

# Resilience

Journal of the Emergency Planning Society

Summer 2024



## COVID INQUIRY

## The findings of Module 1

[www.the-eps.org](http://www.the-eps.org)

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**GRADUATE ENTRY: the only way is Essex**



**HEATWAVE: getting prepared in London**



**PORTRAITS: using art for flood resilience focus**



**VIP VISITORS: some tips on keeping them happy**



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## Resilience

Summer 2024

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preparedness of the  
United Kingdom'*

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## memo

It's been another busy quarter for the EPS, and here's another packed *Resilience* magazine with plenty of interesting articles.

Our members, Professional Working Groups, and some Branches and Committees, have continued to deliver webinars and a whole series of events - the Board would like to thank those members for all your hard work and continued support.

### PWGs

The **Communications PWG** has developed a 'Crisis Comms Guidance', which members will have early access to, via a QR code which will be sent to everyone via email. More information can be found on the guidance in this issue (*see page 8*).

The **EPS Human Aspects and Community Resilience PWG** (HAG&CR PWG) is hosting a series of events under the banner of 'The Big Conversation'. These events aim to allow "... *open and honest conversations, that lead to innovations and initiatives to help to shape the future of humanity in resilience in the UK.*"

The **CBRNe PWG** meanwhile held a live event in June, in conjunction with the National CBRN Centre. It was well attended - the aim of the event was to host an in-person event bringing together specialist CBRN responders, civil non-specialist responders and planners and policy makers, in order to positively influence the UK response to future CBRN incidents.

### New appointments

I'm delighted to report that **Dr Becky Alexis-Martin FRGS CIEH FHEA**, who lectures in Peace, Science, and Technology, as well as being a Visiting Fellow in Geography, Earth, and Environmental Sciences, University of Melbourne, has kindly agreed to take on the role of the Chair of our National Student Network. This is great news.

The Board is also pleased to announce, following successful completion of the recruitment process, two new Board members, to be appointed at our next AGM. They are both well known within the resilience community. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience which will enhance the growth of the EPS, and I hope you will all join me in welcoming them to the Board. Here's their backgrounds:

**Nathan Hazlehurst** is currently head of emergency planning for Worcestershire County Council, and has over 12 years experience of working and volunteering within emergency planning and response. Nathan has been a regular face at the huddles, is member of several PWGs and supported the EPS conference in 2023 in Manchester.

**Lt Col Stephen Johnson** is the Army Competent Adviser and Inspector for C-CBRN in the MOD, providing risk advice and assurance on Counter CBRN capability through exercises, inspections and other data. He also has a career as a Forensic Scientist, and is Senior Lecturer in Intelligence and Forensic Exploitation at Cranfield University, where his focus is on risk

■ **Jeannie Barr**  
Interim Chair, EPS



science and investigations of hazardous incidents. He was Adjunct Professor of Emergency and Disaster Management at Georgetown University, and is still an Adjunct Professor for the University of

Rome Tor Vergata, on emergency management and investigation.

When that doesn't fill up his week, he has been a special constable with Wiltshire Police since 2018, focusing on response policing!

Meanwhile **Stephen Arundell** continues to run the induction sessions for new members and a new lunchtime session was recently held which was well attended. All branches and PWG's are invited along to the induction sessions to introduce themselves.

### Civil Contingencies National Occupational Standards Consultation 2024

We have been invited to put together a joint members feedback to the current NOS consultation, and 'Focus Sessions' will be held over the next few weeks at which comments will be collated and a report prepared and sent to the Workforce Development Trust, commissioned by the Cabinet Office to carry out the consultation.

The Cabinet Office have also requested that we be part of the expert group, and I will provide an update on this once we know more.

### Website

Development of the website is progressing and we are now at the point of inviting members to be part of the **Beta Testing** which will run from mid to end of September with the a provisional go live date of mid-October. If you are interested in being part of the Beta Test please email [info@the-eps.org](mailto:info@the-eps.org).

### Fire Resilience Excellence Awards

I am delighted to confirm **Matt Hogan** has agreed to represent the EPS on the judging panel for the FREA's.

### 30Days30WaysUK

30Days30WaysUK is set to launch its 10th annual campaign in September: #30days30waysUK. The campaign provides access to resources and information to encourage people across the UK to think about the easy steps they can take to 'be prepared not scared'. Can I ask all members to share, comment, link and let everyone know about the campaign.

### AGM

A date for your diary – the next EPS AGM will be held on **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October** at 19:00 hrs via Zoom. Hope to see you there!

# EP Graduate Trainees: YOU'RE HIRED!

By **Tabea Zimmerman**

MSc Risk, Disaster & Resilience, UCL

*IN 2023, Essex County Council introduced one of the first emergency planning graduate traineeships in the United Kingdom. I was fortunate to have been selected as the first graduate trainee. Six months into the role, I would like to share my reflections and invite other local authorities to explore creating entry level positions for the next generation of emergency planners.*



**W**hen I first learned about the position, I was excited to apply. However, I was also surprised to find this opportunity as I had noticed that entry level positions in public sector emergency management were scarce.

I had graduated with an MSc in Risk, Disaster and Resilience from University College London and also had some relevant experiences in conducting disaster research. The graduate traineeship, provided by the Emergency Planning and Resilience (EP&R) Team at Essex County Council, offered an ideal opportunity to build on my skills and develop a solid foundation in emergency planning.

To learn what it takes to become a successful emergency planner, the role is designed to let me develop a diverse skillset through-out projects and professional development. Over the course of two years, I will work across projects in both emergency planning and business continuity, focussing on various hazards and risks. I am further developing my skillset through other tasks such as financial management, learning how to maintain command and control, delivering information

management, and project management.

While I enjoy my projects and professional development opportunities a lot, I also benefit greatly from peer-to-peer learning amongst my team members and emergency partner organisations. Some of my recent highlights include being part of incident responses, observing the 'RideLondon' Command Centre, participating in exercises with members of the Essex Resilience Forum, and being part of our Crisis Support Worker Team training.

I am confident that this two-year programme will lead me to become an emergency planner who can confidently respond to any incident for the authority.

**M**y team developed this position as a response to the gap in graduate entry level positions in the public emergency sector. And I believe that, if other local authorities were to create similar positions, graduates who are interested in emergency management would be thrilled to apply.

This was evident in our application process which involved written pre-selection, attending an assessment

centre, and a final formal interview. There was a significant number of applications from graduates from across the UK who shared the experience, after they could not find the same opportunity elsewhere. In times of a shortage of emergency planners in the public sector, shouldn't we aspire to create entry ways for motivated skilled young professionals?

**Jo Tyler**, EP & R Manager at Essex County Council, says:

*The value of this graduate entry role has exceeded our initial expectations, becoming intrinsic to the way we operate. I feel sure that the wider introduction of graduate roles in addition to apprenticeships will have a positive impact on the profession. We are happy to share our process as well as our job description and documentation around the role.*

■ **PICTURES:** Above, the Essex team at work. Below, meet the EP & R Team at Essex County Council



For inquiries about the scheme, contact the EP&R Team at: [emergency.planning@essex.gov.uk](mailto:emergency.planning@essex.gov.uk)



# London gears up for climate change heatwaves

At the end of June, emergency services and agencies across the capital came together for a training exercise – **Operation Hellos** - to test out their response to an extreme heat event.

