OSQAR²

Quality Assurance & Risk Management

Quality Assurance and Risk Management

'When only the best will do.'

OSQAR²

Developed over a 5 year period in collaboration with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, one of the larger metropolitan fire services in England, OSQAR², the Redkite One-Stop Quality Assurance and Risk Management System has proved a resounding success.

Within Tyne and Wear FRS OSQAR² has helped with improvements to many business areas including Operational Assurance, Resilience and Business Continuity.

The integrated report function within OSQAR² is used to identify trends relating to underperformance and good practice.

OSQAR² provides

- ✓ **A customisable dashboard giving direct access to user defined quality assurance areas, risk registers and risk management functions, reports and administrative facilities.**
- ✓ **User defined assurance fields enabling you to create QA Survey/ Risk Assessment material for any area.**
- ✓ **User definable reporting which can be saved as templates for later use through the 'Reporting Function'.**
- ✓ **User definable reporting over fields such as hierarchical and geographical assurance areas providing business critical comparative analysis of performance.**
- ✓ **User definable Key Performance Indicator (KPI) live overview for Operational Performance and Review.**
- ✓ **In-built Action Plan which facilitates tracking and logging management facilities from the initial reporting of an area of concern through resolution and 'sign off' with allocation of a responsible person or department.**
- ✓ **Standard approach to Risk Management throughout Action Planning processes, (Initial, Agreed and Residual Risks), supported by a recorded risk rationale.**
- ✓ **User defined summary and comparison reports which lead to a managed resolution of issues through effective action planning and informing future practice and planning.**
- ✓ **Access permissions hierarchy.**
- ✓ **System generated reminders and notifications using email and SMS.**
- ✓ **Ability to escalate Action Plans from Risk Register to Corporate Risk Register.**
- ✓ **Capability to export and import information.**

A Fire and Rescue Service (public, aerodrome or private) is concerned with the risks to the people and property within the community it serves. It must be prepared for every contingency within its remit and must be prepared to act to mitigate the impact of anticipated and unexpected incidents. Where an incident is more severe than anticipated, lessons can be learned to help prevent or prepare for similar events in the future. OSQAR² provides a structured approach from the analysis of current performance to action planning and resolution of areas of concern to bring about performance improvements to prevent or prepare for future events of a similar nature.

One Stop - Quality Assurance and Risk Management Dashboard

Operational Assurance	Business Continuity	Resilience	Health & Safety
COMMS	Incident Control	Learning and Development	Hazards
Risk Register	Corporate Risk Register	System Administration	Report Functions

"One stop shop"
Contains everything to ensure the highest standards of quality and the lowest risk.

6 steps to success

1 Create questionnaires. Customisable fields enable standardised questionnaire templates allowing the creation of quality assurance and risk assessment questionnaires covering any business process, activity or asset.

2 Assess on-line. Being web based OSQAR² allows assessments to be undertaken and completed by authorised personnel on line, from any location, at any time on any suitable web enabled device. Assessment questionnaires can be saved for later completion.

3 Identify issues. Non-compliance issues can be graded in terms of business impact and issues can be moved from the Risk Register to the Corporate Risk Register. Responsible personnel and departments will be notified via email and/or SMS.

4 Create an action plan. An action plan will identify the anticipated time scale for rectification. Responsible personnel and departments will be notified via email and/or SMS.

5 Review and monitor. Risk Management and Quality Assurance teams can view the actions being undertaken against the plan and adjust time scales for implementation as needed. Action plans will be 'signed off' when complete.

6 Report, learn and change. A customisable reporting function allows you to define any report and save it for future use. User defined summary and comparison reports which lead to a managed resolution of issues through effective action planning and informing future practice and planning.

OSQAR²

Helps to ensure quality standards are being realised, maintained and improved across all business areas and processes

Helps drive down risk by identifying and then formulating and monitoring actions to reduce or eradicate risks

Helps to improve performance

Helps drive down costs

Helps improve safety

Saves time over paper based processes

Speeds up trend analysis

Provides invaluable strategic management information quickly and easily

OSQAR²
Business Continuity

OSQAR² for Business Continuity

"Business continuity is the activity performed by an organization to ensure that critical business functions will be available to customers, suppliers, regulators and to other entities that must have access to those functions. These activities include many daily chores such as project management, system backups, change control, and help desk. Business continuity is not something implemented at the time of a disaster; Business Continuity refers to those activities performed daily to maintain service, consistency, and recoverability.

