still based round the core BCI principles. In particular, Chapter 6 of the CCS document 'Emergency Preparedness' ([http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep\\_chap\\_06.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep_chap_06.pdf) <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/emergency-preparedness> ) sets out the methodology to be used by Category 1 responders as part of their statutory duties within Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act. Although most public

service organisations in Northern Ireland are not subject to the statutory duty, they should base their BCM processes on the guidance in 'Emergency Preparedness'. The bibliography at **Appendix 1** to this Chapter lists some of the key publications available.

198. Training in BCM is available from a number of sources inside and outside the public sector and should be consistent with the Framework set out in BS 25999 – 1.
199. Preparing a Business Continuity plan is not a one-off process. Like emergency preparedness, business continuity management arrangements need to be monitored, exercised and reviewed on a regular cycle. It is not sufficient for an organisation to employ a consultant to develop a business continuity plan, which is then placed on a shelf to gather dust. Staff working in organisations have the detailed knowledge about their business and its workings which is necessary for the BCM process to be meaningful and they also have the management skills to develop and carry through a BCM strategy. Some organisations may find it useful to employ a business continuity professional to facilitate their first BCM cycle, but the process of embedding the system in the organisation should be a key part of the project plan.

### **Business Continuity Management scope.**

200. Traditionally, BCM processes have been most widely adopted in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector and in those organisations which are very dependent on their computers and communications systems. For example the financial services industry has been in the forefront of BCM development because it depends so heavily on extensive computer networks. However, organisations should not limit BCM activities to their ICT systems or to services which depend on them. BCM should be a holistic process, involving the whole organisation. However, in the context of this Framework, the focus is on maintaining essentials of life services and emergency responses as outlined at a) and b) on page 89.

201. Most organisations, whether public, private or voluntary sector, depend on a wide range of suppliers and service providers when delivering their services. At the same time, all public service organisations have customers, internal and/or external which depend on them continuing to deliver services. No organisation is therefore able to fully ensure its own resilience to business interruption by dealing only with internal matters. As part of the BCM process, business dependencies should be mapped, and business critical dependencies identified. Organisations should then involve their critical suppliers in the process, and should use whatever leverage they have to ensure that critical suppliers have themselves adequate and validated BCM arrangements. For example, BCM requirements may be written into new contracts, or minimum acceptable standards of service could be included in service level agreements (the customer organisation will want some evidence that a supplier can meet its commitments in this respect).
202. Organisations may also find that their customers set standards and requirements in relation to continuity of service. In the case of public service organisations delivering services direct to the public, standards may be set by statute or be contained in business plans or published commitments. Organisations should work with their customers (or representatives of customers) to ensure that both understand what the minimum acceptable standards are, and what the limitations are on service provision.
203. Many public service organisations, especially NI departments, have relationships with agencies, NDPBs, private sector organisations or voluntary organisations in their policy sector. Relationships may be formal or informal and there may or may not be a degree of statutory regulation. Wherever possible, departments and other public service organisations should use their relationships to promote effective BCM in relation to essentials of life services and emergency response, so as to develop the overall resilience of Northern Ireland to disruption.



## **BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES**

### **Business Continuity Management in the public services**

**Civil Contingencies Secretariat Business Continuity webpages.**

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/business-continuity](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/business-continuity).

**Emergency Preparedness, Chapter 6: Business Continuity Management.** The Cabinet Office, available from:

[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep\\_chap\\_06.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep_chap_06.pdf)

and <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/emergency-preparedness>

**How Resilient is Your Business to Disaster?** The Cabinet Office, available through

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/how-resilient-business-disaster.pdf>

### **Business Continuity Management General**

**Good Practice in Business Continuity Management.** The Business Continuity Institute, available through <http://www.thebci.org/gpg.htm>

**BS25999 – 1: 2006 Business Continuity Management: Code of Practice.**

British Standards Institution. ISBN 9780580496011. Price £105 (£52.50 for members) ring 020 8996 9001 or e-mail [cservices@bsuigroup.com](mailto:cservices@bsuigroup.com).

<http://shop.bsigroup.com/en/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000030157563>

**The Definitive Handbook of Business Continuity Management.** Edited by Andrew Hiles and Peter Barnes, Wiley, 2001. ISBN 9780471485599. Available from the TSO Bookshop: <http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/>

**A Guide to Business Continuity Planning.** James C Barnes, Wiley, 2001. ISBN 9780471530152: Available from the TSO Bookshop: <http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/>

**Business Continuity Advice. London Prepared website** at <http://www.londonprepared.gov.uk/businesscontinuity/index.jsp>

**Expecting the Unexpected: Business continuity in an uncertain world.** Joint publication by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office, London First and The Business Continuity Institute, available through [http://www.iwight.com/home/emergency\\_planning/images/ExpectingTheUnexpected.pdf](http://www.iwight.com/home/emergency_planning/images/ExpectingTheUnexpected.pdf)

**UK Financial Sector Continuity.** Website for continuity planning in the UK financial sector, [www.fsc.gov.uk](http://www.fsc.gov.uk)

## **CHAPTER 12 - CORE PRINCIPLE 10: PUBLIC INFORMATION**

**All organisations shall have a strategy for communicating with the public on relevant civil contingencies issues on an ongoing basis. All shall also have a strategy for communicating essential information and public safety advice in relation to their functions when a particular emergency is imminent, is happening or has happened. All appropriate organisations shall participate in co-ordination arrangements for public information and media response.**

204. Providing information to the public has two aspects:

- The public should be provided with relevant civil contingencies information on an ongoing basis, as part of an organisation's overall strategy for engaging with the public.
- The public should be warned of any imminent or actual dangers and provided with information and advice at the time of an emergency.

