

Stakeholder Engagement: UK Emergency Arrangements

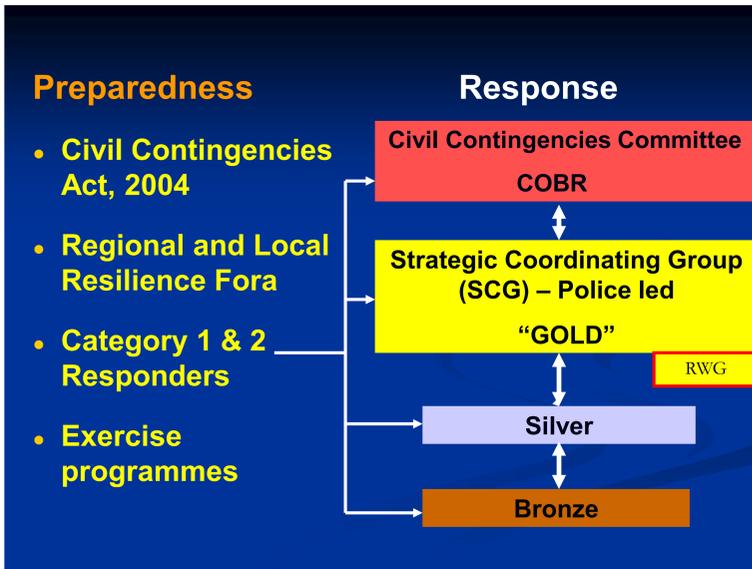
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Introduction

A parent paper, "Stakeholder Engagement: the UK Experience" reviews the experience and progress in integrating Stakeholder Engagement into RP practices. Stakeholder Engagement in emergency preparedness and response is an important subset. This paper explores how stakeholder engagement is an integral element of the framework for dealing with emergencies in the UK. The framework is described and the stakeholder engagement element explored through an example of a Local Resilience Forum (LRF). Experience from the Polonium Poisoning incident in London in 2006 is used to highlight some aspects of Stakeholder Engagement in an emergency response.

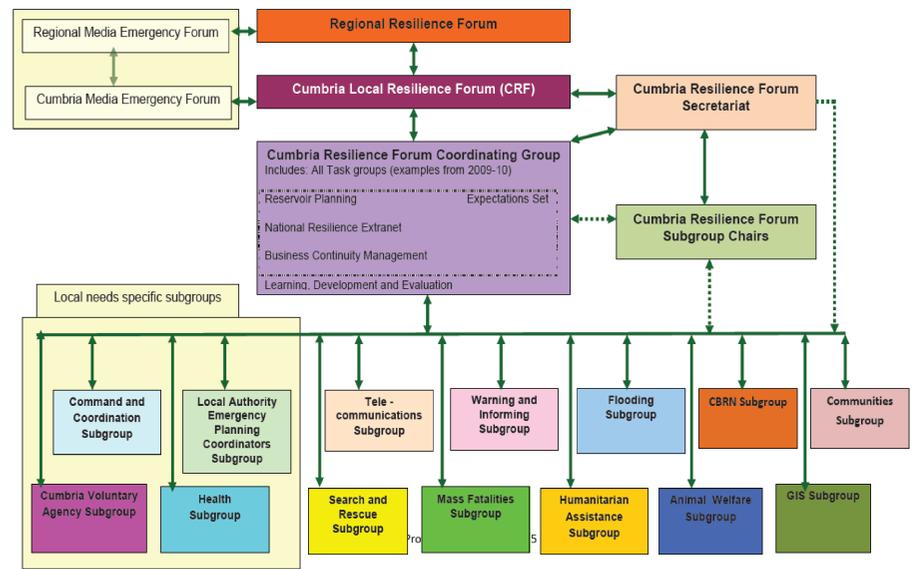


The UK's national framework (shown above) of ascending tiers for managing emergency response and recovery, is applicable irrespective of the nature or cause of an emergency, but remains flexible enough to be adapted to the needs of particular circumstances. The framework identifies the various tiers of management and defines the relationships between them. It provides a common framework within which individual agencies can develop their own response and recovery plans and procedures. Programmes of emergency exercises are an important element; testing the plans, the effectiveness of their implementation and the stakeholder engagement inherent in achieving a coherent response.

