

# **Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies: Guidance on Establishing Family Assistance Centres**

## **Foreword**

In the aftermath of the recent bomb attacks on London I saw what an invaluable role a well run Family Assistance Centre (FAC) can play in helping to support survivors and families at a time of terrible trauma when their need for information and support is very great. A FAC can provide a one-stop-shop for survivors, family and friends and all those impacted by an emergency through which they can access support, care and advice.

The Government believes that local responders should put in place arrangements to ensure that – where required - a FAC could be set up at no notice in any part of the country to support those affected by an emergency regardless of its cause. That is why we support the timely publication of this interim guidance which describes what a FAC is for, the roles and responsibilities of key agencies and how it should be delivered. It provides a framework within which local responders can develop their own arrangements to ensure that the FAC can provide a hub for meeting the needs of their communities at a very difficult time.

The principles described here were implemented when a FAC was established in Westminster for those affected by the bombing attack on London on 7 July 2005. It is too soon to fully reflect the lessons learned from that experience; updated guidance will be published in the new year once the lessons from the London bombings have been fully analysed. However this experience did demonstrate the important role a FAC can provide as a focal point for services.

It is to the great credit of all concerned that the Association of Chief Police Officers has worked so closely with a wide range of responding agencies over the last 2 years to develop guidance on planning for and establishing a FAC – I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who contributed.

***Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP  
Secretary of State***

Planning for humanitarian assistance needs to be approached in a multi-agency fashion. Unless agencies plan, train and exercise together, there will always be a risk of inconsistency, duplication of effort and confusion between those involved in offering humanitarian assistance in emergencies. These guidelines provide a flexible framework to assist the development of efficient, effective and integrated plans at the local level.

We have co-ordinated the development of this document on behalf of the Cabinet Office and believe it marks a major step forward in our ability to provide a caring and sensitive approach to all those affected by emergencies. However, this aspiration will only be achieved if all local partners ensure that an agreed multi-agency plan can be put in place and responders are primed to deliver the standards these guidelines set. And as Duncan McGarry, one of my officers who has helped develop this guidance, says:

‘At the very worst time of their lives, the very least we can do is our very best.’

These are sentiments that should be at the heart of any plan and must be reflected in the professional commitment across all levels of the response to an emergency.

***Commander Jo Kaye***  
***Association of Chief Police Officers***

Over the past fifteen years we have seen a significant shift in the approach to emergency management from one in which the bereaved and survivors had to accept what others expected us to want, to one more fundamentally grounded in understanding and meeting the actual needs of those directly affected. This document focuses on the importance of agencies working collaboratively in both planning and response to address the diverse, individual needs of all those affected by mass tragedy. It should be seen as a living document that evolves to take into account the new and unique concerns created by emergencies yet to take place.

Our involvement in this initiative reflects an effective partnership approach between the Association of Chief Police Officers, local and central government, and the voluntary sector, most particularly the British Red Cross. We call upon all those involved in emergency management to commit to these principles and to work proactively with these guidelines in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

***Maurice de Rohan OBE***  
***Chairman – Disaster Action***

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## Chapter 1: Introduction and Definitions

1. The consequences of an emergency can be devastating and far reaching for all those affected, (both directly and indirectly) including survivors, families and friends and the wider community. From the outset the relationship between the people affected and the responding agencies is crucial. Responders need to understand the needs of their communities at this difficult time, and to draw on joint planning, exercising and training to meet these needs in a joined up, customer focused way.
2. Regardless of where the event takes place those affected need to know that there is somewhere that they can access timely and accurate information, advice and support. They may be in a state of deep shock so it is vital that information is well co-ordinated as well as consistent. Of course early on in any emergency response the priority will be to save lives and to meet the immediate needs of survivors. However, mechanisms need to be established to enable information to be communicated at the earliest stage that it is sensible to do so, and local responders should engage as early as possible on the longer term needs of all of those affected, both directly and indirectly.
3. This document gives guidance to help local responders to ensure that bereaved families, survivors and communities receive professional advice and assistance that is co-ordinated, consistent and clear, that meets individuals' needs and is offered in a sensitive and compassionate manner. Family Assistance Centres (FACs) will provide a service focus in the humanitarian response to an emergency – this guidance is a source for those responsible for facilitating the development and establishment of FACs.

**Part 1** (chapters 1-6) defines the responsibilities of those organisations that are most likely to be involved in planning for, establishing and operating a FAC and it explains the importance of protocols within and between organisations. This draws on local, regional and national practices to provide a generic framework within which local responders can plan, train, exercise, review and evaluate together more effectively, working to agreed standards.

**Part 2** (chapters 7 to 13) explains in more detail the roles of many of the organisations involved in providing a humanitarian response. As well as assisting those involved in providing a FAC, we hope that this guidance can act as a reference source for families and friends, survivors and communities following an emergency, to assist them, if needed, in their decision-making processes. It is important that those affected individuals feel a certain element of control over the assistance provided.

4. Throughout this guidance we have used some key terms:

In the context of these guidelines the term **family** should include: partners, parents, siblings, children, guardians and others who might have a direct, close relationship with the victim. The identification of what makes up an individual's family is extremely important in the context of these guidelines. It is important to recognise the potentially wide variations of the 'family', which can be influenced by culture, lifestyle and by preference. Care should be taken to establish the wishes of the family at all times with sensitivity and understanding exercised around families with diverse lifestyles.

In this guidance, the term **emergency** is used as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004:

- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom;
- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom; or
- War, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom

Additionally, to constitute an emergency, an event or situation must also pose a considerable test of local responders' ability to perform their functions, requiring the implementation of special arrangements. The definition focuses on the *consequences* of events, and thus includes events overseas where a large number of UK citizens are seriously affected. This definition is explained in greater detail in *Emergency Preparedness*, statutory guidance issued under the Act.

# Part 1: The Humanitarian Response - Establishing a FAC

## Chapter 2: Multi-Agency Humanitarian Assistance

1. The achievement of a co-ordinated, multi-agency response to an emergency is essential and requires a joined-up planning process at a local level. The Local Resilience Forum is the primary vehicle for this, and it should be engaged in ensuring well co-ordinated plans for humanitarian assistance, including the setting up of a Family Assistance Centre.
2. Statutory guidance under the Civil Contingencies Act *Emergency Preparedness* recommends establishing a number of specialist sub-groups to drive forward work in particular areas of emergency planning. Each Local Resilience Forum should consider the case for establishing a multi-agency *Humanitarian Assistance* sub-group drawing together relevant Category 1 & 2 responders and key voluntary bodies.
3. This would need to meet regularly to develop and maintain the humanitarian assistance aspects of the planning and also would need to have authority to decide on provision.
4. The group should be chaired by an individual with the appropriate mix of seniority, experience and responsibility to lead the group with authority. Generally the steering group would be chaired at director level by a representative from the local authority with a core membership comprising: local authority; police; health (from primary care, adult mental health services, child and adolescent mental health services); fire (if appropriate); together with other statutory and voluntary organisations. This group would undertake the following essential activities:
  - Prepare a multi-agency emergency response plan that can respond to the psychological and social welfare needs of individuals and/or communities.
  - Pre-identify the members of a Family Assistance Management Group that will coordinate the delivery of all psycho/social support in a community, including the operation of the Family Assistance Centre, during an emergency.
  - Ensure a system is put in place that lays out clear criteria for the nomination and selection of staff that will undertake the identified roles.