### **Civil contingencies information to the public**

**Each public service organisation in Northern Ireland shall have a strategy for proactively providing relevant information, in relation to its services, on:**

- risks, as identified by the organisation's risk assessments,
- steps which the organisation has taken or is taking to treat those risks,
- steps which the public can take to prepare for, or respond to an emergency arising from identified risks, and
- the organisation's civil contingencies arrangements.

205. This is consistent with the principle that as far as possible an organisation should make relevant information available to the public through its publication scheme.
206. An organisation need not publish all of its risk assessments or its complete emergency plans. The emphasis should be on information which helps the public to make decisions in relation to their own safety, to be prepared for an emergency and to respond appropriately when an emergency does occur. For example, the Environment Agency in England and Wales provides geographical information on flooding risks (and on other risks such as landfill sites and pollution sources) which enables house buyers to see what the flooding risk is for a property and house owners to know if they need to be aware of flood alerts. DARD Rivers Agency also publishes a Strategic Flood Map for Northern Ireland which can be found at: <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/riversagency/index/stategic-flood-maps.htm>
207. There may also be reassurance value in letting the public know that an organisation has civil contingencies arrangements in place and will be able to provide a response (assuming that the organisation's arrangements have been appropriately validated).
208. Information published by an organisation may need to manage the expectations of the public about the type, speed and capabilities of its response. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the USA, for example, publishes a booklet called 'Are you ready? A guide to citizen preparedness' in which it advises that all families should have arrangements to manage for themselves in a disaster for up to three days (<http://www.ready.gov/>). It may be necessary to convey some difficult-to-handle information, for example an organisation may need to explain that it will have to prioritise the use of scarce resources and set out the principles which it will use to determine greatest need (see the DHSSPS Influenza Pandemic plan on [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)).

## Freedom of Information

209. An open discussion of risks and responses between public service organisations and the public represents a considerable culture change. However, the Freedom of Information Act has given the public extensive rights to have access to information held by organisations and has created an expectation that organisations will be proactive and encourage dialogue with the public on policies and services. Some aspects of civil contingencies arrangements, such as those which deal with national security or with commercially sensitive information, may well come under exemptions, but there will be a great deal which is not so covered or where there could be held to be a public interest case for revealing information. It is therefore in the interests of organisations to be proactive in publicising their civil contingencies arrangements within a planned scheme. However, organisations should be aware that if they publish extracts from, or summaries of, risk assessments or plans, they could receive a Freedom of Information request for full information. As with other material, it would be advisable for an organisation to assess the status of any source material at the time information is published. Any information on risks, plans or emergency response which organisations proactively make available should be included in the organisation's Publication Scheme.

## Co-ordinating information

210. Most risks or responses do not involve only one organisation. Normally a number of organisations are involved, each contributing something according to its functions. But the public is not interested in organisational divisions or how responsibilities are distributed – people want to know that the public services have taken steps to protect them and will respond when an emergency happens, but they do not particularly care how this is achieved. It follows then that in providing information to the public it is important to tell the whole story and not just one organisation's part. To provide the public with information on the risks of, preparedness for and responses to any particular emergency may therefore involve



drawing information from a number of organisations and presenting it as an integrated package.

211. The lead organisation for any particular risk or response will be responsible for providing public information in relation to that subject, and for gathering and co-ordinating relevant information from other organisations. General information for the public on risks, actions they can take, and preparedness of public service organisations would normally be issued at Northern Ireland level. At that level, the lead organisation will normally be an emergency service or a NI department (see 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland' - [http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf)). For example, the NIFRS issues public information about fire safety and how and when to call out the NIFRS, and DHSSPS issues a range of public safety and public health information, including copies of contingency plans for smallpox and pandemic influenza. The DHSSPS pandemic influenza plan deals not only with the department's response, but with that of the HSC Bodies and Trusts and UK and international health organisations. All lead departments should ensure that in developing their strategies for communicating with the public on civil contingencies matters they consult with, and include information from, associated agencies and NDPBs, the emergency services and other NI departments. Where an organisation which is not the lead organisation considers that it should issue specialist information on its aspect of a risk or response, that information should be co-ordinated and cross-referenced with information being issued by the lead organisation.
212. At sub-regional and local levels, the lead organisation may be an emergency service, a NI department, a Board or Trust, a NDPB or a District Council. Where any specifically local risks or information about preparedness or response need to be communicated, this should be done by the lead organisation in association with other local responders. For cross-cutting issues, the District Council may be able to provide a forum, through its inter-agency group, for discussing public information strategies.

