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**Emergency preparedness, resilience and response**

**Annual report**

**01 April 2014 – 31 March 2015**

# Introduction

This report describes the emergency planning and business continuity activities of Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust during 2014/15 in order to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the NHS England Emergency Preparedness Framework 2013.

Yvonne Taylor, Chief Operating Officer is the accountable emergency officer and holds executive responsibility for emergency preparedness on behalf of the organisation. Mike Bellamy is the non-executive director of the Board nominated to support the accountable emergency officer. Katie Cleaver is the designated Emergency Planning Lead and responsible for supporting the Executive in the discharge of their duties for emergency preparedness. The emergency preparedness work programme for the Trust is progressed through the emergency planning group chaired by the Chief Operating Officer with representation from directorates, communications, human resources and facilities.

# Background

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 outlines a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom. Part 1 of the Act establishes a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparedness and response at local level. As a category one responder the Trust is subject to the following civil protection duties:

* assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
* put in place emergency plans
* put in place business continuity management arrangements
* put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
* share information with other local responders to enhance coordination
* cooperate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency.

**Risk assessment** The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a legal duty on responders to undertake risk assessments and publish risks in a community risk register. The purpose of the community risk register is to reassure the community that the risk of potential hazards has been assessed, and that preparation arrangements are undertaken and response plans exist. Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust reviews these risks in order to inform the preparation of major incident plans and business continuity arrangements.

The top five risks currently identified on the Thames Valley Community Risk Register are:

* influenza type disease (pandemic)
* storms and gales
* flooding
* fuel shortage
* widespread loss of telecommunications

## Definition of a major incident

For the NHS, a major incident is defined as any event that cannot be managed within routine service arrangements and requires the implementation of special procedures which may involve one or more of the emergency services, the wider NHS or a local authority (NHS England Emergency Preparedness Framework, 2013).

# Major incident and business continuity plans

## Major incident plan

The major Incident plan is reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to accurately reflect the role of the Trust in a major incident, and how this role fits with those of other NHS organisations and the emergency services. The major incident plan was reviewed in May 2014. There are several subsidiary plans that link to the major incident plan and each year NHS organisations are required to review these plans. The following response plans were reviewed during 2014/15:

* cold weather plan
* heat wave plan
* hospital evacuation plan
* pandemic flu plan

## Business continuity plan

The Trust Business Continuity Plan outlines how the Trust will continue to discharge core functions in the event of a disruption to business operations and was reviewed during 2014/15. The Trust business continuity plan is supported by service business continuity plans which are also reviewed on an annual basis.

## Business continuity estates and facilities

The associate director of facilities continues to progress a programme of work to strengthen the Trust’s business continuity arrangements for inpatient areas at hospital sites. The work involves the installation of connection points to building distribution systems for hot and cold water, heating and electricity. The installation of these points will allow an alternative source of supply to be connected i.e. temporary boilers, electricity generators and water bowsers. This means that inpatient sites could continue to operate, there is limited disruption, and evacuation/relocation would not be necessary.

# Audits

During 2014/15 NHS England Thames Valley and the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Thames Valley sought assurance regarding the Trust’s preparedness in relation to the NHS England core standards for emergency preparedness, resilience and response (2013). Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust was able to declare full compliance with the listed criteria. This self-assessment was examined and accepted by NHS England Thames Valley and Clinical Commissioning Groups in September 2014.

# Partnership Working

The Trust works in collaboration with a range of partner agencies through formal standing meetings. During 2014/15 Yvonne Taylor, Chief Operating Officer provided representation at the Thames Valley Local Health Resilience Partnership on behalf of all provider NHS Trusts in Thames Valley. Local Health Resilience Partnerships (LHRPs) are strategic forums for local organisations to facilitate health sector preparedness and planning for emergencies at Local Resilience Forum level. Members of the LHRP are executive representatives who are able to authorise plans and commit resources on behalf of their organisations.

During 2014/15 the emergency planning lead was chair for the Thames Valley Emergency Planning Officers Forum. The purpose of this group is to ensure that effective and coordinated arrangements are in place for multi-agency emergency preparedness and response, in accordance with national policy and direction from the NHS England Thames Valley.

Formal committees, of which the Trust was a member during 2014/15 include the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Resilience Groups. Links are also in place with emergency planning colleagues in Swindon, Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset.

# Training and Exercises

Major incident training and the exercising of plans is an important part of the emergency preparedness cycle.

## Training

All directors who are part of the director on call rota are required to undertake strategic leadership in a crisis training and this was provided to the Director of Business Development and Partnerships in September 2014. Ad hoc training was also provided to staff members during 2014/15 in order to raise awareness of the Trust’s role in a major incident and the importance of having business continuity arrangements in place. Staff members are also provided with information regarding emergency planning and business continuity arrangements at corporate induction and there is a prompt on the local induction checklist to familiarise new staff members with major incident and business continuity plans.

## Exercises

NHS organisations are required to undertake a minimum of a live exercise every three years, a table top exercise every year and a test of communications cascades every six months. The Trust carried out two communications cascades, several live exercises and several table top exercises (with multiagency involvement) during 2014/15 (see Table 1). Lessons identified from exercises are incorporated into major incident plans and business continuity plans, and are also shared with partner organisations.

**Table 1. Exercises for 2014/15**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Scenario** | **Date** | **Participants** |
| Communications cascade | Communications | October 2014  March 2015 | Multi-agency |
| Live exercise | Business continuity - power failure | February 2015 | Pharmacy department and the estates and facilities department |
| Business continuity - water supply interruption | March 2015 | All staff members and patients at Warneford Hospital site |
| Table top exercise | Flu pandemic | July 2014 | Multi-agency |
| Business continuity (scenarios: flooding, fire, interruption to the gas supply, water supply, power supply) | July 2014 | Estates and Facilities |
| Ebola | October 2014 | Urgent Care  Dental  Infection control  Communications |

# Live Events

During 2014/15 there were several live events that occurred and this provided an opportunity for services to test their business continuity plans. Two live events in particular affected major parts of the organisation.

On 20May 2014 Witney Community Hospital experienced a disruption to the power supply. Although there is a permanent generator on site (as part of business continuity arrangements), on this occasion the generator did not start due to a component failure in the control panel. As a result Witney Community Hospital was without power for a period of hours and activated their business continuity plan. This event validated the need to progress the estates and facilities programme of work (see section 3.3)

Industrial action took place during October 2014 and services activated their business continuity plans to ensure the impact on patients was minimised and there were sufficient staff with appropriate skills in place to continue to provide a safe and high quality standard of care.

# Conclusion

In line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, emergency planning and business continuity continues to be a core function of the NHS[[1]](#footnote-1). This annual report provides assurance that Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust is in compliance with these requirements.

**Katie Cleaver, Emergency Planning Lead**

**on behalf of Yvonne Taylor, Chief Operating Officer**

**06 May 2015**

1. The NHS England Business Plan 2013 - 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)