The exercise, named after the Greek god of the sun, saw London agencies test the response to a five-day period where temperatures exceeded 40 degrees. It was intended to demonstrate London's ability to deal with future extreme heatwaves.

The exercise was led by the Greater London Authority's London Resilience Unit, involving over 80 participants drawn from the London Fire Brigade, London Ambulance Service, the Met Police, London Borough Councils and a range of health, transport, environment, utility and business as well as voluntary organisations.

The exercise debrief will contribute to the *London Climate Resilience Review*, which published its *Interim Report* (see: [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)) in March. Publication of the final report has been delayed following the calling of a general election.

The *Interim Report* included a recommendation to 'conduct an exercise to test London's preparedness for a severe heat episode and identify potential cascading and concurrent risks.'

The Review was called in response to the heatwave of 2022, when, on 19 July 2022, the London Fire Brigade reported its busiest day since World War II, evacuating approximately 500 people and taking nearly 3,000 calls. In Wellington, East London, two rows of terraced houses were destroyed by fire.

It was clear that London, like the rest of the UK, was unprepared for a prolonged heatwave period of over 40°C. The Fire Brigades Union for example, say that on that day, 39 LFB fire engines were out of action because not enough firefighters were available to crew them, the LFB was unable to send vital specialist equipment to some of the worst fires, while the control room taking calls declared an understaffing emergency.

It is not just kit, but adapting existing structures to cope with extreme heat. **Bob Ward**, Director for Policy and Communications at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change, says heatwaves are not a freak event but will become more common, while work needs to be done for existing normal

summer temperatures.

He said 2022 was "... not a one-off and the Met Office has warned that the probability of similar temperatures, or higher, is growing all the time due to climate change.

"More than 1,300 people have died from summer heatwave conditions in London over the past four years. Most of those who have perished had underlying health conditions such as respiratory illnesses, and were in hospitals, care homes or their own houses.

"Many of these deaths could have been prevented if London's buildings were better adapted to extreme heat, with adequate ventilation, shutters and other measures. Unfortunately, many of the capital's buildings overheat even during mild summers, and deaths can occur when outside temperatures are still below 30°C " (*Evening Standard*, 27.06.24).

While the recommendations of the *London Climate Resilience Review* are awaited, local authorities in London are being urged to study a new guide called *Resilient and Green – governance and partnership guide* (available at: [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk)).

The guide says: "Climate adaptation and resilience is a growing priority for London Boroughs as average temperatures increase



■ Heatwaves can cause railway lines to buckle, causing transport chaos

**'2022 was not a one-off. The Met Office has warned that probability of similar temperatures, or higher, is growing all the time due to climate change'**

and extreme weather events become more intense and more frequent. London Boroughs have a key role to play in adapting to a changing climate and strengthening resilience, to reduce the impact on infrastructure and communities while restoring nature and improving health outcomes."

This guide aims to support Boroughs at the start of their adaptation journey by looking across these themes, and sets out London Boroughs' responsibilities, as well as national and regional policy.

It also maps London's governance landscape and identifies opportunities for collaboration with key stakeholders and networks. Each section sets out the Borough teams and service areas affected.

■ The row of houses destroyed in Wellington, during the 2022 heatwave



# A portrait of resilience

## The synergy of creativity, culture, and business



**JOANNE WOODHOUSE, of JBA Consultants, looks at why a science-based flood resilience company has collaborated with Artists**

At JBA, we use science to explain things, design assets, calculate risks, and manage our surroundings.

We rely on rational arguments and seek to move our clients and engage communities by pointing to truths.

Art and artists similarly point to truths but communicate through emotional engagement. While it may seem less precise than scientific explanations, art can be equally effective. It engages people through responses and feelings, helping to make complex issues relatable. Some artists break the mould and create value, both economic and cultural.

Our values are very similar. We are curious, innovative,

And always seek to explain complexity simply to benefit society.

Art and our scientific work are not polar opposites; they complement each other and are mutually supportive in making sense of the world for ourselves and the communities we work with.

This is why we have worked with *The Artery* and professional photographer **Juliet Klottrup** to capture the human story of climate resilience through the exhibition *A Portrait of Resilience*.

Climate resilience is central to our company strategy, and by adopting innovative communication we can explain the complexities of resilience to a wider audience.

The exhibition is based on JBA's partnership work with North Yorkshire Council and Watertight

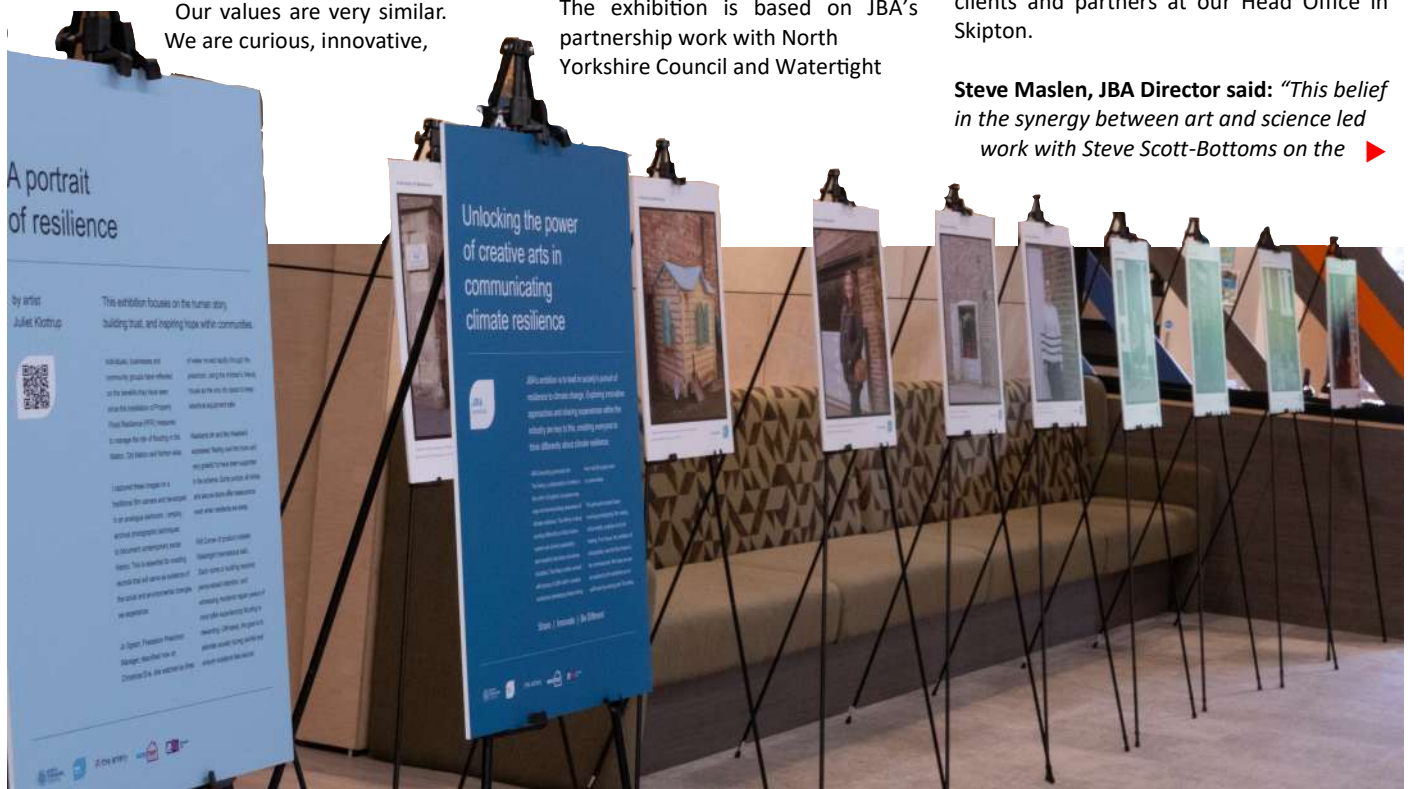
**'We believe that art and artists add new dimensions and perspectives to our technical work. To bring people along on a sometimes difficult journey, we need to appeal to both the head and the heart, the rational and the emotional'**