- Develop appropriate multi-agency training for practitioners and managers who will coordinate the response and undertake support in such areas as family liaison and the Family Assistance Centre.
  - Ensure that a balanced programme of exercises is developed and that lessons are identified and learned systematically. This is particularly important in respect of Family Assistance Centres, which will involve a large number of complex issues.
  - Prepare an operational plan for any building identified as a potential Family Assistance Centre.
5. As in other aspects of emergency planning, an appropriate and effective training and exercise regime is at the heart of effective humanitarian assistance. The Government's **Emergency Preparedness** gives detailed guidance on developing plans, conducting exercises and developing training regimes in a manner consistent with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

## Chapter 3: Purpose of Family Assistance Centres

1. The purpose of the Family Assistance Centre is to:
  - ‡ Act as a focal point for humanitarian assistance to bereaved families and friends and survivors, and where appropriate to anyone else who has been affected
  - ‡ Enable those affected to gain as much information as is currently available about missing family members and friends.
  - ‡ Enable the gathering of mass forensic samples in a timely manner, which enhances the ability to identify loved ones quickly.
  - ‡ Offer access to a range of facilities that will allow families and survivors to make informed choices according to their needs.
  - ‡ Ensure a seamless multi-agency approach to humanitarian assistance in emergencies that should minimise duplication.
2. This is separate from other centres that may be part of a humanitarian response, particularly in the early stages. For example, Local Authorities' and airport emergency plans refer specifically to:
  - A Family and Friends Reception Centre
  - A Survivor Reception Centre
  - Rest Centres.

These are generally used in the immediate aftermath of an incident with specific purposes, for example to reunite relatives with survivors or to provide temporary shelter. The Family Assistance Centre should not interfere with the function of these or other reunion areas. Instead it should have a broader remit and longer term role whilst investigation and recovery operations are taking place. The purposes of, and interrelationships between these facilities is explained in Chapter 5 of *Emergency Response and Recovery*.

3. Both Government and ACPO consider that establishing a FAC should be considered as part of the response to a wide range of emergencies. This not only includes terrorist incidents on the scale of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, but also the potential for transport incidents and emergencies emanating from natural causes such as a severe flooding. They consider there is a strong case for establishing such a facility in these circumstances because it enables responsible authorities to focus resources and concentrate on providing for the needs of those

affected. In order that a Family Assistance Centre can be established rapidly it is essential that some advance planning is carried out

4. The concept of a Family Assistance Centre has been developed to deal with an emergency occurring in the United Kingdom. However, there is no reason why - if it is appropriate and the circumstances are suitable - one cannot be mobilised in the UK – when there are a significant number of UK casualties following an overseas incident.

## Chapter 4: Planning Considerations

1. The Family Assistance Centre should be designed to be a comfortable resource facility where families can access multiple areas of expertise and assistance easily and in a manner that suits their needs at that time. It should also be environmentally suitable for the purpose and equipped to receive people with disabilities.
2. Access to interpreters, people with special language skills and cultural advisors will also facilitate an integrated and inclusive response. The Family Assistance Centre should be opened rapidly after any event to provide services as soon as possible. Although of course it should not open so soon that its function would be undermined by lack of preparation or resources.
3. The responsibility for identifying and securing the use of suitable premises rests with local authorities, which will co-ordinate welfare support to the community in the event of an emergency. Local authorities will also be responsible for meeting the costs of securing the use of premises in the planning phase, and for providing the centre itself in the event of an emergency. However, it is important to adopt a multi-agency approach to this task. During the planning phase Local Authorities may enter into agreements with voluntary agencies, establishing clear expectations in relation to the responsibility for the payment of costs. It must be borne in mind that the Family Assistance Centre is not the immediate Reception or Rest Centre - its role will be considerably more comprehensive and long term.
4. Within the local authority the lead department for the humanitarian response is likely to be Social Welfare and Education Services. Individual local authorities will have to decide upon arrangements to carry out this function taking into account the provisions of the Children's Act 2004. The appropriate departments should work closely with the various health agencies in all aspects of planning and response.
5. The number, capacity and geographical location of Family Assistance Centres should be pre-identified in any particular Local Resilience Area and be informed by risk assessments and risk registers maintained under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (see Chapter 4 of *Emergency Preparedness*) in consultation with partner agencies at both local and regional level. It should be kept in mind that more than one centre at different locations may be required – depending on the geographic location and nature of the emergency. Factors to be considered include:
  - Resident and transient populations.

- Transport infrastructure.
- Number of pre-identified hazardous sites.
- Security risks.

### Premises and Layout

6. Careful consideration must be given during the planning process to selecting appropriate premises for use as a Family Assistance Centre. Issues to be considered in selecting a suitable venue include:
- Sufficient number and size of rooms to meet required functions.
  - Meeting health and safety requirements.
  - Security.
  - Public transport links.
  - Communication or potential communication links.
  - Impact on its normal use and impact on the local community.
  - Being able to meet the additional requirements of disabled persons and the sensory impaired.
7. In determining the layout of the premises, consideration needs to be given to the potential for the Centre to operate in the most effective manner, meeting the needs of both users and staff.

### Facilities

8. It is essential that the Centre has a high level of security and that a full risk assessment is conducted at the outset and reviewed on a regular basis.
9. Consideration should be given to locating some or all of the following facilities within the Centre:

#### *Services / Service Areas*

- ! Registration and reception area - where police can check the validity and record details of all those attending the Centre. This area could also be responsible for issuing daily bulletins with up-to-date information. It should provide practical resources such

as pens, paper, maps of the centre, the location of local amenities e.g. banking facilities, places of worship, phone cards, bus routes etc.

- ‡ An interview area where families can be taken in order that their enquiries are dealt with in a private and compassionate manner with the minimum of disruption.
- ‡ Telephone and Internet areas - people may wish to relay messages to concerned others all over the world; the Internet may be the most efficient way to do this. Also, families and others may be able to recover information in this way, which will be of assistance to the police in any identification process.
- ‡ Welfare and Counselling Area.
- ‡ Quiet areas - where non-staff can go for private time.
- ‡ Work Stations – that can accommodate required staff, which might include:
  - Casualty Bureau liaison station.
  - Survivor liaison team – these should encompass a range of skills to meet the needs and requirements of survivors.
  - Police Family Liaison - a team available to deal with any family needs concerning any investigation or recovery process.
  - Representative(s) from the Coroners Service.
  - Local Authority Representatives (Social Services).
  - Victim Support Services, where appropriate.
  - Voluntary Services.
  - Representatives of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and officials from foreign governments where required.
  - Interpreters and personnel qualified in specialist areas of communication.
  - Assistance in respect of individual and diverse requirements - including multi-faith and cultural groups.
  - A staffed Accommodation Desk.

