



Home Office



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) England

Sept 2021

Contents

1	Foreword	3
2	Introduction	4
3	Emergency Response	6
3.1	Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs)	6
3.2	Home Office (HO)	6
4	Functions	8
4.1	Mobilisation, Co-ordination and Monitoring of National Resilience Assets	8
4.2	Multi Agency/Strategic Holding Areas (MA/SHAs)	8
4.3	PSG & Homeland Security Operations Centres	8
4.4	Home Office Operations Centres	8
4.5	Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR)	8
5	Roles	9
5.1	National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC)	9
5.2	National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) & Duty Officer	9
5.3	Home Office Fire Duty Officer	9
5.4	National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT)	9
5.5	Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)	10
5.6	Tactical Advisor (Tac Ad)	10
6	Capabilities	11
7	NCAF in Operation	12
8	Resource Deployment and Cost Recovery	13
8.1	Pre-deployments	13
8.2	Post-occurrence	13
8.3	Cost Recovery	13
9	International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance	14
9.1	Incoming: International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance	14
9.2	Outgoing: International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance	14
10	Annex A: Central Government's response to major incidents	15
10.1	Concept of Operations for PSG Critical Incident Management Response	15
11	Annex B International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance	20
12	Annex C: NFCC National Crisis Plan Management	21
13	Bibliography	22
14	Glossary	23

1 Foreword

The Covid-19 pandemic and other recent crises have stretched governments around the world. This has demonstrated the importance of a resilient society with effective plans and capabilities, along with flexible response structures that can adapt and respond to the unexpected. I am proud and confident of the significant role the fire and rescue service (FRS) plays in a resilient UK. We know there will be more major challenges in the future, many of which will be related to climate change. Some will be familiar and others will be new; we will be prepared to respond to meet the public's expectations and to maintain their confidence. This National Co-ordination Advisory Framework (revised) has served us well for many years and will ensure we continue to be well-prepared.

The environment in which fire and rescue services operate grows more complex and challenging. The experiences of the Grenfell Tower fire, Manchester Arena, Westminster Bridge and London Bridge terror attacks, widescale flooding across many parts of the country, wildfires, and many other national emergencies, clearly illustrate the diverse nature of these challenges and show the professionalism of our FRS when responding to them.

These emergencies frequently extend over many days and weeks, placing significant demands on local FRS. The FRS response and recovery for a major emergency are almost always provided in partnership with many local and national services and agencies. It is essential that the UK FRS has effective levels of preparedness and response in place to assist local FRS in dealing safely and effectively with whatever emergency they face. To enable this, the FRS has a range of specialist national resilience capabilities, advice and guidance at its disposal, all co-ordinated nationally.

To enable this to happen, this National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) provides a robust and flexible national response to emergencies that is adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the emergency. The framework supports communities affected by emergencies to be returned to normal as quickly as possible, whilst providing a valuable interface between local and central government.

This guidance has been developed jointly between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Home Office (HO) and has been used effectively for many years. The framework provides the necessary advice and guidance to fire and rescue services which will deliver the effective coordination of the fire service's people, vehicles and equipment before, during and after major emergencies. It also sets out the critical situational awareness reporting arrangements which will facilitate central government's decision making that is designed to support, protect and reassure local communities during emergencies.



Mark Hardingham
NFCC Chair

2 Introduction

The NCAF has been designed to provide robust and flexible response arrangements to major and large scale emergencies that can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the incident. Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) must proactively engage with, and support, the NCAF arrangements including the NFCC lead operational role (Fire & Rescue Service National Framework).

Most incidents to which Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) respond are dealt with using the assets that a FRS has at its immediate disposal. However, there may be times when a FRS require specialist resources and equipment, or extra resources and assistance to deliver an effective response. An example would be a declared major incident which is defined as **“an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agencies.”** (JESIP Doctrine)

Home Office is the lead government department for Fire and will work with other government departments, partner organisations, and the Devolved Administrations during major emergencies to coordinate the deployment arrangements for Fire and Rescue assets.

The NCAF is part of the mechanism that coordinates fire & rescue assets. HO Public Safety Group (PSG) and Homeland Security will work with other government departments, partner organisations and the devolved administrations during **“no notice”** and **“rising tide”** events to provide policy reach back and advice, ministerial briefings, co-ordination across government and management of communications. NCAF enables decision makers, both locally and nationally, to receive clear and unambiguous operational advice on how best to co-ordinate the fire & rescue service response to relevant emergencies.

