UK Emergency Resilience and Preparedness: Background, Principles, Practices, Challenges

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Section One: UK Civil Contingencies - Key principles

Section Two: Recurrent challenges and Wales specific questions

Section One: UK Civil Contingencies - Key Principles

Arrangements to prepare for multiple events of different types and causes but similar **consequences** in a networked society:

1. 'Whole cycle of emergency planning', and importance of consequence management.

2. Emergency planning and preparedness organised around a) networks of multiple 'Category 1' and 'Category 2' organisations with different duties and b) different scales of local, regional, national response depending on severity and affected area.

3. 'Principle of subsidiarity': the principle by which decisions should be taken at the lowest *appropriate* level with co-ordination at the highest *necessary* level.

4. New organisational forms – e.g. 'Local Resilience Forums' (LRFs) - that bring together organisations within a given area who have a duty to co-operate under the 2004 CCA.

5. Development of a set of generic 'capabilities' to allow flexible response to the consequences of a range of disruptive events i.e. agnostic to risk.

'Category 1' and 'Category 2' responders

Key question: *who should prepare*?

Category 1 Responders – duties in line with the 'cycle' of emergency planning (including Police forces, BTP, Fire and rescue authorities, local authorities, port heath authorities, national health, natural resources Wales).

Category 2 Responders – 'cooperating bodies' (utilities, transport providers, met office, coal authority, health and safety executive).

Shift to a 'whole of society approach' in recent UK resilience framework – a) are the right private sector entities involved given changes to the economy?; b) how should 'third sector' groups be involved in the preparednessness and response phases, as well as recovery?

[Resilience Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)](publishing.service.gov.uk)

'Local Resilience Forums'

Multi-agency local forums organised according to the four police force areas (North-Wales, South Wales, Dyfed-Powys and Gwent), bringing together CAT 1 and CAT 2 organisations.

General issues with LRFs

- Relation between Welsh Government and LRFs.

- What 'good' looks like i.e. consistent minimum standards.

- Issue of relations between LRFs within Wales and pan-Wales planning i.e. the limit of organising by administrative unit.

- Mechanisms for effective local partnerships, and how to expand who is involved (e.g. voluntary groups through MoU, or training/exercising, or legislative changes).

Section Two: Key recurrent challenges and Wales specific questions

Six key challenges:

1. Assessing Risks
2. Responsibilities for complex events
3. 'Vertical' coordination
4. 'Horizontal' coordination
5. Planning
6. Exercising

Key Challenge 1. Assessing risk

Challenge: Identifying risks, including novel risks. Ensuring up-to-date risk assessments based on multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources and horizon scanning, informed by detailed understanding of affected area, and orientated towards a range of events and their consequences.

Questions for Wales: How do specific Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders ensure best practice in producing, updating, and acting on risk assessments? What sources of information do they draw upon, and how do they make judgments? How to avoid over-familiarity with identified risks i.e. an influenza pandemic? How do LRFs and other multi-agency forums share and enable best risk assessment practice?

Key Challenge 2: Responsibilities for complex events

Challenge: Who should lead on preparing for complex, large-scale events that cross geographic boundaries and sectors of the economy and life.

Questions for Wales: How might existing pan-Wales structures need to be adapted to deal with events that cross administrative boundaries and/or are not easily attributable to 'lead departments'?

Challenge 3: 'Vertical' Coordination

Challenge: Coordination across local, regional, and national scales. Effective coordination between UK Government lead department and regional and local organisations in the context of a cross-border and cross-regional event.

Questions for Wales: How effective were mechanisms for coordination between a) UK Government lead department and Welsh Government (and category 1 or 2 responders in Wales and UK Government) and b) between Welsh Government and LRFs. How well did bidirectional communication and information flows work?

Challenge 4: 'Horizontal' coordination

Challenge: Effective inter-agency coordination despite now well-established attempts to improve inter-agency working through protocols (e.g. JESIP protocols), and regular inter-agency exercising/training.

[The Pollock Report - JESIP Website](#)

Questions for Wales: How are existing mechanisms for inter-agency coordination functioning i.e. common standards and understanding within and between LRFs? How can best practice be identified, embedded in existing forums, and assured across LRFs e.g. pan-Wales assurance mechanisms?

Challenge 5: Planning

Challenge: Effective Plans. How to make plans effective tools that can provide flexible resources to guide response? What should be planned for i.e. should plans be agnostic to type of risk? And what is a 'good' plan?

Question How were plans developed? How were plans focusing on specific 'consequences' used during the pandemic by different category 1 and 2 responders. How can best practice and common standards in the design and use of plans be embedded across the Welsh LRFs and pan-Wales?

Challenge 6: Exercising

Challenge: Learning from Exercises. Ensuring the usefulness of exercises through good design, ensuring that 'lessons learnt' are identified and actioned, and how to effectively exercise complex events that cut across different domains of life and involve multiple, unpredictable consequences.

Questions for Wales: How were pandemic orientated exercises and exercises focused on specific consequences (e.g. body storage) learnt from i.e. what actionable lessons were identified, and what changes were made by CAT 1 and 2 organisations in Wales based on specific exercises? What, if any, efforts were made to 'add up' across different exercises?

Conclusion: Cross-cutting issues

Standards and accountability in complex networks

Effective mechanisms for identifying and sharing 'best practice'

Finally:

Thanks to staff for their **exemplary** professionalism, in particular Sarah Hatherley and Fay Bowen

In memory of the people who died during the covid-19 pandemic, and recognition of those of us who grieve their loss