International in the village of Malton, North Yorkshire.

Through 10 images it powerfully documents the human impact of flooding, the vulnerability and the strength and resilience of community in a personal and heartfelt way.

The exhibition was premiered at the annual 'Flood & Coast' conference, and we recently held a launch event for over 40 clients and partners at our Head Office in Skipton.

**Steve Maslen, JBA Director said:** "This belief in the synergy between art and science led work with Steve Scott-Bottoms on the ▶





# A portrait of resilience

(Continued)

*Boxers Guide to Resilience 18 months ago. It's why our staff collaborated with The Artery, culminating in the 'Portrait of resilience'.*

*We believe that art and artists add new dimensions and perspectives to our technical work.*

*To bring people along on a sometimes difficult journey, we need to appeal to both the head and the heart, the rational and the emotional.*



■ The exhibition in full swing - blending culture and business to drive climate resilience

**Phil Emonson, JBA's Climate Resilience Transformation Lead** said: "Understanding what resilience to climate change means can be complex.

"It means different things to different people operating in different disciplines. Our ambition is to 'lead in society's pursuit for resilience to climate change' and to do this we know we need to find innovative and powerful ways to communicate and raise awareness.

"Working with *The Artery* on this inspiring exhibition has been a rewarding process, and we are delighted to showcase the benefits of partnership working to build resilience in the community of Malton."

**Karen Merrifield, The Artery,** adds: "The Artery works in the gaps and overlaps between the business, creative and culture sectors.

"Traditionally, conversations between the three sectors focus on marketing or sponsorship.

"The Artery brings creatives and businesses together as equals, to explore issues that are important to businesses and the communities they serve.

"This leads to different conversations and more meaningful engagement with colleagues, audiences, partners and stakeholders.

"Our work with JBA Consulting provided a great opportunity with clear and measurable benefits for both JBA and *The Artery*.

"We are delighted with Juliet's exhibition which is already inspiring and informing the debate around resilience."

## Empowering communities to build a more resilient future

We are committed to blending creativity, culture, and business to drive climate resilience. By leveraging the strengths of science, art, and community engagement, we can empower communities, create legacies, and build a society that is more resilient to climate change.

Together, we are not just addressing climate change — we are innovating, inspiring, and paving the way for a sustainable tomorrow. ■



Share

Innovate

Be Different

# Crisis communications - EPS 'Checklist' launched

By **Andy Holdsworth**  
EPS Communications PWG & Holdsworth Consultancy Ltd

The materialisation of global and geopolitical risks have impacted on all of our personal and professional lives more arguably so in the past five years than anything since World War II.

Whilst there have been natural, geopolitical and global crises that have arisen in that time, few would have been felt so personally, and across such a broad range of people, than the culmination of what has been faced recently.

From the global pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine - and subsequent pressures not only on natural resources but the impact of sanctions and how that has impacted numerous organisation who had a presence or relationship with Russia - to the conflict between Palestine and Israel, global events continue to test the resilience of organisations and their ability to deal with challenges and crises.

With impacts on ways of working, to the cost of energy, to the global supply chains, all have proved challenging.

Additionally, organisations have had to still continue to properly handle issues and crises that occur away from the global events, from accidents and incidents to corporate issues, environmental and natural disasters, to cyber-attacks and reputational challenges.

Considering the resilience cycle, and remembering that many organisations have been in Recovery mode from one event, and

crucially learning from it, as another materialises, bringing 'Response' into sharp focus again.

Whilst this has been essential, it is

key that organisations do not neglect to continue the 'Anticipation, Preparedness and Protect' phases. This naturally places a strain on resources within an organisation but, is nevertheless crucial in enabling the organisation to be prepared for the next potential issue and hopefully be able to manage it so it has minimal impact.

It is with this background that the Emergency Planning Society have produced a guidance document to address one part of 'Preparedness': Communication.

Aimed at assisting those who have the responsibility for communications during an issue or a crisis, the document goes through the types of tasks that may be faced and why preparedness is crucial.

The *Crisis Communication Checklist* was written by myself, **Andy Holdsworth** (Holdsworth Consultancy Ltd) and **Charlie Maclean-Bristol** (Plan B Consulting).

Between us we have over 40 years' experience working in, and with organisations, of all types and in all sectors and in multiple regions across the world on resilience and crisis communications. We are members of the EPS Communication Professional Working Group whose aim is to facilitate the development and continuous improvement of emergency communication and guidance related to it.

Understanding how as an organisation you will communicate when a risk materialises is a key part of Preparedness and one that crucially can aid Response when it is needed.

Crisis Communications covers a broad spectrum of communications. It is different from 'day to day communications' for an organisation and crucially this applies both internally and externally. Communicating with staff, partners, suppliers and customers, media and regulators, just a few to start with, and additionally these through the



numerous channels we now have available. When considering communications that may be needed as an organisation in a crisis, it is important to remember that there are multiple benefits to having planned:

- Crisis Communications can encompass a 'Warning and Informing' aspect, where information put out in the public domain can assist in the safety and well-being of individuals.
- Secondly, communicate with key stakeholders, be they suppliers, customers or regulators.
- Thirdly, there is handling any reputational impact that a crisis or issue could have on an organisation - handling communications properly can help to protect this.

There is no, 'one-size' fits all, no standard document that works for every organisation. It has to be recognised that different organisations will have differing capabilities and capacities alongside different structures which will be in place to deal with communications and crisis communications.

The Communications Team may be an individual, a small team or a larger team, some will have external support from Public Relations companies or consultants, others will not. The Communications Team is likely to be geared towards day-to-day business and less so to handling crises and emergencies.