## Communicating effectively

213. Information on risk and the safety of the public is not easy to communicate effectively. The message needs to be clear and easily understood, but the issues underlying it are often complex and contain uncertainties. The risk assessment process which an organisation uses needs to be objective, but the public's risk assessment is often very subjective. Decisions on risk treatment and preparedness will depend on cost benefit analysis and the balance of competing public expenditure priorities, but the views of individual members of the public on what is important will be widely divergent, depending on their own circumstances and experiences. Detailed practical guidance on communicating risk is available from the Government Information and Communication Service document 'Communicating Risk' (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/communicating-risk-guidance.pdf>).
214. Communications strategies should take account of the target audiences and the differing needs of groups within the community. As with other aspects of civil contingencies activities, organisations should ensure that their communications strategies are consistent with the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In particular, advice to the public on their response to emergencies should be issued in formats which make it accessible to those who find written English difficult, whether because of sensory impairment, learning disability or because English is not their first language. Information and advice should also be accessible to those who do not have access to the internet, for example by placing copies in libraries, advice centres and other public places.
215. Organisations which have developed and implemented civil contingencies communications strategies should also have a strategy for monitoring the reception and use of the information they produce, to ensure that they are reaching their target audience, that they are complying with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and that they are receiving value for money.



216. NI departments, the emergency services and some other organisations have staff who are specialists in media and public communications. They should use these specialist resources fully in developing and delivering their civil contingencies information strategies. The Executive Information Service (EIS) provides a range of services to NI departments and can advise on communications strategies and on how to reach target audiences. Other organisations may have full or part-time press officers and/or access to private sector public relations firms. They should make use of whatever resources are available to develop and deliver civil contingencies communications strategies. Training on media relations and public information in a crisis is available from a range of providers.
217. Chapter 7 of the CCS publication 'Emergency Preparedness' ([http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep\\_chap\\_07.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ep_chap_07.pdf) <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/emergency-preparedness> ) contains useful guidance on communicating which is applicable to any organisation. Northern Ireland public service organisations should take account of this guidance in developing their strategies.

### **Warning and informing**

**Each public service organisation in Northern Ireland shall have a strategy and plan for communicating with the public in relation to its services when an emergency is imminent, is happening or has happened.**

218. General communication on civil contingencies issues is useful in preparing the public for emergencies and indicating in general terms what response would be made to certain emergencies. However, when a particular emergency is imminent or has occurred, people want precise information on the detail of that emergency – where ? when ? what effect has it ? who was involved ? how am I affected ? why did it happen ? will it happen again ?
219. The primary objective of giving information in emergency situations should be to enable people to keep themselves, their families and their property safe by

responding appropriately to the emergency. Other key objectives are to inform those directly affected of what is happening, and to provide information on who is involved, so that friends and relatives can assure themselves of their safety or make inquiries to the appropriate source of information. It is a fact of life that the public have an interest in emergencies in which they have no personal involvement and will want information on what has happened, the risks of it happening to them, and whether there are any implications for them. This was well illustrated by the public response to the effects of the Asian tsunami in December 2004. Public Service organisations should ensure that their information strategy includes providing input where they can to the wider reporting of an emergency.

220. Proactively getting good quality information out into the public domain during and in the aftermath to an emergency will take the pressure off organisations by reducing the number of direct queries to switchboards and helplines. Emergency plans of public service organisations should identify what information is likely to be needed, how it can be obtained, what the target audience is and how it should be delivered. Public information aspects of the plan should be validated along with the rest of the plan, for example there should be a public information aspect to relevant exercises.

#### Co-ordinating warnings and information when an emergency occurs or is imminent.

221. In an emergency situation, it is particularly important that all the responding agencies speak with one voice so as to prevent confusion and provide clear guidance to the public. This is not easy. Information can be hard to obtain, especially early on; responding organisations collect information in order to manage their own responses, not necessarily for the benefit of other responders or the public; and physical communication between organisations can be difficult. It is therefore important that contingency planning includes planning to deliver co-ordinated public information, and that this is exercised as part of the validation process. Each responding organisation will have information which it needs or wants to communicate to the public. For each identified risk or response, plans should cover whether all information will come from one source, in which case

other organisations will pass their information to the lead communicator, or whether each organisation will deliver its own information but this will be cleared with a lead co-ordinator before release.