One Stop - Quality Assurance and Risk Management Dashboard

- Operational Assurance
- Business Continuity
- Resilience
- Health & Safety
- COMMS
- Incident Control
- Learning and Development
- Hazards
- Risk Register
- Corporate Risk Register
- System Administration
- Report Functions

The customisable **OSQAR²** dashboard gives access to business continuity tools allowing you to carry out assessments of your critical business functions to determine weaknesses that will undermine functionality under stress. The results of the assessments can then be analysed.
Where weaknesses are found an action plan will be implemented involving all key personnel and departments. The action plan will be monitored to ensure weaknesses are addressed in an effective and timely manner.

On attaining BS25999 certification for business continuity management Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service commented:

"In October 2009 our Strategic Management Team decided to align our processes to BS25999-2, with a strong focus on exceeding BCM best practice by achieving certification. This was an additional driver for the service to meet our statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) (CCA) and the recently reviewed Emergency Preparedness (statutory guidance for the CCA) which now reflects the BS25999 model.

A fundamental improvement to our Business Continuity Management System was the incorporation of Business Continuity Management reporting into our Operational Assurance Database, OSQAR², developed in conjunction with Redkite Systems Limited. The database is being used to monitor corrective and preventative actions that arise as a result of real business interruptions and exercises. The database creates action plan and allocates an action owner to ensure the plans are completed within a realistic timeframe.

Successfully achieving this rigorous standard demonstrates a real determination to manage any risks that could disrupt the vital services it provides to the public" Melanie Prested - Tyne and Wear Fire & Rescue Service. Extracts from publication in Fire Magazine March 2013

OSQAR²
Incident Management

OSQAR² for Incident Management

"Incident management is a term that describes the activities of an organization to identify, analyze, and correct hazards to prevent a future re-occurrence of an incident. An incident is an event that could lead to loss of, or disruption to, an organization's operations, services or functions. It may also involve a loss of reputation. If not managed effectively an incident can escalate into an emergency, crisis or a disaster. Incident Management is therefore the process of limiting the potential disruption caused by such an event, followed by a return to business as usual. "

The customisable **OSQAR²** dashboard gives access to incident management tools allowing you to carry out real-time or post event assessments of your incident control and management capabilities and then analyse the results.

This can lead to the development of an action plan which will be monitored to ensure an effective and timely resolution of issues with the aim of preventing re-occurrence or, where this is not possible, improving performance.
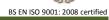
Following a major flooding incident in the North East of England in 2012 this is what Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service stated:

"….we caught our breath and took stock of what had occurred. There was general agreement all round that we had coped well with the demands placed upon us, especially in light of the limited warning we received. However, when we had time to reflect we realised that there were a number of lessons to be learned. This was confirmed when, as per our procedures, we asked operational crews and all others involved to complete debrief forms. All the issues raised on the debrief forms were collated and recorded onto a performance and review report within our Operational Assurance Database (**OSQAR²**). The database is not only used to record the issues, but to record the action plans, who is responsible for implementing these plans and timescales for completion. In addition to operational matters being recorded on the report, those involving business continuity were also included. All the issues were then used to form the agenda for an internal debrief… a regional debrief was also hosted by our service to discuss the national impact of these unprecedented events. The results of this debrief will be shared amongst other fire and rescue services nationally." *Steve Anderson is Group Manager, Contingencies and Special Projects, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Fire Magazine January 2013*

OSQAR² for Operational Assurance

Ensuring business processes in all areas are functioning to the quality standards required against KPI's

Ensuring personnel are trained and maintain competence to use equipment and hold certificates and licenses relevant to their role.

Continually monitoring, assessing and evaluating risk.

Ensuring your assets are safe to use and are where they should be.