NCAF supports:

- Everyday assistance and collaboration between FRSs where specialist national resilience capabilities can support the resolution of an incident
- The provision of specialist assistance to FRS where an incident warrants it and it is available from elsewhere, or additional resources where the resolution of an incident is, or is likely to be, beyond a service's own resources or capabilities
- The coordination of the combined FRS response to relevant incidents, and when required, the integration of other first responders, for example police, ambulance and the military, at any geographical scale

The Chair of the NFCC and/or the National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT), who by exception will deputise for the Chair of the NFCC, will provide the Home Secretary and other ministers within the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), with expert timely advice in accordance with central government's requirements. Further explanation of this requirement is set out within the Fire & Rescue Service Supporting Guidance to NCAF.

The National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) Duty Officer supports the provision of information between the affected services, the NFCC, other agencies and government to enable the framework to operate effectively.

The framework details the functions, roles and responsibilities necessary to coordinate national resilience resources, as well as any specialist and/or conventional FRS resources that can be deployed before, during and after relevant incidents and sets out the direct lines of communication involved. This will ensure that the appropriate level of advice, guidance and assurance is provided when required.

The structure of the framework is designed to be flexible to adapt and develop against the nature, scale and operational requirements of an incident and support those involved in resolving it. The framework should be considered as a supporting aid and does not imply that all the components will be required on

each occasion or be automatically activated for every incident that requires a national response or support.

The NCAF seeks to aid fire and rescue services with their planning and operating methods. It will strengthen resilience during the planning, preparation and response phases of large scale incidents that may require national coordination. It is designed to complement, support and reinforce local response arrangements – it does not replace them. The responsibility for resolving incidents effectively, safely, and for implementing safe systems of work through effective command and control arrangements, remains with the affected FRS.

The NCAF will be reviewed as necessary following National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) taken from incidents, training and exercising. Importantly, this will include a review of incidents for which a formalised national capability does not exist but where specific or specialist FRS resources may be requested and mobilised nationally to assist other FRSs.

3 Emergency Response

3.1 Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs)

The majority of emergencies in England are dealt with at a local level by the emergency services, local authorities and local resilience partners without the need for direct involvement by central government or the implementation of these arrangements.

FRSs can draw on mutual assistance under Sections 13 & 16 of the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004. These arrangements ensure continuity of service provision across authority boundaries.

There will be occasions where FRSs require assistance from, or provide assistance to, other authorities. Fire Service Circular 42/2006 National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents outlines the provision of available resources.

The effectiveness of NCAF arrangements is dependent upon on individual FRSs releasing resources for national deployment when requested to do so. It is recognised that during exceptional or wide spread events, some individual authorities may wish to retain assets for deployment in accordance with risk assessments within their own Integrated Risk Management Plan.

However, each FRS is a signatory to the National Mutual Aid Protocol for Serious Incidents and are therefore expected to adhere to its principles and purpose. Given the national implications of such situations, FRSs should highlight the specific need to retain National Resilience assets from deployment with the NRAT Duty Officer/NSAT on a case by case basis. Further explanation of this requirement is set out within the Fire & Rescue Service Supporting Guidance to NCAF.

3.2 Home Office (HO)

In some circumstances, the scale or complexity of an emergency is such that some degree of central government response, support or coordination becomes necessary. Government will not duplicate the role of local responders. A designated Lead Government Department (LGD) or where appropriate a Devolved Administration will be responsible for the overall management of the central government response.

HO provides the cross Whitehall coordinating function for the response policy arrangements to emergencies involving the Fire sector. Cabinet Office will provide the cross Whitehall coordinating function for the recovery policy arrangements to emergencies involving the Fire sector. The co-ordination of response policy arrangements across government within the Devolved Administrations will differ accordingly and are set out as individual addendums to the NCAF.

The HO response to major or noteworthy incidents will be delivered by either the PSG or Homeland Security Operations Support Teams for no notice and rising tide incidents. Fire Resilience and Major Events (FRaME) will provide policy support to these arrangements. These arrangements are set out in [Annex A](#).

