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Dear Colleague,

REVISED DRAFT CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

The Government has today published the draft Regulations and statutory guidance (*Emergency Preparedness*) under the Civil Contingencies Act, revised in the light of public consultation from December to March. The revised package can be found at www.ukresilience.info. This letter confirms that we remain on track to bring the bulk of the duties in Part 1 of the Act fully into force in November 2005 and outlines some of the work CCS is undertaking to support local responders in the implementation process.

Implementation timetable

The Act requires the Government to seek the consent of the National Assembly for Wales to the revised package of Regulations and statutory guidance and to consult the Scottish Executive; this process will take place during May and June. We have worked closely with colleagues in all of the devolved administrations throughout the policy development process, and we do not expect to make substantial further changes to the documents. Local responders should therefore continue to drive forward their implementation programmes using the revised draft Regulations and statutory guidance published today as the basis for this work. The next step of the process will be to lay the final Regulations before Parliament and publish the final version of the statutory guidance in July. We remain on track to publish the non-statutory guidance *Emergency Response and Recovery* alongside the final Regulations and statutory guidance.

The consultation documents envisaged a six month implementation period between publication of the revised draft Regulations and statutory guidance and commencement of the bulk of the duties (with an additional six months for BCM promotion). The Government remains committed to giving local responders adequate time to implement the requirements of the Act. We will therefore commence the bulk of the duties in



November 2005, with the duty on local authorities to promote BCM coming into force in May 2006.

Implementation planning

As you will be aware, commencement is the point at which the duties come fully into force, not the point at which local responders need to begin work on implementation. The duties in the Act are to “maintain” assessments, plans and arrangements – local responders therefore need to ensure that the Local Resilience Forum process is up and running and that relevant plans and assessments are in place by the date of commencement to be compliant with the legislation.

The Government recognises that implementing the main requirements of the Act by November 2005 entails a challenging programme of work in collaboration with a wide range of partners; embedding the new framework will be a longer term process of review and improvement. We will be reflecting this in our discussions with audit and performance management bodies.

Support for local responders

The Act requires Category 2 responders, many of whom are private sector bodies, to cooperate and share information with Category 1 responders to inform multi-agency planning frameworks. We have worked closely with the widest range of Category 2 bodies in developing the Regulations and statutory guidance to ensure that the costs of contributing to effective civil protection arrangements are minimised. On the whole, Category 2 responders felt we had struck the right balance. However, a strong message coming out of consultation responses – and discussions with industry representatives and other Government Departments – was that demands on private sector bodies could be reduced still further by proactively publishing in one place generic information about industry-specific emergency planning arrangements already in the public domain. This will ensure that local responders have instant access to much of the information they need, and ensure that the weight of information demands on private sector bodies is kept to a minimum. The Act Team will be working closely with Government Departments and relevant industries to explore how we can take this idea forward using www.ukresilience.info website as a platform.

Work is also underway to further improve the usefulness of www.ukresilience.info as a practical resource for local responders. Over the summer we will be working to revamp the site and make sure it meets practitioners’ needs. In particular, we hope to make the Act pages a “one-stop-shop” for civil protection professionals, clearly signposting additional sources of advice, guidance and support that local responders may find helpful



when taking forward the duties in the Act. Cabinet Office colleagues will also be reviewing the www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk website to improve the quality and accessibility of advice targeted at the public at large.

As always, we would be very pleased to receive any feedback you have on this bulletin. If you have got any questions or queries about any aspect of this letter, please contact the Act Team at ccact@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

DAN GREAVES

