Resilience Policy

POLICY / TITLE		DATE OF APPROVAL
Resilience Policy		September 2025
APPROVED BY	**VERSION NO.**	**VALID UNTIL**
Executive Board	1	September 2028

OWNER	Assistant Director Risk and Protection
GROUP EXECUTIVE LEAD	Chief Information Data and Estates Officer
DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy ☒ Group Procedure ☐ Local Procedure ☐
PURPOSE	The purpose of this policy is to define the objectives of the resilience function. This policy is also designed to ensure that the principles of the resilience framework are agreed and communicated across the organisation.
APPLICABLE TO	All NCG employees, as well as consultants, vendors, agency workers, contractors, service users, trainees/students, volunteers and/or any other parties who have a business relationship with NCG.
EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED [POLICIES ONLY]	Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐
	(If EA not applicable, please explain)
KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY	1. This policy outlines NCG's commitment to organisational resilience—ensuring we can respond to, recover from, and adapt to disruptions while continuing to deliver essential services. It sets out a clear framework for emergency and incident management, business continuity, crisis communications, and recovery, supporting a proactive and coordinated approach across the Group. 2. It is essential that all staff are aware of and understand this policy. Resilience is a shared responsibility, and every individual has a role to play in ensuring NCG can respond effectively to disruption and maintain continuity of service. Familiarity with this policy and its principles is critical to protecting our learners, colleagues, and the wider organisation. 3. All resources, including associated plans and procedures are accessible using the NCG Resilience Portal.
EXPECTED OUTCOME	Readers are expected to understand the organisational position on organisational resilience, know their responsibilities in relation to the policy and comply with the terms of the policy.

MISCELLANEOUS	
LINKED DOCUMENTS	- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 - Health and Safety Policy - Safeguarding Policy - Prevent Action Plan - Critical Incident Management Plan - Crisis Communication Plan - Cyber Incident Response Plan - College Business Continuity Plan - College Emergency Plan
KEYWORDS	- Resilience - Incident Management - Business Continuity

Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
	Yes	**No**	**Explanatory Note if required**
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in Section 2?	☒	☐	The answer to this must be YES
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	☐	☒	
Age	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Disability / Difficulty	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Gender Reassignment	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Marriage and Civil Partnership	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Race	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Religion or Belief	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sex	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sexual Orientation	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy/processes contain any language/terms/references/ phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this could be yes or no as positive action is lawful. However, an explanation must be provided for clarity.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	This policy has been reviewed internally, using the guidance included within the NCG Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy.		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish NCG's commitment to organisational resilience by ensuring that the Group and its colleges are prepared to respond to, recover from, and adapt to disruptions while continuing to deliver critical services to learners, staff, and stakeholders.

This policy applies to all NCG colleges, departments, services, and staff. It supports the development, implementation, and maintenance of resilience strategies across the organisation and incorporates the following processes:

- Emergency and Incident Management
- Business Continuity
- Crisis Communications
- Recovery and Adaptation
- Organisational Learning and Continuous Improvement

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

NCG is committed to embedding resilience into its culture, operations, and governance. We define resilience as the ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions while maintaining essential functions and safeguarding our people, assets, and reputation.

We will achieve this by:

- Identifying and protecting critical activities and services.
- Maintaining and testing robust emergency response and business continuity plans.
- Ensuring effective communication and coordination during incidents.
- Promoting a culture of preparedness and continuous improvement.
- Collaborating with partners, suppliers, and local authorities.
- Supporting the wellbeing of staff and learners during and after incidents.

The key objectives that underpin this policy are to:

- To minimise the impact of disruptions on learners, staff, and operations.
- To ensure continuity of teaching, safeguarding, IT, and other critical services.

- To comply with statutory/regulatory requirements and aligning with industry best practice.

- To foster a proactive and informed organisational culture around risk and resilience.


3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Resilience can be defined as the ability of an organisation to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions while maintaining essential functions and adapting to changing circumstances.

The **NCG Resilience Portal** is the central hub for all resources related to resilience. It provides access to guidance, templates, and tools that support preparedness and response activities. In addition to a central homepage, each college within NCG has a dedicated page where they can access their specific documents and resources.

NCG adopts a holistic approach to the planning, management, and effective resolution of a range of incidents and events affecting its operational capability.