The defined UK Government response arrangements are set out in the Government's concept of operations documentation. These are large, often protracted or complex incidents which may require a higher level of co-ordination and central government involvement, in response to an incident, and have been defined within three broad levels, which are:

Level 1 – Significant Emergency

Central Government support is provided through a LGD (or devolved administration) alongside the work of the emergency services and local authorities. This will usually be via the Local Resilience Forum for the affected area.

Level 2 – Serious Emergency

This level reflects an incident which has or threatens prolonged impact requiring sustained central government coordination. This coordination would likely be through COBR under the leadership of the lead government department.

Level 3 – Catastrophic Emergency

These events present exceptionally high and potentially widespread impact and require immediate central government direction and support. The Prime Minister, or nominated Secretary of State, will lead the coordinated emergency function of central government to deliver a national response, or where emergency powers are invoked. COBR and the Civil Contingencies Committee coordinate activity, rather than the LGD.

4 Functions

The NCAF is delivered by several key functions that have been developed to ensure the appropriate level of advice and coordination can be provided. These functions may not all be required simultaneously or be in operation during all emergencies.

4.1 Mobilisation, Co-ordination and Monitoring of National Resilience Assets

The NCAF Electronic Support System (ESS) provides a 24/7 overview of the availability and distribution of National Resilience capability assets. On receipt of a request for assistance the NRAT Duty Officer supported by the NFCC Capability Strategic Lead/ NSAT will work with National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC) to facilitate the mobilisation of national assets for the duration of an incident. Depending on the nature and/or duration of the incident, the NRAT Operations Room may be established within NRFC.

4.2 Multi Agency/Strategic Holding Areas (MA/SHAs)

These are pre-identified locations with suitable space and facilities to accommodate large numbers of crews, appliances and equipment.

Should a MA/SHA be required it should be established under the provisions and coordination of the affected FRS and supported by the Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS) capability. Locations for Multi Agency SHA will also have been identified by each Local Resilience Forum.

4.3 PSG & Homeland Security Operations Centres

PSG & Homeland Security Operations Centres will provide the cross-Whitehall coordination functions during no notice and rising tide incidents as set out within Annex A.

4.4 Home Office Operations Centres

The PSG & Homeland Security Centres enable strategic decision makers at a national and local level to carry out their role in an informed manner. The centres, which can be established in multiple locations, comprise of government department policy officials and government liaison teams, who in consultation with the Chair of the NFCC and/or NSAT, will provide situational awareness to COBR and across central government departments. In addition, they co-ordinate advice for Ministers and engage with Government Liaison Officers (GLO) via Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Resilience and Emergencies Division (RED) who enable Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs) in the affected FRS to have access to a single point of contact for central government assistance.

Dependent upon the scale of the incident, NSAT & NRAT assistance may be required to support the Home Office Operations Centres. If necessary, this will be agreed at the time between the Chair of the NFCC and/or NSAT and the HO.

4.5 Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR)

In some instances, the scale and complexity of an emergency is such that central government support and coordination becomes necessary. On these occasions, the response will be coordinated through COBR.

5 Roles

The NCAF contains a range of designated roles that provide levels of advice and coordination when National Resilience capabilities are required. These roles may not all be engaged in every emergency and will vary dependent upon the scale and nature of the incident.

5.1 National Resilience Fire Control (NRFC)

NRFC are based in the lead authority Fire Control. NRFC utilise the NR Electronic Support System to maintain a 24/7 overview of ongoing incidents and asset mobilisations. They are the first point of contact when reporting an incident or requesting assets or resources. On receipt of an incident via telephone or the Reporting Tool, NRFC will contact the NRAT Duty Officer with details of the request.

5.2 National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) & Duty Officer

The NRAT provide 24/7 operational cover with immediate access to capability specific expertise and advice through the team's capability officers. A designated NRAT Duty Officer will work closely with NRFC in mobilising and coordinating national resilience assets. They will also monitor broader asset availability and other information that may affect an ongoing incident and will do so in collaboration with the NSAT.

The NRAT Duty Officer may support any elements of NCAF with the provision of expert advice on National Resilience capabilities. NRAT officers may be required to support any/all of the functions listed, as well as being mobilised to the scene of operations to assist and support the management of nationally mobilised resources. The NRAT Duty Officer will also provide timely situational awareness and incident information when requested, to the HO Fire Duty Officer and Chair of the NFCC and/or NSAT.