- A staffed Transport Desk.
- Representatives of Airline and Train Operator care teams where applicable.
- JobCentre Plus .
- Legal Advisors and Insurance Company representatives – where applicable.

‡ Adequate restroom facilities to cater for staff and families.

‡ Food and refreshments - with particular efforts made to cater for varied dietary requirements.

‡ Childcare facilities - many families will find it difficult to attend without such facilities being made available to them.

‡ First Aid centre: this will be a very traumatic time for families and sufficient facilities should be made available to deal with any immediate health issues.

#### *Staff Office Space*

‡ Management and administration offices.

‡ Briefing rooms.

‡ Rest rooms.

‡ Private areas with telephones.

10. The choice of premises to be used should be made with great care with special attention paid to whether it will be fit for the purpose. Essentially the core function of any such facility will be to maximise the two-way flow of timely and accurate information between the families and friends, survivors, impacted communities and essential responders.
11. It will have a major part to play in ensuring the confidence of families, survivors, affected communities and the general public in the aftermath of an emergency.

## Chapter 5: Establishing and Operating a FAC

1. In the event of an emergency, a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG - sometimes known as gold command) will be convened at the earliest opportunity in order to establish the strategic and policy framework for the response and recovery effort. Having considered the potential scale of the incident, the SCG will make a decision on opening a Family Assistance Centre (in some circumstances the SCG will task a sub-group to advise it on humanitarian assistance in the round). This decision will draw heavily on the views of the local authority where the FAC would be sited. Where a Regional Civil Contingencies Committee (RCCC) has been established the decision will generally be taken in consultation with it. In emergencies without an identifiable scene, or where an emergency has occurred but has significant domestic implications, local responders should draw selectively and pragmatically on this guidance. Once a decision has been made to open a Centre this must be kept under regular review.
2. Where Family and Friends Reception Centres or other facilities have been established to meet some of the immediate needs after an emergency, the Strategic Co-ordinating Group will need to consider the arrangements to migrate from these temporary facilities to the longer term FAC so that seamless support is provided for families. The SCG will also need to determine who the FAC is for, for example whether it is focused solely on the families or extended to others that have been affected, and the arrangements for communicating its existence to those that may want to use it. Once the Strategic Co-ordinating Group has authorised opening the Family Assistance Centre, a Family Assistance Centre Management Group (FACMG) will be established to manage the Centre. This group should be pre-designated during the planning stage.
3. The FACMG should only open the Family Assistance Centre when it is sufficiently staffed and equipped to fulfil its designated functions. Effective communication with victims, families and the public must be part of the initial strategy to avoid chaos and confusion at the outset.
4. A Family Assistance Centre is highly likely to be of intense interest to the media. The Strategic Co-ordinating Group must develop a strategy to ensure that the Centre is able to conduct its business with the minimum of interference and intrusion from the media; this is vital to protect the privacy of families.
5. However, it is important that the media are kept fully apprised of the Centre and its purpose, while emphasising the need to avoid putting additional stress on bereaved families likely to be already traumatised. This should form an integral part of local responders' media and public communications strategies (see also Chapter 7 of *Emergency Preparedness*).

6. The Chair of the FACMG will have overall responsibility for administration of the Centre. However, each organisation will have responsibility for managing, resourcing and providing administrative support for their own teams.
7. Other posts that need to be considered include:
  - **Initial Reception:** Staffed by police and local authority personnel. This will record the details of all persons initially attending the centre. All those permitted access will be issued with an identity pass that should be displayed at all times. This also applies to uniformed emergency services personnel.
  - **Security:** This will normally be carried out by police in the first instance and, subject to risk assessment, may be handed over to private security. There must be clear, effective communication between security personnel and the initial reception.
  - **FAC Management Secretariat:** This team will be responsible for recording minutes of meetings, preparing briefing papers for the management group and assisting the Chair in co-ordinating the various organisations working at the Centre.

#### Closure of the FAC

8. The decision to open a Family Assistance Centre must be subject to regular review. The SCG will take the decision on closure based upon the advice of the FACMG Chair. The decision to close should be based upon whether or not the FAC has achieved the objectives and purpose agreed at the outset. The possibility of a phased closure or moving the location in due course to smaller premises should be considered. The nature and circumstances of an individual incident should determine whether these are appropriate measures.

## Chapter 6: Community Impact

1. It must be recognised from the outset of an emergency that communities may be affected in different ways. For example, where victims are predominantly from one community there may be heightened fear, anger and the need for targeted support.
2. A community impact assessment is a vital element in both ensuring the most effective and appropriate response to those affected by the incident and in retaining the trust and confidence of the wider community. Where the circumstances are subject to a criminal investigation the police will lead in developing the assessment. For other types of emergencies it may be more appropriate for the assessment to be led by the relevant local authority or agency.
3. Communities can be identified in many ways - geography, shared language, shared culture, shared identity, etc. It will be necessary to analyse the nature of possible impacts:
  - How might the event affect particular communities?
  - How severe will that impact be?
  - How likely is the impact to happen?
4. Once community impacts are established, this will need to be followed by identifying options for addressing each of the impacts (although those that are judged unlikely or minimal may not need to be considered in great detail).
5. Consequences that are judged more likely and have potential for severe impact should be carefully considered. Those in overall command of the management of the emergency will then have to determine the strategy for managing these aspects.
6. The community impact assessment process must be iterative. The effect of measures intended to reduce or remove negative community impact should be constantly monitored. In addition, other changes to the operating environment must be fed into the assessment process so that options for impact management are constantly updated. There will be significant dates and events that will also form a natural occasion for revising an assessment, for example the return of bodies, funerals, anniversaries, etc.
7. Police community involvement branches will be able to advise and assist with compiling community impact assessments. The National Community Tension Team also has experience of completing community impact assessments and can provide advice and guidance.

## **Part 2: Organisations Involved in Humanitarian Assistance**

This section of the guidance provides information about some of the key organisations that are likely to be involved in providing humanitarian assistance and in the establishment and operation of a Family Assistance Centre.

The list is not definitive but is intended to provide a starting point from which local arrangements can be developed. Further details of the roles and responsibilities of key local responders can be found in Chapter 3 of *Emergency Response and Recovery*.

