

Improving civil contingencies planning

Report supplement: Survey data and examples of current practice



Prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission
August 2009

Auditor General for Scotland

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Part 1. Introduction

1. On 6 August 2009, Audit Scotland published a report, *Improving civil contingencies planning*, on behalf of the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission.
2. The Civil Contingencies Act was passed in 2004, and established a new legislative framework for civil protection across the UK. The Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005 describe how the provisions of the UK Act should be implemented in Scotland. Our report highlights progress made since the implementation of this legislation. The report does not attempt to make judgements on how individual emergencies have been dealt with, the adequacy of plans in place or the level of preparedness of any individual organisation, sector or Scotland as a whole.
3. The full report is available on our website (<http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk>), and presents a national picture of Scotland's civil contingencies planning arrangements at the time of our main audit work in 2008; we recognise that more progress may have been made since then. The study generated a lot of interesting data but not all of it could be included in the main report. Therefore we have produced this supplementary material, which provides more detail for practitioners and may also be of wider general interest.
4. The data presented consists of:
 - survey findings – results of our survey of 64 Category 1 responders that operate exclusively in Scotland (police forces, fire and rescue services, local authorities, local health boards, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS)). Category 1 responders are defined as those public sector organisations providing vital services in an emergency.
 - examples of current practice.
5. For further information about this supplementary material, please contact Kirsten Paterson (kpaterson@audit-scotland.gov.uk).

Part 2. Working together

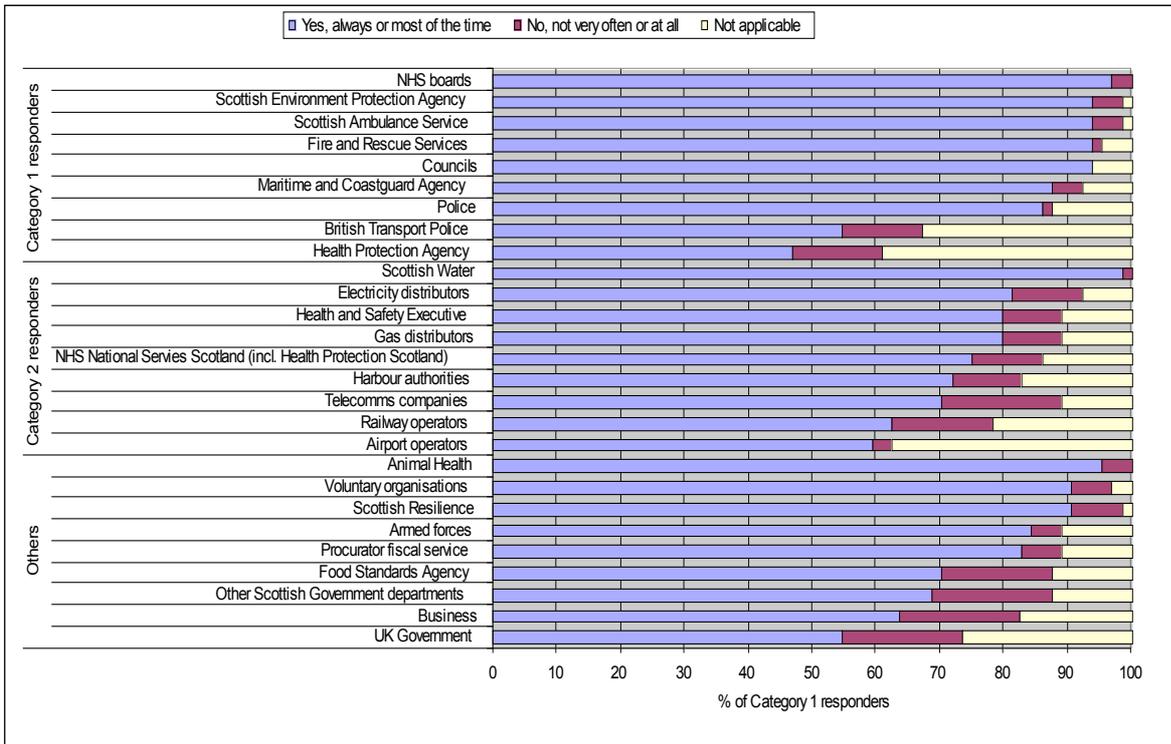
6. Part 2 of the main report considers the ways in which key organisations and the Scottish Government are co-operating to prepare for civil contingencies. The main findings are that:
 - Organisations co-operate well with each other, but the lack of a consistent approach to information sharing could limit effective joint working both within and outwith SCG areas.
 - The SCGs have added value as forums for joint working in their areas but have still to fully address some key issues and they could work together better across boundaries.
 - Ensuring that all key organisations are effectively involved in multi-agency planning is a challenge. Member organisations do not always attend SCG meetings and are not always represented at a level that allows effective participation.
 - The Scottish Government has been active in supporting the implementation of the Act, but the increased priority given to this at a national level has placed greater demands on local responders.
 - Governance and accountability arrangements for multi-agency civil contingencies planning are unclear.

Co-operation and information sharing (see pages 12-14 of the main report)

7. The Civil Contingences Act 2004 places duties on Category 1 and 2 responders to share information freely with each other (except some sensitive information), and to co-operate with each other in the performance of their duties. Most Category 1 responders in our survey reported that other Category 1 responders, Category 2 responders and other relevant organisations co-operate appropriately with them. Over 90 per cent of Category 1 responders reported that they receive appropriate levels of co-operation from key organisations such as NHS boards, councils, fire and rescue services, Scottish Ambulance Service, SEPA, Scottish Water, Animal Health, Scottish Resilience and voluntary organisations. However, respondents viewed the level of co-operation among those organisations which have limited or no involvement in SCGs as much lower (Exhibit A).

Exhibit A

Overall, does your organisation receive the appropriate level of co-operation to deliver effective civil contingencies planning, from the following organisations?