5.3 Home Office Fire Duty Officer

The Home Office Fire Duty Officer is the first point of contact in Government for a range of responsibilities that are within the scope of NCAF. They will provide support to the Chair of the NFCC, NSAT, FRaME, and Homeland Security Ops Centre. The Home Office Fire Duty Officer maintains close contact with the NRAT Duty Officer and other cross Whitehall Government Departments. They will monitor developing or emerging issues and incidents and provides the necessary advice and support in to government.

5.4 National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT)

The NSAT team will liaise with the NRAT Duty Officer to obtain information regarding how and what resources have been mobilised to an affected FRS.

The NSAT provides impartial peer support and professional advice that may be required by an affected FRS as a result of an incident's scale or complexity. This advice can be obtained 24/7 365 via the NRAT Duty Officer/National Resilience Fire Control.

5.5 Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

The Chair of the NFCC and/or NSAT provide professional advice on behalf of the FRS to partner agencies and Government ministers including COBR

5.6 Tactical Advisor (Tac Ad)

Tactical Advisors are trained officers and recognised specialists with specific references within local and/or National Resilience capabilities. They are available to provide advice and support to any incident irrespective of location. Tac Ads should be requested through NRFC.

6 Capabilities

National Resilience refers to the capacity and capability of FRSs to work together with other Category 1 and 2 responders (Civil Contingencies Act 2004) to deliver a sustained and effective response to major incidents, emergencies and disruptive events. These may include (but are not limited to) those identified in the National Security Risk Assessment.

The NCAF National Resilience capabilities can therefore be divided into two categories:

- i) Specialist assets and skills that are an integral part of the National Resilience Programme:
 - CBRN(e) (including Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) and Mass Decontamination (MD))
 - Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS)
 - High Volume Pumps (HVP)
 - Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

- ii) Specialist Resources and skills hosted at a local level by FRSs or other agencies, that can respond if specifically requested to do so as a national capability and where incident timescales allow. For example, but not limited to;
 - Flood Rescue (team 'typed' assets with associated crews¹)
 - Marauding Terrorist Attack Specialist Response (MTA)
 - Conventional and other specialist appliances