### **Chapter 7: Government Departments**

#### Central Government in the Regions

1. Since April 2003, Regional Resilience Teams (RRTs) have been operational in each of the Government Offices in the nine English Regions.
2. Regional Resilience Forums have been formed to bring together the key players, including central government agencies, the Armed Forces and representatives of local responders including the emergency services and local authorities.
3. The Forums will work to improve the co-ordination of planning at a regional level and improve communications between the centre and the region, and between the region and the local response capability. The Regional Resilience Teams will provide secretariat support for the Regional Resilience Forums.
4. In exceptional circumstances a separate committee, the Regional Civil Contingencies Committee, would be formed to co-ordinate the regional response to an event which completely overwhelmed local responders, or which had an impact over a wide area.
5. These regional structures provide the platform for a regional role in both planning and response in relation to civil contingencies. While the regional tier will provide improved co-ordination and facilitation, the actual delivery of a response to a disruptive event will remain for the most part with local responders (e.g. emergency services, local authorities etc.).
6. Regional Resilience Teams offer local partners an entry point to central government on all aspects of emergency response. They offer an

understanding of both the local context and the machinery of Whitehall, which is vital for local stakeholders.

7. RRTs are part of Government Offices in the Regions, which bring together the activities and interests of ten Government Departments within a single organisation. This makes them well placed to take a cross-departmental approach and to provide a coherent view of delivery.
8. In Wales the Welsh Assembly Government facilitates the work of the Wales Resilience Forum and would provide secretariat to the Wales Civil Contingencies Committee.

#### Department of Health

9. The Department of Health (DH) has overall responsibility for the provision of healthcare in England. On a day to day basis, many of these responsibilities are devolved to the frontline organisations in the NHS. Any reliance on NHS services in plans should be negotiated and agreed locally. In the event of an emergency, the Department has a Major Incident Co-ordination Centre which provides strategic co-ordination for the NHS response.
10. In many cases, the key element of the NHS response would be the treatment of those affected by the incident. However, there is also likely to be a significant element of psychological counselling and support. This will require a joint approach, including health, social and voluntary agencies. With these elements in mind, it would be sensible for there to be health service representation at a Family Assistance Centre from its establishment. However, this should be appropriate to the scale and nature of the emergency.
11. Information and guidance would be made available to ensure that the most appropriate support is available to those involved in the incident. This would include awareness of best practice, of the information required immediately following an incident, and of the appropriate pathways for care, particularly in relation to psychological support.
12. The Welsh Assembly Government has devolved responsibility for healthcare in Wales.

#### The Department for Work and Pensions

13. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides support for people seeking employment and administers social security benefits through its agencies – JobCentre Plus, the Pensions Service and the Disability and Carers service. The Child Support Agency (CSA) deals with child support matters.

14. The Department has a national network of offices. Further details of DWP's services and organisation are available on the Department's website ([www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)).
15. It is likely that some people affected by future emergencies would require advice about benefits or other DWP services. While DWP does issue guidance to other organisations about social security matters, the best way for those affected to get advice is to talk to a member of the Department's staff about their individual circumstances. The Department is willing to provide support at a Family Assistance Centre. The type and extent of that support would depend on the nature and role of the individual centres. Those organising a FAC are advised to contact the nearest DWP local office to discuss the necessary arrangements.

### Foreign & Commonwealth Office

16. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is a network of people working in the UK and in over 200 Embassies and Consulates abroad. Providing high quality services to the public around the world is a top priority for the FCO. This includes helping UK citizens abroad, issuing passports and giving travel advice.
17. British nationals make over 53 million overseas trips each year. The FCO provides a range of information to help British travellers have a safe trip overseas. This can be found at [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) with links for specific country advice, information on how to prepare for a trip and what the FCO can do to help if things go wrong – such as a death overseas.
18. When a consular crisis occurs, such as an evacuation, terrorist incident or natural disaster, The FCO's London Crisis Management Team takes the lead on responding in the best way possible to provide fast and effective consular assistance to British nationals overseas. This response may include sending a Rapid Deployment Team to help, opening the Consular Emergency Unit or evacuating British nationals.
19. The purpose of the FCO's Emergency Response Team is to provide a central contact and information point for all records and data relating to persons who have, or are believed to have been involved in an incident overseas. If it becomes evident the ERT will be unable to cope with the numbers, an agreement has been reached which allows us to switch calls to the Metropolitan Police Central Casualty Bureau, or where necessary an alternate Police Bureau. This will greatly increase the call handling capability for any particular incident.
20. It is normal for a single telephone number (020 7008 0000) to be issued by the ERT within a maximum of two hours of the incident occurring, via the media, for friends, relatives and others with

information, to register their concern and lodge details of person(s) they believe may have been involved. The ERT is comprised of eleven volunteers and has three fundamental tasks:

- (1) Obtain relevant information on the persons involved or potentially involved.
- (2) Process that information.
- (3) Provide accurate information to families, to the Police Casualty Bureau and HM Coroner.

21. The ERT will arrange to:

- Receive enquiries from the general public and record 'missing persons' reports.
- Formulate a comprehensive list of missing persons.
- Inform enquirers (by the most appropriate method) of the condition and location of these persons.

22. The most consistent problem encountered by ERTs has been the high volume of public enquiries, which are inevitably generated by any major emergency.

## **Chapter 8: The Emergency Services and Other Investigative Bodies**

### The Police

#### *Role of the Police Family Liaison Officer*

1. The role of the police Family Liaison Officer (FLO) will fall under the command of the police Senior Identification Manager (SIM). Another key role within the effective delivery of police family liaison is that of the Family Liaison Co-ordinator (FLC). At the earliest possible time after the emergency the SIM will seek to appoint a dedicated FLO to the appropriately identified family<sup>1</sup>.
2. The role of the FLO will be to deliver the family liaison strategy as recorded by the SIM (in connection with this emergency) and the role of the FLC will be to facilitate that delivery by ensuring that the appropriate support is in place for the FLO. This will include operational advice and liaison with other relevant agencies that can assist in the response to families needs.
3. A family liaison strategy will be laid down by the SIM. This should always address issues of identification. Therefore, it is imperative that the FLO gathers information and evidence, as directed from the family, in a compassionate manner – this will contribute to the earliest possible identification and repatriation.
4. It is also essential that the FLO keeps the family fully informed of any developments in the investigation and recovery operation.
5. The FLO will make a record of all contacts with the family, the reasons for the contacts and the outcomes. The intention is to minimise the potential for duplication of effort, thereby ensuring that valuable resources are effectively managed and that families do not suffer from apparent organisational insensitivity.
6. The SIM may direct that an FLO or FLC presence is necessary within the Family Assistance Centre, and the roles and responsibilities of the FLO are covered fully in the ACPO Family Liaison Strategy Document.

### Police Casualty and Information Bureau

#### *Purpose of Casualty Bureau*

7. The Casualty Bureau provides the initial point of contact for the receiving and assessing of information relating to persons believed to be involved in the emergency. Its primary objectives are to:

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of 'what is a family?' is included in Chapter 1, paragraph 6, page 7.