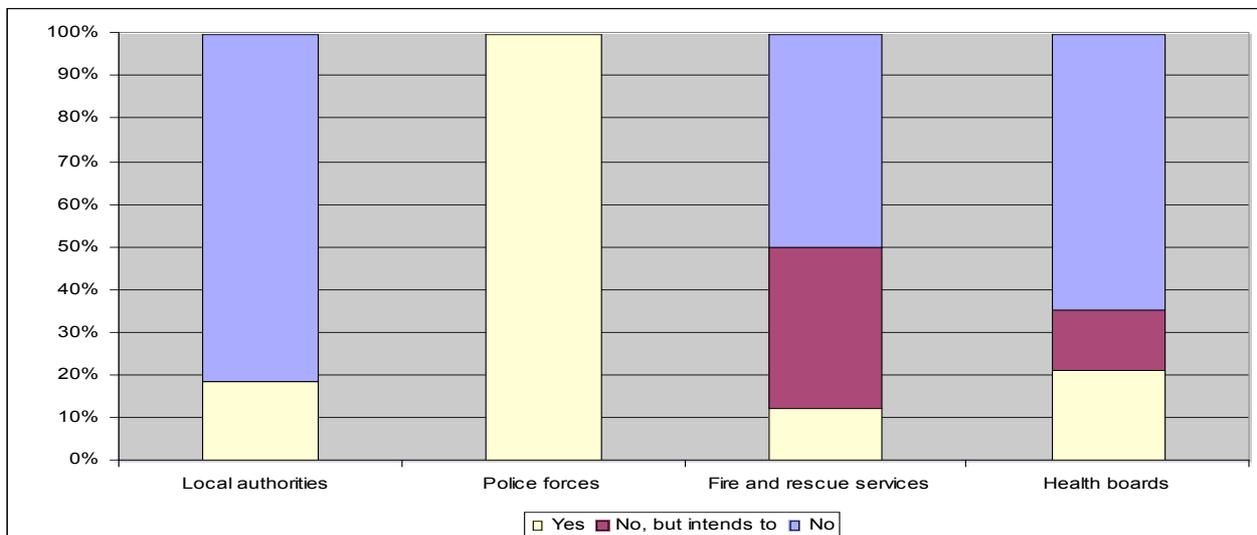


Source: Audit Scotland survey

8. We found that there are some barriers to sharing information between Category 1 and 2 responders, including different approaches to sharing sensitive information. Some organisations use the Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS), an administrative system created by the UK government to ensure that access to information is appropriately managed. Although all police forces use this system, the extent to which it is used in other sectors varies (Exhibit B).

Exhibit B

Does your organisation use the Government Protective Marking Scheme?



Source: Audit Scotland survey

9. Grampian Strategic Coordinating Group has developed an information sharing protocol, based on the GPMS, which allows information to be shared between organisations, even if they don't all use GPMS (Current practice example 1).

Current practice example 1: Grampian SCG's protocol for handling sensitive information

SCGs currently use the Government protective marking scheme, which is linked to the vetting procedure (and therefore has cost implications). However this leads to difficulties in sharing restricted documents as police, NHS and Scottish Government are signed up to this, but other organisations, for example local authorities, are not.

Grampian SCG has come up with a workable solution, using the existing scheme to enable sensitive information to be shared with people whose employer isn't signed up to the GPMS. The legislation allows this, if sharing the information is in the public interest.

Grampian SCG has produced a document to this effect and shared it with the Scottish Government and other SCG areas.

Source: Grampian SCG

The role of government (see page 20 of the main report)

10. The study found that there is some confusion around the different roles the Scottish and UK governments may have during an emergency, and the extent to which they can intervene in local arrangements. Current practice example 2 describes the difficulties in testing UK emergency arrangements alongside Scottish and local arrangements, especially where the lead responder is a reserved organisation.

Current practice example 2: Difficulties in testing UK, Scottish and local arrangements

Exercise Unicorn was held in Aberdeen in June 2008. It was jointly led by the Westminster-based Department of Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR; energy has since become the responsibility of the Department of Energy and Climate Change) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Although the exercise took place within the Grampian Strategic Coordinating Group area, the SCG was not involved in its development and Grampian police was the only SCG member to participate. The exercise was a test of Maritime and Coastguard Agency, BERR, oil company, and the Secretary of State's Representative (SOSREP)¹ command and control centre arrangements, rather than a full test of local response arrangements.

Links to the UK Government were provided through representatives of BERR and SOSREP. The Scottish Government was represented by the Fisheries Research Service (now part of Marine Scotland) but the Scottish Government Resilience Room and Grampian Strategic Coordinating Group were not included as part of the exercise arrangements.