 - Bulk Foam

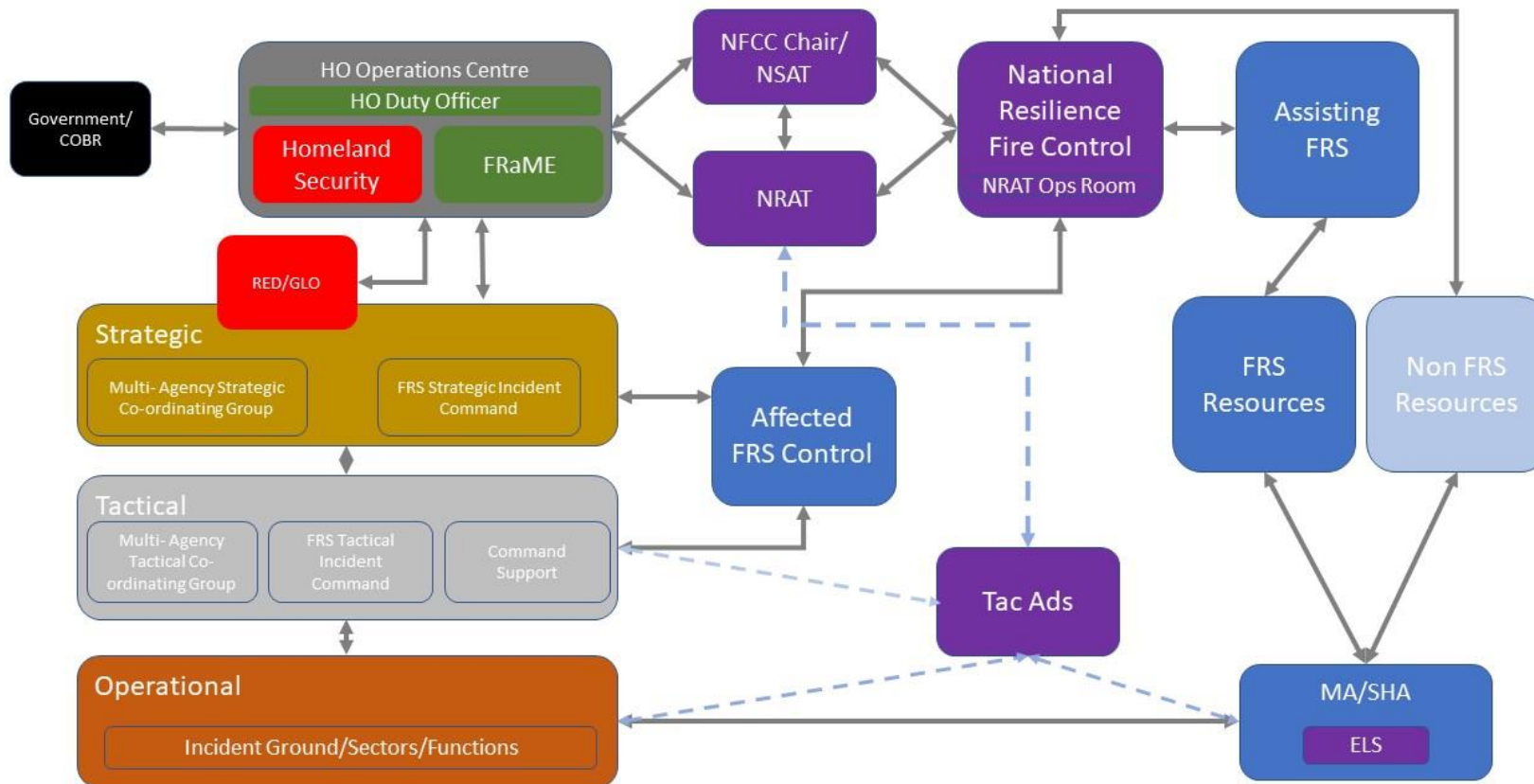
 - Wildfire

 - Waste fire

Capabilities are located across a large number of FRS. Mobilisation of these resources is facilitated by the NRFC and NRAT. Other assets which may be available nationally fall within the scope of NCAF if involved with a national event.

¹ A Flood Response National Asset register is maintained through the ESS and includes specialist assets and tactical advisors on call

7 NCAF in Operation



The above diagram represents the NCAF as it operates at a strategic level, and how it is flexible in application depending on the nature of the incident and resources required.

8 Resource Deployment and Cost Recovery

Emergency preparedness and response occurs both prior to and during an emergency incident.

8.1 Pre-deployments

The term pre-deployment is used to describe the early movement of resources to assist with the mitigation of the impact of an identified event, or perceived threat based upon credible intelligence. Depending on the assessed scale of the response, an individual FRS can, through the Chair of the NFCC and/or the NSAT, seek the support of HO to assist in meeting associated costs of pre-deployment. All requests for financial support will be considered by HO on a case-by-case basis.

8.2 Post-occurrence

Post occurrence is when a Fire & Rescue Service is in the response phase of an incident. Resourcing and mobilisation of the emergency response will remain with the FRS, and supporting agencies, at the local level. Additional resource requirements will be determined by local commanders. Dependant on the scale of the response, FRSs can seek reimbursement of costs relating to response and recovery through existing finance schemes or those that are announced during and/or post incident by the Whitehall department responsible.

8.3 Cost Recovery

The NFCC Guidelines on FRS Charging for Mutual Assistance is a mechanism which provides guidance to donor and receiving FRSs when mutual aid arrangements are activated. This guidance defines types of mutual aid and offers a standardised scale of charges that provide consistency and assurance to all FRSs. The document is updated annually following any pay award negotiation agreed through the National Joint Council. Updates to this document are circulated through a National Resilience Information Note.

9 International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance

9.1 Incoming: International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance

National Resilience Planning within the UK is based on a general presumption of self-sufficiency. The National Security Risk Assessment sets out the government's assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of a range of different risks that may directly affect the UK, which equates to a relatively small number of occasions where the UK would seek international assistance. In exceptional circumstances where an emergency is of sufficient scale to overwhelm UK capacity, or where highly specialised assistance is required, a request may be considered.

International assistance is requested on a case by case basis following Her Majesty's Government cross departmental consultation and can only be initiated following a formal request. Co-ordination of such requests should be facilitated through formalised structures or following a direct request.

Incoming assistance must be well co-ordinated to ensure rapid and effective integration into the national response. Precise co-ordination arrangements will depend on the given situation. However, plans should be prepared and communicated across a range of Government departments, Local Resilience Forums and agencies well in advance of arrival to ensure that arrangements are understood and work effectively. This will involve the NCAF arrangements and should be made in conjunction with Chair of the NFCC and/or the NSAT, the National Resilience Strategic Lead and the lead Government Department.