The diagram below illustrates the timeline of an incident, highlighting how key resilience components interact and overlap throughout its lifecycle. These components—Emergency Planning, Incident Management, Business Continuity, and IT Disaster Recovery—support timely decision-making, safeguard operations, and enable effective recovery.
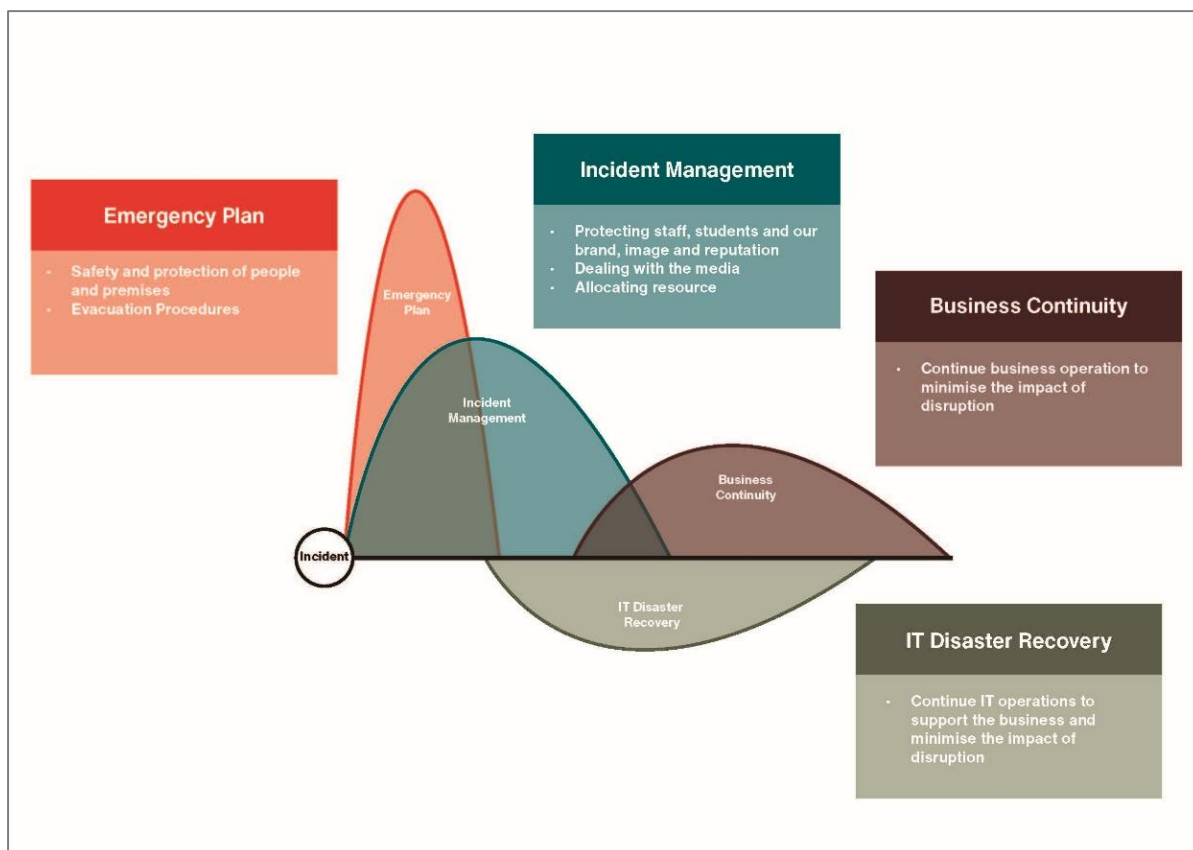
Each phase begins at different points and may continue concurrently, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of incident response and recovery. This reinforces the importance of coordinated action across all stages to maintain essential functions and adapt to changing circumstances

4. EMERGENCY AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

NCG is committed to ensuring a structured and effective response to emergencies and incidents that may impact the safety of individuals or disrupt normal operations. Our emergency and incident management arrangements are designed to protect people, safeguard assets, and support continuity of service.

The Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) provides strategic guidance for Group Executives and College Principals, enabling coordinated leadership and decision-making during high-impact incidents. It ensures alignment between emergency response, business continuity, and recovery efforts, supporting a seamless transition from incident management to operational restoration.

Emergency response is coordinated through a clearly defined Emergency Response Team (ERT) structure, with roles and responsibilities tailored to the nature and scale of the incident. The ERT is empowered to:

- Protect the safety and welfare of staff, learners, and visitors.

- Secure vital assets and infrastructure.

- Coordinate with emergency services and external agencies.

- Initiate timely and accurate communication with stakeholders.

- Maintain detailed logs of decisions and actions taken.

The CIMP is supported by local arrangements detailed within the College Emergency Plan which outlines the procedures, roles, and resources required to respond effectively to a range of incidents, ensuring the safety of students and staff while maintaining continuity of essential operations. Working with plan stakeholders, the plans should be regularly assured to ensure the following takes place:

- Ensuring emergency plans are current, tested, and aligned with legal and regulatory requirements.

- Providing training and guidance to ensure readiness across all sites.

- Supporting the integration of emergency response into NCG's wider resilience and business continuity framework.