- Inform the investigation process relating to the incident.
  - Trace and identify people involved in the incident.
  - Reconcile missing persons.
  - Collate accurate information in relation to the above for dissemination to appropriate parties.
8. This will involve:
- Receiving enquiries from the general public and recording missing persons reports.
  - Recording details of survivors, evacuees, the injured and deceased, including their whereabouts.
  - Formulating a comprehensive list of missing persons.
  - Collating data to assist in the identification of all persons involved.
  - Liaising with the police ante mortem team.
  - Informing enquirers (by the most appropriate method) of the condition and location of these persons.
9. The most consistent problem encountered by Casualty Bureaux has been the high volume of public enquiries, which are inevitably generated by any major emergency. The local telephone exchange can become jammed, preventing virtually all telephone traffic in the area; this severely restricts the flow of public enquiries and casualty information to the bureau from hospitals, reception centres etc. - thus hampering the identification process.
10. Unsuccessful callers will often call other numbers, for example the hospitals and police stations, tying up emergency services staff and putting further pressure on the local exchange. Many of those who are still unsuccessful may then travel in person to hospitals, police stations or the scene of the incident, creating a major containment problem, and rendering it likely that they may not be contactable by the police.
11. It has been agreed that police forces, in co-operation with other emergency services, provide a common telephone number (where not already in place) for use by members of the public who are seeking to give or obtain information about persons who have, or may have, been involved in a major emergency.

12. Not only will Casualty Bureau provide an information focus for police purposes but it will also reduce:
  - (1) The risk of individual services switchboards becoming jammed thereby seriously impairing their operational capabilities.
  - (2) The number of families and friends who may otherwise travel to the incident site with the hope of getting information.
13. It is normal for a single telephone number to be issued within one or two hours of the incident occurring, via the media, for friends, relatives and others with information, to register their concern and lodge details of person(s) they believe may have been involved.

#### *Distribution of Public Enquiry Telephone Calls*

14. The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO), in consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has developed an enhanced call taking system to enable police forces to link together using the latest technology, to increase the call handling capability for any particular incident.

#### *Missing Person Enquiries*

15. When an operator receives an enquiry call from a member of the public, the likelihood of the person being involved must be assessed. The officer in charge will introduce a grading system, which will address not only the degrees of involvement, but also the nature of the incident.
16. The caller making the enquiry will be advised that they will be informed as soon as possible once information on their enquiry becomes available. They will also be asked to inform the bureau if the person is traced or further information comes to light. This facility should be provided by the use of a separate telephone number.

#### *Other Call Centres*

17. It is important that any arrangements for call centres opened by transport operators and others, to provide information following a major emergency, are closely linked into police casualty bureau procedures. This will assist in minimising the potential for duplication, repetition and adding additional pressure on families calling to report a person missing.
18. Operators of such centres should engage with the police as part of the contingency planning process, including those opening overseas on behalf of UK-based operators (also see UK Airlines: Emergency Passenger Telephone Call Centre).

## Fire and Ambulance Services

19. The main role of the Fire Service at the scene of an emergency is to save life through search and rescue as well as fire fighting and prevention. Primary areas of responsibility for the Ambulance Service at a major emergency are to save life, provide treatment, the stabilisation and care of those injured at the scene as well as providing appropriate transport, medical staff, equipment and resources.
20. The presence of other emergency services at the Family Assistance Centre will be dictated by the nature and circumstances of the incident that has occurred, and it may be that Fire and Ambulance Liaison Teams could assist with family and other external enquiries. The presence also of Hospital Liaison personnel would be advantageous in circumstances where several hospitals are being used.
21. Any premises used for the purpose of Family Assistance would be subject to rigorous inspection under Health and Safety regulations and it is anticipated that a sufficient number of suitably trained personnel would need to be available to deal with any first aid issues.

## Transport Accident Investigators: Air (AAIB), Rail (RAIB) and Marine Accident Investigation Branches (MAIB)

22. Regardless of who is responsible for any investigative process following a major emergency it is accepted in principle that the victims' families will require timely and accurate information about the progress of that enquiry.
23. If there is a police investigation, e.g. following a terrorist attack, this function will be carried out by the dedicated Family Liaison Officer (FLO). The FLO will be working to the strategy set by the police senior investigation officer and senior identification manager, and the highest possible levels of disclosure of information to the families will be their objective. This will obviously be balanced against the need to protect individuals and the integrity of any evidence or intelligence to be used in any future legal proceedings.
24. The statutory investigators mentioned above will also make every effort to ensure that survivors and bereaved families are kept informed of the progress throughout the investigation to a level appropriate to the circumstances of the enquiry and in accordance with individual wishes. The basic principle is to treat survivors and bereaved families with respect and sensitivity throughout the investigation process.
25. The AAIB, MAIB and RAIB will also make available an information leaflet to families. This will normally be delivered through the police FLO. The leaflet will facilitate the development of a two-way communication process between the family and the statutory investigator.

## Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

26. The HSE is a government body which enforces health and safety law for work related activities. Those who run businesses and work activities have a legal responsibility to ensure safe working practices *so far as reasonably practicable* and the HSE makes sure they meet these responsibilities.
27. If an emergency is related to a work activity the HSE will investigate. The investigation is to find out what happened so that similar accidents can be prevented in the future. If health and safety laws have been broken the inspector will take the necessary action to enforce the laws and, if necessary, ensure that remedial work is undertaken. If applicable, the HSE can also prosecute the person or company responsible.
28. Where a work-related incident causes a death, the HSE will work very closely with the police under the terms of a Workplace Death Protocol, with the police taking the lead should there be evidence of possible manslaughter.

## **Chapter 9: Local Authorities (including psychological support)**

1. Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community that they serve.
2. In emergencies local authorities co-ordinate the provision of welfare support to the community and have a leading role in establishing key humanitarian assistance facilities. Local authorities also take on a leading role in the recovery phase of emergencies.
3. The lead departments for the humanitarian response will be Social Welfare and Education Services. Individual Local Authorities will have to decide upon arrangements to carry out this function taking into account the provision of the Children's Act 2004. The appropriate departments should work closely with the various health agencies in all aspects of planning and response.
4. Reports from recent public inquiries have identified a role for support agencies such as Social Services departments. Both the latest edition of the Cabinet Office document *Emergency Response and Recovery* and Follow Up Guidance to the Home Office document *Guidance for Dealing with Fatalities in Emergencies* published in July 2005 reinforce Social Services' role, stating that the local authority, particularly Social Services departments, will need to co-ordinate both the statutory and voluntary sector welfare response.
5. Follow Up *Guidance on Dealing with Fatalities in Emergencies* (July 2005) sets out the mechanics of how local authorities emergency planners and social services departments will need to work closely with health professionals and police family liaison officers where appropriate to ensure the needs of families and the community are properly met.

### Social Services Departments

6. The role of Social Services departments is to plan, co-ordinate, manage and review provisions for meeting the short, medium and longer-term psychological and social needs arising in their communities following a major emergency. As set out above, social services will be a key deliverer in the Emergency Family Support Management Group.