222. In most cases, the lead organisation for the emergency response will also take the lead in providing and co-ordinating information to the public. For sudden impact incidents, the initial lead will normally be the police, and they will initially co-ordinate the press response. In cases where the lead is another emergency service, such as the MCA, or a non-emergency public services such as a NI department, that organisation will co-ordinate the public information response. During the course of the emergency, the lead response organisation may change, for example when the emergency services have dealt with the immediate incident and hand over to a department, agency or district council for the recovery process. In that case, consideration needs to be given to when and how responsibility for co-ordination of public information will be handed over. This would normally be concurrent with the change in response lead, but there may be reasons, for example ongoing casualty bureau investigations, why the original lead responder needs to hold on to the public information lead. Whenever there is a change in public information lead organisation, this must be clearly signalled to the public and the media so as to avoid confusion. Chapter 7 of 'Emergency Preparedness' includes some very useful guidance and advice on co-ordinating public warning and information, which Northern Ireland organisations should take note of in preparing their own arrangements.
223. Delivering and co-ordinating public information in an emergency will place a considerable strain on an organisation which is already providing an emergency response. Because of this, many organisations have mutual aid arrangements to obtain additional support in an emergency. The Northern Ireland departments all have recourse to the central resources of the EIS and agencies and NDPBs may be able to call on the press office resources of their parent departments. As part of the planning process, organisations should consider what their needs would be and make mutual aid arrangements where appropriate.

## Communicating effectively

224. In an emergency situation timeliness of information is particularly important. Essential public safety information needs to be disseminated quickly, in time for people to take appropriate action. The release of other information may have to be carefully managed, for example names of people killed should not be released until formal identification procedures are complete and relatives have been informed. Information needs to be in a format which people can understand and act on and should come from a reputable and authoritative source. Organisations should have plans and arrangements which will enable them to deliver timely information, targeted to particular localities and/or groups in the community. They should also have a monitoring capability to gather information on what information people are asking for, so that messages can be refined and tailored and an audit strategy which will enable them to demonstrate afterwards that they met any statutory requirements and to produce evidence at any subsequent inquiry.
225. Chapter 8 of 'A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland' and Chapter 7 of 'Emergency Preparedness' give information on public information issues in emergency situations.
226. Further information is also available on the website of the National Steering Committee on Warning and Informing the Public (NSCWIP), <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/national-steering-committee-warning-informing-public-nscwip>.

## **The role of the media**

227. Public service organisations use various means to communicate directly with the public, for example, websites, written material made available on request or in libraries and other public places and direct mail to people's homes. However, it can be difficult to reach everyone by such means, especially if the message is urgent.

Therefore many organisations use the media to some extent. It is important to distinguish between two aspects of providing information to and through the media:

228. Direct information can be conveyed through the media, either by paying for advertising or through a media interview with a public service spokesperson. Means of delivering direct information would include press conferences and interviews with emergency services personnel or Ministers.
229. Information on civil contingencies issues and particular emergencies may be given to the media, but the media will have editorial control over how and when that information is used, and will often also present alternative or additional material from other sources.
230. The media, including print, radio and television reach a huge audience, and members of the public are likely to gain most of their information and understanding of the world through the media rather than directly from the government. This may be because direct means of communication do not reach the right groups or because people do not fully trust information from public service organisations.
231. Public service organisations should give consideration to the full range of options available for communicating through the media and should take professional advice on how best to present information. Traditionally, media interest in emergencies was focused on the response to and outcomes of, specific incidents. Increasingly all the media, but especially television, are taking a more holistic approach, with programmes being made on planning, communication and co-ordination issues, either in relation to emergencies generally or those associated with particular scenarios such as CBRN terrorism or global warning. Organisations should be aware of potential opportunities to contribute to public understanding through participation in such programmes but they should also be prepared to provide information to challenge or answer assertions made in such programmes.

232. The government has established an agreement with the BBC on the provision of public information in emergencies through radio and television. Northern Ireland public service organisations should always access the scheme through their Press Officers and EIS, who will have the relevant contacts.



## PUBLIC INFORMATION PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

**Emergency Preparedness.** CCS publication

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/emergprepfinal.pdf>

**A Guide To Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland.** CCPB

publication available at

[http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a\\_guide\\_to\\_emergency\\_planning\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_-\\_refreshed\\_september\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/a_guide_to_emergency_planning_in_northern_ireland_-_refreshed_september_2011.pdf)

**A Guide to Evacuation in Northern Ireland.** CCPB publication which includes information on communicating in an evacuation situation, available at

<http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/aguidetoevacuation.pdf>.

**Communicating Risk.** Government Information and Communication Service document

(<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/communicating-risk-guidance.pdf>)

**Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), NI website**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk). An example of a departmental website which provides information, advice and guidance in relation to health emergencies and copies of multi-agency health emergency plans.

**DHSSPS NI Influenza Pandemic plan** available on [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

**The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) website**

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/>

**Rivers Agency (NI) website:** <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/riversagency/>. Website with extensive information and advice on flooding.



**The Environment Agency in England and Wales website:** [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/) . Website with extensive information and advice on environment-related emergencies, especially flooding.

**The National Steering Committee on Warning and Informing the Public (NSCWIP), website,** <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/national-steering-committee-warning-informing-public-nscwip>. Information on the NSCWIP and copies of its reports.

### **Others**

**Federal Emergency Management Agency, USA website** [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) An extensive website with guidance on general and specific preparedness issues, and links to civil contingencies sites and publications worldwide.

