

Client Stories **Emergency Planning Solutions Ltd**

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is one of 12 Northern Ireland Departments of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. DHSSPS has lead responsibility for the development of policy, guidance, advice, planning and preparedness for health emergencies and for the provision of health countermeasures for which DHSSPS is a Lead Government Department (LGD). In doing so, it helps to support the Chief Medical Officer's responsibility for Public Health policy, and the Health Minister.

DHSSPS is the Lead Government Department (LGD) for health consequences arising from the following emergencies:

- CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear);
- human infectious diseases;
- disruption to medical supply chains; and
- mass casualties.

DHSSPS facilitates the effective and timely receipt and recording and transmission of information, to support strategic health decision-making by the Chief Medical Officer and the Health Minister throughout an emergency, from its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

As well as providing training for the Department's emergency response staff in Emergency Control Centre operations, as part of its H1N1 (Swine Flu) preparedness, a cadre DHSSPS staff undertook training in the Department's EOC processes, as part of business continuity management measures, to ensure the Department could provide a continuing robust and resilient response over a prolonged period. EPS was engaged to design and deliver this bespoke training in situ in the Department's EOC, utilising a mix of theory and practical examples.

As a result of this training, DHSSPS has broadened its pool of trained responders allowing it to plan its response to future health emergencies with confidence – especially where this may require the extended operation of its EOC.