"Operational Assurance is a process for ensuring that personnel, equipment and management systems function in a unified manner to provide products and services to the standard expected of your business effectively, efficiently and safely whilst meeting or exceeded key performance indicators (KPI's). A process of continuous assessment and analysis followed by action planning and monitoring of all operational areas is required. It is an everyday process and not a process that is triggered when an incident occurs."

OSQAR² integrates seamlessly with both **Redkite PDS** to ensure personnel are trained and maintain competence to use equipment and undertake business functions and **Redkite AMS** to ensure assets are in the right location and have been tested, inspected and serviced to ensure optimum safety. **OSQAR²** provides the tools to allow you to assess these and other management systems to determine weaknesses that may add risk to a business activity. The results of assessments can be analysed and a local risk can be elevated to the corporate risk register. Where improvements need to be made an action plan can be developed to involve all key personnel and departments. The action plan will be monitored to ensure improvements are made in an effective and timely manner.

OSQAR² provides customisable templates through which assessment criteria for any business area or activity can be defined. Once defined the assessment outcomes are recorded and analysed. A risk that starts out as a local risk can be elevated to the corporate risk register. Where an issue is identified an action plan can be created which will involve all relevant personnel in all relevant departments to address the issue and progress towards resolution can be monitored to ensure the issue is resolved quickly, efficiently and effectively.

"The use of an Operational Assurance Database (OSQAR²) ensures continual improvement across all areas of our operational response. In the case of flooding incidents it has led to many changes that include improvements to our standard operating procedures, wet weather personal protective equipment, swift water rescue team operations, greater resilience for call handling, additional training for all personnel and enhanced communications with the UK Met Office. The floods of June 28 are said to be a one in a 100 years event. However, the lessons learned from that eventful day have ensured that as a fire and rescue service we can offer the communities of Tyne and Wear, and beyond, an enhanced response to any future flooding incidents." *Steve Anderson is Group Manager, Contingencies and Special Projects for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Extracted from article published in Fire Magazine January 2013*

Tyne and Wear lead the way in business continuity

Melanie Prested, Risk Officer, Business Assurance for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, reports on the service's attainment of BS25999 certification for business continuity management.

As an emergency responder, we are proficient in handling incidents that happen to other individuals or organisations. However, we recognised that events such as power outages and severe weather conditions could have the potential to affect how we respond. It was vital that we put measures in place to ensure we could carry out our duties, no matter what we were faced with.

In 2009, we decided to carry out a full review of our Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements to ensure we captured the risks and planned for any disruption and we began to rehearse how we would deal with the consequences.

Business Continuity Review
Assistant Chief Fire Officer Joy Brindle said: "People turn to us when they have their own emergencies so it's essential that no matter what we are faced with, we continue to deliver. Business continuity is core to our ability to do that, and we saw the BS25999 certification process as really testing us to make sure everything is the best it can be."

In October 2009 our Strategic Management Team decided to align our processes to BS25999-2, with a strong focus on exceeding BCM best practice by achieving certification. This was an additional driver for the service to

> **"We saw the BS25999 certification process as really testing us to make sure everything is the best it can be."**

meet our statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) (CCA) and the recently reviewed Emergency Preparedness (statutory guidance for the CCA) which now reflects the BS25999 model.

Author Melanie Prested

The review began early 201 0 with a series of workshops which helped us to analyse and identify reinstatement recovery times following a disruption, for all of our activities in each service area. Staff understood it was the responsibility of every individual to know the priorities for their own area and the contingencies in place to allow them to assist with the recovery effort in the event of a disruption.

A rigorous regime was introduced to test and validate each Business Continuity Plan (BCP) including walk through learning, table-top exercises and live events as they happened. Each test was an opportunity to learn and improve. Once validated, each BCP became part of a robust on-going review and maintenance process. All staff were given access to every BCP and supporting information following a review of the service intra net and this formed the 'hub' of our BCM system. This was supported by a staff awareness programme and an e-learning package for operational crews.

Improving Business Continuity

A fundamental improvement to our BCMS was the incorporation of BCM reporting into our Operational Assurance Database, developed in conjunction with Redkite Systems Limited. The database is being used to monitor corrective and preventative actions that arise as a result of real business interruptions and exercises. The database creates action plans and allocates an action owner to ensure the plans are completed within a realistic timeframe.

