

# Tier-1 Business Continuity Exercise

## Introduction

On Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th March the Tier-1 ran a Business Continuity Exercise. The Cloud team also chose to take part in the exercise.

The overall purpose of this was to validate Tier-1's capability to operate as a remotely distributed organisation. Based on the results of the exercise we hoped to identify and resolve any potential issues and/or risks that could impact the running of the Tier-1 services in a remote configuration.

In practice we requested all members of the Tier-1 (with the exception of a small number of Fabric personnel whose presence on site was essential), to work remotely from home for the duration of the exercise.

To facilitate this we asked for the following confirmation from Tier-1 personnel:

- You have a laptop with appropriate VPN connection.
- You have an internet connection.
- You have a set of working headphones with a mic.

Meeting owners were requested to create (and distribute the relevant details to the appropriate attendees), a virtual version of their meeting(s) on [Zoom](#) to be used for the duration of the exercise to allow operations to run as normal.

Each day of the two day exercise was pre and post fixed with a virtual meeting.

Intentionally short in duration the idea was for all participants to attend, firstly to ensure all participants were at their desks (rather than still in bed or watching TV!) and secondly to ensure that there were no individual issues that the group needed to be made aware of.

The second meeting of the day served the same purpose but additionally allowed people to report back on any issues they had encountered during the day.

In practice there were no real issues reported at these meetings as extensive use of the tier-1\_parade\_hall slack channel was made when resolving problems during the day.

# Summary of Feedback

## DSE

There were a number of reports/complaints of not having appropriate seating. Typically dining room chairs are a touch on the hard side after a period of time. This is on balance true, however from personal experience the expedient use of cushion resolved this matter.

Most people during the exercise appear to have had access to a monitor(s). For those who didn't the screen size on their laptop was an issue. People were happy to work with a reduced screen size for the duration of the exercise, however this could become problematic if working from home for a prolonged period of time.

For clarity it should be noted that in the event of a prolonged period of home working people's screens could be issued out and used at home.

There were a number of issues where cables were lacking i.e. HDMI or a USB hub would have been useful. These are very minor in the scheme of things and currently such items are being sourced.

## Interactions with other STFC staff

The primary means of communication (as opposed to video conferencing), was achieved by the use of Slack both as a direct messaging platform and with a public channel.

Both methods of communication appear to have been successful with no members of the exercise reporting difficulties in being able to communicate with others.

Video conferencing was achieved by using a combination using Zoom and Vidyo. In the case of Zoom there were no reports of issues or difficulties. However, there were reports on Vidyo taking an excessive time to connect. Once connected, Vidyo did work as expected.

## Data Services

The Data Services Group staff who were part of this exercise reported carrying on with work as they would have done in the office, this included Ceph and Castor management, for both Tier-1 and Facilities as the team work on more than the Tier-1 project, for example:

- On duty activities - checking each of the Ceph clusters and Castor monitoring
- Recycling and managing disk faults in the Echo cluster
- Analysing ongoing issues with Alice experiment job efficiency related to the Echo cluster
- Purchase and renewal of host certificates

- Handling tickets in RT

In addition, other tasks and meetings, for example:

- Arranging interviews for recruitment campaign with HR
- Attending meetings including catch ups, SCD Group Leaders meeting, Change Control and XrootD development
- Chasing delivery and installation plans for equipment being delivered in March and general procurement work
- Post-mortem related to DLS recall issue from previous week

Generally the team seemed in good spirits using slack to stay in touch and say hello/goodbye and let each other know what they were doing; this maintained a really pleasant working environment. In addition one member of the team created a zoom meeting at lunchtime so people could virtually lunch together if they wanted.

## Tier-1 Manager's Summary

In general I was pleased with the attitude of staff during the exercise.

- Not all staff attempted to work from home citing essential reasons for being in the office. The primary reason being access to the machine room. While these may have been true, in the event that these staff need to self isolate we will have to figure out how to manage without them.
- I am not convinced all staff fully understood the aim of the exercise (Business continuity) and focused on doing things that could be done in isolation such as their APR. I think the second day of the exercise really helped some staff as they were forced to do things remotely. Some staff would benefit from additional practise WFH days.

I chaired two meetings remotely during the exercise (that would have normally been chaired in person). There were some technical issues at the start of one. It was a lot harder to build a consensus if there is a disagreement over a topic.

The availability of STFC funded softphones to make several calls would be useful. You can't always rely on people responding to emails / joining meeting invites.

## Appendix A - Questionnaire

To allow us to gauge the success ( or otherwise) of the exercise we requested participants to fill out 2 surveymonkey polls at the end of each day. The poll questions were as follows:

- Q1. How was your display screen equipment (DSE) setup?
- Q2. Did you feel you missed any item(s) of equipment when working from home?
- Q3. How many physical meetings would you normally have attend today?
- Q4. What did you do instead of attending the physical meeting?
- Q5. How many virtual meetings would you normally attend today?
- Q6. Did you make use of slack? If so did you use group, private chats or both?
- Q7. Did you achieve what you set out to achieve today
- Q8. Did you achieve what you set out to achieve today
- Q9. Do you feel you did a typical days work?
- Q10. Did you have any problems with the network or connecting to machines remotely?

Of the 10 questions asked 6 requested answers as comments with 4 (Q1, 2, 8 and 9), being directly graphed.

## Day 1

Q1

How was your display screen equipment (DSE) setup?

Poor		OK		Excellent	Total	Weighted Average
0%	13.97%	44.83%	27.59%	13.97%		
0	4	13	8	4	29	3.41

Q2

Did you feel you missed any item(s) of equipment when working from home?

Answer Choice	Response	
Yes	41.38%	12
No	55.17%	16
Total		29

Q8

Did you achieve what you set out to achieve today

Answer Choice	Response	
Yes	82.14%	23
No	17.86%	5
<b>Total</b>		28

Q9

Do you feel you did a typical days work?

Answer Choice	Response	
Yes	92.86%	26
No	7.14%	2
<b>Total</b>		28

## Day 2

Q1

How was your display screen equipment (DSE) setup?

Poor		OK		Excellent	Total	Weighted Average
0%	5%	40%	25%	30%	20	
0	1	8	5	6		3.8

Q2

Did you feel you missed any item(s) of equipment when working from home?

Answer Choice	Response	
Yes	45%	9
No	55%	11

<b>Total</b>		29
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Q8

Did you achieve what you set out to achieve today

<b>Answer Choice</b>	<b>Response</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	90%	18
<b>No</b>	10%	2
<b>Total</b>		20

Q9

Do you feel you did a typical days work?

<b>Answer Choice</b>	<b>Response</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	95%	19
<b>No</b>	5%	1
<b>Total</b>		28