

RESILIENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

KEY THEMES SUMMARY

On 9th October 2006 CCS hosted a national resilient telecommunication workshop in London. The event was attended by Regional Resilience Directors, representatives from each Local Resilience Forum, the Emergency Services and representatives from across Government.

Towards the end of the morning session, delegates were invited to break into groups and consider the following questions:

1. What can local responders do to ensure resilient telecommunications, and how can LRFs facilitate the process?
2. What can Central Government do to help?

In response, the key themes which emerged on the day were:

What can local responders do to ensure resilient telecommunications, and how can LRFs facilitate the process?

- **Improve Communication** – Telecoms resilience issues are currently a hot topic, but thinking is largely internal and little multi-agency thinking is underway.
 - Consider working more closely with the voluntary sector and other non Category 1 & 2 responders
 - Be clear on who is likely to want to talk to whom, when and why.
 - Enlighten Chief Executives (or other Board members with financial responsibility) that inadequate means of communication is likely to result in an inadequate response.
- Consider the establishment of a **communications sub-group** in each LRF area to co-ordinate and push forward this work locally.
- Promote a **'Gold' standard** for telecomms resilience across the response community
- First identify the weaknesses with the current means of communication, then address need and finally costs
- Encourage the attendance of relevant **courses** at the **Emergency Planning College**
- **Exercise** routinely
 - Check connectivity
 - Retain flexibility and diversity of telecoms provision.
 - Ensure staff have adequate training.
 - Ensure that each agency has a page in their plan setting out fallback arrangements if comms fail during an emergency.

What can Central Government do to help?

- Develop and communicate a strategy for improving the resilience of responder's telecommunications.
- Issue clear guidance to raise awareness of telecommunications resilience issues and how they might be addressed.
 - Provide more technical advice on interdependencies, down time and mode of failure
 - Provide clear guidance on a national approach on standards
 - Disseminate lessons identified and good practice
 - Consider mapping capabilities, followed by an education and awareness campaign
 - Issue more specific training and guidance eg. on Next Generation Networks
 - Consider a 'Good Practice Check List' (as for the NISCC fixed line guidance)
- Liaise more with telecommunications companies to highlight industry's role in ensuring resilience.
- Plan and conduct exercises where telecommunications are degraded or not available.