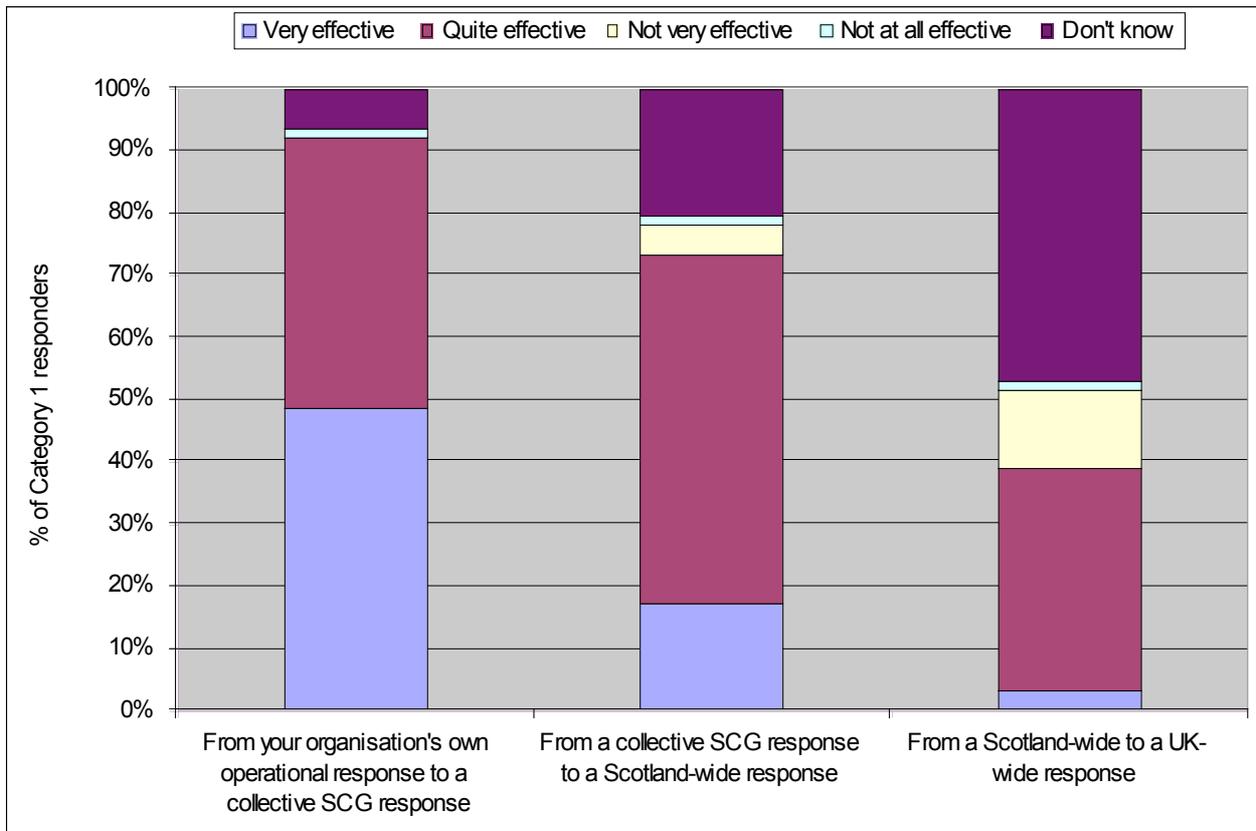
Source: Audit Scotland

11. Perhaps because of the need for more clarity on roles and responsibilities at different levels, Category 1 responders were less confident of the effectiveness of arrangements in place to provide a smooth escalation of response to a Scotland or UK-wide emergency than to a local emergency (Exhibit C).

¹ The Secretary of State's representative (SOSREP) has ultimate powers to intervene on behalf of Secretary of State for Transport in any salvage situation or situation where there is a threat of significant pollution, and liaises closely with MCA's directorate of operations.

Exhibit C

How would you rate the arrangements for providing a smooth escalation of response to emergencies?



Source: Audit Scotland survey

Part 3. Planning for a resilient Scotland

12. Part 3 of the main report looks at the progress that has been made by Category 1 responders in Scotland in assessing risks and planning for civil contingencies, both individually and with their Strategic Coordinating Group partners. The key messages are that:
- There is no comprehensive risk assessment process or risk register at a Scottish level.
 - All SCGs have produced and published a CRR but the contribution these make to national risk assessments and local civil contingencies planning has been limited.
 - Most Category 1 responders have developed generic emergency plans, but there is variation in how guidance about content has been adopted.
 - Most Category 1 responders are involved in multi-agency planning, but joint plans and cross-boundary working could be improved.
 - Planning for business continuity management and recovery are not yet well developed.
 - The public are generally not well informed about risks and not all Category 1 responders have arrangements in place for informing the public during an emergency.

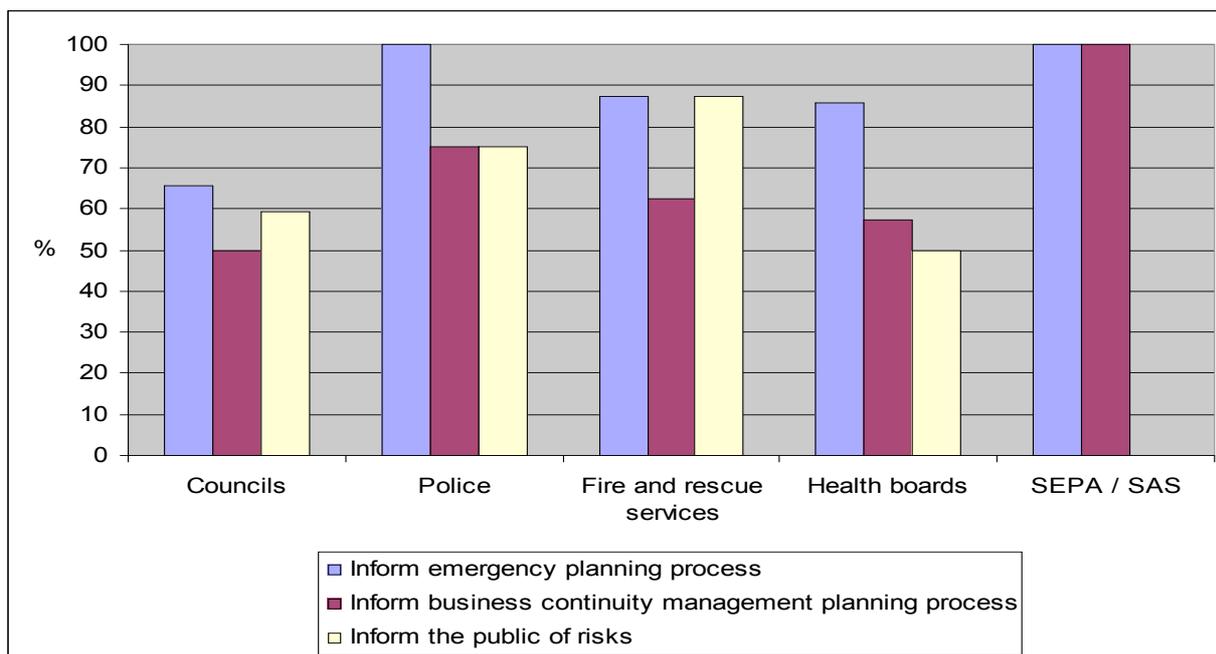
Risk assessment (see pages 23-26 of the main report)

