Emergency Planning College
Position Paper

Number
April 2017

6

Preparing People: a Critical Element of UK Resilience

Dr Robert MacFarlane
Cabinet Office, Civil Contingencies Secretariat

Emergency Planning College Position Papers

At the EPC we use Position Papers to define, for the guidance and information of the practitioners and partners we train, our institutional standpoint on good practice in resilience, emergency and crisis management.

They are free downloads from the Knowledge Centre on the college website. As such they are a part of our Public Programme and a *pro bono* service to the resilience community.

Please note that, whilst they represent our current understanding of good practice and will always be consistent with relevant and formal published guidance, doctrine and standards – they are designed to complement – not replace – formal government guidance. As statements of good practice they do not imply direction or mandate from central government. When they refer to specific products, models or methodologies (used to translate doctrine into practice) this does not constitute CCS endorsement or recommendation of the same.

As with our Occasional Papers, which have more of a discursive nature and purpose, they are peer-reviewed and subject to rigorous quality assurance to ensure that they will contribute effectively to the needs of practitioners and the customers and partners of the Emergency Planning College.

Preparing People: a Critical Element of UK Resilience

The readers of EPC papers will be very familiar with the model of Integrated Emergency Management (IEM), which lies at the heart of the duties and activities associated with the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). The figure below slightly elaborates the basic model[1] to draw out the place of *validation* (the activities we conduct to provide assurance on our level of readiness and resilience) and *learning* (the gathering of knowledge from experience, and subsequent action to enhance policy, doctrine and practice).

This article focuses on the vital role that *people* play in all stages and aspects of IEM, and how we can, indeed how we should, think and act more systematically about preparing them for their roles.
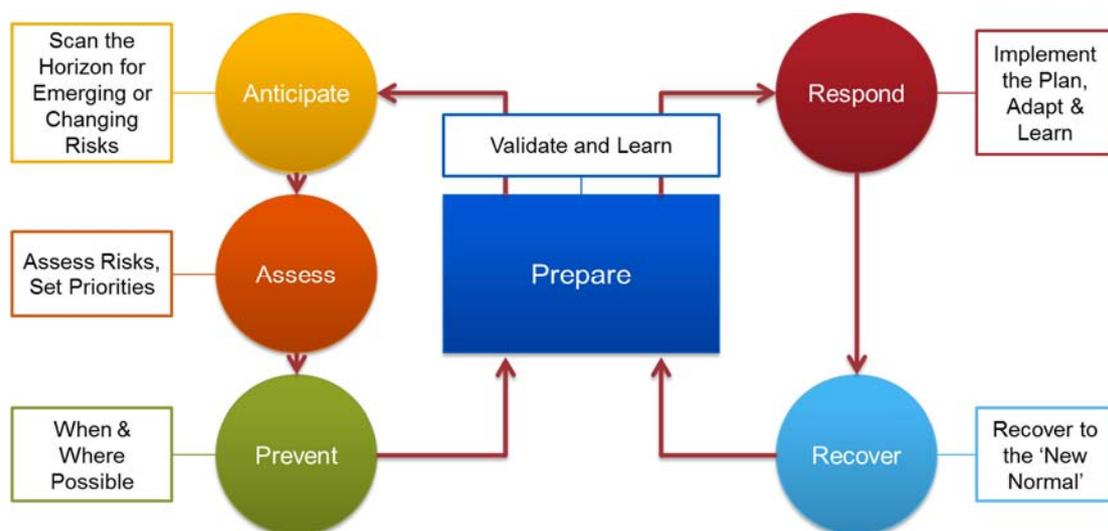

Figure 1: Integrated Emergency Management, drawing out the place of training, validation and learning

Capability, *capacity*, *competence* and *reliability* are critical ideas in building greater levels of preparedness and resilience, at all levels from the local to the

---

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61024/Chapter-1-Introduction_amends_16042012.pdf

national, and indeed to the international, and the table below offers a definition for each of these[2].

