



Media release

April 2011

## Free ICT resilience help for voluntary groups

Local voluntary and community groups are being urged to apply for free help to protect their ICT systems in the face of unexpected emergencies.

The advice, from emergency response partners within the Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum (BLLRF), is designed to ensure that third sector groups can keep providing community support in times of civil emergencies.

Chair of BLLRF, Assistant Chief Constable Kath Govier from Bedfordshire Police said: "The police and other emergency services are always on hand to respond when emergencies strike. However, we often depend on voluntary and community groups to provide help at a personal level.

"Therefore, third sector groups should ensure their own ICT systems have the resilience to survive and continue operating when the unexpected strikes."

Thanks to support from the Big Lottery Fund, the Voluntary Works Consortium in Bedfordshire has secured the services of ICT development advisor Dez Carruthers who can provide free assistance and consultancy for voluntary sector organisations.

"Voluntary groups traditionally operate on minimal budgets but they cannot afford to jeopardise the integrity of their ICT systems," said Dez, who has wide experience in the industry.

"This free service will provide advice on how they can ensure they have robust systems and back-ups so they can quickly recover from unexpected system failures."

BLLRF supports the 'What would you do if...?' campaign which aims to help everybody living or working within Bedfordshire and Luton to be prepared and consider what they would do if faced with an emergency. Visit [www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk](http://www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk).

Dez Carruthers can be contacted on 01234 354366 or at [dez@yourcvs.org](mailto:dez@yourcvs.org)

**Sidebar**

Every year one in five businesses face major disruption to their services. Would your firm know how to handle a flood, fire or communications breakdown?

Every firms should have a business continuity plan– they're quick and easy to put together, just take the 10-minute health check or complete the online tool by clicking on the business link at [www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk](http://www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk).

Caron Kendall, chairman of the BLLRF Business Continuity Management Group, said: "Business continuity is so important yet many businesses just ignore it because they think it'll never happen to them. Making a plan is very straight forward and it could make the difference between survival and going under."

**Notes to editors:**

BLLRF was formed in 2004, bringing together the key agencies required to respond to emergencies.

Comprising local agencies, including the emergency services, local authorities, National Health Service (NHS) and the voluntary and community sector, the forum was created to ensure the best possible plans are in place should a major emergency occur.

BLLRF's vision is to make Bedfordshire and Luton the best-prepared place for any emergency. Through the '*What would you do if...?*' campaign, the forum aims to promote the importance of being prepared and ensure people living and working within the county feel safe. For more information visit [www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk](http://www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk)

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