Annex B provides an overview of the procedure for the approval of incoming international reciprocal mutual assistance.

9.2 Outgoing: International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance

On occasions UK FRS capabilities are required to respond to humanitarian disasters and emergencies overseas. Overseas deployments will be coordinated through the NCAF arrangements and assisted by the Chair of the NFCC and/or NSAT and Lead Government Departments. Any deployment must also be agreed by the NFCC Capability Lead and not impact on the UK's ability to respond to a national incident.

Following major international disasters, the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) are able to request fire & rescue resources through a Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU sets out the principles for effective liaison, collaboration, communication and mutual co-operation.

Fifteen fire & rescue services currently form the International Search and Rescue Team under the governance of the NFCC. The team is available to deploy to sudden onset disasters overseas, on behalf of FCDO or the Cabinet Office.

10 Annex A: Central Government's response to major incidents

Central Government's response to major incidents will be managed by either the PSG or Homeland Security Operations Centres. The Homeland Security Operations Centre will be the responsible lead for suspected or confirmed Counter Terrorist incidents.

The following Concept of Operations sets out the HO response arrangements that will be implemented in the event of a major incident. This document refers to the term 'critical incident' which may be declared for an emergency as defined in the Governments Responding to Emergencies Concept of Operations (page 8).

When these arrangements are enacted support will be required from the NFCC and NRAT to ensure timely and accurate situational awareness is provided.

10.1 Concept of Operations for PSG Critical Incident Management Response

10.1.1 Purpose

1. This document sets out the concepts and principles of Public Safety Group's (PSG's) approach to the management of critical incidents.
2. It has been developed to ensure that any PSG response is effective, consistent and meets the needs of Ministers, other government departments and police forces and fire and rescue services.
3. It is one of a series of documents that detail PSG's critical incident management arrangements. These include a detailed critical incident manual and handrail documents for key responders.
4. Guidance on readiness, recovery and training requirements can be found in separate guides.

10.1.2 Who is this document for?

5. This document has been produced to introduce a range of audiences to PSG's critical incident management arrangements including:
 - All PSG staff.
 - BICS, Homeland Security and wider HO staff who need to understand PSG's response to critical incidents to support their own roles.
 - Other Government Department officials who may work with PSG in the HMG wide response to critical incidents.
 - Officers from Police Forces, Fire and Rescue Services, NPCC, NFCC and NPoCC who may be asked to support PSGs response to critical incidents.

10.1.3 What do we mean by a 'critical incident'?

6. A variety of different circumstances could lead to the requirement for PSG to activate its critical incident management arrangements.

A critical incident for PSG is defined as:

Any incident where the outcome or consequence is likely to result in:

- *serious harm to the public or staff; or*
- *significant community, public confidence or business impact including to the Home Office; or*
- *a significant impact in the confidence of the public in the Home Office; and*
- *requiring special arrangements and professional incident management capability to respond.*

7. These incidents can include the large-scale deployment of police or fire personnel, situations where police powers need to be changed or clarified urgently, events affecting PSG or Home Office staff, or events affecting the reputation of the Home Office.
8. In practice, the following scenarios represent the most likely situations where PSG may need to activate its critical incident arrangements, although this list is not by any means exhaustive:
 - **A large-scale civil emergency that requires Home Office or wider HMG response (with or without COBR meetings).** For example, widespread flooding, pandemic disease outbreaks, widespread public disorder, industrial action affecting police or fire operational effectiveness. These incidents are likely to be led by PSG for the Home Office.
 - **A terrorist incident where Homeland Security requires PSG support to respond to the impacts on police forces or fire and rescue services.** This may include issues such as supporting large scale deployments, managing secondary impacts such as disorder or the rapid development and introduction of new or amended powers for the emergency services. These incidents are most likely to be led by Homeland Security.
 - **An incident that requires extraordinary police support to maintain the integrity of the UK Border or Immigration Enforcement activity.** This could include situations where there are unexpected and significant shortages or increased demand on Border Force staff, or where new powers are required for both Border Force and police constables (as seen in the response to the 2015 Ebola outbreak). These incidents are most likely to be led by BICS.
9. There are also many areas that, while not necessarily a critical incident, can be effectively planned for or managed using critical incident techniques. These could include:
 - **An issue where there is extraordinary demand on an individual PSG policy area.** This could be the result of significant media or political attention; or as a result of an emergency need to reform or renew policy advice or legislation; or in the wake of a release of data due to a cyber-attack or leak. This is not intended to replace the medium-term support offered by the priority projects team.
 - **A large-scale planned event that requires PSG management beyond the immediate capacity or policy expertise of the Major Events Hub.** This could include 'no notice' state occasions, snap elections or referenda, or very large sporting events. While such an event in itself may not be considered a critical incident, the PSG arrangements could be used to bolster the capacity of the Major Events Hub.