The Critical Incident Management Plan and College Emergency Plans are coordinated and maintained by the Assistant Director – Risk and Protection, supported by external assurance activities where required.

5. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

NCG's Business Continuity Management (BCM) framework is aligned with the Business Continuity Institute (BCI) Good Practice Guidelines, ensuring a structured and resilient approach to managing disruption. Our process follows five key stages:

- **Understanding the Organisation (Analysis)**
  We conduct regular Business Impact Analyses (BIA) across all Colleges and Services to identify critical activities, assess the impact of disruption, and determine resource requirements.

- **Determining BCM Strategy (Design)**
  Based on BIA findings, we develop continuity strategies that address key resource areas—people, premises, technology, information, and suppliers. These strategies ensure that alternative solutions are in place to maintain essential services during disruption.

- **Developing and Implementing BCM Response (Implementation)**
  We translate analysis and strategy into actionable Business Continuity Plans (BCPs). These plans outline roles, responsibilities, and recovery procedures, and are centrally maintained and accessible to relevant service leads in both digital and hard copy formats.

- **Exercising, Maintaining and Reviewing (Validation)**
  To ensure effectiveness, our continuity arrangements are regularly tested, reviewed, and updated. This validation process confirms that plans remain current and capable of supporting recovery within defined timeframes. Assurance extends beyond internal plans to consider our subcontractors who are subject to an annual review process as part of the NCG Subcontractor Handbook.

- **Embedding BCM in Organisational Culture (Embedding)**
  We promote a culture of resilience through ongoing training, awareness, and integration of BCM into daily operations. This collaborative approach strengthens our ability to respond to and recover from disruptions.

Each College and Professional Service is responsible for contributing to the BIA and BCP review process, ensuring that their critical activities and recovery needs are accurately reflected. The Assistant Director – Risk and Protection is responsible for overseeing the BCM process and ensuring that all documentation is maintained, up to date, and aligned with organisational resilience objectives.

6. IT DISASTER RECOVERY

NCG recognises the critical role of technology in maintaining essential operations and is committed to ensuring the resilience of its IT infrastructure. The Information and Data Services (IDS) team leads and manages the organisation's IT Disaster Recovery (ITDR) processes, which are integral to our Resilience framework.

ITDR at NCG is governed by a suite of dedicated plans, including the Cyber Incident Response Plan and the IDS Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan. These plans outline the procedures, responsibilities, and recovery strategies required to restore IT services following a disruption, ensuring minimal impact on teaching, learning, and operational continuity.

The IDS team is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining ITDR plans in alignment with industry best practices.

- Ensuring recovery strategies are tested, validated, and updated regularly.

- Coordinating with the Legal, Governance, Assurance & Risk team to ensure alignment with organisational resilience objectives.

- Supporting service areas in understanding IT dependencies and recovery expectations.

All ITDR activities are centrally managed by IDS team, with clear escalation and communication protocols to ensure a timely and effective response to IT related incidents.

7. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is essential to NCG's ability to respond to and recover from disruptive incidents. The NCG Marketing and Communications team leads and

manages NCG's **Crisis Communications Plan**, ensuring that accurate, timely, and consistent information is shared with all stakeholders during a crisis.

The Crisis Communications Plan outlines the protocols and responsibilities for managing internal and external messaging, with the following key objectives:

- Coordinate clear and controlled communication throughout incidents.
- Ensure all stakeholders including staff, students and the public are kept informed and reassured.
- Put people before property and PR.
- Maintain the reputation of NCG and its colleges.
- Support a quick return to normal operations.

The NCG Marketing and Communications team is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining the Crisis Communications Plan and associated guidance.
- Leading the response to communication needs during incidents, in coordination with relevant service areas.
- Ensuring communication channels and messaging strategies are tested, reviewed, and aligned with NCG's broader resilience framework.

All crisis communication activities are centrally managed by the NCG Marketing and Communications team, with clear escalation and approval processes to support effective decision-making and stakeholder engagement.

8. RECOVERY

NCG is committed to ensuring a structured and supportive recovery process following any significant disruption. Recovery focuses on restoring normal operations, addressing impacts, and adapting to new conditions where necessary to maintain continuity of service.

The recovery process is guided by the outcomes of the **incident or event** and includes the following key objectives:

- Reaffirming recovery plans to ensure alignment with current needs and priorities.

- Addressing operational backlogs and resuming suspended activities within acceptable timeframes.

- Supporting the wellbeing of staff and learners through appropriate services and interventions.

- Communicating the return to 'business as usual' clearly and consistently to all stakeholders.

Where required, NCG may adapt operations to reflect new conditions—such as revised delivery models or relocation of services—to ensure continued service delivery and organisational resilience.