13. The Civil Contingencies Act includes a duty for all Category 1 responders to assess the risk of emergencies occurring, and if necessary plan for this eventuality. The Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005 state that within their SCG groups, Category 1 responders should co-operate in maintaining a Community Risk Register (CRR) of risk assessments carried out by Category 1 responders within their police force area. The CRRs should then be used to provide *‘the basis for supporting the preparation of emergency plans’* in that area.² All Category 1 responders within six of the eight SCGs reported using their CRR to inform emergency planning processes. Fourteen organisations (one in Highlands and Islands SCG and 13 in Strathclyde) reported not using them in this way. Even fewer organisations reported that they use CRRs to inform their business continuity planning (Exhibit D).

² *Preparing Scotland*, Scottish Government, 2007.

Exhibit D

Has your organisation used the SCG Community Risk Register to inform emergency planning or business continuity management planning, or to inform the public of risks?



Source: Audit Scotland survey

14. Current practice example 3 illustrates how the CRR is used to inform planning in Central Scotland SCG area.

Current practice example 3: Using a CRR to inform planning (Central SCG)

When Central Scotland SCG's Community Risk Register was being produced, the SCG wanted each member organisation to take a full and active part in its development through its Support Group. The CRR was to be the foundation for all SCG members' planning in Central Scotland. The original document was initially drawn from the *Preparing Scotland* template and then developed locally to reflect risks within the three local authority areas of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling.

Each organisation was tasked with identifying relevant risks, from the *Preparing Scotland* list and also other known local risks. A lead organisation was attached to each risk to carry out a risk assessment and the final reports were then collated and managed by Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service, which was responsible for leading the CRR working group.

Once completed, Clackmannanshire Council compared the risks in the CRR to those in its Major Emergencies Operational Procedures (MOPS) manual to ensure the council's generic plan would meet the required responses for each particular risk. Some risks required further guidance to be added. Both the CRR and the MOPS manual are living documents, constantly being reviewed and updated.

Source: Clackmannanshire Council

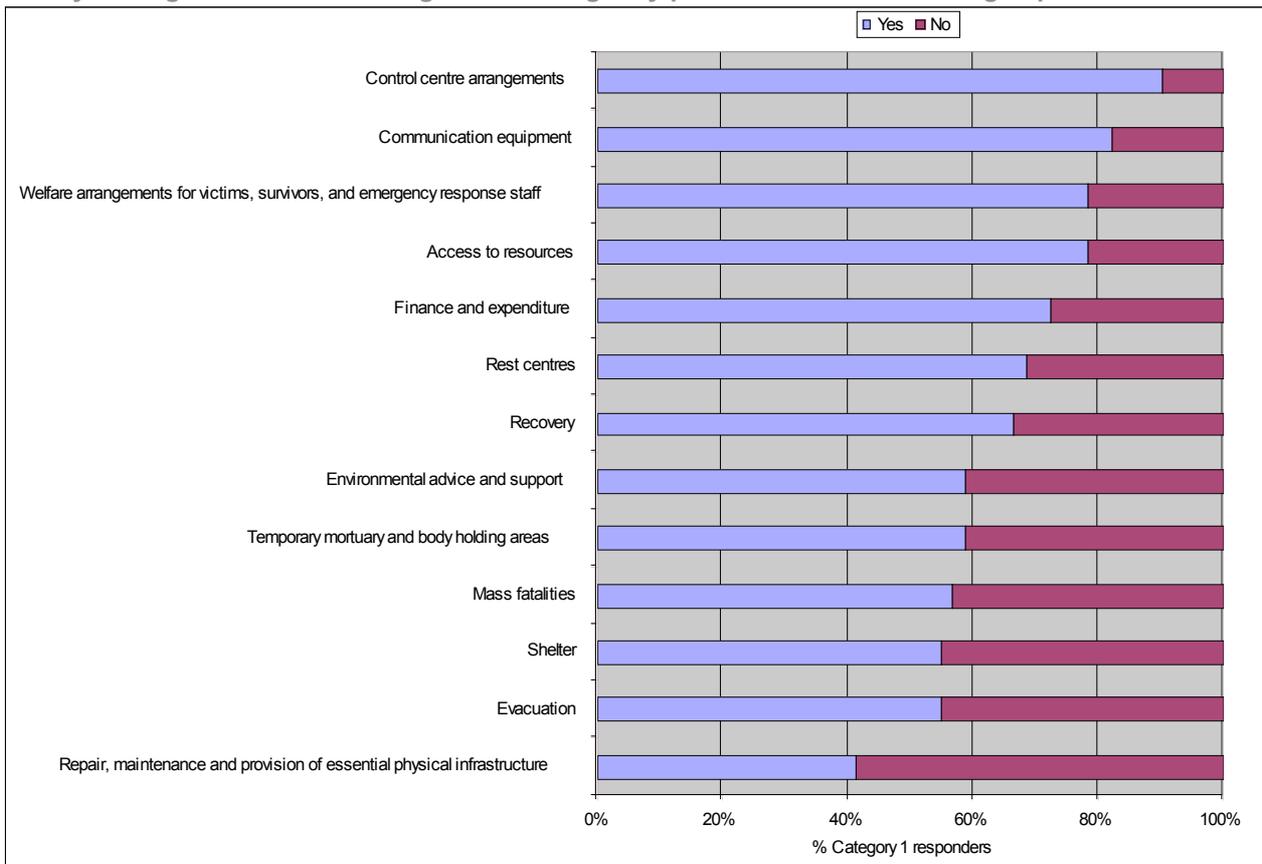
Generic emergency plans (see pages 26-27 of the main report)

15. The Regulations state that Category 1 responders 'must maintain plans which relate to more than one emergency or more than one kind of emergency'. These are known as generic plans, and they enable responders to plan to respond to a wide range of emergencies, irrespective of the cause. Each Scottish Category 1 responder must maintain generic plans for both business continuity and responding to emergencies.