- **A business continuity or continuity of government incident that requires the redeployment of PSG teams to support the critical functions of the Home Office.** This could include incidents which lead to the loss of Home Office buildings or systems, an unexpected shortage of staff or denial of access to the HMG estate in central London. The response to these incidents would be led by the Home Office Business Continuity Team and/or Homeland Security as required.

10.1.4 What will PSG have to do during a critical incident?

10. During a critical incident response, PSG may be required to:

- **Develop Situation Reports** based on information from sources such as the police, fire and rescue services, other government departments, media outlets and teams from across the Home Office.
- **Provide fast time policy advice** on areas where PSG has a day to day lead or significant interest. This could take the form of formal policy papers, discussions with other parts of the Home Office or other government departments or providing policy positions to operational partners.
- **Brief Ministers and senior officials** on what has happened, what the Home Office interests are, and what action is being taken. This could be in person, by phone or through concise briefing notes.
- **Support COBR meetings** by representing the Home Office at an official's discussion, or ensuring Ministers attending COBR are suitably briefed. Similarly, senior fire or police officers attending COBR may require support to understand their role during a meeting.
- **Build or use stakeholder networks** to facilitate information flows from operational partners or other government departments as needed. This could be ensuring that the relevant national policing or fire lead is involved in relevant discussions or that other government departments are given the ability to engage with police forces or fire and rescue services with PSG support.
- **Develop media briefings and FAQs** lines by working with press office and policy teams to ensure increased media attention is effectively managed.
- **Support increased Parliamentary interest** by working with Parly Branch to answer increased numbers of PQs, UQs and be prepared to draft statements and speeches for use by Ministers in the House.
- **Manage the logistical elements of PSG's response** by helping create rotas of staff, logging key decisions, managing and storing key information sources, supporting team welfare.

11. The list above is not exhaustive. That said, the majority of PSG activity during a critical incident can best be described as providing an 'enhanced briefing and policy advice' function. This means that those involved in the response will be asked to use their core civil service skills to support the response rather than to rapidly acquire specialist or operational knowledge.

12. PSG does not have any overt operational role in a critical incident, although there may be occasions when urgent policy decisions can support the emergency services' operational response (such as the facilitation of a request to ban a protest march under the Public Order Act 1986).

10.1.5 How will PSG deliver its response to a critical incident?

13. Will use the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) as the basis for how PSG will deliver its response to a critical incident. Therefore, during the response to a critical incident, PSG will:

- **Co-locate** – PSG will ensure that there is a dedicated physical space for all teams involved in the response to work together. This includes responses where support from Homeland Security or BICS teams is required. This is likely to be 5th Floor in Fry. PSG will also deploy staff to co-locate with other Home Office teams where they are leading the response to an incident.
- **Communicate** – PSG will ensure that our briefings are clear, timely and reach the right audiences within and outside the Home Office.
- **Co-ordinate** – PSG will actively work to identify which teams across the group, the Home Office and across government and operational partners may need to be involved in the response to an incident and ensure they are consulted and engaged as appropriate.
- **Jointly understand risk** – PSG will ensure that everyone involved in the response are able to understand what has happened, why PSG are involved and, where needed, have access to specialist knowledge or background information to ensure everyone is working from the same level of basic knowledge.
- **Shared situational awareness** – PSG will work to ensure that we protect the operational independence of fire and police colleagues whilst also seeking from them appropriate levels of operational detail to support briefing and rapid policy making, sharing this as and when required with other teams across Home Office and HMG.

