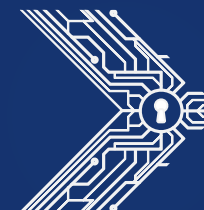
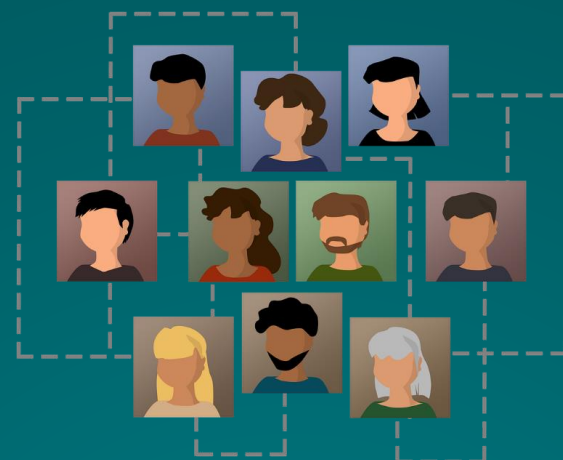


Managing staff welfare

Managing the impact on staff during an incident



When an incident hits an organisation, it is important to consider the welfare of staff involved directly in the response, and the wider workforce who are aware that an incident is in progress. This guidance suggests actions to help manage staff welfare during an incident.



Why is staff welfare so important during an incident?

When an incident occurs, it's important not to underestimate the impact of increased workloads, pressure and stress. It can lead to mistakes and even employee 'burn out'.

Looking after staff during an incident is not only good from a HR perspective, but also has direct security benefits in reducing the impact.

If staff only have experience of **practice** scenarios, be aware that the real-life pressures of a **genuine** incident can lead to unexpected behaviours.

Everyone copes differently in a crisis. Some staff will 'thrive' during an incident, others won't. Those who thrive might become 'overly invested', unable to spot signs of burnout in themselves.

You should ensure staff feel free to speak up:

- if they are feeling overwhelmed, burnt out, or need help in any way
- if they spot worrying signs in their colleagues (who may feel unable to raise it with managers)

1. Check in on people



During severe incidents which threaten the viability of an organisation, staff will be concerned with how this could impact their own livelihoods (such as job losses, salary impacts, or loss of personal information).

It is important to clearly communicate how the organisation plans to get through the incident, reducing the uncertainty and helping your staff to focus on the incident response.

2. Monitor staff workloads



A severe incident may lead to staff working longer hours and taking fewer breaks. Over an extended period, this could have a negative impact on staff wellbeing and increase the risk of burnout. This is particularly the case for those staff whose role involves round-the-clock monitoring, or requires them to be on call.

Ensure that staff spend time away from the office and can also work on other, less pressured tasks. This will provide space for staff to recharge, and boosts organisational resilience.

You should consider:

- how you can empower staff to take breaks and switch off (both within and outside working hours)
- how you can empower staff to take time out for themselves, including through leave or flexible working

3. Be clear and realistic when updates are expected



During the early phases of an incident, providing clarity to staff directly involved in the response can remove some of their personal uncertainty and help reduce stress. This might include setting expectations around working times, especially if this involves working outside core hours, or in a different location.

You must also consider those in the organisation that are not directly involved in the incident response. A large number may be affected by the disruption of services, and will have to plan their work accordingly. Others will want to help with the organisation's response. All staff will expect to be kept informed about what is going on.

Prepare your organisation-wide internal communications so that:

- staff who are not directly involved are kept up-to-date with the latest developments
- staff who are involved are not interrupted from the task at hand (nor feel pressurised into providing constant updates)

4. Consider the longer-term impact



The recovery and impact of incidents often last much longer than initial estimates, be aware of this in your response organisation and also be clear with your staff that this may be the case.