16. Most Category 1 responders (80 per cent) have now produced their own generic emergency plan. The remaining organisations (seven councils, four fire and rescue services, one police force and one NHS board) were in the process of developing them at the time of our survey in 2008.
17. *Preparing Scotland* provides guidance as to what organisations should include in their generic emergency plans. This covers both management procedures and supporting capabilities and resource requirements. Our survey found that the extent to which Category 1 responders' followed this guidance varies (Exhibit E).

Exhibit E

Does your organisation's formal generic emergency plan include the following capabilities?



Base: 51 (those Category 1 responders with a generic emergency plan in place)

Source: Audit Scotland survey

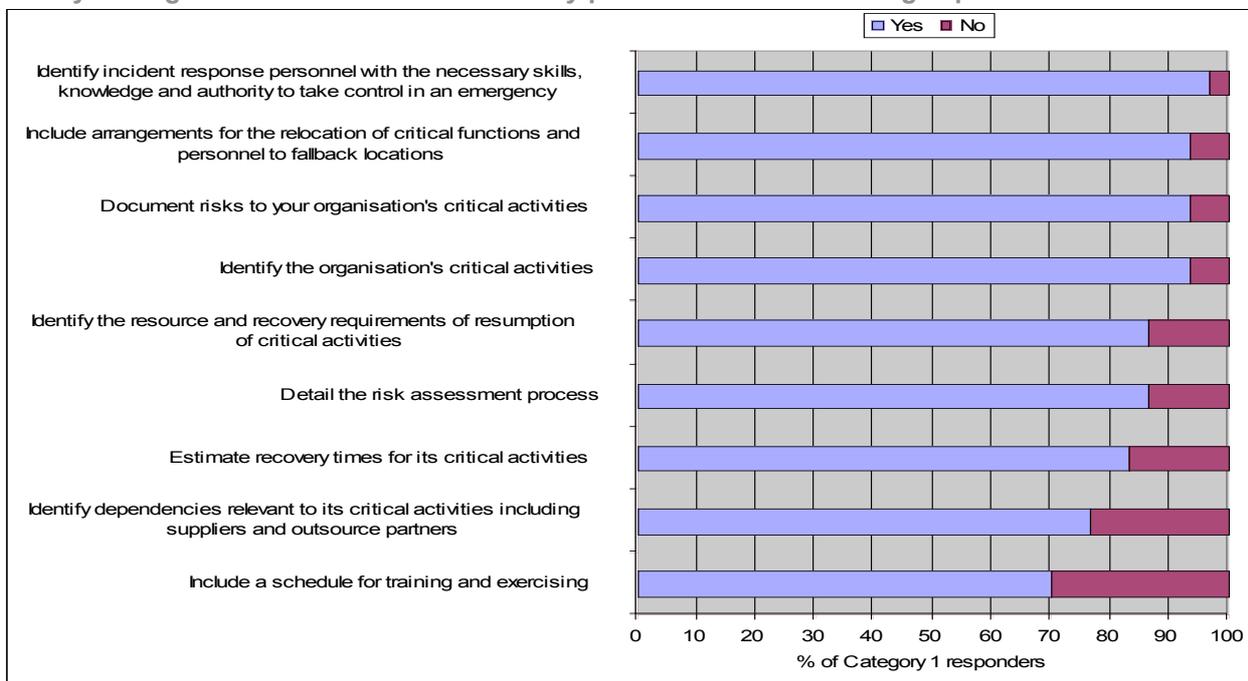
Business continuity management (see pages 28-29 of the main report)

18. Business continuity management (BCM) is a process for organisations of all types to ensure they can continue to delivery key services during any kind of disruption. The Act places a duty on Category 1 responders to maintain business continuity plans.
19. Almost half (47 per cent) of Category 1 responders reported having a formally agreed corporate business continuity management plan in place, and the same proportion had one in development. Not all Category 1 responders' business continuity plans included key information such as named incident response staff, the critical activities of the organisation and their estimated recovery times,

arrangements for relocation of critical functions and staff, or identification of areas (such as suppliers) on which delivery of their critical functions are dependent (Exhibit F).

Exhibit F

Does your organisation's business continuity plan include the following aspects?



Base: 30 (those Category 1 responders with a business continuity management plan in place)

Source: Audit Scotland survey

20. The British Standards Institute has introduced a standard for business continuity management (BSI 25999). Scottish Borders Council was the first local authority in the UK to achieve this standard (Current practice example 4).

Current practice example 4: Scottish Borders Council and BS 25999

British Standard 25999 *'provides a basis for understanding, developing and implementing business continuity within your organisation and gives you confidence in business-to-business and business-to-customer dealing.'*³

Scottish Borders Council business continuity project arose when the council was developing its Corporate Risk Register and found it was failing to comply with the Civil Contingencies Act due to its lack of business continuity planning. It sought to establish business continuity plans throughout the council to ensure the continual delivery of critical services in the event of a major operational disruption.

The council developed template plans to be used by suppliers/partners to develop business continuity plans for their own organisations and there are plans to extend this via the council's procurement unit.

Scottish Borders Council has sent its 'Guide to Business Continuity Planning' to businesses and voluntary organisations throughout the area. The council was awarded BS 25999 in November 2008.