Capability	The demonstrable ability of an organisation, collective or system to do something, under specified conditions, to defined levels
Capacity	The amount of a given capability that exists in a particular context
Competence	The ability of individuals to perform a specified task or role, which is based on defined knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours
Reliability	The attribute of an organisation, collective or system in which things perform as they are needed, when they are called upon

Table 1: key ideas in emergency preparedness and resilience

Capability is defined above as 'the demonstrable ability of an organisation, collective or system to do something, under specified conditions, to defined levels'. That ability rests on a number of different components, and capability can be disaggregated in various ways. For example, military doctrine distinguishes between *conceptual, moral* and *physical* dimensions of capability, and the British Standard (BSI, 2014) on Crisis Management refers to *intellectual, organizational, cultural* and *logistic* elements. These have been brought together into the EPC framework for capability assessment and development, as follows:

Physical	Intellectual	Structural	Human
Equipment	Doctrine	Legislation	Selection
Facilities	Concepts	Organisation	Training
Supplies	Policy	Relationships	Education
Logistics	Procedures	Linkages	

[2] NOTE a revised version of the UK Resilience Lexicon is currently in preparation and final agreed definitions for these terms will appear in that.

However capability is broken down, the human component of capability – people, teams and teams-of-teams – is a vital element.

Capability, capacity, competence and reliability are closely interrelated. Without reliable capabilities, at an appropriate level of capacity and the availability of enough competent people to direct, resource, manage, coordinate, implement and monitor the response to an emergency or incident, the effectiveness of that response will be severely compromised.

The human component of resilience is critical, but reflect on your own experience and ask whether the level and manner in which you develop and prepare people adequately reflects that. The remainder of this article briefly sets out a framework for thinking about training in the round. It accepts that resources are tight and that funding for training is often hard to secure, but argues that you can focus resources to make the best of what you have got.

Training does not, of course, exist in a vacuum. We train people to fulfil certain tasks and roles, to meet required levels of performance and to do so under expected or foreseeable operating conditions. In the context of the IEM cycle above, training is generally associated with the preparation stage, although in reality it is more distributed than that, as specific training will probably be required to build competences in relation to risk assessment and other specific activities.

The figure and section below relates why we train, what we train and how we train people in the context of UK Resilience.
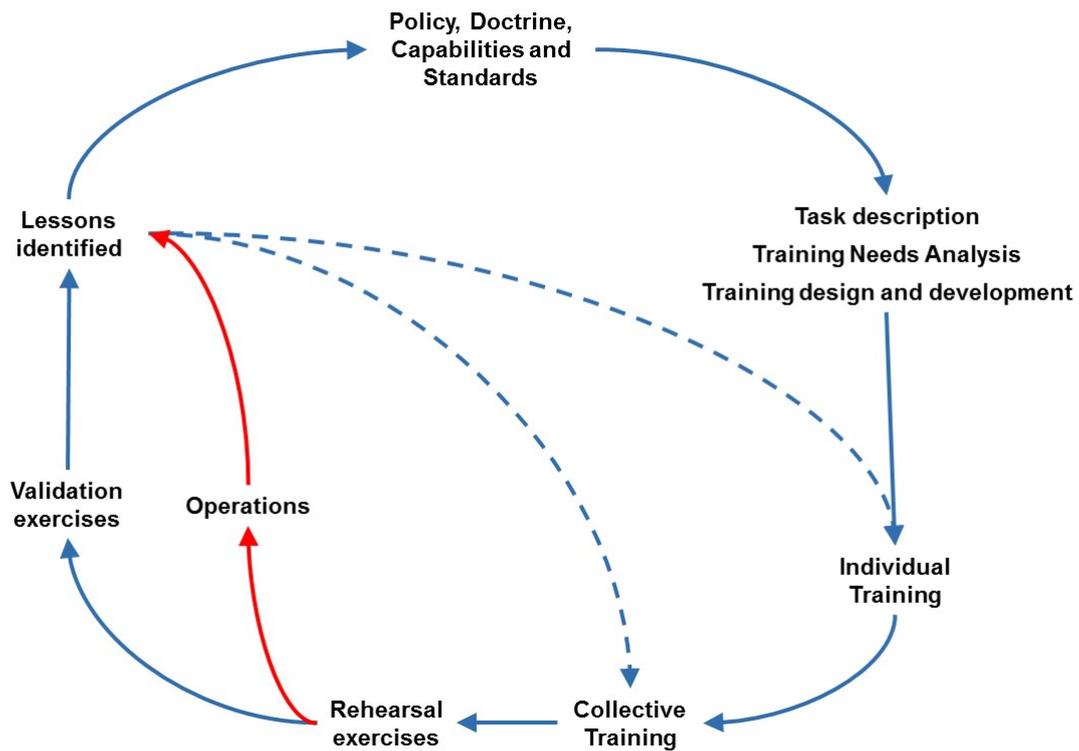
Figure 2: a cyclical approach to training

It starts, at the top, with UK Resilience *policy* (strategic concepts and direction), *doctrine* (the way in which emergency responders should train and operate), *capabilities* (see table 1) and *standards* (agreed ways of doing things, and expectations of how much of something is required). From these tasks are specified – the things we need people to be able to do. A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is the means by which the gaps between what we need people to be able to do and what they can currently do are identified, and options to fill those gaps are evaluated. A TNA is then the basis for training interventions of different types to be designed and developed.