Different organisations will have different structures in place to deal with communications and crisis communications and, whatever is put in place to handle such situations should be bespoke and suitable to that individual organisation.

The *Crisis Communication Checklist* will help organisations consider what they need to have in place and have a plan in place to deal with issues.



■ Pictures: the world has seen the greatest impacts since World War II - not only the pandemic, but also the conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine



# VIP

## Some 'tricks of the trade' for that important Ministerial site visit

### ALL CHANGE! But expect delays...

DURING my time as a Civil Servant I saw two political transitions during general elections: from Conservative to Labour in 1997, and from Labour to Conservative/Lib Dem Coalition in 2010.

A political transition is different because, from the Civil Service point of view, obviously the previous continuity is lost. Think *Yes Minister* crashing into *The Thick Of It*...

Sorry to disappoint, but when a government changes political direction there is an extended transition period as new Ministers are bedded in and the policies and projects of the previous administration reviewed.

So there could be a temporary hiatus if you are awaiting news from Whitehall on that project you were working on with central government.

Within government there are 109 paid Ministers to be appointed. Of the new government, only a handful of the Cabinet have previous Ministerial experience. So that's a lot of new politicians 'learning the ropes' afresh.

Then of course they will want to review the direction of travel their Department was following under the previous administration, a detailed look at their budgets and then look at how the new policies they promised on the stump can be delivered.

Then there's all the Private Parliamentary Secretaries, Trade Envoys and Special Advisors to appoint.

In my experience, this process took about six months in terms of progress on projects.

What do carry on however are Ministerial Visits, as the new Ministers will want to be seen getting to grips with their new department.

Read on ....

**FOLLOWING** the recent General Election, BOB WADE, editor of *Resilience*, looks at the choreography of a Ministerial or VIP visit. Bob spent 16 years in the Civil Service, and oversaw the communications and presentation aspects of over 200 Ministerial visits, from Prime Ministers to Secretaries of State.

**D**uring major incidents, particularly ongoing ones, you will probably get a visit from a VIP, whether a Secretary of State or a member of the Royal Family.

For the Royal Family, it is an act of solidarity for their country. For politicians whose government is in power, it is a necessity to show they are taking the issue seriously and working with the emergency services and responders to put things right.

We have all seen the fate of politicians who are slow or late to visit a flood hit area or scene of national tragedy. So a politician will want to be there, sleeves rolled up (which seems obligatory these days) getting to grips with the crisis.

That can be a bind for emergency responders who want to get on with the job, because VIP and Ministerial visits can take up valuable time. But unfortunately it is a reality.

So this is what facilitates the Politician will want – to those of you dealing with real life and death issues during the incident, this will all sound incredibly shallow. But for a Politician, it can be make or break.

They fear the picture that will come back to haunt them for the rest of their career (*think Ed Milliband and the bacon sandwich...*). They know that the pack of mainly freelance photographers and camera crews will not just be looking for images of the current incident: for freelancers in particular, they are looking for that 'bacon sandwich shot' that they can flog to the media again and again. To them, it is an investment for the future.

The Ministerial team should be overseeing all of the following, but if you know the 'tricks of the trade', you can help them which will gain you Ministerial appreciation (which is always helpful).

A usual format for the politician is this – arrival, to greet and thank senior and key responders and receive a briefing; tour of the affected area; then a location to give a media briefing and interviews.

Simple. What could possibly go wrong... ▶





## 1 Pre - visit

WHEN you work with the Minister's team arranging the visit, don't try to push too much on the agenda. At the same time, make contingencies - that is, put in one less important aspect that could be dropped, if, as often happens, the Minister is suddenly called away to urgent business.

Having said that, make sure that 'less important' aspect is not where the Minister meets the responders that dealt with the incident (or school children lined up to meet the famous politician): the *'Minister snubs rescue heroes'* headline is not a good look.

Also, at your venue make sure you have a room put aside for the Minister's exclusive private use, in case 'business calls' and he/she has to make a confidential phone call (which from my experience can be very swearsy).

## 2 The arrival

THE Minister will want the least distance available between stepping out of the Ministerial car and the entrance to your venue, not just for security reasons, but also so they don't get mobbed by the media pack.

The problem is of course, what's usually the nearest parking slot to an official building? The Disabled Parking Bay - and the Minister will not want pictures of his limousine hogging a Disabled Parking Bay for ever more.

So if possible, cover the bay up with matting, or at least put up a prominent sign (that the media can see) that the parking regulations for that moment have been suspended.



If your organisation is security sensitive, are there any procedures that the Minister and his

team will need to adhere to, such as having site specific Passes and ID?

These can be done in advance to ensure a smooth entrance - otherwise it can be very embarrassing for all concerned.

It does happen - I've seen the High Commissioner for Zimbabwe refused entry to a government building, and once when queuing up for my site specific Pass at the Foreign Office, the person queuing in front of me was UN General Secretary Kofi Annan (*to his credit he didn't blurt out 'don't you know who I am?!?' , but was very courteous to the reception staff*).

So get all that relevant paperwork done in advance to ensure a smooth transition.

Equally, if the Minister and his team, and the media, are to enter a bio-security area, make sure they are briefed on what to expect: shiny Whitehall shoes don't like standing in a tray of disinfectant.

But also make sure the media themselves know to bring waterproof cameras, in case they need to be dipped.

And when you give the Minister the private briefing, make sure media cameras (including drones as they discovered in the Salisbury Novichok incident) can't pry - draw blinds and so on, and close windows against eavesdroppers.

## 3 Site visit

THE Minister will want the 'environmental pose' shot - that is, a picture that tells the story, of them there in the 'thick of it', so the incident as the backdrop where possible.

Don't forget the Ministerial team may number up to five, so they will need transporting to the site too. If it's a flood, are there enough high-axle vehicles to get everyone there? I've been with a Secretary of State for the Environment in flooded Evesham, where there was only room for him. Once again, check with the Ministerial



■ Where's your wellies, Minister?

team if they will bring the appropriate health and safety clothing and foot ware, or do they want it provided. And explain to the Minister's team before hand about conditions on site - yes, there was a Prime Minister and his team who turned up at a major flooding, without a Wellington Boot between them.

## 4 Photo-call

WITHIN the site visit will be the opportunity where the media can get the picture that tells the story, at least the ideal one that the Minister would like.

This may sound petty, but the Ministerial team will be looking out for *anything* in the backdrop that could cause problems.

You may recall *The Thick Of It* episode where the 'Minister' is defending her husband, Liam Bentley, who is standing for a by-election but has been accused of corruption: unfortunately as she stands under a huge sign of her husband's name, her two taller aides stand each side of her blocking out each end of Ian Bentley's name. So the shot used by all the media shows her standing under a huge sign apparently saying 'IAM BENT'.



**VIP** (continued)

The creator of *The Thick Of It*, Armando Iannucci, is not just a clever comedic writer - he studied the antics that go on in central government.

We had a similar ‘Liam Bentley’ problem during the protracted Longbridge crisis when the Blair government was trying to save the Rover car company.