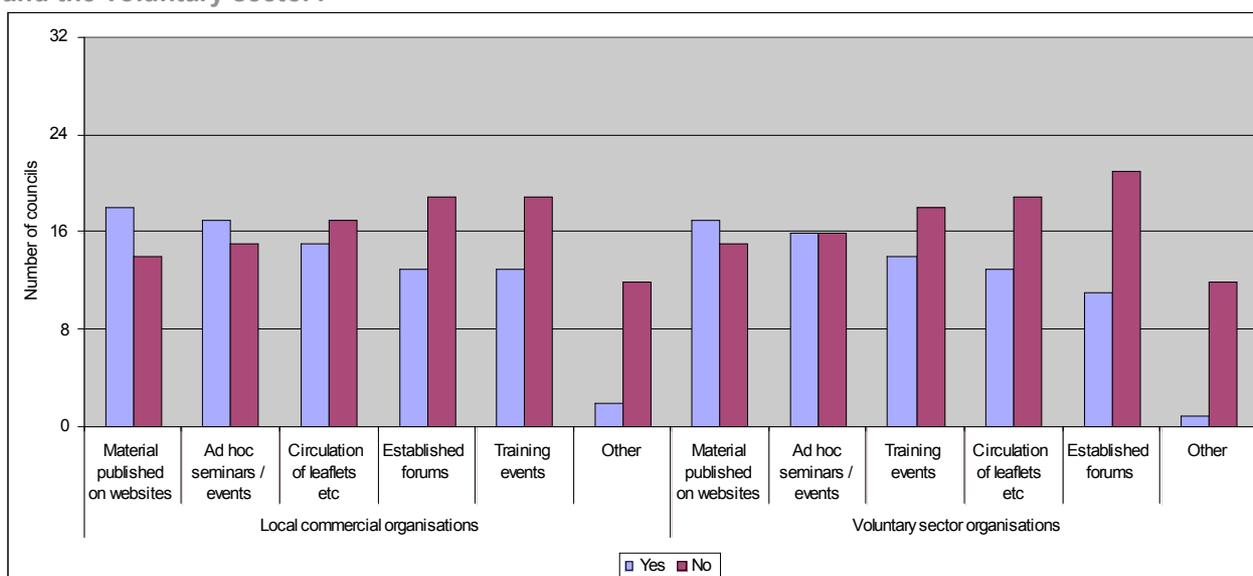
Source: Scottish Borders Council

³ BSI 25999, Business Standards Institution Group, 2006 and 2007.

21. The resilience of commercial and voluntary organisations to emergencies is important to the recovery of communities. As well as providing their own essential services to the public, they may also be involved in delivering some local authority services, and it is important that they are prepared for emergencies and have business continuity arrangements in place. Therefore, the Regulations place an additional duty on local authorities to provide advice and assistance on business continuity management to local businesses and voluntary organisations. Twenty-four councils reported that they provide this for both businesses and voluntary organisations, through a variety of means (Exhibit G).

Exhibit G

Does the council use any of the following to provide business continuity advice to local business and the voluntary sector?



Source: Audit Scotland survey

22. There is very little targeted BCM advice and promotion and it is most often provided by publication of information on websites and in leaflets, which rely on commercial and voluntary organisations being proactive in seeking advice. Perhaps as a result of this, our study also found that there is little awareness within the voluntary sector of the benefits of BCM, how it applies to their organisations, or of the provision of advice by local authorities. None of the voluntary sector organisations interviewed had sought advice from local authorities.⁴

23. Current practice example 5 describes East Lothian Council's approach to promoting business continuity management to local businesses and voluntary organisations.

⁴ British Red Cross; Salvation Army; the Samaritans; WRVS; Mountain Rescue Committee for Scotland; and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Current practice example 5: East Lothian Council's guide to business continuity planning

East Lothian Council developed a 'Guide to Business Continuity Planning' for businesses and voluntary organisations. The guide covers legislation and guidance, information on the type of incidents to plan for, a five step guide to business continuity planning, frequently asked questions and useful contacts. There is also a website based business continuity plan template that can be used by businesses and the voluntary sector.

To gain a picture of the level of understanding of business continuity planning prior to circulating the guide, a survey of businesses was conducted. It found that two-thirds of local businesses did not understand the term business continuity planning. The council also tried to raise awareness of the need for business continuity planning through articles in their quarterly 'Business Buzz' magazine.

The guide was then sent to various council buildings (such as libraries and community centres) and 2,000 local businesses. The survey of businesses will be repeated in 2009 by East Lothian Council to measure the impact of the guidance.

This guidance has now been adopted by Highland Opportunity, Midlothian Council, North Ayrshire Council, Scottish Borders Council and South Lanarkshire Council.

Source: East Lothian Council

Part 4. Learning lessons from training, exercises and incidents

24. Part 4 of the main report looks at how training and exercising complements the planning process, and explores the need for better sharing of lessons identified from exercises and incidents. The key messages are:

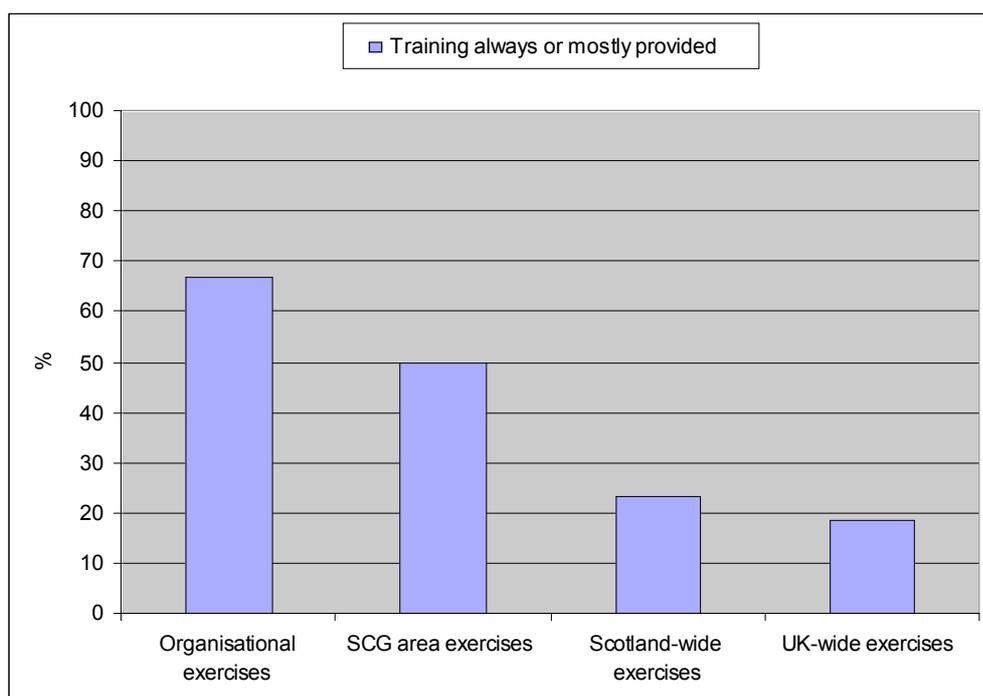
- A complex training and exercising landscape places significant resource demands on key organisations, making participation and effective coordination difficult.
- There is limited testing of cross-border or cross-boundary arrangements.
- Most Category 1 responders with generic emergency plans have tested them, but this is not the case for business continuity plans.
- Lessons learned from incidents and exercises are not always shared widely or systematically put into practice.

Training (see pages 32-34 of the main report)

25. As well as exercising plans, the Regulations state that staff should receive training so that plans can be carried out. Training ensures that participants understand their role and responsibilities and it can be helpful for them to receive training prior to plans being exercised. We found that although most Category 1 responders provided training before an organisational exercise, staff were less likely to receive training prior to regional, Scottish or UK-wide exercises (Exhibit H).

Exhibit H

How often, if at all, is relevant training provided prior to exercises?

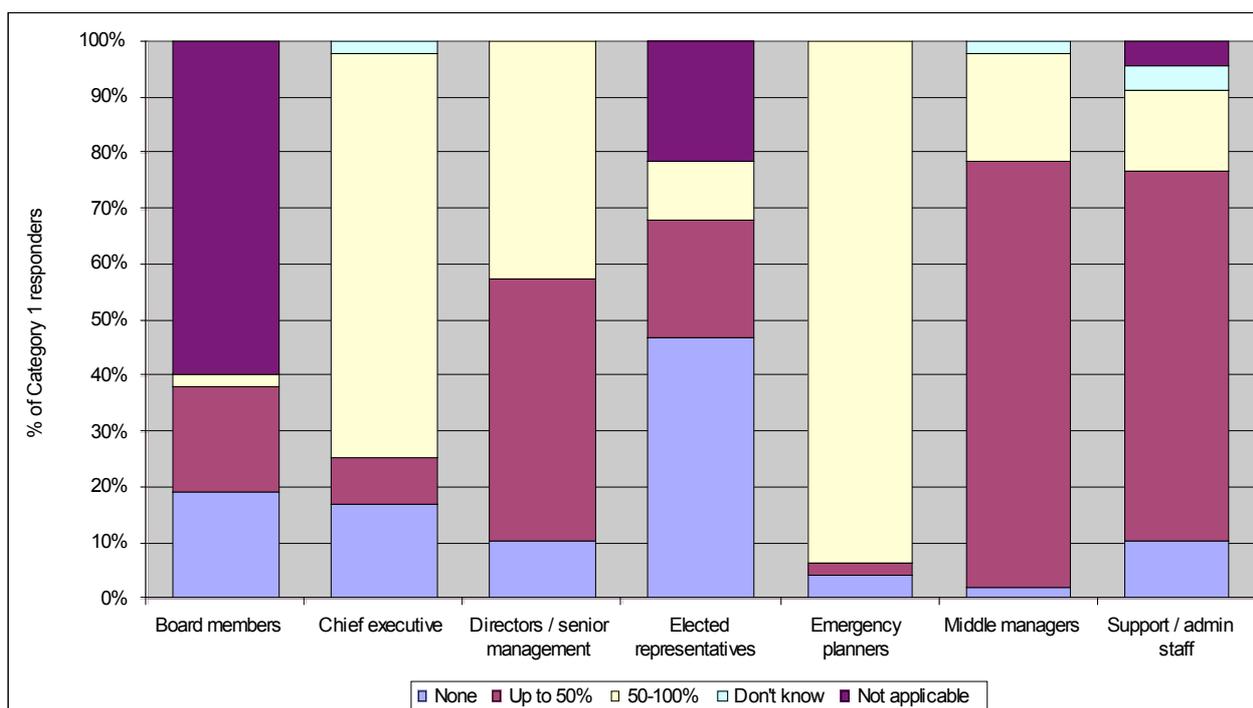


Source: Audit Scotland survey

26. Training on preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies should be available across all levels of organisations, to help embed civil contingencies planning within organisational structures. Excluding the emergency services which train all staff in dealing with emergencies due to the nature of their day-to-day business, we found that most other Category 1 responders had provided some formal training related to responding to or recovering from emergencies to some of their middle and senior managers in the previous two years. However, only nine organisations had provided training to all senior managers, and only two to all middle managers (Exhibit I).

Exhibit I

What proportion of the following groups in your organisation undertook formal training in preparing for, responding to, or recovery from emergencies, in the last two years?



Base = 47 (not including police forces, fire and rescue services or the Scottish Ambulance Service)

Source: Audit Scotland survey

27. Few local authorities, police forces or fire and rescue services have provided training for elected members on their public-facing role following an emergency. Current practice example 6 is about a booklet Clackmannanshire Council has produced and distributed for this purpose.