14. These principles will be used in addition to ensuring PSG works within the cross-Home Office concepts adopted by the Home Office critical incidents steering group which are:

- **Declaring an incident** – there should be a shared understanding of how a critical incident should be declared.
- **Agreed processes** – anyone can identify a critical incident, however, the decision to declare it should be made through a process agreed across the Department.
- **Shared understanding across business areas** – all parts of the system will have an understanding of how different business areas identify who will assume the role of Gold Command and how this will happen at the beginning of a critical incident.
- **Communication** – once declared, the incident must be communicated to relevant internal and external stakeholders along with confirmation of the command structure and strategy.
- **Cross-system impacts** – a command should automatically assume that the incident has the potential to impact on the rest of its system, other parts of the Home Office or other Government Departments, and narrow down the key areas following agreement with relevant partners.
- **One Department** – we will interact as one Department with the Cabinet Office and when relevant, with other Government Departments

10.1.6 Resourcing a critical incident

15. Once a critical incident has been declared business areas will make, as a priority, the necessary resources available to manage the incident. The affected business area will also be supported by additional resources trained in critical incident response from across the Group. Further details on these arrangements can be found in the PSG critical incident manual.

10.1.7 Homeland Security Operations Centre

16. Governments 24/7 response and policy support arrangements will be provided by the Home Office Homeland Security Group for suspected or confirmed Counter Terrorist incidents.

17. The response functions provided by Homeland Security will include:
 - Managing communications
 - Situational awareness – ensuring Ministers and senior officials have a single, timely and accurate account of what is happening. (CRIP)
 - Support to Ministers for COBR
 - Monitoring the situation
 - Coordinating actions across the Home Office, including any actions from COBR.
18. Homeland Security will require 24/7 policy 'reach back,' including weekends and public holidays, but the threshold for making a call to a policy lead is high, although COBR actions may require policy support to start specific work streams. These points of contact will be the Home Office Fire Duty Officer, the CIH and Fire, Resilience and Major Events Unit officials.
19. Dependent upon the scale of the incident NSAT & NRAT assistance may be required to support Homeland Security. If necessary, this will be agreed at the time between the Chair of the NFCC and/or the NSAT and the HO.

11 Annex B International Reciprocal Mutual Assistance

11.1.1 Incoming: International Mutual Assistance

The following procedure is to be adopted for the approval of incoming international reciprocal mutual assistance to the UK:

- FRSs should have exhausted all mutual assistance arrangements/options under sections 13 & 16 of the Fire & Rescue Services Act and assistance that can be sourced via the NRAT Duty Officer from the UKFRS beyond 13 & 16 arrangements.
- A request should be made by the Chair of the NFCC and/or NSAT to Government for the exploration of other national capability options.
 - i) Where COBR is stood up requests should be made via this route. HO FRaME and CCS will prepare the brief for COBR.
 - ii) Where COBR is not stood up, requests should be made to HO FRaME who will co-ordinate the arrangements with the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS). HO FRaME and CCS will agree and arrange the necessary Ministerial clearance procedure.
- Once all national options have been exhausted Ministers will approve incoming international mutual assistance requests..

12 Annex C: NFCC National Crisis Plan Management

COVID Committee to complete

13 Bibliography

Civil Contingencies Act 2004
Concept of Operations Response to Emergencies April 2013 Cabinet Office
Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018
Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
Multi Agency Strategic Holding Areas – Civil Contingencies Secretariat
National Fire Chiefs Council Mutual aid charging protocol
National Mutual Aid Protocol – Fire and Rescue Service (2006) Fire Service Circular 42/2006
National Operational Guidance – Major Incidents 2018

14 Glossary

BICS	Borders, Immigrations and Citizenship Strategy
CBRNe	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Room
CRIP	Common Recognised Information Picture
ELS	Enhanced Logistics Support
ESS	Electronic Support System
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office
FRaME	Fire Resilience and Major Events
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
GLO	Government Liaison Officer
HO	Home Office
HVP	High Volume Pump
JOL	Joint Organisational Learning
LGD	Lead Government Department
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
MASHA	Multi Agency Strategic Holding Area
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTA	Marauding Terrorist Attack
NCAF	National Coordination Advisory Framework
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
NOL	National Operational Learning
NPCC	National Police Chiefs Council
NPoCC	National Police Coordination Centre
NRAT	National Resilience Assurance Team
NRFC	National Resilience Fire Control
NSAT	National Strategic Advisory Team
PSG	Public Safety Group
RED	Resilience Emergencies Division
SCG	Strategic Coordinating Group
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue