

# Improving service outage communication

## What the UAL Community wants from service outage communication

1. Speedy notifications, frequent updates
2. Communications delivered via tools they see and use
3. Impact of incident to match impact of communication tool
4. Communications style: in plain English and without Jargon, clear, complete, professional, and consistent with other UAL Communications
5. Communication content: better definition of user impact (e.g. services affected); work arounds, resolution updates
6. Management want to know about service outages promptly and before the rest of the UAL community

## What we learned from our previous service outage communication plan

1. Plan became out of date quickly and was difficult to maintain
2. IT staff found the defined processes difficult to follow

## Challenges

1. It may not be possible to fulfil all of the expectations with the resources available, or at all.
2. Language and processes used by different departments involved in service outage communication may not integrate well

## How we're planning to improve

### **Fulfilling the expectations of the UAL Community:**

- 1. Speedy notifications, frequent updates**
  - ✓ Address aspects of our service outage processes and working instructions that slow down the delivery of communications to the UAL community
  - ✓ Agree the target timeframes for each type of communication, balancing expectation with available resources
- 2. Communications delivered via tools they see and use**
  - ✓ Work with Internal and College Comms teams to deliver targeted communications
- 3. Impact of incident to match impact of communication tool**
  - ✓ Work with internal communications to determine the impact of each communication channel
  - ✓ Work with internal communications to define the criticality of each IT Service

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- 4. Communications style: clear, professional, and consistent with other UAL Communications**
  - ✓ Communications will be house style; tone and branding agreed
  - ✓ Communications will be in plain English and avoid jargon
- 5. Communication content: better definition of user impact (e.g. services affected); work arounds, resolution updates**
  - ✓ Minimum and ideal content attributes will be defined and agreed with the UAL community
  - ✓ IT Services will develop service mapping to assist with defining user impact and work arounds
- 6. Management want to know about incident first and promptly**
  - ✓ SMS alerts will be sent to Executive board UOB first

## Improving our service outage communication plan:

- 1. Plan became out of date quickly and was difficult to maintain**
  - ✓ Remove data elements that require frequent manual updates e.g. replace staff names with job titles
  - ✓ Document process for updating contact lists
  - ✓ Automate updates wherever possible
  - ✓ Document process and responsibilities for maintenance and improvements
- 2. Staff involved in service outage communication found the plan difficult to follow**
  - ✓ All processes and terms will be accompanied by precise definition and specifications
  - ✓ Involved parties will be consulted each team in early stages of planning
  - ✓ Involved parties will be consulted in early stages of planning to discover their standard working processes and tools
  - ✓ Clear process and simple working instructions will be supplied to all involved parties
  - ✓ Introductory sessions will be held with all involved parties
  - ✓ Training will be provided for any new processes or tools

## Meeting challenges:

- 1. It may not be possible to fulfil all of the expectations with the resources available.**
  - ✓ Scope of initial improvements will be limited, but will be set in line with priorities of business
  - ✓ Plan will be defined for cycles of reviewing and improving the communications with the business
  - ✓ Expectations of the business will be managed: scope of types of communication and tools, SLAs and responsibilities will be defined and agreed with the business
- 2. Language and processes used by different departments involved in service outage communication may not integrate well**
  - ✓ IT Communications will work with different departments to standardise language and processes for optimal integration

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## Progress so far

- Reviewed 2014 service outage communication plan and identified areas that require improvements or updates
- Defined the scope and timeline of initial improvements
- Worked with Internal Comms to develop business led communication protocols
- Translate protocols for optimal integration with IT processes (underway)
- Improving definitions and specifications that accompany processes (underway)
- Developing simple working instructions and checklists (underway)

## Next steps

- Consultation and workshops with all parties involved in service outage communication to discover standard working processes

## Timescale

We're planning to introduce the new service outage communications plan to IT Services in May 2017.