Current practice example 6: Clackmannanshire Emergency Planning Unit – elected members' emergency guidance booklet

The emergency guidance booklet was designed to provide Clackmannanshire Council's elected members with a clear overview of the council's emergency response processes, together with a suite of guidelines informing members of their important role and duties before, during and after an incident. It was launched at an elected member's workshop on emergency planning and business continuity in April 2008, where members received a hard copy. It was then posted on the council's intranet site.

The council thinks that the booklet has been very beneficial to the council's emergency planning and response processes. It believes that elected members now have an understanding of the Civil Contingencies Act and know the communication links and how they will be kept informed. They are also aware of responders' roles and responsibilities at the various stages of an incident.

Source: Clackmannanshire Council

Part 5. Costs, capacity and performance

28. In Part 5 of the main report, the resources supporting civil contingencies planning activity are considered, as well as performance and financial management and potential for increased efficiencies. The key messages are:

- There is no clear information on how much is spent on civil contingencies planning across Scotland.
- There is potential for more effective use of resources and to increase capacity through closer collaboration between organisations, for example through formal mutual aid agreements and the sharing of resources.
- Performance management at national, regional and local levels is limited.

Resources (see pages 37-42 of the main report)

29. Responding to, and recovering from, emergencies and major incidents can be costly for the organisations involved. Sometimes compensation may be claimed to recover some of the money spent, for example from the Scottish or UK governments. For this to be possible it is important that organisations clearly record any expenditure. We found that few Category 1 responders record information in this way. Current practice example 7 shows a breakdown of NHS Borders' expenditure in relation to an anthrax related death in 2006.

Current practice example 7: Incident costs – NHS Borders' anthrax case

In July 2006, someone died in the Scottish Borders after inhaling anthrax. This was the first death from anthrax in the UK in over 30 years, and the first by inhaling the spores in over 100 years. The man's home was cordoned off and an incident control team set up. NHS Borders traced individuals known to have had access to the building where the exposure to anthrax occurred. These individuals were then assessed for risk of infection and action was taken as required. The investigation lasted approximately a year and involved a wide range of agencies, culminating in a fatal accident inquiry in November 2008. There was a clearly managed accounting process to deal with the costs. The total cost was around £500,000.

Description	Amount
1. Salaries for additional staff hours worked	£7,960.85
2. Emergency response vehicle	£7,575.00
3. Maintenance and equipment	£4,512.16
4. Hire charges	£7,500.51
5. Consultancy fees	£2,000.00
6. Lothian and Borders police fees	£22,970.52
7. Medical fees	£225.05
8. Specialist contractor fees (Health Protection Agency, SABRE and specialist waste disposal service)	£227,291.93
9. Health Protection Agency costs:	
a. Hawick	£119,902.87
b. Smailholm	£27,785.00
10. Incident costs general	£37,129.00
Total	£464,852.89

Source: NHS Borders and BBC News

30. There is a lack of information available on the physical resources available to each Category 1 responder. Although the emergency services have systems in place to identify their resources, for example equipment and infrastructure, these are not joined up across sectors. During emergencies it may be helpful to know what equipment is available and where it is held. Current practice example 8 describes how a need for this kind of system was identified following severe floods in Hull in 2008.

Current practice example 8: Managing knowledge about local capacity – the 2007 floods in Kingston-upon-Hull

In June 2007, the city of Kingston upon Hull experienced unusually high rain fall, receiving the equivalent of around a month's rainfall in 24 hours. Subsequent flooding caused widespread disruption, including damage to 8,649 homes and over 1,300 businesses, and impact on 91 of the area's 99 schools. Overall around 22,000 people were directly affected by the floods, and 6,300 had to move into temporary accommodation.

After the flooding, Hull City Council commissioned an Independent Review Body to examine the key factors leading to the flooding in Hull and recommend actions to improve flood prevention in the future.

The review found databases played an important role in helping to locate vulnerable people (eg older people and those with disabilities) for rescue or checking during the emergency and helped to allocate relief funds and maintain contact with vulnerable people in the recovery phase.

It also found that no lists of key strategic locations and infrastructure (eg pumping stations, substations etc) had been agreed by the agencies. The provision of basic protection equipment (eg wellington boots and gloves) could have helped rescue and recovery operations progress more smoothly and the review recommended that appropriate levels of equipment should be available during the response phase and that procurement, storage and distribution of equipment should be centrally coordinated.

This has now been addressed within Hull City Council and the wider Humber Region. Three of the four unitary authorities have developed community plans, detailing additional local capacity and skills that may be needed in emergencies (such as farms with tractors) or people with specialist skills (such as chain saw operators).

Source: Humber Emergency Planning Service

31. There is potential for efficiencies to be achieved in sharing services or procurement between Category 1 responders. Current practice example 9 describes a joint working initiative in Ayrshire.

Current practice example 9: Joint working – the Ayrshire civil contingencies team

The Ayrshire civil contingencies team was set up in December 2008. The team consists of five civil contingencies staff from East, North and South Ayrshire councils, led by a Civil Contingencies Manager. A steering group comprising one senior officer from each council has been established to provide strategic direction, oversee financial management and monitor the team's effectiveness.

The Civil Contingencies Manager is responsible for the day-to-day administration and management of the team, including personnel, performance management, property maintenance, information and communication technology support, and financial administration and budgetary control, subject to the overall supervision of the steering group. The steering group has agreed a budget for the team for the current financial year and will review and set future budgets on an annual basis. Each council retains responsibility for its own staff costs and has transferred its budget for non-staff costs to fund the team's operating costs. Strathclyde police force is likely to locate one officer on site most of the time and other agencies will use the office to "Hot Desk".

The expected benefits include each member of staff gaining more holistic support and each local authority gaining increased resilience, strength and knowledge through the sharing of their respective skill base.

Source: North Ayrshire Council

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