### Family Support

7. To ensure the most appropriate support is made available to individual families, social services professionals should work closely with the police family liaison coordinator to ensure families receive the most appropriate overall psychosocial support.

8. This process, as with other aspects of this guidance, will be greatly assisted by multi-agency training and exercising.
9. In general, local authorities must also train and maintain crisis support teams for the responses to particular personal problems or issues associated with emergencies. Some of these include:
  - Liaison with the Job Centre Plus, and other government benefits agencies on behalf of clients.
  - Ensuring welfare services to 'at risk' clients are continued along with the identification of new clients created by the major emergency.
  - Provision of short- and longer-term accommodation, if required.
  - Working closely with health agencies to ensure a joined-up service for clients.
  - Setting up and running telephone help lines.
  - Information services; drop-in centres.
  - Advising on responding appropriately to short-term psychological distress and arranging longer-term counselling support services where necessary.
  - Practical support; community work; youth work and newsletters.
10. All of these could be co-ordinated at a Family Assistance Centre where established.

### Psychological Support Services

11. Psychological support services role includes providing timely, evidence-based and phase-appropriate mental health services to major emergency survivors, families, responders and organisations. The initial psychological support services should work towards restoring the psychological and social functioning of individuals and communities, limiting the occurrence and severity of adverse impacts of major emergency-related mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder.
12. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines (published March 2005) on post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) state that *“social services will have the overall lead role in the initial*

*psychosocial response but it is vital that mental health professionals liaise with social services and provide supervision and support”<sup>2</sup>.*

13. In terms of early intervention following traumatic incidents, NICE suggests that brief, single-session interventions (traditionally known as debriefings) which focus on the traumatic incident should *not* be routine practice when delivering services for those who have been exposed. NICE recommend that early interventions should be provided in an empathetic manner but formal counselling or psychological intervention is usually inappropriate at this time.
14. However, NICE also recommend *“the good practice of providing general practical and social support and guidance to anyone post-incident”* and that *‘for all people who have been involved in a major disaster, consideration should be given (by those responsible for coordination of the disaster plan) to the routine use of a brief screening instrument for PTSD at one-month post-disaster.’*
15. As with other aspects of major emergency response, it is important that arrangements for any community psychological service provision are integrated into the pre-planning, training and exercising phases of emergency planning and form part of a co-ordinated response. This is important for ensuring that any provision is coherent and consistent with the overall strategy for community social and psychological support.
16. Pre-planning should also take account of selection and vetting procedures for assuring that any major emergency responders providing psychological support services are suitably trained, qualified and experienced in trauma response. They should have received specific training on the nature and role of mental health responses in major emergencies, be familiar with their specific role and responsibilities in relation to the overall response and be provided with regular briefing, and on-site and post-deployment support.
17. In relation to longer-term support, *“evidence-based interventions should be offered to those with specific needs through adequately trained and supervised counsellors/clinicians”* (NICE).

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<sup>2</sup> The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines (March 2005) p. 176

## Chapter 10: Her Majesty's Coroner

1. The role of HM Coroner is clearly defined by statute. Coroners have responsibilities in relation to bodies lying within their district who have met a violent or unnatural death, or a sudden death of unknown cause.
2. The coroner has to determine at an inquest who has died, how and when and where the death came about. This is regardless of whether or not the death occurred within their jurisdiction.
3. The coroner in whose jurisdiction the body is lying will:
  - In consultation with the relevant council and police, initiate the establishment of the emergency mortuary.
  - Authorise the removal of bodies of victims.
  - Appoint a supervising pathologist and authorise the examination of bodies to establish cause of death if necessary.
  - Chair the Identification Commission and take reasonable steps to identify the deceased.
  - Liaise and co-operate with other coroners who may also have bodies of victims arising from the same event.
  - Authorise the release of those bodies - after appropriate examination and documentation is complete – to those lawfully entitled.
  - At all times liaise with the relevant emergency services and government departments.

### The Coroner's Officer

4. The coroner's officer works under direction of HM Coroner and may:
  - Obtain and document relevant information to assist the coroner and the pathologist.
  - Liaise with the supervising pathologist and document all samples taken for toxicology, histology, DNA.
  - Arrange and attend post mortems if post mortems are directed by the coroner.
  - Facilitate visual identification or viewing of the deceased by the bereaved, given the recognised importance of

such viewing for the grieving process. Where possible, viewing should be permitted as soon as the bereaved wish to see the body. Information and support should be made available prior to such viewing.

- Liaise with the police senior identification manager.
- Liaise closely with families and the police family liaison officers and family liaison coordinator, where practicable, on all matters relating to the required processes, and information gathering and giving. All issues arising from the role of the coroner and the coroner's staff in terms of such processes could be raised at a Family Assistance Centre when established.
- Prepare case files for the inquest and undertake all activities in relation to obtaining relevant documents and statements, arranging and participating in court proceedings both at the opening and at the full inquest.
- Prepare all documents required for burial, cremation or removal outside England and Wales, also the interim certificate of the fact of death, and registration documents.
- Liaise with all those involved in the inquest process.

## Chapter 11: Voluntary Sector and Other Support

### Voluntary Sector

1. Voluntary sector involvement in emergency planning and emergency response in the UK is large and diverse, offering a range of skills and expertise. *Emergency Preparedness* gives advice on the capabilities the voluntary organisations can offer, and means of engaging them in the planning phase.
2. The Civil Contingencies Act requires local responders to “have regard” to the capabilities of the voluntary sector when developing emergency plans. Those preparing plans should be aware of the wide spectrum of operational and support activities provided by the voluntary organisations and volunteers.
3. These organisations and volunteers include:
  - Established groups such as the British Red Cross, Women’s Royal Voluntary Services, Salvation Army St John Ambulance and Victim Support providing a range of services.
  - Individual volunteers with particular skills, not necessarily members of an established organisation, such as representatives of the faith communities and interpreters.
  - Organisations that specialise in emotional support, such as CRUSE Bereavement Care and Samaritans .
4. Few of these organisations provide a primary emergency response role. Many can deliver support to statutory authorities.
5. Frequently, these roles are provided to meet the needs of individuals in crisis. It is recognised that they will only function effectively and successfully if individual volunteers have received appropriate training that is recognised by the professional organisations seeking their support.
6. Teams of trained, skilled, organised and supported volunteers from organisations such as the British Red Cross can assist in meeting the practical and emotional needs of individuals in centres that have been set up, or in their homes. The support includes:
  - Emotional support, befriending, listening
  - Assistance with communication
  - First aid and health care including medical and mobility aid equipment (e.g. wheelchairs)

- Transport
  - Clothing, bedding
  - Care of children and pets
  - Refreshments
  - Documentation
  - Sign-posting to, and liaison with, other organisations.
7. Other support which can be provided by the voluntary sector includes:
- ∣ Emergency Medical Multi-lingual Phrasebook.
  - ∣ Communications, whether in the provision of radio and telephone links or interpretation and translation facilities.
  - ∣ Transport and escort to and from temporary accommodation; hospitals; rail stations; mortuaries, etc.