**Are you ready? A guide to citizen preparedness.** Federal Emergency Management Agency, USA, (<http://www.ready.gov/>).

## GLOSSARY OF CIVIL CONTINGENCIES TERMINOLOGY

Definitions in this glossary relate specifically to their use in relation to emergencies. Some of the terms may have more general or different definitions in other contexts. Not all these terms appear in this document, but they are likely to be encountered in other civil contingencies literature.

<b>(The) Act</b>	The Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
<b>Bronze</b>	The tier of command and control within a single agency (below gold level and silver level) at which the management of ‘hands-on’ work is undertaken at the incident site(s) or associated areas.
<b>Business continuity forum</b>	Grouping of organisations to share and co-ordinate business continuity plans.
<b>Business Continuity Plan (BCP)</b>	Documented collection of procedures and information developed, compiled and maintained in readiness for use in an incident to enable an organisation to continue to deliver its critical functions at an acceptable predefined level.
<b>Capabilities Programme</b>	A programme to develop a range of capabilities that underpin the UK’s resilience to disruptive challenges. These capabilities are categorised as being structural (e.g. local response), functional (e.g. mass casualties) or relating to essential services (e.g. financial services).
<b>Capability</b>	A demonstrable capacity or ability to respond to and recover from a particular threat or hazard. Originally a military term, it includes personnel, equipment, training and such matters as plans, doctrine and the concept of operations.

<b>Capability gap</b>	The gap between the current ability to provide a response and the actual response assessed to be required for a given threat or hazard. Plans should be made to reduce or eliminate this gap, if the risk justifies it.
<b>Capability status</b>	Assessment of the level of capability in place.
<b>Casualty Bureau</b>	Initial point of contact and information, maintained by the PSNI, for all data relating to casualties
<b>Catastrophic emergency</b>	An emergency which has an exceptionally high and potentially widespread impact and requires immediate central government direction and support.
<b>Category 1 responder</b>	A person or body listed in Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Civil Contingencies Act. These bodies are likely to be at the core of the response to most emergencies. As such, they are subject to the full range of civil protection duties in the Act. In Northern Ireland Category 1 responders are limited to the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (see Schedule 1 to the Act).
<b>Category 2 responder</b>	A person or body listed in Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Civil Contingencies Act. These are co-operating responders who are less likely to be involved in the heart of multi-agency planning work, but will be heavily involved in preparing for incidents affecting their sectors. The Act requires them to co-operate and share information with other Category 1 and 2 responders. In Northern Ireland Category 2 responders are limited to telecommunications operators (see Schedule 1 to the Act).

<b>Civil Contingencies</b>	Risks to civilian health, safety, and property from emergencies as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act (2004).
<b>Civil Contingencies activities</b>	Activities undertaken by individuals and organisations to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.
<b>Civil Contingencies Group (NI)</b>	A strategic lead inter-agency group which considers Northern Ireland civil contingences policy and supports the Crisis Management Group to co-ordinate the emergency response across the NI departments and other public sector organisations.
<b>Civil Protection</b>	Organisation and measures, under governmental or other authority, aimed at preventing, abating or otherwise countering the effects of emergencies for the protection of the civilian population and property.
<b>Community Resilience</b>	The ability of a local community to respond to and recover from emergencies.
<b>Community Risk Register (CRR)</b>	A register communicating the assessment of risks within a Local Resilience Area which is developed and published as a basis for informing local communities and directing civil protection workstreams.
<b>Consequences</b>	Impact resulting from the occurrence of a particular hazard or threat, which is measured in terms of the numbers of lives lost, people injured, the scale of damage to property and the disruption to a community's essential services and commodities.
<b>Control centre</b>	Operations centre from which the management and co-ordination of the response by each emergency service to an emergency are

carried out.

<p><b>Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999, Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.</b></p>	<p>Regulations applying to the chemical industry and to some storage sites where threshold quantities of dangerous substances, as identified in then Regulations, are kept or used.</p>
<p><b>Controlled area</b></p>	<p>Area contained by an outer cordon.</p>
<p><b>Cost-recovery basis</b></p>	<p>A formally agreed situation under which an organisation can charge another organisation for providing a service, to ensure that the providing organisation does not make a financial loss in providing the service. It is usually agreed that no surplus or profit can be made by the organisation providing the service.</p>
<p><b>Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSA)</b></p>	<p>Police officers who provide advice on preventing and mitigating the effects of acts of terrorism.</p>

