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| Government Communication Service | Assembling your crisis team  – five questions to ask |

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| **1** | Does everyone understand the background to the incident or crisis? Make sure you encourage everyone to share what is known about the situation though media coverage, officials and any other sources of information. Crucially, ask yourself the basic, but critical question: is this a crisis, and is it your crisis to manage – this will give you a clear sense of your organisation’s role in the response. |  |
| **2** | What range of expertise and knowledge will you need to respond effectively? Think about the skills and knowledge you will need to respond effectively to the situation you’re facing, so that you start to understand the key people you will need to build your team around. Essential skills needed to respond and handle a crisis should be relevant to handling the initial crisis response, the duration and the aftermath. To deliver a co-ordinated response these skills must be mapped against the four I’s of the GCS Competency Framework: Insight, Ideas, Implementation and Impact.  Essential skills:   * Reactive media queries (implementation) * Generating proactive media and digital handling (ideas) * Managing stakeholders (implementation) * Targeting key audiences (insight) * Evaluation and lessons learnt (impact) |  |
| **3** | Who else beyond your organisation will have a stake in the response? A crisis rarely involves a single organisation, so it’s vital that you understand who else will have a stake in the response and start finding ways of making this an integrated effort. This is where the time that you invested in planning and rehearsing can make a difference as it will mean you are likely to have established relationships and protocols with other organisations. If you haven’t, it is important that you work fast to make connections with key contacts and establish appropriate ways of working with them. |  |
| **4** | Is everyone clear about who is leading what aspect of the response? You are likely to be facing a complex, fast-moving situation, so be clear about who is responsible for what within your crisis team. Make sure everyone understands their own role, but also knows how their actions may affect others in the team – it is important that everyone recognises how they fit into the wider effort. Take the time now to set the direction for the team, so that there is consensus on what is expected of everyone involved. |  |
| **5** | Have you got a reliable way of keeping track on progress across the team? In a crisis situation, there can be a danger of losing control of the process as the pace of the response quickens. While it may not seem the most obvious thing to do upfront, it is worth establishing how everyone will share information and keep the team up to date on progress. The reporting should be proportionate so that it doesn’t detract from the vital job of delivery, but it is an important part of setting up an effective team response. |  |