We government press officers were continually on the guard to ensure Ministers on the rostrum, with a Rover logo backdrop didn’t end up with a media picture of a Minister with ‘OVER’ sticking out of their head. Not the reassuring message we wanted.

When Tony Blair came to launch the *Rover 75*, his press secretary had my press team looking at the stand from every angle to see where a photographer could get that ‘OVER’ shot. Even when Blair arrived, I noticed the first thing he did was check what the car’s number plate said.



■ Yes please!



■ No thank you

Also, remember to brief your responder team that they are on camera too. It is true that given the nature of our sector, a certain black humour prevails (it has to, otherwise we would go mad).

So if it is an incident with multiple casualties, no smiling or joking while the cameras are rolling. Sombre faces all round, please.

## 5 Media call

YOU may be asked to provide a venue for a press conference after the on-site visit. Of course, we all had school assemblies, so think all big meetings should be set up like that – top table on the stage, and then rows of chairs, and the entrance at the back of the hall.

The first thing the Ministerial press team will want to know is the *Escape Route* – how



the Minister can leave the top table to get to their car without having to battle their way through the media pack in front of them.

So if there is only one entrance, no matter what the previous room layout has always been, put the top table by that entrance so the Minister can make a quick getaway. If it is on a stage, make sure there is left and right exits that avoids the media audience. And before you ask, yes I have had one Secretary of State walk into a cupboard.

With the room layout sorted, table-ware is next:

- Have a table cloth that, facing the media audience, reaches the floor - that way the journalists can’t see ‘fidgeting feet’ (indicating nervousness) or confidential briefing documents put on the floor beside you (and certainly don’t put them on the table for all the media world to see).
- No wine glasses – the top table will need a jug of water, but tumblers only. As soon as a Minister picks up a wine glass, even though it be only water, the photographers will snap away and file for future use, if that Minister later gets into any sort of trouble related to them being on the sauce.
- No floral decorations – in a serious incident this could look inappropriate (or worse still, like a funeral parlour). Keep the table clear and make it look *business like*.

And please make sure your team have their phones switched to silent. Ringing phones are a distraction when the Minister is trying to give a



serious message to the media.

I recall a colleague being absolutely mortified when she forgot, and her phone went off at full volume as the Minister was addressing the media on a serious issue. Worse still, her ring tone was the *Mexican Hat Dance*.

## 6 Minister, exit left

IF ALL goes to plan and the Minister makes a swift exit without having to battle through the media pack, the ever hungry journalists will look for anyone else to swoop on, and it could be you as you try to make your way back to your car.

Knowing you are involved at some level in the response, the media will want to question you, perhaps asking what you thought of the Minister’s response. If you haven’t been briefed to talk to the media and that responsibility is well above your pay grade, then don’t give a statement. But be helpful, and politely direct them to your press officers for any queries.

This is a useful tip for anyone getting ‘doorstepped’ unexpectedly.

We generally speak at about three words a second – if the short walk from doorstep to your car is about 10 seconds, plan out a brief 30 word or so statement in your head – e.g ‘Hi, yes my organisation is issuing statements and will be happy to talk to you, the details are on our website, now I must get back to dealing with our response to this incident, thank you’. (37 words).

And don’t pretend to be on your mobile. No one believes you and it looks silly. ■

# COVID INQUIRY

## The findings of Module 1

THE first Module of the Covid-19 Inquiry on *The resilience and preparedness of the United Kingdom*, has now been published.

This report will be the one closest to the heart of the Emergency Planning Society, and its findings will be what everyone in the resilience sector had already felt 'in their bones' – a lack of central focus, lessons being identified but not acted upon, and resources, resources, resources.

*Resilience* looks at Module 1's extensive findings.





# Pandemic – a global catastrophe

COVID-19 killed millions of people globally and infected many millions more. As at March 2024, the World Health Organization stated that there had been over 7 million deaths and more than 774 million confirmed cases, although the true numbers may be far higher. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will be felt for decades to come.

Following over 190,000 deaths in the UK by September 2022, a Public Inquiry was set up to look at what went wrong, and more importantly, to learn lessons for the future.

The Chair of the Inquiry, the Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett DBE, decided to address this challenge by dividing its work into separate investigations known as modules. Each module is focused on a different topic with its own public hearings where the Chair hears evidence. Following hearings, recommendations for changes are developed and put into a Module Report. These reports will contain findings from the evidence collected across each module and the Chair's recommendations for the future.

## Remembering the victims

THE Inquiry has quite rightly put the victims and their families at the forefront. As such, the first report also carries statements from the bereaved – these comments from **Anna-Louise Marsh-Rees**, co-leader of *Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymr*, reminds us that all responders have a duty of care for those affected, and not to become 'routine' or insensitive when carrying out our roles:

“Something that was not communicated to us was that once somebody with Covid dies, they are almost treated like toxic waste.

“They are zipped away – nobody told us that you can't wash them, you can't dress them, you can't do any of those things, the funerals, the ceremonies, you just can't do any of those. You couldn't sing at a funeral. You know, we're Welsh, that's something you have to do ... when we left the hospital... we were given my dad's stuff in a Tesco carrier bag. Some people were given somebody else's clothes that were in a pretty awful state.

“It's those things like that that don't often get considered ... there is such a thing as a good death, and I think that was very overlooked during the pandemic.”

**‘We were given my dad's stuff in a Tesco carrier bag... there is such a thing as a good death, and I think that was very overlooked during the pandemic’**

## ‘A flawed system’

THESE were the core findings of *Module 1: The Resilience and Preparedness of the United Kingdom*.

It found that the system of building preparedness for the pandemic, and our ability to deal with a pandemic, suffered from several significant flaws:

- Despite planning for an influenza outbreak, our preparedness and resilience was not adequate for the global pandemic that occurred
- The UK government's outdated pandemic strategy, developed in 2011 for influenza, was not flexible enough to adapt when faced with the Covid pandemic in 2020
- Emergency planning was complicated by the many institutions and structures involved
- The approach to risk assessment was flawed, resulting in inadequate planning to manage and prevent risks, and respond to them effectively
- Emergency planning failed to put enough consideration into existing health and social inequalities and local authorities and volunteers were not adequately engaged
- There was a failure to fully learn from past civil emergency exercises and outbreaks of disease
- There was a lack of attention to the systems that would help test, trace, and isolate.
- Policy documents were outdated, involved complicated rules and procedures which can cause long delays, were full of jargon and were overly complex
- Ministers, who are often without specialised training in civil contingencies, did not receive a broad enough range of scientific advice and often failed to challenge the advice they did get
- Advisers lacked freedom and autonomy to express differing opinions, which led to a lack of diverse perspectives.
- Their advice was often undermined by “groupthink” - a phenomenon by which people in a group tend to think about the same things in the same way



# Central government: 'not prepared for a whole-system civil emergency

The Inquiry found that even today, there is no agreed definition between the UK Government and Devolved Administrations about what amounts to a whole-system civil emergency, and this should be rectified. Their report says: "A single definition... should be created and used to determine the structures needed in the response, the assessment of risk and the design of strategy. One thing is clear, however: a pandemic that kills human beings is a whole-system civil emergency. The risk of a pandemic therefore demands careful assessment, planning and response" (Para. 2.12).

