Business Continuity Management: Exercise Guidance for local responders with the statutory duties of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

1.   Introduction to BCM national guidance

1.1   Business Continuity Management has been defined in the BSI British Standard BS25999 as representative of the following:

"A holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organization and the impacts to business operations that those threats, if realized, might cause, and which provides a framework for building organizational resilience with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities"

(Source: BSI, 2006)

1.2   The Government aims to ensure local responders are discharged with *Civil Protection* duties and under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA, 2004) are fully prepared for the disruptive impacts associated with *civil emergencies*. This includes the statutory duty to maintain Business Continuity Management (BCM) for the purposes of ensuring the smooth running of the organisation during disruptive challenges. The guidance is aimed at local level responders and takes account of the advent of the new British Standard (BS25999) on BCM and its requirement although not legislative forms a foundation for consolidated industry practice based on the development of a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS). A key objective of exercising and testing local responder BCM is the comprehensive delivery of all formative stages of the BCM Lifecycle as outlined in figure 1.1 below.
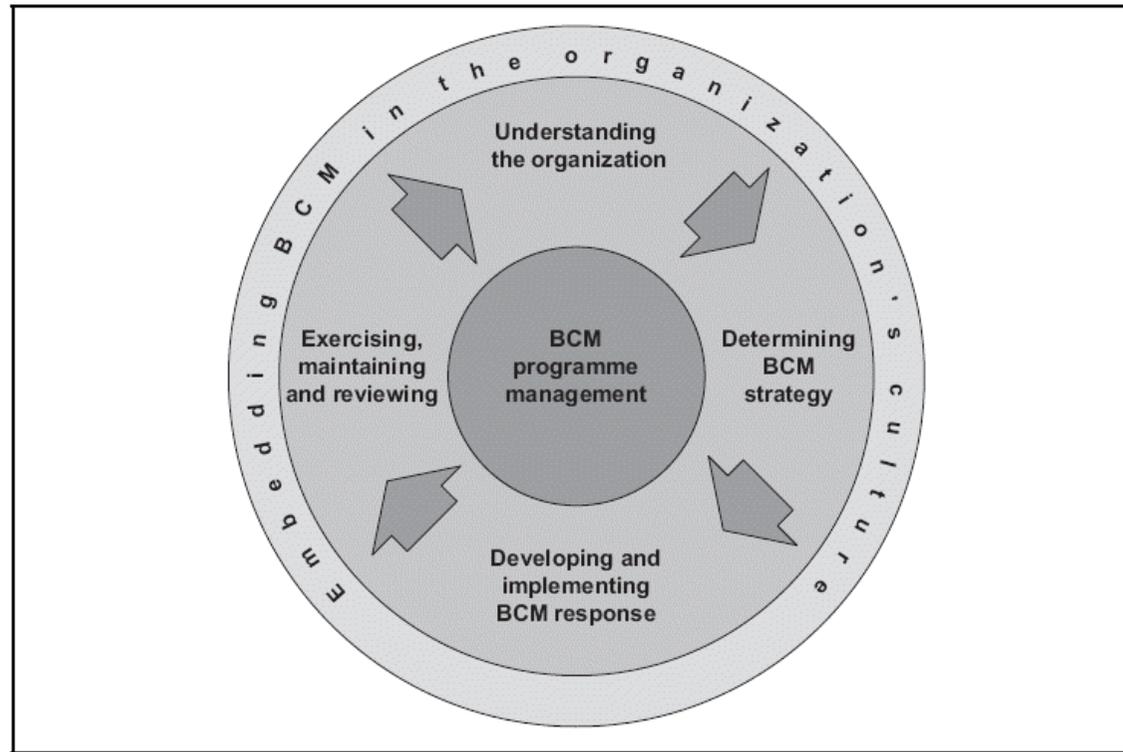
Figure 1.1 *Showing the Business Continuity Management Lifecycle as identified in*
BS25999-1: Code of Practice for BCM (2006)

1.2   Effective exercising and testing of all the elements of the local responder organisation and its own BCM capability cannot be assured without first progressing methodically through all the stages in the Figure 1.1 in the Lifecycle. This guidance document has been developed in direct consultation with the Civil Contingencies Secretariat by a range of local responders, academics and professionals. It provides national guidance on BCM exercising and assumes that your organisation has already developed its BCMS and is at or nearing the point of exercising its evolving capability with regard to BCM. This work aims to provide good practical advice and guidance to responder organisations with regard to their duty to undertake BCM exercises. It is further recognised that the unique nature of some organisations, the culture of work and management style may require a general adaptation of this guidance to suit given circumstances.

2. What constitutes a BCM exercise?

2.1 An exercise or simulation that involves a disruptive challenge and its impacts on an organisation and tests or exercises part or all of its BCM arrangements. Exercises are undertaken with three main purposes:

- validation - to validate and identify improvement opportunities in existing arrangements ;
- training - to develop staff competencies and confidence by giving them practice in carrying out their roles in a incident ; and
- testing - to test existing procedures, plans and systems to ensure they function correctly and offer the degree of protection expected.

3. Why local responders should exercise and improve their BCM?

3.1 BCM arrangements cannot be considered effective until they are exercised and have been proved to be workable, especially since false confidence may be placed in the integrity of a written plan. In addition, it will lead to the improvement of BCM capability by:

- rehearsing the organisation's ability to continue to deliver acceptable levels of key products and services and/ or rapidly recover from a disruptive incident(s).
- verifying that the BCP incorporates all organisational critical activities and their dependencies and priorities;
- ensuring that incident management and recovery arrangements are robust and workable
- highlighting assumptions which need to be questioned;
- instilling confidence amongst exercise participants and associated stakeholders;
- raising awareness of business continuity throughout the organisation by publicising the exercise;
- validating the effectiveness and timeliness of restoration of critical activities and resource requirements; and
- demonstrating competence of the primary response teams and their alternatives.

3.2 Exercises provide demonstrable evidence of BCM and Incident Management competence and capability which has been developed within the Category 1 Responder organisation. No matter how well designed and thought-out a BCM strategy or plan appears to be, a series of robust and realistic exercises will identify areas that require amendment. Time and resources spent proving BCM strategies by exercising will lead to a fit-for-purpose capability. A continued focus on realistic testing supported by effective training will help staff maintain a flexible and robust response framework that encapsulates Incident Management protocols BCM objectives and recovery targets when dealing with wide ranging impacts attributed to operational disruption.

4. Exercising BCM arrangements under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004)

4.1 CCA (2004) Regulation 25(a) requires Category One Responders to include provision for the carrying out of exercises and for the training of staff in emergency plans. The same requirements apply to BCM. This means relevant planning documents must contain a statement about the nature of the training and exercising to be provided and its frequency. A fundamental objective of this guidance is to encourage the ongoing maintenance of a BCM programme of exercises that progressively increases the responder organisation's BCM capability in line with recognised BCM Lifecycle.

5. BCM exercising – the pre-requisites

5.1 The following points are fundamental to the success of all stages of BCM exercising. Category 1 Responders **should** apply the principles of BCM to ensure exercises are correctly developed, adequately supported, effectively managed and lessons identified are captured and taken forward. Fundamental to any exercise is the ability of the participating stakeholders to learn and apply lessons which underpin every day practices. All organisations have differing learning styles and a key consideration is the degree to which an organisation and participating staff have the capacity to adapt and learn from exercises. This ability to adapt and learn can be compromised by influential stakeholders with fixed views, limited understanding and faulty rationalisations on:

- how prepared the organisation is to respond to a disruptive challenge;
- how prepared the organisation **should** be (linked to risk awareness and appetite); and
- how much time, resources and effort the organisation **should** commit to the BCM programme.

5.2 Exercises provide a rich environment in which a broad range of stakeholders can gain a deeper and fuller appreciation of these factors. The outcomes of exercises and testing procedures **should** provide a credible

- demonstration of capability to stakeholders
- assessment of the current state of preparedness
- position for conscious improvement in BCM capabilities

5.3 A BCM exercise programme **should** be devised to provide objective assurance that all arrangements will work as anticipated when required. The delivery of ongoing exercises **should** be challenging enough to ensure capabilities are fully explored. However the concept of "progressive maturity" as discussed later in this document is based on the notion that exercises provide a learning experience that will not excessively overload the responders' capability. A series of exercises might better be designed to progressively test the organisations evolving capabilities and ensure manageable lessons are documented and acted upon as part of a wider progressive and meaningful process.

5.4 An exercise programme requires senior management buy-in at <u>every stage</u>; this may require significant work to underpin the rationale for an ongoing exercise programme and align with the organisation's culture, strategic objectives and operational constraints. BCM can highlight a clear relationship between organisational objectives and critical operational activities and products or services. In such instances senior management **should** have already been made aware of these factors in the earlier stages of the BCM Lifecycle and the ongoing protection of strategic and operational priorities for the organisation **should** be periodically discussed alongside any other compelling reasons to support exercising. In many cases a detailed consideration of permissible and historic events supported by a business case that is linked to the strategic objectives within the organisation may be explored and stressed when briefing senior management. Engaging senior officers is crucial to the success of any major BCM exercise programme because:

- of the influence they have over resource allocation and the culture of an organisation;
- it requires the leverage they exert across the organisation in order to be effective;
- it requires decisions which can only be taken at the top level;
- the top team is responsible for ensuring and demonstrating effective governance;

5.5 Exercises **should** be designed to validate the procedures and protocols that staff are expected to implement during an incident. Staff **should** receive appropriate training prior to exercising in relation to their assigned roles and responsibilities. Category 1 Responders are reminded of the pitfalls of relying solely on those who are regular participants in training, exercises and incidents. The hallmark of embedding BCM is a wider transition and enlargement of support from all quarters of the organisation.

5.6 Training and exercising are distinctly <u>separate</u> elements of the BCM lifecycle e.g. training is not an exercise and vice versa. Exercises provide valuable learning opportunities which are difficult to replicate in a training environment. Rehearsing key staff is only one of the three principle purposes of BCM exercising validating plans and testing systems being the others. In these circumstances, it may be unavoidable and, especially in the case of systems testing, essential that certain key personnel are involved in the exercises. However, if individual members of staff are identified as 'critical' to continued provision of a Category 1 Responder's key functions and services, then an appropriate number of alternates **should** be identified, trained and exercised to ensure resilience. The combined effectiveness of roles and responsibilities may be tested to determine the degree of interaction, cross functional jurisdictions, effective decision making and overall competence. (See companion guidance on 'BCM Training' for further details).

6. Exercise Programme Development

6.1 An exercise programme identifies a predetermined schedule covering short, medium and long term objectives in the exercising capability of the organisation. Planners should avoid scheduling exercises which might conflict with busy periods in the organisations calendar to ensure maximum value. The programme is a strategic document that establishes and communicates to the organisation clear objectives that will be expected of all exercising participants. Local Responders are advised to develop a detailed and challenging exercise programmes that:

- outlines a schedule of exercises to be achieved
- develops exercises in line with the scope of the organisation's BCM arrangements
- is flexible enough to deliver a range of different exercises
- provides an overview of current and intended capabilities to be exercised
- highlights those who **should** be involved

6.2   An exercise programme **should** be realistic, achievable, carefully planned, and agreed so there is minimum risk of disruption. The following aspects **should** be considered in the document:

- aim and objectives
- how progressive maturity will be achieved
- type, frequency and complexity of exercises that will support progressive maturity
- stakeholders who will be responsible, accountable, consulted and informed
- financial implications
- opportunities for review and change management between exercises
- senior management ownership and support for the outlined programme

7.   The Exercise Aim and Objectives

7.1   When developing a BCM exercise programme's aim and objectives, local responders **should** have regard for:

- The organisation's strategic objectives
- BCM programme aim and objectives
- Statutory requirements
- Regulatory requirements
- Current and intended BCM maturity within the organisation
- Internal and external stakeholders

8.   Developing mature BCM arrangements

8.1   Every local responder **should** aim to increase their BCM capability by systematically improving the organisations ability to manage the threat of "disruptive challenges" that might interrupt the smooth running of day-to-day activities. Progressive maturity in the local responders BCM programme is best reflected in a focus on continuous improvement and in part on the degree of learning established from a range of carefully planned exercises delivered on a consistent and evolving basis. One key way of determining if an organisation has a mature BCM capability in place would be the

successful delivery against a <u>range</u> of progressively complex exercise formats (as listed in figures 8.2 and 13.1). The importance of organisational learning achieved from exercises cannot be underestimated as this factor will have a significant bearing upon the degree and rate at which an organisation develops a deeper level of BCM capability. Figure 8.1 shows how the organisation's BCM evolves and matures. Ongoing maturity in BCM capabilities can be assessed in part by the successful integration, interaction and improvement between the following elements:

■ **Plans** (encompassing: Incident management, business continuity, and recovery plans)
■ **Individuals** (including the discharge of their roles and responsibilities)
■ **Teams** (including the interactions, coordination and flow of communication)

8.2 The above aspects are inter-related and generally appropriate to all formats and complexities of exercise as listed in Figure 8.2.
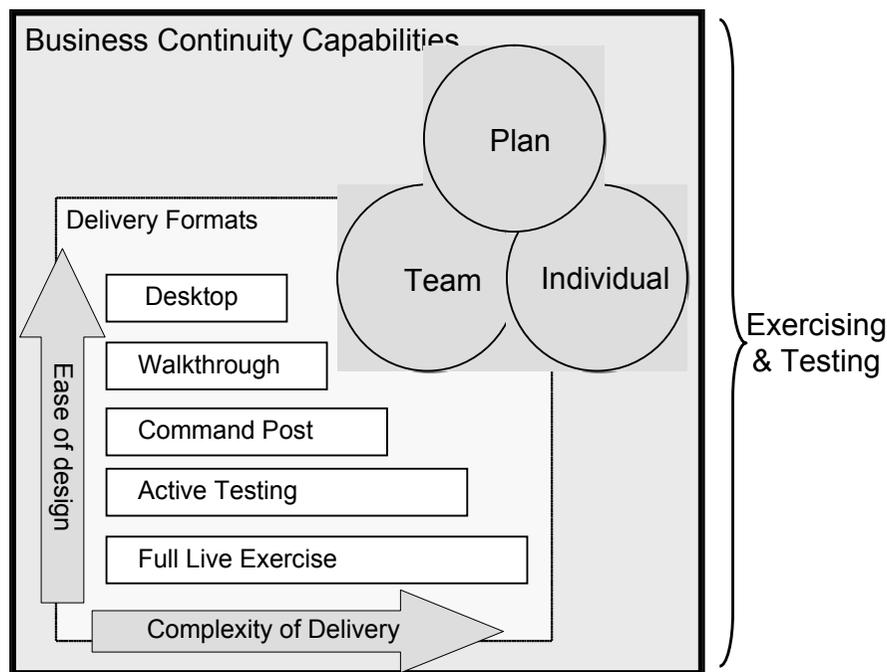

Figure 8.2 demonstrating the relationship between various formats and Complexities of exercise delivery and the component facets related to each exercise such as plans, teams and individuals.

9.   Frequency and Complexity of Exercises

9.1   The frequency and type of exercising utilised is a matter for the individual organisation to determine unless dictated by some other defining source such as legislation or regulatory requirements. However the organisation **should** have regard for the outcomes of prior exercises and incidents when planning and delivering exercises. Ultimately the frequency of exercises **should** reflect the organisations desired BCM requirements as outlined in a documented exercise schedule. A combination of documented evidence and real incident feedback provides an effective means whereby organisational deficiencies or vulnerabilities may be clearly identified, monitored and strengthened.

10.   Involving Stakeholders in Exercises

10.1   It is an established tenant of BCM that local responders **should** not only look at the resilience of internal structures and processes, but also those of organisations that they rely upon or deliver their critical services through. The importance of robust BCM for contracted and partner organisations is emphasised in the Civil Contingencies Act guidance, 'Emergency Preparedness'.

*"*Category 1 responders should ensure supplier and contractor have in place robust Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangement. To ensure the resilience of operations, it is necessary to ensure that other aspects of the delivery chain are resilient to. It is important to build Business Continuity Management (BCM) into procurement and contract management processes.*"*

(Source: Emergency Preparedness, Section 6.93, Page 87)

10.2   Where permissible responder organisations may wish to involve in their own exercise planning an appropriate number of critical contractors or outsourced partners who deliver products and services on behalf of the organisation. There is merit in conducting join exercises as a basis for gaining mutual assurance of each parties own business continuity arrangements and solidifying effective communications and a coordinated response.

11.   The Financial Implications of Exercising

11.1   Strategic planning enables exercises to be resourced appropriately and supports the development of a clear business case aimed at demonstrating cost benefits for senior management. It is worth noting that the costs associated with exercises that involve third party contractors and partners may be shared as a means of reducing the overall cost of exercises.

11.2   To secure appropriate funding for the BCM exercise programme, the following **should** be considered:

■   Number of exercises planned over a given time period (e.g. 0-3 year plan)

- Resources and facilities needed
- Sizes and extent of exercises (see section 3)
- Complexity
- Programme maintenance and improvement cycles planned
- Programme administration and logistics
- Projected cost and time associated with learning and implementation of lessons between exercises

11.3   Striking a balance between the exercise types and the cost benefits **should** be carefully considered <u>before</u> an exercise programme is developed and funding **should** then be secured and signed off.

12.   Post Exercise Review and Change Management

12.1   The exercise programme **should** identify a process for periodic review following each individual exercise as a means of gaining assurance that the programmes aims and objectives are being fully met. It is advisable that the organisation clearly identifies an appropriate mechanism for ensuring timely review and adoption of changes that will form the basis of feedback for improving the exercise programme. In some instances the local responder organisation may over time modify, restructure or develop new strategic and operational priorities or line of work. Under such circumstances the BCM programme and its exercising remit may require review alongside the exercising arrangements against new priorities as part of maintenance and continued improvement requirements. The British Standard BS25999-2 recognises a Plan, Do, Check, and Act approach, commonly called PDCA (see figure 40.1). This simple methodology may prove valuable in supporting a structured approach to progressive review and change management.

12.2   The exercise programme **should** be supported by a portfolio that files and contains a detailed and comprehensive listing of all exercise documentation. This portfolio will support future reviews alongside the prospect of internal/ external audits and self-assessment. A properly implemented and documented Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) as listed in the British Standard (BS25999) will ensure senior management and other interested stakeholders meet corporate governance expectations and are confident that core services and assets of their organisation are being properly protected and such plans are current, workable and exercised frequently. In <u>all cases</u> the exercise debriefing, reports and recommendations arising out of every exercise **should** be listed in the programme schedule and included in the portfolio as reflective evidence.

13.   Exercise Formats and Types

13.1   The following figure listed below (13.1) provides a means of general guidance on the types of exercise that **should** be considered.

Complexity	Exercise	Process	Variants
Simple	Desk check	Review/amendment of content Challenge content of BCP	Update/validation Audit/verification
Medium	Walk-through of plan	Challenge content of BCP	Include interaction and validate participants' roles
	Simulation	Use "artificial" situation to validate that the BCP(s) contains both necessary and sufficient information to enable a successful recovery	Incorporate associated plans
	Exercise critical activities	Invocation in a controlled situation that does not jeopardize business as usual operation	Defined operations from alternative site for a fixed time
Complex	Exercise full BCP, including incident management	Building-/ campus-/ exclusion zone-wide exercise	

Figure 13.1 above highlights the type and complexity of exercises that are applicable to Business Continuity Management.

13.2　It is the responsibility of the programme planners to correctly identify the type of exercise being held in the BC Exercise Programme. However, it is the exercise planning team's responsibility to format the type of exercise to fit the Aim and Objectives.

14.　The Exercise Planning Group

14.1　It is important to establish an Exercise Planning Group that is responsible for all exercise planning development and decisions (as covered in Figure 20.1 later in this chapter). An exercise planning group **should** equally apply sound project management principles covering timelines, interdependencies, quality assurance and the effective maintenance programme of documentation. The Exercise Planning Group **should** consider and have due regard for identifying, reducing, monitoring and managing any potential the welfare and safety issues presented to all participants by virtue of their involvement or exposure to actual or potential hazards and their associated consequences. Where appropriate a formal risk assessment for the exercise itself may be prudent.

15.　The Exercise Scope

15.1　Effective **scoping** of the exercise will provide direction and guidance during the planning phase. Identifying what is in and out of scope will help ensure objectives are met; improve fiscal planning and limit project creep or strategic drift in objectives. Key points to be considered when scoping an exercise includes:

■ *Participation* ■ *Exercise complexity -* **link to simple, medium and complex** ■ *Scenario complexity -* **link to annex of type of scenarios impacts** ■ *Outcomes* ■ *Current and desired levels of BCM capability*	■ aim of exercise ■ level of control ■ scope ■ degree of participation ■ exercise name ■ produce a paper covering exercise drivers ■ outline for the exercise including aims ■ dates ■ extent of participation, cost estimate, ex management structure, H&S Risk Assessments

Figure 15.1 *demonstrating the scope against the exercise aims and objectives*

THE PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE AS ENDORSED BY THE PROJECT SPONSOR	**AIM**

16. Exercise Participants and Stakeholder Identification

16.1   To provide clarity and to avoid confusion, those involved in an exercise can generally be divided into two distinct groups:

SPECIFIC MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES WHICH SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EXERCISE AIM	**OBJECTIVES**

16.1.1 Internal

THE EFFECTS NEEDED TO ALLOW PLAYERS TO PRACTICE ACTIONS RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES E.G. TIMELY DECISION-MAKING, COORDINATION OF PLANS, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, MEDIA MANAGEMENT	**PLAYER EFFECTS REQUIRED**

- ■ Players
- ■ Facilitators
- ■ Observers
- ■ Exercise Director
- ■ Command and Control participants
- ■ Scenario experts
- ■ Stakeholders are those who may have a vested interest as defined in BS25999.
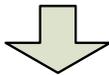
THE SPECIFIC SCENARIO IMPACTS NEEDED TO CREATE THE PLAYER EFFECTS: E.G. DENIAL OF ACCESS TO BUILDINGS, WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION TO SERVICES AND SUPPLIES, MEDIA DEMANDS	**SCENARIO IMPACTS NEEDED**

16.1.2 External
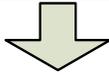
THE BROAD STORYBOARD OF THE SCENARIO: E.G. SEVERE WEATHER THAT CAUSES SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTION TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND LOSS OF LIFE ACROSS A WIDESPREAD AREA.	**OUTLINE SCENARIO**

- ■ Media
- ■ Auditors
- ■ Public bodies
- ■ Industry
- ■ MPs and / or councillors
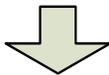
THE INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION INJECTS WHICH BUILD THE SCENARIO PICTURE. THESE INJECTS CAN BE EITHER PRE-PLANNED OR DYNAMIC (DEPENDENT ON PLAYER ACTIONS)	**INFORMATION INJECTS**

17. Aim and Objectives

17.1   The aim of an exercise **should** fit within the scope of the programme. It will define the overall purpose and required outcomes. The clear definition of measurable objectives will ensure that the exercise aim is achieved.
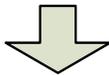
THE DOCUMENT WHICH CONTAINS THE PRE-PLANNED INJECTS AND WHICH PROVIDES THE PRINCIPAL TOOL FOR CONTROLLING THE EXERCISE TEMPO	**MASTER EVENTS LIST**

17.2   The aim and objectives **should** be endorsed by the project sponsor or a senior manager. The best approach to achieve the aims and objectives are;

- ■ a realistic scenario (see section 18)
- ■ effective communications (see section 19)
- ■ exercise command and control (see section 20)
- ■ sound use of administration and logistics (see section 21)

Note: Figure 17 (see right hand side) identifies the sequence of activities involved in developing and delivering exercises from the point of establishing aims through to delivering information from the Master Events List (MEL).

18.   Scenario

18.1   A realistic scenario **should** engage the participants and ensures that the predetermined aim and objectives of exercising are achieved. A realistic scenario **should** be progressive in its flow and not based on speculative assumptions. The scenario may be explored and developed using a white board that highlights all the potential issues for the organisation, the plans and exercise participants to explore and manage. A visual approach such as a whiteboard can be used as an aid to measure the overall depth and issues posed by a scenario against predetermined exercise aims and objectives. The Scenario Development Team **should** liaise with the exercise Administration and Logistics Team to coordinate requirements specific to scenario delivery and it is therefore wise to have representatives from both parties present in the scenario planning stage. The scenario planning will need to represent facts and events as accurately as possible to retain credibility. Where appropriate technical and arbitrary information may need to be corroborated by recognised expert opinion and supporting evidence to mirror a real incident.

19.   Communications

19.1   It is important to identify and engage with <u>all</u> exercise stakeholders early in the planning stage so the exercise may:

- ■ gain their support and involvement;
- ■ ensure everyone is fully briefed on their role, the roles of others and the mechanics of the exercise; and
- ■ maintain good governance of the whole exercise process;

19.2   Communications plans linked to each stakeholder group is essential and such plans can cover three distinct phases of the exercise as illustrated in figure 19.2 below. The communication plans may if appropriate include communications to stakeholders based on a recognised management RACI

framework (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed). Where appropriate exercise codeword's may be used to signal the commencement and closure of an exercise.

Type	Aim	Plan Contents	E.g.
Before the exercise	coordination of the exercise planning process	For participants and stakeholders Methods Frequency	Introduction Health & Safety requirements Exercise Contacts directory Proposal paper Outline dates Cost Estimate Exercise management structure
During the exercise	exercise communications	For players and other participants consider including the following: Player structure Command & control Debriefing methods	Method Players communication nets Telephone directories Feedback Exercise log Intranet Coordination of injects Method of inject Code words
Post exercise communications	coordination and dissemination of information and lessons identified	For participants and stakeholders: Frequency of communications Methods of communication	Lessons learnt Participant feedback Cost benefit analysis Reports

Figure 19.2 identifying the communication plans need for exercising BCM arrangements

19.3   Communication to stakeholders needs to be considered and specialist advice sought if required especially for more complex live exercise involving multiple plans, players, relocation to other sites, transfer of workload to other departments and / or agencies.

20. Command and Control (C^2)

20.1 An appropriate command and control structure needs to be considered for all exercises, however typically the less complex the exercise the less complex the C^2 needs to be. A C^2 structure can offer clarity on decision making, leadership and the ownership of management functions during the exercise. An example complex C^2 structure can be seen in figure 20.2 below
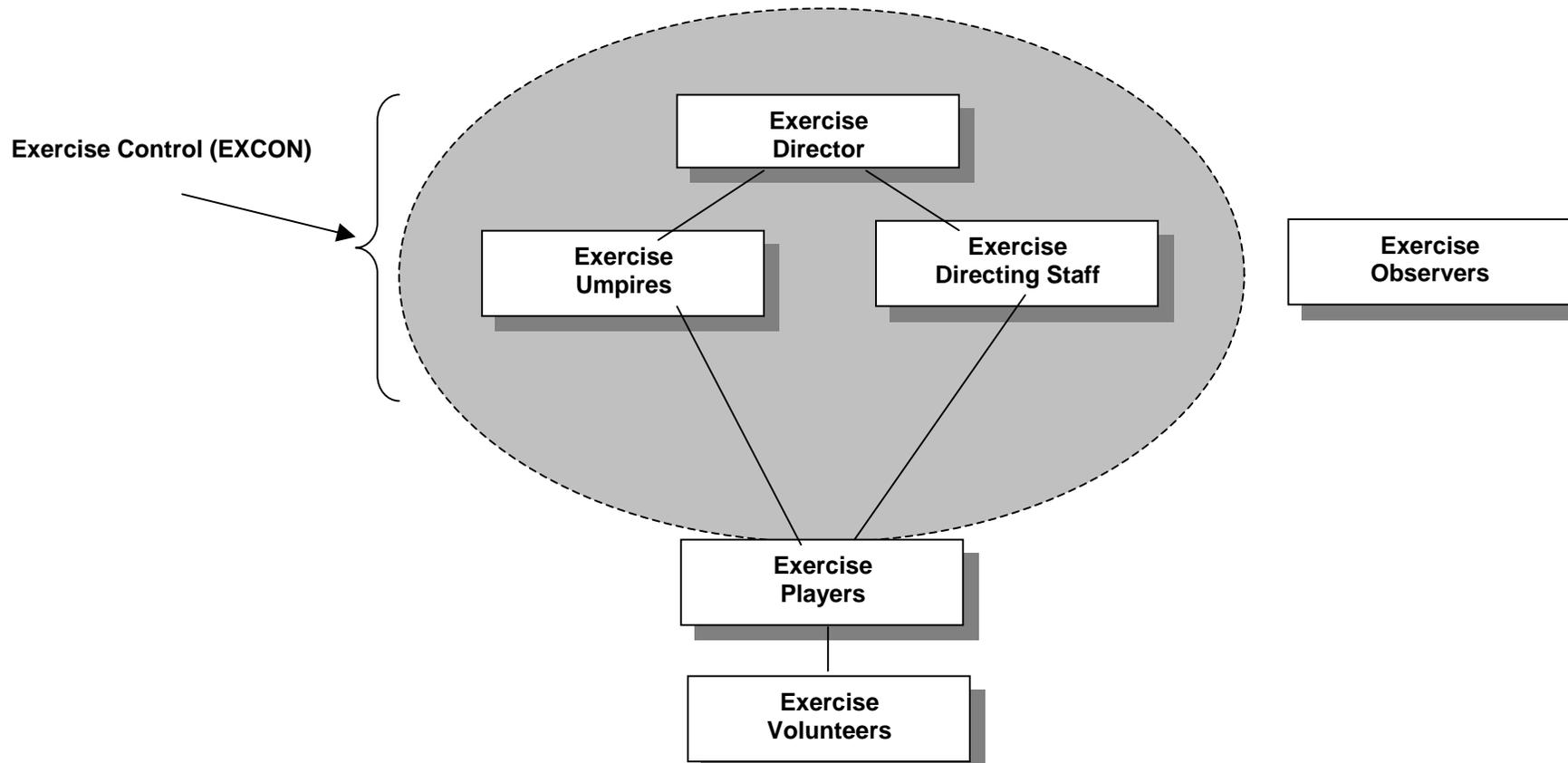

Figure 20.1 showing an example of command and control structure used for exercising of BCM arrangements

21. Exercise Director

21.1   The role of the exercise director is to ensure that the exercise is delivered effectively so that the objectives are achieved. The Exercise Director **should** have had significant involvement in the preparation for the exercise so that they are aware of the key deliverables and the main delivery risks during the delivery phase. The Exercise Director need not necessarily be a subject matter expert but, especially for larger exercises, **should** have sufficient authority, experience and gravitas to lead the delivery team.

22. Exercise Directing Staff

22.1   **Logistics Support**

The logistics support team will be the focal point for administrative and logistics issues during the exercise. The Control Team role tasks will include:
- Reception arrangements
- Office facilities
- Security of personnel and exercise information, including documentation
- Catering: Tea and coffee provisions. Meals arranged or the responders may be expected to make their own emergency arrangements as part of the exercise.

22.2   **Administrative support**
Arrangements for incoming messages, deliveries or admissions into the exercise e.g. parcels and visitors many need to be in place. These need to be allocated specific times or signals. Exercise log – document designed for recording the key moments and developments in the delivery of a business continuity management exercise.

22.3.   **Security staff (If appropriate)**
Isolation for a safe learning environment and security to protect the participants, the confidentiality of exercise data/ materials and the organisation may need to be considered. Preventing the exercise from affecting the normal regular business operations by ensuring there is no additional risk to the business.

22.4.   **Facilitators.**
These can fulfil two roles:

- Provide active guidance to players to help them through the exercise. This role is most suited to desktop-type exercises.

■ Ensure that the exercise delivery works effectively from the player's perspective. This role is especially important during a larger simulation-type exercise.

22.5 **Evaluators**.
Evaluators are a valuable asset to assess the effectiveness of player actions and skills during the exercise. Evaluators need careful briefing and will need access to the test scenario.

22.6 **Umpires**.
Umpires may be used where it is useful, or necessary, to act as marshals and/or ensure the players remain within the physical, or notional boundaries of the scenario cell. This may involve monitoring or controlling movements of the players or their access to particular places, facilities, equipment or sources of information. It is normal practice for umpires to explain their action through reference to the scope and rules of the exercise as determined by the Exercise Director. The scope and rules of the exercise may be known to the players or they may be subject to discovery by trial and error, in which case it is the umpire's role to ensure these learning points are delivered in response to the player's testing of the boundaries.

22.7 **Technical support.**
Ensuring that information flows are efficient throughout the exercise is vital to its success. The technical support team should have the necessary skills to be able to set-up monitor, fault-find and problem solve for all the communications methods during the exercise; for example, phones, email, web sites, video/DVD. This role is especially important for desktop exercises where players may not be using their live systems. In simulation exercises it is every player's responsibility to ensure that their own communications or live systems are effective.

22.8 **Scenario cell**.
The scenario cell creates the 'virtual world' through which the players experience the scenario. The composition of the scenario cell will depend on the nature of the exercise but, typically, will include those who have been involved in building the scenario and the MEL (Master Events List - see Figure 17) as well as any key subject-matter experts (SMEs) with specific knowledge or skills to contribute. The work of the scenario cell is coordinated by a 'Scenario Cell Manager'. The scenario cell may consist of two components:

■ an Inject Team which delivers the prepared items contained in the MEL and which, during simulation exercises, responds dynamically to player actions
■ a Red Team which analyses player activities and then makes up alternative reactions. The Red Team will comprise subject matter experts and will work from the guidance of the Exercise Director. The Red Team role is particularly important for large-scale multi-agency exercises.

23.   Observers and Visitors

23.1   Observers may be invited to attend the exercise. Observers typically are from related stakeholders and other interested parties who are not taking a direct part in the exercise. Observers normally participate in the entire exercise or specific, discreet, phases. An observer briefing may need to be held or distributed.

■   Visitors such as VIP members may also be invited to attend an exercise. Visitors may only be interested in a specific part or phase of the exercise and are, more usually, of senior grade. A specific visitor's programme may need to be developed.
■   The benefits of observers and visitors attending the exercise **should** be carefully balanced with the risks of distracting the delivery team from their core task.

24.   Administration and Logistics

24.1   Without the wider consideration of underpinning administration and logistics planning the delivery of an exercise can quickly encounter measurable difficulties. Individuals **should** be identified to establish an Administration and Logistics Team. This team **should** source and provide the resources for effective exercise delivery. The following is a generic list of administration and logistics that **should** be considered for each exercise:

■   Facilities - buildings
■   Rooms
■   Food and drink
■   Computers (internet capabilities and firewalls)
■   Printers
■   Stationery
■   Projector and screen
■   Travel and Accommodation (including visas)
■   Security clearance

24.2   The communications equipment used during an exercise will vary considerably depending on the complexity. A generic list of communications equipment follows:

■   Phone – mobile / landline / satellite
■   Fax
■   Radios
■   Blackberry / mobile email

- Computers / email / internet sites / VOIP
- Conference call hubs – including pins numbers

25. Exercise Delivery

25.1   Delivery is about ensuring a pragmatic, challenging and realistic event is captured in the minds and actions of those participants. Exercise delivery is to test procedures and planned activities and not to catch people out. Exercises **should** be carefully planned, and agreed with stakeholders, so that there is minimum risk of disruption to business processes. An exercise **should** not introduce the risk of a real incident occurring as a direct result of the exercise delivery.

25.2   Every exercise **should** have clearly defined aims and objectives. Participants should be made aware that a post-exercise debriefing and analysis will be undertaken which considers the achievement of the aims and objectives of the exercise. A post-exercise report **should** be produced that contains identified lessons and a timetable for their implementation of recommendations.

25.3   The participants **should** be given a clear understanding of the 'rules of the game' whereby they are made aware of the limitations and scope of the scenario cell. This may form part of their initial briefing in a 'warm' or 'cold' exercise. In a 'hot' exercise they may be required to figure out the limitations and scope through interaction with the umpires whenever they attempt to go beyond the limitations or outside of the scope.

26. Principles

26.1   The delivery of an exercise which achieves its objectives is based on three principles:

- **Player engagement**: this is the core principle and the exercise delivery **should** be judged by the way in which it enables the players to gain the most value from the exercise. Each delivery tool, process and procedure **should** be tested against this principle.
- **Control, coordination and organisation**: all exercises need an effective control and coordination organisation so that the exercise is delivered in a way which achieves its specified objectives.
- **Logistics and technology support**: ensuring efficient administration support to an exercise will enable both players and delivery team to function effectively.

26.2   The complexity of the exercise will determine the nature of the delivery organisation. For example, a desktop exercise will need a more simplified organisation than a complex multi-agency live exercise. The following paragraphs set out the different roles and tasks for an exercise delivery team which **should** be scaled according to the specific needs of the exercise. The scale and complexity of exercises **should** be appropriate to the organisation's recovery objectives, address all interdependencies and remain centred on disruption to key products/ services all underlying activities and minimum resource requirements including the availability or loss of:

- people
- premises
- technology
- information
- supplies and
- stakeholders

27. Exercise Delivery -Time Management

27.1 It may be beneficial for the exercise director and all associated teams to undertake a dry run of the exercise in advance to identify potential problems and improve the overall outcomes. Undertaking a dry run of the exercise will

- identify potential problems
- Improve the credibility and quality of inputs and outputs
- help to ensure the equal participation of all players
- help achieve the core objectives in the time specified for the exercise

28. Technical test arrangements

28.1 The exercise delivery team **should** test the exercise communications and practise their role before the exercise. This is especially important where the delivery team is drawn from different organisations. Where technology is being used to deliver the exercise, it **should** be tested in good time to allow identified faults to be remedied prior to the start of the exercise. Exercise communications equipment need to be tested for reliability, capacity and reach.

29. Starting the exercise

29.1 It is important to have a controlled start to the exercise so that players know that they are now 'in play'. The exercise may start 'hot', with little or no warning to the players, 'warm' in which the players receive a degree of pre-briefing, or 'cold' in which extensive briefing notes are circulated prior to the exercise. There should be a formal introduction immediately preceding the start of the exercise.

29.2 During the exercise the scenario cell will use the MEL as the basis for delivering exercise content to the players. Any changes in delivery timings or mechanisms will be coordinated by the Scenario Cell manager under guidance from the Exercise Director.

30. Ending the exercise

30.1 The end of the exercise **should** be formally communicated to the players so that they understand that they are now 'out of role'.

30.2 In some circumstances it will be necessary to bring the exercise to a premature conclusion, for example the occurrence of a real work incident. Procedures **should** be put in place to allow an emergency end to the exercise to take place in a controlled manner.

31. Debriefing after the exercise

31.1 Exercises **should** conclude with an immediate debrief (sometimes known as a 'wash up') to capture participants views on its effectiveness. The use of debriefing following the completion of the exercise can include "hot" and "cold" debriefs across a range of areas including;

■ Teams
■ Incident Management, Business Continuity and or Business Recovery Plans
■ Individual participant role

32.2 The responsibility for preparing the de-brief sits with the exercise planning team. Immediate debriefing (sometimes referred to as a "hot" debrief) can be delivered through facilitators directly following the exercise. Cold debriefs allow participants the time to reflect deeper and consider the wider issues relevant to the exercise. Facilitators may use email/web surveys where participants need time for a considered input or have engaged remotely with the exercise. Equally some exercise participants may not feel comfortable feeding back comments in a hot debrief, but to ensure that their thoughts are captured, the exercise directing staff may wish to carry-out an individual debrief with that person or ensure they are able to comment in a later cold debriefing session.

32.3 Debrief notes **should** be collated by the Exercise Control team and submitted to the exercise report author. Business continuity and incident management plans **should** be exercised to ensure that they can be executed correctly, and contain appropriate detail and instructions. **Note:** *Exercises that show serious deficiencies or inaccuracies in incident management, business continuity or recovery plans ought to be rerun after corrective actions have been completed*

33. Post Exercise Arrangements

33.1 A single exercise although highly useful is not a guarantee that resilience has been achieved systemically across the organisation and its critical stakeholders. A series of continued exercising **should** demonstrate that the organisation and its key stakeholders have

- correctly identified and agreed key lessons that need to be learned
- planned, implemented and periodically monitored the implementation of all lessons identified across the organisation as part of a documented PDCA Cycle (or equivalent process).

34. Analysis and reporting

34.1 Undertaking post exercise analysis is a key requirement under any exercising regime and if not implemented appropriately can often result in lost learning and improvement opportunities for the organisational. The post exercise analysis report **should** document the exercise materials used, participant feedback gained. All exercise reports **should**:

- contain a clear indication of what and how the exercise aims were achieved or not
- clearly identify any lessons that need to be considered by the organisation
- propose a time based work programme for the implementation of lessons throughout the organisation
- identify who will monitor and or sign off lessons once fully implemented
- suggest any clear improvements or considerations to be noted for future exercises listed in the organisations exercising schedule

34.2 The prescribed approach identified in figure 34.2 drawn from "Emergency Preparedness" identifies the need for:

- Debriefing after exercising
- The initiation of Post Exercise Analysis
- The generation of a "Lessons Learned" Report
- The undertaking of plan auditing
- The delivery of final Post Exercise Report
- The Implementation and monitoring of changes
- Plan review
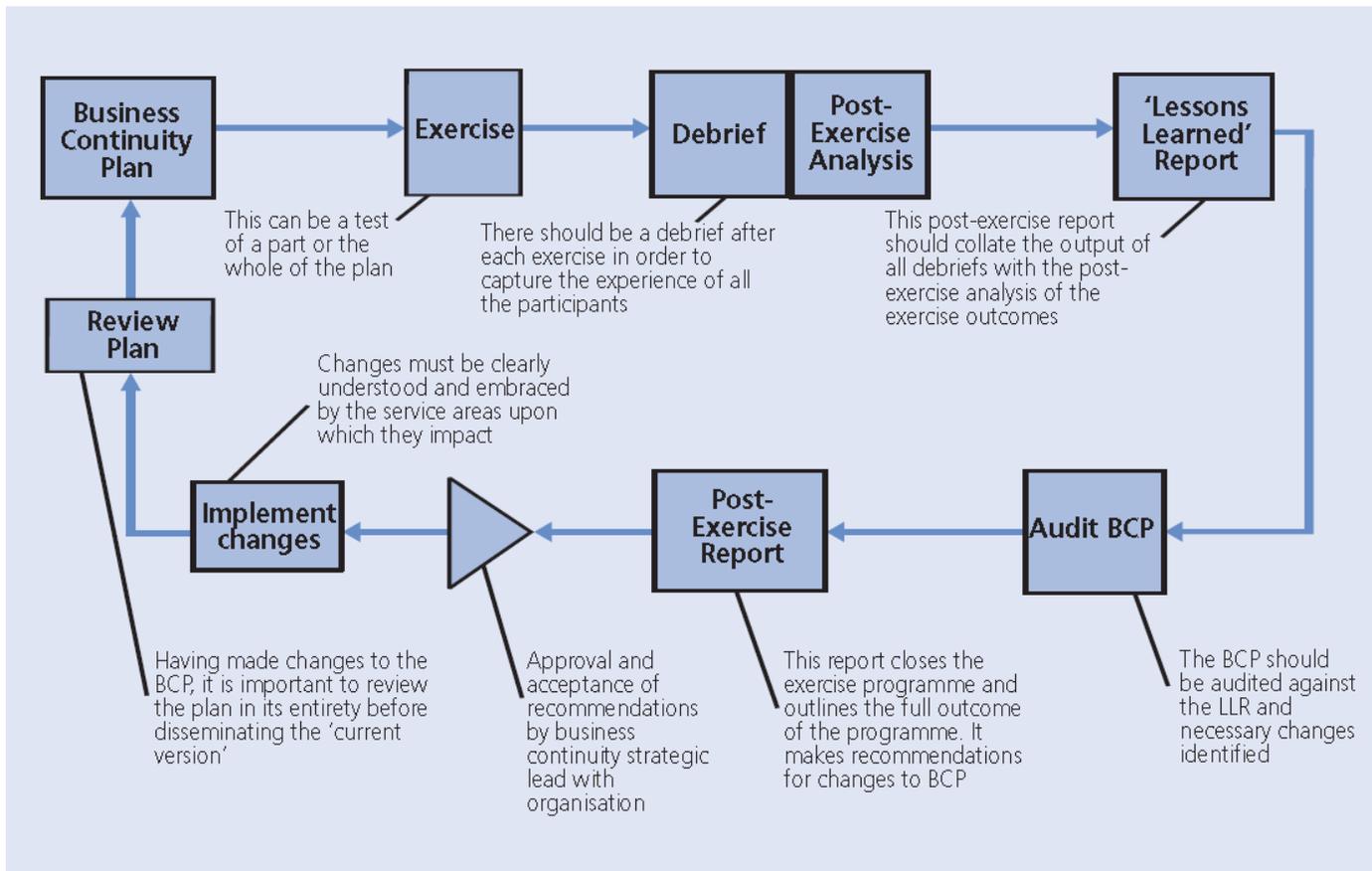
Figure 34.2 *showing all the formative stages involved in BCM exercising as outlined in "Emergency Preparedness" Guidance for the Civil Contingencies Act 2004*

35. Continuous Improvement cycle

35.1   Continuous improvement requires organisations to demonstrate an improvement based management approach which is designed to upgrade and enhance the organisations overall BCM capability including the testing and exercising of plans. Therefore the evidence generated for exercise reports is especially useful and relevant in identifying and managing any strengths or weaknesses within the organisations capability to plan, respond and recover for disruptive challenges. One recognised means of achieving ongoing improvements systematically across the organisation is contained in the BSI British Standard (BS25999). The standard identifies an improvement system called PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) see figure 40.1 below. The standard requires that the organisation clearly undertake, document, retain evidence of exercising arrangements with the aim of enhancing the overall effectiveness of the organisations BCM arrangements.
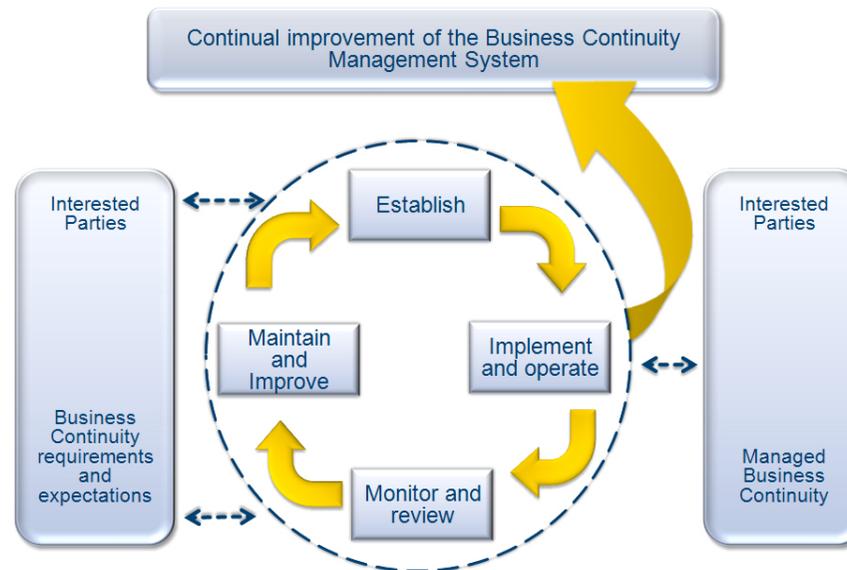

Figure 35.1 showing the PDCA Cycle as used in BS25999 to define a continuous improvement methodology in the BCMS

36. Document appendix

36.1   The purpose of this appendix is to provide a range of specimen documents that can be used to help local responders initiate their own BCM exercising arrangements. The examples contained in this guidance are not considered authoritive beyond their original purpose and are provided solely as a baseline to illustrate of selected practice.

Appendix - A
Appendix - B
Appendix - C
Appendix - D
Appendix - E
Appendix - F