<b>Crisis Management Group (CMG)</b>	Within the Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements, the Minister-led strategic co-ordination group which is responsible for setting the overall strategy for the NI Administration's response to a Level 2 or Level 3 emergency.
<b>Cross-border co-operation</b>	In the Northern Ireland context, normally refers to co-operation with agencies in the Republic of Ireland, but may also refer to co-operation with other parts of the United Kingdom.
<b>Cross-boundary co-operation</b>	In the Northern Ireland context, co-operation across organisational boundaries, for example co-operation between two district councils or Health and Social Services Boards.
<b>Damage</b>	Physical destruction, corruption of information, or loss of beneficial social phenomena (e.g. trust or affiliation).
<b>Data Protection Act</b>	An Act that requires organisations which hold data about individuals to do so securely and only for specific purposes. The Act also gives individuals the right, with certain exemptions, to see personal data that relates to them.
<b>Delegation</b>	A formal agreement whereby one organisation's functions will be carried out by another. This does not absolve the organisation of any duty, merely re-designating the form of delivery.
<b>Emergency</b>	An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare, the environment or the security of Northern Ireland or the UK as a whole. Damage would be serious if: the emergency would be likely seriously to obstruct an organisation in the performance of its functions; <u>or</u> it is likely that the organisation would consider it necessary or

desirable to act to prevent reduce, control or mitigate the emergency's effects, or otherwise take action; and would be unable to act without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.

**Emergency planning (EP)** Aspect of Integrated Emergency Management concerned with developing and maintaining procedures to prevent emergencies and to mitigate the impact when they occur.

**Emergency planning cycle** A continuous process of assessing the risk of and preparing for emergencies, supported by procedures to keep staff in readiness and to review and validate plans and training, revising them if necessary following emergency exercises or response operations.

**Environmental Information Regulations** Statutory provision (SI 2004 No. 3391) providing right of access to environmental information held by UK public authorities

**Essentials of life services** Those services which contribute to human welfare, protection of the environment and security and to the maintenance of the critical NI infrastructure and essential functions of government in support of these.

**Exercise** A simulation designed to validate organisations' capability to manage incidents and emergencies. Specifically exercises will seek to validate training undertaken and the procedures and systems within emergency or business continuity plans.

**Exercise Directing Team** The team which assists in designing an exercise and then directing the exercise play.



<b>Exercise Director</b>	The individual who is charged with designing and directing an exercise.
<b>Exercise Programme</b>	Planned series of exercises developed by an organisation or group of organisations to validate training and plans.
<b>Family and Friends Reception Centre</b>	Secure area set aside for use by and interviewing of family and friends arriving at the scene (or location associated with an incident, such as an airport or port). Established by the police in consultation with (in Northern Ireland) the Community Trust and District Council.
<b>Freedom of Information Act 2000</b>	The Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows the public access, regardless of nationality or country of residence, to information held by public authorities or anyone providing services for them, subject to certain exemptions. It came fully into force in January 2005.
<b>Generic local assessment</b>	In GB, assessment provided by central government to the local level.
<b>Generic plan</b>	A single emergency plan developed to enable an organisation's response to emergencies arising from a wide range of risks. Generic plans are usually specific to individual organisations, but in some cases they will be developed as multi-agency plans to enable a joint response for use by a range of emergency responder organisations.
<b>Gold</b>	The strategic level of command and control (above Silver level and Bronze level) at which policy, strategy and the overall response framework are established and managed for individual responder agencies.

<b>Hazard</b>	Accidental or naturally occurring (i.e., non-malicious) event or situation with the potential to cause death or physical or psychological harm, damage or losses to property, and/or disruption to the environment and/or to economic, social and political structures.
<b>Hazard assessment</b>	A component of the civil protection risk assessment process in which identified hazards are assessed for risk treatment.
<b>Hazard identification</b>	A component of the civil protection risk assessment process in which identified hazards are identified.
<b>Holding and Audit Area for Deceased People and Human Remains</b>	Area close to the scene where the deceased can be temporarily held until transfer to the emergency mortuary or mortuary.
<b>Impact</b>	The scale of the consequences of a hazard, threat or emergency expressed in terms of a reduction in human welfare, damage to the environment and loss of security.
<b>Inner cordon</b>	Cordon established to secure the immediate scene and provide a measure of protection for personnel working within the area.
<b>Integrated Emergency Management (IEM)</b>	Multi-agency approach to emergency management entailing six key activities – anticipation, assessment, prevention, preparation, response and recovery.
<b>Joint Working</b>	A single programme being delivered jointly by a number of organisations.

<b>Lead organisation</b>	The Department or Agency responsible for preparedness for an emergency for which it is the designated lead. When an emergency occurs the lead organisation would co-ordinate the multi-agency response at the appropriate level, or provide input to the Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements (Level 2 and 3 emergencies).
<b>Liaison officer</b>	Person within an organisation who co-ordinates their organisation's staff at the scene of an incident.
<b>Local Resilience Forum (LRF)</b>	In England and Wales, a process for bringing together all the Category 1 and 2 responders within a local police area for the purpose of facilitating co-operation in fulfilment of their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act. In Scotland the equivalent structures is a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG).
<b>Major Incident</b>	Event or situation requiring a response under one or more of the emergency services' major incident plans.
<b>Media Emergency Forum</b>	Ad hoc group of senior media editors, government representatives, local authority emergency planners, emergency services, police and the private sector set up to consider the provision of information to the public, and other media issues, in the context of civil emergencies.
<b>Media Plan</b>	A key plan for ensuring co-operation between emergency responders and the media in communicating with the public during and after an emergency.
<b>Multi-agency plan</b>	A plan for the coordination and integration of the response to an emergency by a number of organisations.