The Inquiry is critical too of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, calling it outdated: "At the time of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the legislative framework and associated national guidance was "widely acknowledged [by public health specialists and practitioners] as being outdated and did not relate to contemporary structures, roles and responsibilities" (Para. 2.14).

On top of this, the Inquiry found a gaping hole at the head of central government. After the election of the 2010 David Cameron administration, UK resilience was restructured to become 'more strategic', and the National Security Council was formed.

In addition, the 'National Security Council (Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies) sub-Committee' was created, with a focus on emergency planning and preparedness, which included non-malicious hazards.

## Abolished

The Inquiry heard evidence from Katharine Hammond, Director of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (2016 to 2020).

The Inquiry found that the last occasion on which the Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies sub-Committee met was in February 2017.

In July 2019, the sub-Committee was formally "taken out of the committee structure": "Ms Hammond suggested that it



could be "reconvened if needed" but accepted that it was, in effect, abolished. As a result, immediately prior to the pandemic, there was no cross-government ministerial oversight of the matters that were previously within the sub-Committee's remit" (Para. 2.25).

## 'LGD' unsuitable

The Inquiry also found that the traditional 'Lead Government Department' principle was not fit for purpose for a whole-system crisis event, and that in such circumstances the Cabinet Office should solely take the lead.

The report says: "The Inquiry concludes that the lead government department model is fundamentally unsuited to preparing for and building resilience to whole-system civil emergencies such as pandemics. The requirements of acute crises that place demands on the whole of the UK government and devolved administrations at once requires a different approach. It is therefore necessary to place in charge the only government department that has the power and authority necessary to take the lead – the Cabinet Office. It has the decision-making power of the Prime Minister and the oversight and ability to coordinate the activities of the whole government" (Para. 2.105).

'With the effective abolition of the National Security Council (Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies) sub-Committee, immediately prior to the pandemic there was no cross-government ministerial oversight '

## The next modules

Having issued the first Module, the Inquiry will now go onto to focus on specific areas. These reports of the future Modules will be:

- **Core UK decision-making** and political governance - including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- **Healthcare systems**
- **Vaccines** and therapeutics
- **Procurement** and distribution of key equipment and supplies
- **The Care sector**
- **Test, trace** and isolate programmes
- **Children** and young people
- **The economic response** to the pandemic



# Preparing for the ‘wrong kind of pandemic’

Much of the report focusses on why the threat of a pandemic, although consistently at the top of the National Risk Register, was not acted upon.

The report states; “Pandemic influenza was consistently described as the most significant civil emergency risk facing the UK in the UK’s risk assessments from 2005 until the eve of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic” (Para. 3.5).

The Inquiry also points out that all the preparations that were made, were for an influenza style pandemic only.

Following the Swine Flu outbreak of 2009-10, the UK remodified its strategy on dealing with pandemics in 2011.

But that was based on an influenza type virus, when the new emerging threats of SARS and MERS would mean a whole new approach.

The report states: “It is obvious, on the face of the 2011 Strategy, that the UK had devoted its efforts to preparing for an influenza pandemic. Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England from June 2010 to October 2019, could not recall a debate about including non-influenza pandemics in the 2011 Strategy” (Para. 4.23).

The report also says: “The only SARS or MERS-specific contingency plans received in evidence by the Inquiry are interim plans

**‘There does not appear to have been a separate plan that documents a specific UK-wide strategy for responding to an outbreak of SARS, MERS or any other high consequence infectious disease’**

held by the Health Protection Agency and Public Health England respectively.

“The SARS interim plan, dated December 2003, described itself as “a contingency plan for a co-ordinated response from the Health Protection Agency” and one that was designed to be used in conjunction with plans for SARS of UK health departments and the NHS.

“The 2014 MERS interim plan expressly stated that it was “an internal document” for use by Public Health England and that it was “not intended for use outside of the organisation”.

## No plan

“There does not appear to have been a separate plan that documents a specific UK-wide strategy for responding to an outbreak of SARS, MERS or any other high consequence infectious disease and that sets out the impacts on the health, social care and public health systems and wider society, or non-pharmaceutical interventions such as mandated quarantining, contact tracing or border controls” (Para. 3.30).

Giving evidence, Katharine Hammond, former Director of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (2016 – 2020), said the UK’s system was built on using good risk assessment to identify the capabilities and having a means of rapidly adapting these in the face of events.

But she also expressed concerns that the use of multiple pandemic scenarios would have been too resource-intensive and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat “did not realistically have the capacity”. As a result,

■ The SARS and MERS outbreaks were ignored



there was only very limited multiple scenario planning within the 2016 National Risk Assessment and the 2019 National Security Risk Assessment.

By November 2018 however, it was recognised that there was a need to “refresh” the 2011 Strategy.

In November 2019, it was again recorded that the 2011 Strategy needed a “refresh” within the next six months.

The report states however: “It might have been thought that a ‘refresh’ would have meant that some of the underlying flaws would have been subject to scrutiny. However, as the Inquiry learned, ‘refresh’ was a euphemism for an update that was only minor and limited in scope.

“Thus, any change would not have had a material effect on the UK’s pandemic preparedness. It is unlikely that any such review would have considered the underlying flaws in the 2011 Strategy or its implementation.

“In any event, the Covid-19 pandemic intervened. The absence of an update to the 2011 Strategy meant, in particular, that it did not incorporate any learning from the international experiences of the Ebola virus disease, Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) or SARS outbreaks, and did not take into account lessons from any exercises that took place after 2011” (paras. 4.49 & 4.50).



# 'LRFs and health agencies unaligned'

■ The much commented on 'structural map' on page 19 of the report

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive of the Local Government Association, told the Inquiry the link between the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the LRFs as "strong".

But he added that there was a "fragmentation" because, while the Cabinet Office co-ordinated activity on national incidents, the Department of Health and Social Care had specific responsibility for pandemics.

Mr Lloyd said that, as a result, officials in the DHCLG had a "big challenge" in managing "the interface between central and local government. Important links between local and national governments were missing" ( Para. 2.25).

The report says: "When national guidance was developed under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, there was also a lack of understanding at the UK government level about the inter-relationships between entities at the local level.

"Local structures are not aligned. For example, local resilience forums are geographically defined by police force areas, but local health resilience partnerships (strategic forums for organisations in the local health sector) follow the geographical boundaries of the integrated care system.