#### Diversity within the Community

8. Any emergency occurring in the United Kingdom is likely to involve a diverse community with different needs based upon a wide range of factors. Some sections of the faith communities already have established emergency plans, and it is important that as far as possible, their specific requirements are integrated into the contingency planning infrastructure and arrangements.
9. Family Assistance Centre planning arrangements must reflect the religious and cultural needs of the bereaved families. Further guidance on individual religious requirements is available in the Home Office document *The Needs of Faith Communities in Major Emergencies: Some Guidelines (2005)*
10. Details of two prominent voluntary organisations that represent the needs of victims are given below.

#### Disaster Action

11. Survivors and bereaved people from UK and overseas emergencies founded the charity Disaster Action in October 1991. All members have direct personal experience of surviving a major trauma such as a disaster and/or being bereaved in such a traumatic event. The organisation consists of an informal national network.
12. A self-help organisation, Disaster Action's aims are to:
- Offer support to those directly affected by major trauma.
  - Raise awareness of the needs of survivors and the bereaved in the short- and longer-term aftermath.

- Help create a safety climate in which disasters are less likely to occur.
13. The organisation is not a front-line responder. Disaster Action seeks to influence policy in relation to the management of the human aspects of an emergency and works in partnership with the Association of Chief Police Officers and central and local government on these issues. As an advocacy group, Disaster Action seeks to represent the interests of survivors and the bereaved in such a way that empowers those directly affected to regain control over events.
  14. Disaster Action facilitates the formation of family support groups – a primary source of self-help for those affected by an emergency. Members take telephone calls from survivors and the bereaved to offer the benefit of similar experience, but are not counsellors and refer people on to other services where appropriate.
  15. Disaster Action members have written a number of leaflets in a series called *When Disaster Strikes*. These are specifically for relatives and friends of those killed or injured in a disaster, and survivors, to guide them through the likely course of events following an emergency, whatever its unique features.
  16. Disaster Action is consulted by police forces, local authority emergency planners, coroners and other professional responders on the human aspects of responding to emergencies, such as family liaison, victim identification and repatriation, access to the disaster site and the inquest process.

#### Victim Support Services

17. Victim Support Services has 30 years experience of working with victims and has demonstrated the value of emotional and practical support to those affected by crime; and at times, emergencies and other large scale incidents, e.g. the Shipman Inquiry, Omagh and the Manchester bombs.
  - ‡ Victim Support Services provide emotional and practical support for those affected by crime; this includes support for relatives of victims of homicide and violent incidents.
  - ‡ The Head of Members' Services will provide operational support and information to the affiliated charities that make up members across England and Wales.
  - ‡ This includes policies and protocols for the recruitment, support and retention of the 12,000 volunteers who provide victim support services to victims of crime. This support may include:

- Providing emotional support through listening to the story the victim has to tell, often repeatedly.
  - Acknowledging the real fears and anxieties emanating from the experience.
  - Supporting distraught relatives and close friends.
  - Providing practical support through acting as a channel of communication with employers, other agencies, and family members, etc.
  - Helping to identify other sources of community support.
  - Assistance with form filling and paperwork.
  - Accompanying to hospital/office appointments.
18. This support is not necessarily time-limited. Victim Support Services also provide assistance with criminal injuries applications and referral on to more specialist support.

## Chapter 12: Transport Operators and other commercial organisations

1. A number of commercial organisations offer family assistance services in response to an emergency. This guidance does not comment on their use or recommend or endorse any particular organisation.
2. The level of services offered vary from establishing and operating all facets of a Family Assistance Centre (particularly in overseas incidents) including the provision of appropriate facilities, lodging, meals, transportation and equipment; to providing counselling services, welfare visits and practical support. Other potential services offered include provision of medical care, interpreting services and international repatriation assistance.
4. In order to ensure a co-ordinated effort by all responding agencies and to minimise duplication of services, it is important that any responding commercial organisation is integrated into the Family Assistance Centre at an appropriate level.

### Transport Operators

5. In the event of a transport emergency some transport operators are likely to wish to contribute to the response to families, survivors and affected communities in the aftermath. This may take the form of financial assistance or some form of logistical aid. It is also important that those affected are provided with advice from the appropriate legal expert<sup>3</sup> in order that they are aware of any implications of accepting financial aid. It is also important that if assistance is offered the families, survivors and affected communities themselves should be able to make an informed decision as to what is best for them at that time.
6. In an emergency where members of a transportation agency have themselves been victims, it is important that they are treated appropriately regardless of any ongoing enquiries.

### UK Airlines

7. UK airlines and helicopter operators have for many years devised, resourced and exercised emergency response plans. Upon notification of an accident, the airlines or helicopter operators will immediately activate these plans. This will involve the assembly of management, logistic and humanitarian care teams as well as the establishment of command centres. In addition, assistance will be requested from

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<sup>3</sup> For further Information see Chapter 13: Legal Advisers.

partner airlines and external service providers will be placed on standby.

8. When in a position to respond, the affected airline/helicopter operator or its local representative will make themselves available to the Strategic Co-ordinating Group. It will place its resources at the disposal of the accident responders. In return the airline/helicopter operator will expect appropriate access to its passengers, employees and their relatives.
9. The airline or helicopter operator will do its best to enhance the facilities available to the local authority. This is particularly relevant to the standard, location and staffing of the Family Assistance Centre. Senior airline management will also be available for liaison with Gold (SCG) and Silver Commands.
10. In addition to its moral responsibility to assist those affected, airlines will offer an interim payment without prejudice to each surviving passenger or their next of kin to ease the financial strains on each family.

#### *Special Assistance Teams*

11. All airline/helicopter operators within the UK have pools of trained care givers. It must be emphasised that they are not professional counsellors, rather that they are trained to provide emotional first aid and immediate relief of basic needs. Obviously the numbers involved vary with the size of organisation. However, extra humanitarian workers can be provided by inter-airline mutual aid agreements as well as by commercial service providers.
12. Owing to the international nature of the airline industry it will be quite common for care workers to be from overseas countries even in the aftermath of a UK domestic accident. These individuals will be of great use as they bring with them both language and cultural expertise.
13. Mutual aid is organised between British airlines/helicopter operators by the United Kingdom Airlines Emergency Planners Group and by alliances and flight sharing agreements elsewhere. Mutual aid and best practice are further facilitated by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and International Air Carrier Association (IACA).

#### *Emergency Passenger Telephone Call Centre*

14. In the event of an incident involving either a UK registered aircraft or an aircraft conveying UK citizens, the airline or helicopter operator may well activate its own emergency passenger information call centre. In the case of offshore helicopter operator operations this would be via the chartering oil company. This call centre may well be located overseas but must have its procedures closely linked to the police

casualty bureau. It must be remembered that the airline will provide the call centre with a passenger name list so that uninvolved callers may be eliminated.

