**Emergency Planning and Business Continuity**

**Annual Report**

**01 April 2013 – 31 March 2014**

# Introduction

This report describes the emergency planning and business continuity activities of Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust during 2013/14 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. Yvonne Taylor is supported by the Associate Director of Operations, Sharon Fennell. 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 Associate Director of Operations with representation from Divisions, 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. Those risks currently identified on the Thames Valley Community Risk Register[[1]](#footnote-1) with a rating of very high include:

* influenza type disease (pandemic)
* fuel shortage
* low temperatures and heavy snow
* storms and gales
* flooding
* local accident on motorways and major truck roads
* international disruption to the oil supply
* foreign nuclear activity affecting the UK

## 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 April 2013. There are several subsidiary plans that link to the major incident plan and each year NHS organisations are required to revise these plans. The following response plans were written and/or reviewed during 2013/14:

* Cold Weather Plan
* Heat Wave Plan
* Hospital Evacuation Plan
* Pandemic Flu Plan
* Psychosocial Plan
* Lockdown Plan
* Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Plan

## Business Continuity Plan

The Trust Business Continuity Plan, which outlines how the Trust will continue to discharge core functions in the event of a disruption to business operations, was reviewed during 2013/14. As a result of the review a programme of work has been implemented by the Associate Director of Facilities to strengthen the Trust’s arrangements in the event of a disruption to the mains water supply. The Trust Business Continuity Plan is supported by Service Business Continuity Plans which are also reviewed on an annual basis.

# Audits

During 2013/14 NHS England Thames Valley sought assurance regarding the Trust’s preparedness in relation to the core standards for emergency preparedness, resilience and response[[2]](#footnote-2). 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 in December 2013. The Area Team noted the following:

*The Local Health Resilience Partnership panel were impressed with the level of preparedness demonstrated by the Trust and commend all the work that has gone into the internal assurance of trust plans and polices. In particular the panel were impressed by the methodical attention to detail demonstrated with regard to policies and procedures.*

In addition CEAC issued a final internal audit report in July 2013 regarding the Trust’s emergency planning and business continuity arrangements stating excellent assurance on the controls operated.

# Partnership Working

The Trust works in collaboration with a range of partner agencies through formal standing meetings and ad hoc arrangements. Formal committees, of which the Trust was a member during 2013/14, include the Thames Valley Emergency Planning Officers Forum and the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Resilience Groups. The purpose of these groups 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. 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

During 2013/14 loggist training was provided to staff members who will provide note taking support to Directors holding the role of strategic command during an incident. Ad hoc training was also provided to staff members during the year 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. Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust carried out six communications cascades and several table top exercises (with multiagency involvement) during 2013/14 as described in 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 2013/14**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scenario** | **Date** | **Division** |
| Hospital evacuation  | April 2013June 2013August 2013 | Oxfordshire Community Services DivisionMental Health DivisionMental Health Division |
| LRF Communications | July 2013 | Communications Team |
| Winter resilience | October 2013 | Mental Health Division |
| Business continuity | November 2013 | Estates and Facilities  |

# Live Events

During 2013/14 there were several periods of flooding and this provided an opportunity for services to test their business continuity plans which included the relocation of Talking Space and a request from Oxfordshire County Council for NHS support at a Rest Centre.

Woodlands House experienced a disruption to the power supply and a structured debrief session was facilitated by the Emergency Planning Lead to ensure lessons were captured and acted upon. One of the changes made was the installation of a generator permanently on the Woodlands House site. Previously the delivery of a mobile generator had been relied on. A generator was also installed at Mandalay House.

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service were invited to speak at the Trust’s Lessons Learned from Incidents seminar following a fire on a ward at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. This provided an opportunity for staff members to understand the lessons learned by the Fire and Rescue Service and hospital staff members regarding the evacuation and relocation of patients.

# Health Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR) from April 2014

During 2013 Local Health Resilience Partnerships (LHRPs) were formed in order to provide a strategic forum 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. Yvonne Taylor, Chief Operating Officer will provide representation at this forum on behalf of all NHS Trusts in Thames Valley for the period 2014/15.

# Conclusion

In line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 emergency planning and business continuity continues to be a core function of the NHS[[3]](#footnote-3). This annual report provides assurance that Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust is in compliance with these requirements.

**Katie Cleaver, Emergency Planning Lead**

**23 April 2014**

1. The Thames Valley LRF Community Risk Register can be accessed at: http://www.thamesvalleylrf.org.uk/useful-links/publications/risk-register.ashx [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NHS Commissioning Board Core Standards for Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR), published on 7 January 2013 <http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/gov/eprr/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The NHS England Business Plan 2013 - 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)