Station Manager Jeff Wilkinson said: "I was in charge of Gateshead Community Fire Station on June 28, 2012 when we suffered severe flooding. We swiftly moved our operations onto the first floor of the building and managed to maintain functionality. This was an opportunity to prove this isn't just theory, it really works."

Achievement of the certificate involved a formal assessment separated into two distinct stages. We successfully completed stage one in March 2012, involving a desk review of our BCM framework, including an assessment of all processes and supporting documentation. During stage two in October 2012 we invited auditors to visit four of our stations, our control room, the technical services centre, service delivery headquarters and service headquarters. The assessors aimed to gather evidence to ensure that BCM was 'embedded' across the service.

> *"A fundamental improvement to our BCMS was the incorporation of BCM reporting into our Operational Assurance Database, developed in conjunction with Redkite Systems Limited."*

The timeframe from the initial workshops in 2010 through to certification this year was required due to the robustness of the assessment process. It goes into the detail of competency based training, document management and preventative/ corrective action monitoring. The auditors need to speak to a cross section of staff from different disciplines- not just your business continuity steering group.

Government Acclaim

Chloe Smith MP, Minister for Political and Constitutional Reform at the Cabinet Office and who also has responsibility for Cyber Security and Civil Contingencies, said: "Congratulations to all those at Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service on this fantastic achievement, the first fire and rescue service to be accredited for every activity they do. Business continuity is not just for big businesses and companies, we all need a clear understanding of continuity planning. Business Continuity is about understanding risk. Having robust, tested plans and preparations in place, like the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, is vital and exactly what government is encouraging."

Fire Minister Brandon Lewis MP said: "My congratulations to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service on achieving the British Standard on Business Continuity Management. Successfully achieving this rigorous standard demonstrates a real determination to manage any risks that could disrupt the vital services it provides to the public."

During 2012, our BCM arrangements were tested to the limit when our own locations were severely affected by power outages and the worst summer flooding on record for over

"Successfully achieving this rigorous standard demonstrates a real determination to manage any risks that could disrupt the vital services it provides to the public"

100 years. It cannot be emphasised enough how it demonstrated the effectiveness and value of our contingency plans. More importantly, it convinced staff at all levels of our organisation that effective BCM has real tangible benefits and demonstrated the benefits of their work.

The assessment process is continuous to maintain accreditation and promote improvement of the BCMS. We are expecting our first continual assessment in March 2013 and have already created an improvement plan to enhance our BCM capability.

We have worked very hard to instil a BCM culture into the organisation's routine operations and management processes and we will continue working together across our whole service to develop this further.

About the Author:
Melanie has worked in emergency planning for 10 years, the last four years she has held a specific role with the remit of Business Continuity Management (BCM) for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) is the first UK service to receive certification for the British Standard for Business Continuity BS25999-2 across every single activity they do.

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Database aids flood resilience at Tyne and Wear

Tyne and Wear's **Steve Anderson** reports on how the development of an Operational Assurance Database has ensured continual improvement across all areas of operational response and, specifically, during flood conditions

An unprecedented amount of rain fell across the Tyne and Wear area on June 28, resulting in Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) receiving more than 1,000 calls between 1500 and 0000. The sheer volume of calls stretched our control room resources to the limit, even with the additional personnel that were drafted in at short notice to staff every available phone.

Calls were also received by our colleagues in Durham and Darlington, Northumberland, North Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire and even as far afield as Devon and Somerset to flooding incidents in the TWFRS area.

Telephones also started to ring in various departments throughout our service headquarters as our colleagues in control rooms around the country attempted to pass details of the calls they were taking on our behalf. It was at this point that we realised that something more than the 'heavy rain' predicted was occurring.

Due to the potential for disruption to our service delivery, senior management, in line with our business continuity management (BCM) arrangements, convened the Emergency Management Group (EMG) who themselves formed two key groups. One group focused on maintaining our operational response and the other on our business continuity plans relating to our staff and building stock.

The EMG quickly implemented 'spate conditions', maintaining a limited operational cover at key locations to respond to primary fires and other life-threatening incidents. The remainder of our frontline operational fleet were all deployed to flooding incidents, attending one after another.

