

03 Oct 2012



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To: Emergency Planning Officers and Emergency Planning Liaison Officers

CC: Chief Executives of all NHS Organisations

Dear Colleagues

Gateway reference number 18186
ROCR Approval Applied for

National Capabilities Survey

Please Treat in Confidence (see appendix A for information on FOI requests)

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the launch of the National Capabilities Survey (NCS) 2012 on the 5th of November 2012. From the Health Service perspective the Survey applies to both Category 1 and 2 Health responders¹. We would be grateful if you could give this matter your consideration and support.

This year we have made the NCS voluntary, however responders should be mindful that it provides assurance at the national level that plans, procedures and capabilities are in place to respond to the risks identified in the National Risk Assessment as per the duties placed on responders by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The National Capabilities Survey is conducted by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) in Cabinet Office as part of its National Resilience Capability Programme. It is held every two years, previously undertaken in 2008 and 2010, to assess the UK's capability with respect to a number of key risks and planning assumptions as determined by the National Risk Assessment. It is a key element in the cross-government assurance process for emergency preparedness and response.

¹ These are organisations at the core of the response to most emergencies and are subject to specific duties under the Civil Contingencies Act. PCTs, selected NHS trusts, ambulance trusts, and the HPA are Category 1 responders. SHAs are Category 2 responders. NHS CB and PHE will be Category 1 responders and CCGs will be Category 2.

National Capabilities Survey 2012

The survey comprises 22 modules, consisting of 10 questions, covering both generic resilience criteria and specific modules for particular threats and capabilities. Not all questions are relevant to health and we have identified those questions specific responders need to answer. The Survey forms part of a cross-government, whole system process but the timing of the survey is clearly not ideal in the context of the changes that are taking place in the NHS. In seeking to minimise the burden of completing the survey we have sought to ensure that the requirements on the Health System are proportionate during transition. Most of the survey questions should require a simple tick box or yes/no answer.

Notwithstanding the fact that the NHS is undergoing a transition process, this survey forms an important part of our national and local assessment of its outputs. To support NHS participants we will provide further guidance relating to best interpretation of the questions with a view to achieving consistent and appropriate responses.

The survey will be hosted on the National Resilience Extranet and we will be writing to health responders to provide guidance on access to this system.

Should you have any questions regarding the NCS 2012 or related matters, please contact either your SHA Emergency Planning Lead or Stephen Groves (stephen.groves@dh.gsi.gov.uk) at NHS Operations.

Yours sincerely,



Lyn Simpson

Director of NHS Operations



Helen Shirley-Quirk

Director DH Emergency Preparedness

Copy list:

HPA

NHSBT

MONITOR

Appendix A: for the attention of emergency planning officers

Information relating to the Capabilities Programme, particularly that contained in the NCS may be subject to exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act (in particular, the National Security exemptions in section 24 and the exemptions surrounding the formulation of Government policy in section 35). You must therefore refer to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat for advice immediately upon receiving any FOI request, informing the source of the request that you are doing so.

For further information about NCS 2012 or FOI requests, please contact:

Kate Darwent
020 7276 3002
kate.darwent@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Due to the significant level of staff turnover and changing job roles, it is not always possible to have absolutely up-to-date contacts details of trust EP officers. In order that the survey reaches the appropriate person in a timely fashion after its launch could any trust not receiving an email from the Civil Contingencies Secretariat of the Cabinet Office with survey registration details within a week of its launch on the 5th November please contact:

Kristel McDevitt
NHS Operations
020 7210 4936
Kristel.McDevitt@dh.gsi.gov.uk