<b>Multi-level plan</b>	A plan which relies on the participation and co-operation of responders at more than one level.
<b>Mutual Aid</b>	An agreement between responders, within the same sector or across sectors and across boundaries, to provide assistance with additional resource during an emergency.
<b>National Security Council</b>	A coordinating body, chaired by the Prime Minister, to integrate the work of the foreign, defence, home, energy and international development departments, and all other arms of government contributing to national security.
<b>News Co-ordination Centre (NCC)</b>	The NCC works with the UK lead department and devolved administrations where necessary, to co-ordinate media and public communications support during a crisis, emergency or major event.
<b>Operational</b>	<p><i>General definition</i> - relating to an emergency service's actions undertaken in response to an incident.</p> <p><i>Specific definition</i> - the level (below tactical level) at which the management of 'hands-on' work is undertaken at the incident site(s) or associated areas, equating for single agencies to Bronze level.</p>
<b>Outer cordon</b>	Cordon established around the vicinity of an incident, and encompassing the inner cordon, to control access to a wider area around the scene, to allow the emergency services and other agencies to work unhindered and in privacy.
<b>Plan maintenance</b>	Procedures for ensuring that emergency plans are appropriate, up to date and kept in readiness for emergencies.

<b>Plan validation</b>	Measures to ensure that an emergency plan meets the purpose for which it was designed. Validation may include a range of measures, including various forms of emergency exercises and tests.
<b>Planning assumptions</b>	Descriptions of the types and scales of consequences for which organisations should be prepared to respond. These will be informed by the risk assessment process.
<b>Public awareness</b>	A level of knowledge within the community about risk and preparedness for emergencies, including actions the public authorities will take and actions the public should take.
<b>Public Information Line</b>	A help-line set up during and in the aftermath of an emergency to deal with information requests from the public and to take pressure off the Police Casualty Bureau (which has a separate and distinct purpose).
<b>Readiness level</b>	An assessment of the extent to which a capability meets the agreed capability target.
<b>Recovery</b>	The process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency.
<b>Rendezvous point (RVP)</b>	Point to which all resources arriving at the outer cordon are directed for logging, briefing, equipment issue and deployment.
<b>Resilience</b>	Ability of the community, services, area or infrastructure to detect, prevent, and, if necessary to withstand, handle and recover from disruptive challenges.

<b>Resilience Advisory Board Scotland (RABS)</b>	Advises Scottish Ministers and the wider civil contingencies community on strategic policy development, to ensure that Scotland is prepared to respond effectively to major emergencies.
<b>Rest centre</b>	Premises used for temporary accommodation of evacuees from an incident.
<b>Risk</b>	Risk measures the significance of a potential event in terms of likelihood and impact. In the context of the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework, the events in question are emergencies.
<b>Risk appetite</b>	Willingness of an organisation to accept a defined level of risk.
<b>Risk assessment</b>	A structured and auditable process of identifying potentially significant events, assessing their likelihood and impacts, and then combining these to provide an overall assessment of risk, as a basis for further decisions and action.
<b>Risk management</b>	All activities and structures directed towards the effective assessment and management of risks and their potential adverse impacts.
<b>Risk rating matrix</b>	Table showing the likelihood and potential impact of events or situations, in order to ascertain the risk.
<b>Risk treatment</b>	A systematic process of deciding which risks can be eliminated or reduced by remedial action and which must be tolerated.

<b>Safety Advisory Group (SAG)</b>	Multi-agency group set up to provide advice on safety matters for a specific event, or events, such as a major sporting event or a concert held in a stadium.
<b>Scottish Emergencies Co-ordinating Committee (SECC)</b>	A multi-agency group in Scotland which ensures that steps are taken to respond to the changing risk environment and determines the national strategy for the development of civil protection. The membership of SECC can be adjusted according to circumstances, but it includes Scottish Executive departments, emergency services, local authorities and the military. The SECC may meet at a time of emergency to advise on development of the national strategy for Scotland.
<b>Sensitive information</b>	Information which is not reasonably accessible to the public because its disclosure would, or would be likely to, (a) adversely affect national security, (b) adversely affect public safety or (c) prejudice the commercial interests of any person; or information that is personal data, within the meaning of section 1(1) of the Data Protection Act 1998, disclosure of which would breach that Act.
<b>Silver</b>	The tactical tier of command and control within a single agency (below Gold level and above Bronze level) at which the response to an emergency is managed.
<b>Specific plan</b>	A plan designed to cope with a specific type of emergency, where the generic plan is likely to be insufficient.
<b>Strategic</b>	The level (above tactical level and operational level) at which policy, strategy and the overall response framework are established and managed.