Incidents varied from the rescue of numerous families from their homes in Gateshead using the emergency rescue boat (ERB), to our Swift Water Rescue Team rescuing people from their cars stranded in flood water on the 'central motorway' in Newcastle. Vast amounts of water were pumped out of a building that housed IT server equipment that was critical for the mobilisation of other emergency services throughout the country.

Because the demands on our services were at their highest at the changeover of shifts (1800), this caused additional problems, as returning appliances back to their home stations to allow the nightshift to take over proved a major challenge.

Group Manager Steve Anderson, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

"As the rain eased we were able to 'catch up' and expand the types of incident we attended from those involving life risk to others, including pumping from major trunk roads to ease traffic congestion"

Traffic around the Tyneside area was at a standstill, so a number of nightshift personnel were unable to get into work, but we were able to staff appliances with a mix of dayshift and nightshift crews. It was not until around 2200 that the last appliance was staffed fully with a nightshift crew.

The implementation of our 'recall to duty' procedure was considered by the EMG, however, it was decided that because of the traffic gridlock and the fact that the oncoming duty crews could not get to their respective stations, then recalling additional staff would not be beneficial.

As the rain eased we were able to 'catch up' and expand the types of incident we attended from those involving life risk to others, including pumping from major trunk roads to ease traffic congestion.

Dealing with other people's emergencies is our business. However, doing so whilst faced with our own is not something we do on a regular basis. But this was the situation we found ourselves in as five of our fire stations were themselves affected by the floods. Our robust BCM arrangements, which were managed by the EMG, ensured that our service to the public was not affected due to our own business interruptions.

Operational Assurance Database
The next day we caught our breath and took stock of what had occurred. There was general agreement all round that we had coped well with the demands placed upon us, especially in light of the limited warning we received. However, when we had time to reflect we realised that there were a number of lessons to be learned. This was confirmed when, as per our procedures, we asked operational crews and all others involved to complete debrief forms.

All the issues raised on the debrief forms were collated and recorded onto a performance and review report within our Operational Assurance Database. The database is not only used to record the issues, but to record the action plans, who is responsible for implementing these plans and timescales for completion.

In addition to operational matters being recorded on the report, those involving business continuity were also included. All the issues were then used to form the agenda for an internal debrief that took place on September 6.

Eastwood Gardens, Felling,
Tyne and Wear

The internal debrief covered such areas as our response, any training implications, health and safety matters, transport, multi-agency liaison, communications, mobilising and business continuity. The action plans were discussed at length and several alterations made. Some action plans could be addressed immediately, while others were set completion dates after discussion and agreement with those allocated responsibility.

Regional Debrief
At the request of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisors' Unit, a regional debrief was also hosted by our service to discuss the national impact of these unprecedented events. The results of this debrief will be shared amongst other fire and rescue services nationally.

Although not on the same scale, we have suffered from further floods since June 28. Again, debrief forms were requested for all these incidents and, along with additional reports from performance and review officers who attended, any areas identified for improvement were recorded on the Operational Assurance Database and action plans produced.

The use of an Operational Assurance Database ensures continual improvement across all areas of our operational response. In the case of flooding incidents it has led to

"The floods of June 28 are said to be a one in a 100 years event"

many changes that include improvements to our standard operating procedures, wet weather personal protective equipment, swiftwater rescue team operations, greater resilience for call handling, additional training for all personnel and enhanced communications with the Met Office.

The floods of June 28 are said to be a one in a 100 years event. However, the lessons learned from that eventful day have ensured that as a fire and rescue service we can offer the communities of Tyne and Wear, and beyond, an enhanced response to any future flooding incidents.

About the Author:
Steve Anderson is Group Manager, Contingencies and Special Projects, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Steve has served with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service since 1989 and currently works in Contingencies and Special Projects. His responsibilities include the management and implementation of the service's environment strategy, business continuity, Firelink and operational assurance.

Prior to taking up his current role, Steve served at a number of locations on an operational level and also completed a secondment to the Fire Service College. He has also worked across different departments within the Service, including station management and the learning and development department, where he was involved in the introduction of the New Dimension projects.