The Assistant Director – Risk and Protection is responsible for overseeing the recovery process in collaboration with relevant service leads, ensuring that recovery actions are coordinated, documented, and aligned with NCG's wider resilience objectives.

9. ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

NCG is committed to continuous improvement and views every incident as an opportunity to strengthen its resilience framework. By learning from real-world events, we enhance our preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities across the organisation.

Following any significant disruption, NCG will:

- conduct structured debriefs involving key internal and external stakeholders.

- complete post-incident reports to capture lessons learned and identify areas for improvement.

- review and update the resilience plans and procedures.

- embed improvements into future planning, training, and exercises.

As part of this commitment, NCG maintains a schedule of testing and exercising to validate the effectiveness of its resilience arrangements. These activities ensure that plans remain fit for purpose and that staff are confident in their roles during disruption.

This cycle of learning and adaptation ensures that our resilience arrangements evolve in response to emerging risks, stakeholder feedback, and best practice.

The Assistant Director – Risk and Protection is responsible for overseeing the organisational learning process, ensuring that insights are captured, shared, and translated into meaningful improvements across NCG's resilience and continuity planning.

10. DOCUMENTATION

All documentation relating to NCG's resilience arrangements will be centrally stored and maintained on the NCG Resilience Portal. This ensures consistent access, version control, and alignment across all Colleges and Professional Services.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW

NCG is committed to maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of its Resilience Policy through regular monitoring and review. This ensures that our arrangements remain current, compliant, and responsive to emerging risks and sector developments.

Key elements of our monitoring and review process include:

- Regular review of this policy in accordance with NCG's governance framework; following any significant event, organisational change, or the introduction of new sector guidance.

- Ongoing compliance monitoring through audits, plan validations, and incident debriefs.

- Timely communication of updates to all relevant stakeholders.

The Assistant Director – Risk and Protection is responsible for ensuring that all updates are implemented and that the policy continues to support NCG's resilience objectives.

12. RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Chief Information Data and Estates Officer	• Approval of policy and associated plans and procedures relating to resilience. • Advisor to NCG's CEO, Executive team and the NCG Corporation Board in relation to resilience. • Reporting updates and issues to Executive Board and Audit & Risk Committee.
Assistant Director – Risk and Protection	• Development and implementation of policy and supporting procedures relating to resilience. • Embedding a resilience culture throughout the Group. • Maintenance of the business continuity management system as detailed within this policy. • Training and supporting plan owners in all aspects of business continuity management. • Monitoring national and local developments in respect of resilience. • Supporting senior teams within the Colleges / Services to deliver the requirements set out below.
Director of IDS	• Oversee the development and implementation of IDS Resilience arrangements, as detailed in the ITDR and Cyber Incident Response Plan.
Assistant Director of Health and Safety	• Support the development and implementation of emergency plans across the Group, ensuring they meet with legislative requirements where appropriate.
Director of Recruitment and Communications	• Oversee the development and implementation of communication plans and guidance.
Professional Service Leads and College Leadership Teams	• Contribute to the development, review, and maintenance of resilience documentation.

Role	Responsibility
	• Participate in relevant training, exercises, and awareness activities to ensure readiness and understanding of roles during disruption. • Share information and cascade key messages to their teams to support preparedness and coordinated response.
All Staff	• Adopting and follow guidance provided through the Resilience Framework, including Emergency/ Incident Management and business continuity procedures. • Participating in training and awareness activities to understand their role in responding to disruption. • Contributing to improvement activities where appropriate, including debriefs and feedback following incidents or exercises. • All staff have a shared responsibility to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of themselves, learners, and visitors. This includes remaining vigilant to potential risks, responding appropriately during incidents, and actively supporting the implementation of resilience procedures.

13. STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval, this policy will be uploaded to the policy portal and communicated to staff via The Business Round-Up.

14. STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NCG is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Further details or our aims and objectives are outlined in our [Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Strategy](#).

This policy has been assessed to identify any potential for adverse or positive impact on specific groups of people protected by the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate either directly or indirectly. In applying this policy, we have considered eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between people from diverse groups.

15. STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

NCG is committed to upholding the principles of freedom of speech as enshrined in UK law. This policy is designed to ensure that all members of our college community, including students, staff, and visitors, can express their views and ideas freely and without fear of censorship or reprisal, provided that such expressions are within the law.

We affirm that this policy does not, in any way, diminish or undermine the rights of individuals under existing Freedom of Speech legislation.

16. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION

This policy / procedure has been reviewed in consultation with members of the Policy Review Council prior to approval by Executive Board.

VERSION CONTROL			
Version No.	**Description of Change and Rationale**	**Author/Reviewer**	**Date Revised**
1	New policy	Asst. Director Risk and Protection	Aug 2025