UK Emergency Preparedness and Response Framework

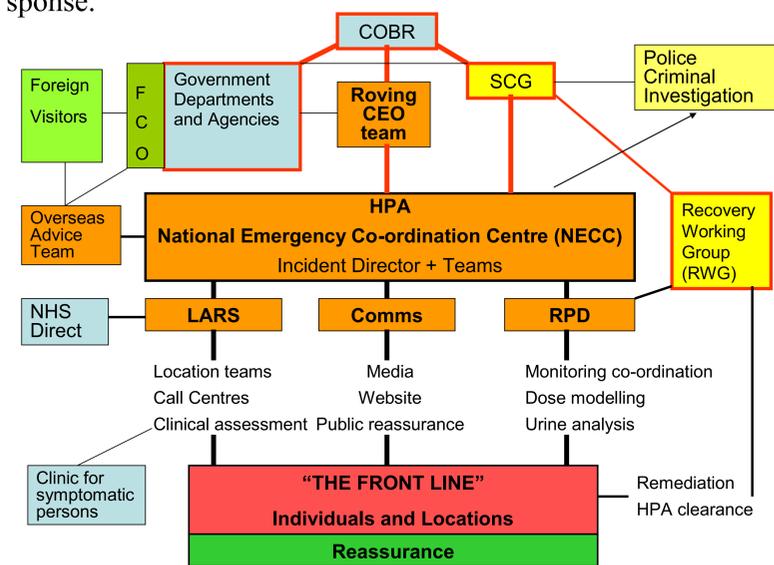
The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, together with the supporting documents set out a single framework for civil protection in the UK, They establish a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparedness and response at the local level. Local Resilience Fora (LRFs), are the vehicles through which all the responders and other stakeholders, co-operate and co-ordinate their plans at the local level. The geographical coverage of LRFs are based on the boundaries of Police Forces, and the Police take the lead in the organisation of LRFs. The diagram below shows the LRF structure for Cumbria. The focus of the structure is on the generic elements common to all emergencies: and for the specific arrangements for the nuclear sites there would be interaction with the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG)

Annex B: Diagrammatic chart of CRF Structure (while not responding)



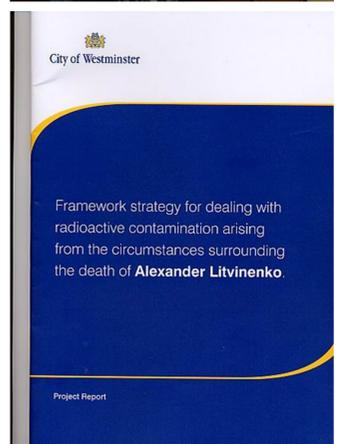
Polonium Poisoning Incident in London, 2006

- 23 November 2006, Alexander Litvinenko died from Po-210 poisoning.
- Police investigation and public health emergency.
- Radioactive contamination found at tens of locations: homes, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, bars, clubs, offices and transport
- 1000s potentially exposed: triaging identified 752 UK citizens for 24hour urine sampling and testing: 139 with detectable intakes.
- 664 overseas visitors from 52 countries also followed up.
- 6 week response phase and recovery over 7 months.



Stakeholder Engagement was essential in the response: key examples being:

- Dialogue with other responding agencies, particularly the Police: they identified locations and HPA assessed implications of contamination profiles.
- Getting the co-operation of the management and staff of locations that needed to be monitored for contamination, required putting significant effort into explaining the nature of the situation and the significance of the results to those involved.
- Each location was assigned a Doctor led public health team, who were used to dealing with unusual situations, dealing with concerned individuals and getting information on their actions that would allow triaging.
- A large number of the potentially exposed were overseas visitors who had stayed in, or visited, one of the locations, This introduced a new set of stakeholders: embassies, international organisations, foreign health bodies and the individuals themselves. To address this HPA established an Overseas Advice Team.
- Early on the SCG set up a Recovery Working Group (RWG), led by Westminster City Council (WCC), with membership from the major stakeholders. The RWG set out clear policies and procedures, and published them.
- Crucially, there was the early and regular provision of information to the public and all those involved, through press conferences, interviews, regular press releases, websites with material on frequently asked questions etc. There was a determination to be as open as possible with the media and the public, whilst ensuring it respected the confidential nature of police investigations as well as the sensitivities of individuals.



Conclusion

The UK legislation and framework for preparing for and dealing with emergencies ensures Stakeholder Engagement is an integral element throughout. The work of the Local Resilience Fora, together with the experience from emergency exercise programmes and real emergencies, help ensure that Stakeholder Engagement is on-going and effective.