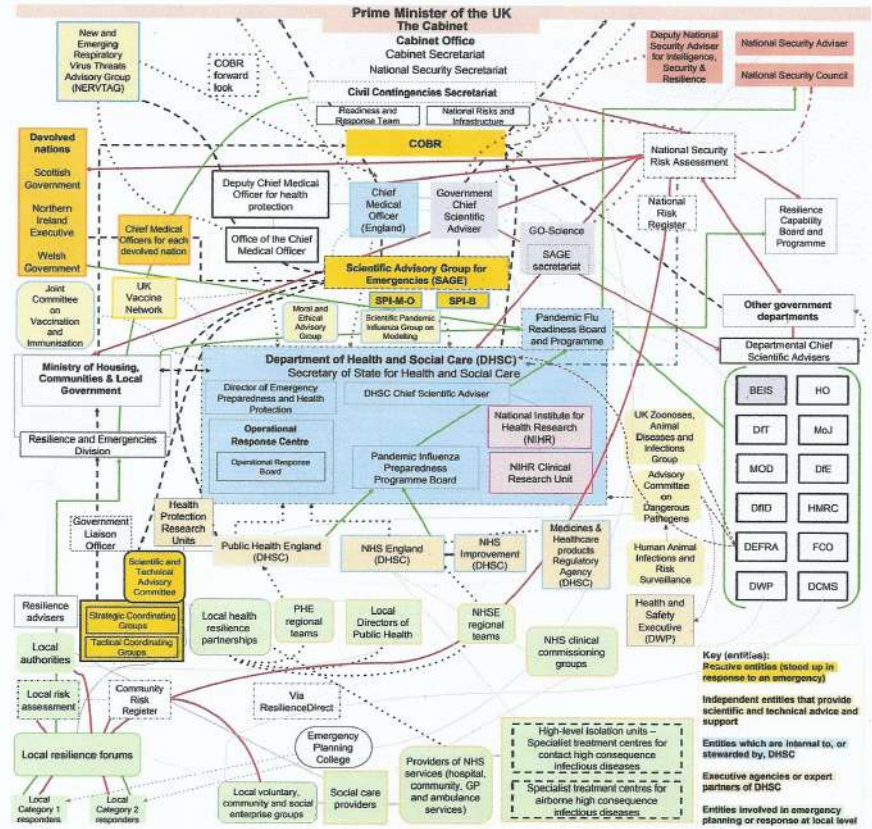
"This means that the geographical areas covered by directors of public health do not always match those of local resilience forums or local health resilience partnerships. This structural flaw, for which the Cabinet Office was ultimately responsible, is potentially a recipe for confusion and duplication" (Paras. 2.43 & 2.44)

Another key issue identified was that Directors of Public Health (accountable for the delivery of their local authority's public health duties) co-chaired local health resilience partnerships, yet they did not routinely sit on the LRFs because they "were not invited to do so" (Para. 2.45)

Structurally, this created a gap when it came to addressing a public health emergency, with professionals in civil contingencies and public health not appropriately connected.

Equally, the report added, health agencies will focus directly on the health response, and therefore be put in the lead on health matters, when actually the impact of the

Figure 2: Pandemic preparedness and response structures in the UK and England – c. August 2019



Source: Extract from INQ.000204014

likes of a pandemic will have a greater societal impact, involving policing, supply chains, education and social care.

## A problem of bureaucracy

The Inquiry found that: "The number of organisations across the UK with responsibility for pandemic preparedness had multiplied over time to become unnecessarily numerous and complex. The responsibilities within the UK government and devolved administrations, and their supporting organisations, were duplicative, diffuse and delegated too far from ministers and senior officials to allow them to be effectively overseen. No one who gave evidence to the Inquiry was able to offer a substantive rationale for a system that was unduly complex and labyrinthine" (Para.2.88).

The diagram carried on page 19 of the report (see above), showing the UK

response structure to the pandemic, speaks volumes on this.

The Inquiry also found that there: "... was a lack of focus. This was created by a lack of clear leadership and oversight by both ministers and officials. Across the UK, systems had grown to be overly bureaucratic. Instead of focusing on skills, technology and infrastructure, they were focused on creating groups, sub-groups and documents.

"As a result of the abolition of the Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies sub-Committee, there was no ongoing ministerial oversight of one of the UK's most significant risks. The effect was that preparedness and resilience were not being scrutinised at the highest levels of government" (Para. 2.92).

**'No one who gave evidence was able to offer a substantive rationale for a system that was unduly complex and labyrinthine'**



Some media reports into the Covid Inquiry have given the impression that only one pandemic exercise – Exercise Cygnus – was held prior to the Covid pandemic. There have actually been many.

Unfortunately, as the Inquiry report points out, the findings were not acted upon as resources were pushed towards ‘Operation Yellowhammer’ and the preparations for the impact of a ‘No Deal’ Brexit.

The report outlines the exercises which took place, prior to the pandemic:

**Exercise Shipshape** (6 June 2003) followed confirmation of the first SARS case in the UK. It provided important warnings about the state of preparedness in England and Wales in dealing with outbreaks of high consequence infectious diseases such as SARS. It provided observations on the importance of:

- contact tracing and quarantine
- border health security;
- personal protective equipment (PPE);
- existing NHS surge capacity
- defining more clearly the roles and responsibilities of government departments;
- a national response plan;

**‘Exercise Cygnus warrants particular attention because its recommendations were stark reminders of the state of the UK’s preparedness for a pandemic in the three years leading up to Covid’**

# Exercises identified lessons... but then came Yellowhammer

- a care homes strategy.

**Exercise Bennachie**, (December 2004) reached similar conclusions for Scotland, but also included observations on the need to streamline, rationalise and update the large number of communicable disease plans.

**Exercise Goliath**, (December 2003) tested Northern Ireland’s response. It identified the need for more discussion on preventing the initial spread of the virus, as opposed to only dealing with its impact.

**Exercise Alice** (February 2016) was conducted in London exercised a large-scale outbreak of MERS. It was clear from the exercise that, at the earliest stages of such an outbreak, suitably trained professionals, with access to PPE in

sufficient quantities, sufficient bed capacity and specialised clinical equipment, were key.

**Exercise Cygnus** was a major, three-day, cross-government exercise which took place in October 2016. As the report states: *“It warrants particular attention because its findings and recommendations were stark reminders of the state of the UK’s preparedness for and resilience to a pandemic in the three years leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic”* (Para. 5.38).

The exercise was set in the seventh week of a pandemic affecting up to 50 per cent of the UK’s population and causing 200,000 to 400,000 excess deaths.

More than 950 representatives from the devolved nations, the Department of Health and 12 other government departments, NHS Wales, NHS



## Exercises (continued)



■ Resources were pushed towards preparing for a 'no deal' Brexit

► England, Public Health England, eight local resilience forums (multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services) and six prisons took part in the exercise. However, once again it focussed on influenza. That aside, the lessons it identified for the building of

epidemiologically sound and effective infection control measures, included:

- a scalable system of testing and contact tracing;
- a practicable system of isolation;
- effective border controls and health security at the border;
- surge capacity in health and social care;
- stockpiling and distribution of PPE;
- protecting vulnerable people.

Unfortunately, there was no one in central government to listen to all these lessons identified. The report says: *"The UK government's priority did not ever move back to pandemic preparedness. The Pandemic Flu Readiness Board did not meet again until 23 January 2020"* (Para. 5.50).