<b>Survivor reception centre</b>	Assistance centre in which survivors not requiring acute hospital treatment can be taken for short-term shelter and first aid.
<b>Survivors</b>	Those who are directly affected by an emergency, but not killed by it. Including those who have been injured, traumatised or displaced.
<b>Tactical</b>	Level (below strategic level and above operational level) at which the response to an emergency is managed.
<b>Temporary mortuary</b>	Building or structure whose function is to provide an area where post-mortem and identification examinations of victims can take place and, where necessary, provide body holding storage prior to bodies being released for final disposal.
<b>Threat</b>	The intent and capacity to cause loss of life or create adverse consequences to human welfare (including property and the supply of essential services and commodities), the environment or security.
<b>Threat assessment</b>	A component of the civil protection risk assessment process in which identified threats are assessed for risk treatment.
<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	Bodies, other than public authorities or local authorities, which carry out activities otherwise than for profit.
<b>Vulnerability</b>	Susceptibility of individuals or community, services or infrastructure to damage or harm arising from an emergency or other incident.

<b>Wales Resilience Forum (WRF)</b>	Wales-level multi-agency planning group chaired by the First Minister. It promotes good communication and the enhancement of emergency planning across agencies and services in Wales by providing a forum for Chief Officers to discuss with Welsh Ministers strategic issues of emergency preparedness.
<b>Warning and Informing the Public</b>	Arrangements to make the public aware of risks and for responders to warn, inform and advise the public when an emergency is likely to occur or has occurred, and to provide them with information and advice subsequently.

## ACRONYMS

Not all these acronyms appear in this document, but they are likely to be encountered in other civil contingencies literature.

<b>ACPO</b>	Association of Chief Police Officers
<b>BASICS</b>	British Association of Immediate Care Scheme
<b>BCI</b>	Business Continuity Institute
<b>BCM</b>	Business Continuity Management
<b>BIS</b>	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
<b>CBRN</b>	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
<b>CCS</b>	Civil Contingencies Secretariat (Cabinet Office)
<b>CCG (NI)</b>	Civil Contingencies Group (Northern Ireland)
<b>CCPB</b>	Civil Contingencies Policy Branch (OFMDFM)
<b>CFOA</b>	Chief Fire Officers Association
<b>CMG (NI)</b>	Crisis Management Group (Northern Ireland)
<b>COMAH</b>	Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 and Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.
<b>DARD</b>	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (NI)
<b>DCAL</b>	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (NI)
<b>DCLG</b>	Department for Communities & Local Government (Whitehall)
<b>DCMS</b>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport (Whitehall)
<b>DCSF</b>	Department for Children, Schools and Families (Whitehall)
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education (NI)
<b>DECC</b>	Department of Energy and Climate Change (Whitehall)
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Whitehall)
<b>DEL</b>	Department of Employment and Learning (NI)
<b>DETI</b>	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (NI)
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education (Whitehall)
<b>DFID</b>	Department For International Development (Whitehall)
<b>DfP</b>	Department of Finance and Personnel (NI)

<b>DfT</b>	Department for Transport (Whitehall)
<b>DH</b>	Department of Health (Whitehall)
<b>DHSSPS</b>	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (NI)
<b>DOE</b>	Department of the Environment (NI)
<b>DOJ</b>	Department of Justice(NI)
<b>DRD</b>	Department for Regional Development (NI)
<b>DSD</b>	Department for Social Development (NI)
<b>DWP</b>	Department for Work and Pensions (Whitehall)
<b>EA</b>	Environment Agency (England and Wales)
<b>EIS</b>	Executive Information Service (NI)
<b>FCO</b>	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<b>FSA</b>	Food Standards Agency
<b>GLA</b>	Greater London Authority
<b>GNN</b>	Government News Network
<b>HMIC</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
<b>HMT</b>	Her Majesty's Treasury
<b>HO</b>	Home Office
<b>HPA</b>	Health Protection Agency
<b>HSE</b>	Health and Safety Executive
<b>HSENI</b>	Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>LFEPA</b>	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
<b>LGEMG</b>	Local Government Emergency Management Group
<b>MCA</b>	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
<b>Met Office</b>	Meteorological Office
<b>MoD</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>MoJ</b>	Ministry of Justice (Whitehall)
<b>MPS</b>	Metropolitan Police Service
<b>NCC</b>	News Co-ordination Centre
<b>NCIS</b>	National Criminal Intelligence Service
<b>NDPB</b>	Non-departmental public body

<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisations
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>NIEA</b>	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
<b>NIFRS</b>	Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
<b>NIO</b>	Northern Ireland Office
<b>NVASEC</b>	National Voluntary Aid Society Emergency Committee
<b>OFCOM</b>	Office of Communications
<b>OFMDFM</b>	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (Northern Ireland)
<b>PHA</b>	Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland)
<b>PSNI</b>	Police Service of Northern Ireland
<b>RAYNET</b>	Radio Amateurs Network
<b>RNLI</b>	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
<b>SHA</b>	Strategic Health Authority (GB)
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and medium sized enterprises
<b>SoS</b>	Secretary of State
<b>WRVS</b>	Women's Royal Voluntary Service