It is useful to distinguish between *individual training* and *collective training,* although the clue is in the title! Individual training is the means by which people build their knowledge, learn and practice skills, and develop or evolve their attitudes to certain tasks, roles, partner organisations and situations. Collective training, which almost always builds on the basis established by individual training, develops those competences which are not entirely vested

in individuals, but emerge through their operation and interaction as a team, or team-of-teams.

So, while individuals can learn and develop competences such as risk analysis, decision logging, exercise design or business impact analysis as individuals, the knowledge, skills and attitudes to conduct, for example, effective multi-agency command, control and coordination requires training as a collective, alongside and interacting with the relevant partners, and (ideally) delivered by a training team of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. It is worth emphasising that the accumulation of individual training is a necessary *but not sufficient* condition for collective performance. The purpose of collective training is to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts – indeed, without collective training many teams may fall short of the sum of their parts.

Competent people and effective teams are the bedrock of a reliable emergency response, deploying capabilities to good effect and adapting in a flexible manner to the unexpected. But how do we know if our arrangements, capabilities and people are as ready, reliable and resilient as we hope they are? Continuing round the loop of figure 2, sometimes emergencies and major incidents will provide a measure of readiness and reliability (they are, after all the ultimate test), but other approaches to validation are required, to provide stakeholders, principals and other interested parties with meaningful assurance.

It should be noted here that while rehearsal exercises are a valid and valuable *component* of individual and collective training, validation exercises are for validation and should <u>not</u> be used as a convenient or low-cost training opportunity – to do that is to undermine the validation *and* to compromise the training. Keep them separate and do them in the right order!

Exercises and operations yield lessons. Many resilience professionals get quite forceful about the distinction between *lessons identified* (an

understanding of what went wrong, how and why, and what better would look like) and *lessons learned* (the translation of those insights into improved practice). This isn't pedantry however – it matters, because learning lessons is very difficult to do well, and we need to resist the trap that publishing the report is the same as making the change.

Two routes to translate lessons from exercises and operations into practice are shown in the final part of figure 2. Some lessons can be translated quite directly into training interventions, for example in illustrating good practice or identifying pitfalls and mitigation measures. Other lessons change how we work in a more fundamental way, driving a change in policy, doctrine, capabilities or standards (the emergence of the JESIP programme from Lady Justice Hallett's 2011 report on the 7/7 London bombings is a good example of this), and when this happens the cycle starts again.

Rather than draw conclusions, here are some questions for you to reflect on:

1. Is the training you are doing or procuring definitely grounded in the latest policy, doctrine, capability specification and standards?
2. Have you *systematically* considered the training requirement: what do you need people to do?
3. What steps are you taking to evaluate the impact of training you undertake?
4. Are you appropriately blending and sequencing individual *and* collective training?
5. Are you training people <u>before</u> you put them through validation exercises?
6. Is your training up-to date on recent and relevant lessons?

About the Author

Dr Robert MacFarlane is Deputy Director in the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat where he leads the UK Resilience Training, Doctrine and Standards team. Rob has oversight of the operation of the UK Emergency Planning College, has trained situation cell and crisis teams across government and internationally, and is an OECD expert on crisis management doctrine. Rob was one of the principal authors of the UK Joint Emergency Services Doctrine and led the development of British Standards on Crisis Management and Organizational Resilience. He chairs the British (BSI) and sits on the European (CEN) and International (ISO) Standards Organisations teams working on continuity, resilience and emergency and crisis management. Rob is an Honorary Member of the Business Continuity Institute, has attended the Strategic Leadership Programme for Security, Resilience, Defence and Intelligence at the UK Defence Academy and the US Leadership in Homeland Security Program at Harvard University. Before joining the civil service in 2006 Rob was a senior lecturer and research director at the University of Northumbria. He has a PhD in geospatial analysis from the University of Aberdeen (1995) and a Doctorate in Business Administration on crisis decision making from the University of Durham (2016).

To discuss any aspect of this article or issues arising please contact the CCS Doctrine, Training and Standards Team (claudine.scatchard@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk) or the Emergency Planning College - the UK Resilience Training Centre - that is run for and on behalf of, and assured by, the Cabinet Office (mark.leigh@emergencyplanningcollege.com).