Thus, by 2020, three years after Exercise Cygnus, and the start of the Covid outbreak, the report states: *"The Cabinet-level body (the Threats, Hazards, Resilience and*

*Contingencies sub-Committee) that brought into effect the Pandemic Flu Readiness Board and its programme of work had been effectively abolished.*

*"Some of the work of the Pandemic Flu Readiness Board itself had been completed (eg the draft bill and some work on managing excess deaths), but a significant amount of its work was incomplete (eg surge planning for health and social care sectors and the review of the UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy 2011).*

*"The programme, which was running two years behind schedule, had been further delayed due to a combination of resourcing issues and the demands of Operation Yellowhammer (the UK government's contingency planning for a 'no deal' exit from the European Union)"* (Para. 5.96).

*Thus the report concludes: "The failure to examine such measures thoroughly in advance of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the UK was exposed to the risk of having to create policy during the emergency rather than before the emergency"* (Para. 5.36).

## Inquiry criticises the UK Government Resilience Framework - 'too vague'

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK government undertook a number of reviews to analyse the adequacy of its systems and structures for preparedness for and resilience to civil emergencies. The UK Government Resilience Framework (UKGRF) is said to be a plan to 'strengthen the underpinning systems that provide our resilience to all risks'.

We have all had presentations on the UKGRF, including at last year's conference. However, in looking forward post-Covid, the Inquiry does not think it will be fit for purpose, and fails on a number of grounds.

The report records these as:

- A lack of detail: the (UKGRF) document is characterised by assurances that the government will *"consider a range of options"*, *"develop an action plan"* and develop *"proposals"* – but it does not go further to describe how or when a plan will be developed.
- For some changes, a lack of substance - for example, the creation of a 'new' Head of

Resilience was simply a reformulation of part of the previous role performed by Director of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (the other part being the 'new' Director of the COBR Unit).

- A lack of urgency or ambition: timescales for actions, which are in themselves broadly and vaguely defined, extend to 2030.

- A lack of commitment: there is no commitment by the UK government to impose any significant change upon itself, either in terms of its legal duties or the discharge of its primary functions in relation to emergency preparedness, resilience and response.

- A lack of resources: as Roger Hargreaves, Director of the COBR Unit from July 2022, admitted, there was no new money and *"there might be less money"*. (Para. 4.59)



The report says the UKGRF document does not offer a set of sufficiently clear proposals to be implemented with urgency, supported by the necessary resources.

The Inquiry comments: *"(The)... Strategy lacks deadlines by which actions should occur and by which the government's progress could be measured. The public cannot know if the government has failed if the government itself is unwilling or unable to describe and set objective tests by which its actions can be measured, nor can the officials whose job it is to implement such a strategy"* (Para. 4.65).



# The recommendations

Baroness Hallett’s team has made the following ten recommendations for the future, based on their findings in Module 1:

**1** Governments should create a single Cabinet-level or equivalent ministerial committee (including the senior minister responsible for Health and Social Care) responsible for **whole-system civil emergency preparedness and resilience**, to be chaired by the leader or deputy leader of the relevant government. There should also be a single cross-departmental group of senior officials in each government to oversee and implement policy on civil emergency preparedness and resilience.

**2** The Lead Government Department model for whole-system civil emergency preparedness and resilience is **not appropriate and should be abolished**.

**3** The UK Government and Devolved Administrations should develop a new approach to risk assessment that moves away from reliance on ‘reasonable worst-case scenarios’ towards an approach that assesses a **wider range of scenarios** representative of the different risks and the range of each kind of risk. It should also better reflect the circumstances and characteristics particular to England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole.

**4** A new **UK-wide whole-system civil emergency strategy** should be put in place and it

should be subject to a substantive reassessment **at least every three years** to ensure that it is up to date and effective, and incorporates lessons learned from civil emergency exercises.

**5** The UK Government and Devolved Administrations should establish new mechanisms for the timely **collection, analysis, secure sharing and use of reliable data** for informing emergency responses, such as data systems to be tested in pandemic exercises. In addition, a wider range of ‘hibernated’ and other studies should be commissioned that are designed to be rapidly adapted to a new outbreak.

**6** The UK Government and Devolved Administrations should hold a **UK-wide pandemic response exercise at least every three years**.

**7** Each government should publish a report within three months of the completion of each civil emergency Exercise summarising the findings, lessons and recommendations, and should publish **within six months of the exercise** an action plan setting out the specific steps to be taken in response to the report’s findings. All exercise reports, action plans, emergency plans and guidance from across the UK should be kept in a



**single UK-wide online archive**, accessible to all involved in emergency preparedness, resilience and response.

**8** Each government should produce and publish a report to their respective legislatures on whole-system civil emergency preparedness and resilience **at least every three years**.

**9** ‘Red Teams’ are groups of people external to the decision-making structures involved in developing policies – the report recommends external ‘Red Teams’ should be regularly used in the Civil Service of the UK government and devolved administrations to scrutinise and challenge the principles, evidence, policies and advice relating to preparedness for and resilience to whole-system civil emergencies.

**10** The UK Government, in consultation with the Devolved Administrations, should create a **UK-wide independent statutory body** for whole-system civil emergency preparedness, resilience and response. The body should provide independent, strategic advice, consult with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector at a national and local level, as well as with directors of public health, and make recommendations.



How *Resilience* covered the events throughout the pandemic



## The need to collate ‘institutional memory’

The inquiry has recommended the establishment of a mechanism to achieve ‘Institutional memory’.

During the hearings, Professor Wendy Barclay, the Action Medical Research Chair of Virology at Imperial College London, who explained to the Inquiry that the reason that its members had not thought sufficiently “outside the box” prior to the pandemic was similarly due to the fact that their agendas were “filled” with tasks set by ministers and officials.

As a consequence, they did not have the time to consider “the unexpected”. This included viruses that were not influenza, and also the full range of potential responses.

The report recommends:

*“There should be open access – for all those involved in pandemic preparedness and response throughout the UK – to preserved, institutional information.*

*“Having quick access to past solutions and best practices also enhances efficiency. It prevents the need to ‘reinvent the wheel’ and for wasteful parallel processes.*

*“The Inquiry is therefore recommending the creation of a central, UK-wide online repository of information relating to civil emergency exercises, which should include all exercise reports and emergency guidance.*

*“This repository should be accessible to, among others, the devolved administrations, local and regional tiers of government, and those in the voluntary and community sectors” (Para 5.117).*

## ‘NEVER AGAIN’

In the report, Baroness Hallett praises all those health, emergency services, retail and transport personnel who kept the UK going during the pandemic, many at personal risk to themselves.

However, she also issued this stark warning in her introduction to the report:

“Unfortunately, the expert evidence suggests that they will be called upon again. It is not a question of ‘if’ another pandemic will strike but ‘when’.

The evidence is overwhelmingly to the effect that another pandemic – potentially one that is even more transmissible and lethal – is likely to occur in the near to medium future. Unless the lessons are learned, and fundamental change is implemented, that effort and cost will have been in vain when it comes to the next pandemic. There must be radical reform. Never again can a disease be allowed to lead to so many deaths and so much suffering.



■ The Rt Hon Baroness Hallett DBE, Chair of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry





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