

The Client

Our client is one of the top ten modern universities in the UK with teaching facilities spread across a wide urban area and has over 10,000 students.

The university recognised that it needed to improve upon its current response capability to respond effectively to major incidents that could threaten business continuity and/or reputation.



The Challenge

Emergency response, incident management, business continuity plans and contingency procedures were already in place together with defined responsibilities. However, analysis, planning and exercising activities had been fairly limited in recent years, leading to uncertainty of how effective the arrangements would be in practice. The university was keen to ensure they were ready for anything that might occur in an incident.

Importantly, the university wanted clarity on the point at which incident management moves to business continuity, to the recovery of priority services and to restoration of the sizeable campus. A single incident could take out a large proportion of facilities and management needed to understand what was available to support student services.

The Solution

Teed was engaged to run a full day's Awareness & Exercise workshop for the senior management team and subject matter experts. This provided an opportunity for the key players who would respond to a major incident to understand the differences between incident management and business continuity and their respective roles and responsibilities. Recent local tragic events highlighted the importance of effective incident management and senior individuals took time out to attend the workshop, which in other circumstances, may have been delegated to deputies.

David Teed was the lead consultant for this project, given his extensive experience working with universities for many years and understanding of the threats that higher education institutions might face.

Using Teed's proven methodology, David undertook a comprehensive review of the current response documentation to gain an understanding of the organisation, risk, response structure and recovery strategies. The university's objectives were defined to help provide focus: safeguarding staff and student welfare being paramount alongside prompt communication and continuation of prioritised teaching services.

The workshop culminated in a tabletop incident management and business continuity exercise. Participants were asked to take part in a number of different scenarios designed to involve them every step of the way by thinking through communications and strategies. The exercise provided an opportunity to address specific gaps in existing response processes and affirm the most likely chain of command.

The Result

The university achieved its objective of raising awareness of both incident management and business continuity with senior management and others likely to be involved in responding to a major incident.

Teed's methodology ensured existing response processes and strategies were tested and areas for improvement identified, for example, further business impact analysis activity would be beneficial. Taking the learnings from the workshop, the university has developed a plan of action to address areas of concern and minimise risk.

Bringing all parties together round the table helped to raise confidence in the university's ability to respond effectively when confronted with challenging situations.