#### *Assistance with Family Assistance Centre*

15. In the event of incident or accident the UK airlines/ helicopter operators will offer assistance in establishing the Family Assistance Centre. (For offshore helicopter operations this will be done via the chartering oil company.) It will be up to the local authority and police whether to accept this offer. If this offer is accepted the airlines/helicopter operators would expect that all relevant government agencies work together from this centre. This arrangement will facilitate maximum co-operation between all responders, avoid duplication and allow the seamless handover of relatives or survivors to which ever agency is going to undertake long-term care.

#### *Internet Dark Site*

16. Many UK airlines/helicopter operators retain a standby emergency Internet site dedicated to providing information to the public and the media in the event of an emergency. This will be regularly updated as the situation develops. The airline will not publish the names of the passengers or next of kin until the permission of the next of kin has been obtained.

#### Foreign Airlines

17. A large number of foreign airlines fly in and out of the UK on a daily basis. The dynamic is such that each carrier may be bound by various transportation acts in place in their countries of origin.
18. Without explaining all the various legislation, it is important that a good relationship between the UK Authorities and the foreign carrier is in place in order that information and assistance can be shared in the event of an emergency involving one of their aircraft.
19. A mutual aid agreement is already in place between most airlines via their alliances e.g. One World and Star Alliance. This allows co-operation between airlines in an area of business where competition is placed to one side. Therefore it is highly likely that in the early stages after an incident, a foreign carrier would be able to call upon the resources of a more locally based airline.
20. Trained staff would back up these resources as soon as possible from the affected airline; they will be despatched as required to assist in the country where the incident has occurred.

21. All the resources mentioned above in UK Airlines are available either directly or indirectly from foreign airlines and support for a Family Assistance Centre is likely.

### National Rail

22. The UK passenger train operators accept a primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of their passengers and see this as extending into care and support for the victims of rail related major emergencies.
23. In conjunction with its members, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) has developed a Code of Practice entitled Joint Industry Provision of Customer Care Following A Major Passenger Rail Accident which sets out a framework through which such care and support is provided.
24. All UK mainland franchised train operating companies, together with Eurostar and Network Rail on behalf of the stations they manage directly, have signed up to this Code.
25. The Code recognises that the response to a major emergency may require a level of resources beyond that available from the train companies directly involved.
26. As a consequence it requires all Train Operators to work together to provide mutual support (in such a way as to be seamless to the customer) in such circumstances.
27. With the aim of ensuring that all aspects of welfare and customer service are dealt with safely, efficiently and compassionately through inter-Train Operating Company co-operation and assistance, the Code details the agreed roles and responsibilities of railway industry parties with regard to the handling of those customers and staff *directly* involved, and friends/relatives enquiring about them.
28. Ultimate responsibility for the welfare and support of customers involved in or affected by the incident lies with the Owing Operator(s) of the trains concerned.
29. However, in many cases the Owing Operator will not be able, at least initially, to meet this responsibility without assistance. This may be because the incident has occurred at a location remote from any significant concentrations of its own staff or because the nature of it is such that the resources needed to meet the requirements of this Code exceed those that it can itself make available.
30. Accordingly, the basic principles enshrined in this Code of Practice are that following any Major Passenger Rail Accident to any operator's train :

- (a) Wherever possible, the Owing Operator will take immediate charge of a joint customer care response involving all train operating companies in the area.
  - (b) Where this is not possible, this role will be provided by the train operating company designated as the Lead Operator. This is determined by which company is logistically best able to provide resources in the immediate aftermath - the identification of the Lead Operator for each rail route is included within the Code. In such cases, the Owing Operator will assume subsequent management of the accident once resources permit, unless an agreement has been reached with the Lead Operator to continue this role.
  - (c) Whichever train operating company has taken charge of the customer care response will assume responsibility for the management and co-ordination of their own resources and those mobilised by other train companies in response to the location, nature and circumstances of the accident
31. Customer care staff will attend at the incident site, hospitals, Survivor Reception Centres, Friends & Relatives Reception Centres, Family Assistance Centres and nominated stations.
  32. The Code requires such staff to be pre-selected and trained to meet the requirements of the Code. The Code strongly advocates (though does not mandate) the setting up of an 'Incident Care Team' within each train operating company, able to respond quickly in the event of a Major Passenger Rail Accident.
  33. Depending on circumstances, practical assistance to be provided includes:
    - Assisting in contacting friends and relatives (e.g. through making mobile phones available).
    - Making travel arrangements (including road and if necessary air as well as rail transport) for friends and relatives.
    - Payment of taxi fares, overseas flights, funerals, etc.
    - Provision of cash, food, clothing, etc.
    - Meeting of friends and relatives and arrangement of hotel accommodation for them.
    - Tracing of luggage and other items of property lost as a result of the incident.
    - Arranging for professional counsellors.

34. Early and close liaison with police FLOs is advocated. Specific longer-term responsibilities of the Owning Operator include where appropriate (and following liaison with the emergency services, local authorities, faith communities, etc.):

- Follow-up hospital or home visits to their staff and customers.
- Placing of flowers at site.
- Setting up of Books of Condolence or Remembrance.
- Sending of letters, flowers and condolences and attendance at funerals.
- Setting up memorial funds.

## Chapter 13: Legal Advisers

1. Any emergency will have legal implications. These can range from issues involving financial assistance to families, survivors and impacted communities; to information about succession rights and death certificates.
2. It is important that the most appropriate informed professional advisor deals with enquiries from families, survivors and affected communities regarding legal issues. Information given must reflect the highest levels of consistency and be bound by an ethical code. The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) can assist in ensuring that affected people get the best possible advice.

### Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL)

3. APIL is a membership organisation with more than 5,000 members in the UK and abroad. Most members are solicitors, with some barristers and academics. The key criterion for joining APIL is that the majority of the member's personal injury work must be conducted on behalf of the claimant.
4. APIL is not a trade union for its members. They lobby for law reform for injured people and offer training to members, via their College of Personal Injury Law (CPIL) with the aim of helping to ensure injured people receive the best possible legal service.
5. Leaflets telling people about CPIL, and how to contact CPIL members, are circulated to main libraries and Citizens Advice Bureaux. The APIL *Safety Watch* website (see details below) includes contact details of members who have reached the 'litigator', 'fellow' or 'senior fellow' level of the college, so injured people can be confident about the level of expertise and experience of the solicitor they wish to instruct.
6. APIL has recently launched a new Consumer Charter, which reassures people about the service they will receive from individual members who have signed up to it. All APIL members are obliged to sign up to a code of conduct.
7. APIL's objectives are as follows:
  - To promote full and just compensation for all types of personal injury.
  - To promote and develop expertise in the practice of personal injury law.
  - To promote wider redress for personal injury in the legal system.

- To campaign for improvements in personal injury law.
  - To promote safety and alert the public to hazards wherever they arise.
  - To provide a communication network for members.
8. APIL members offer independent, legal advice. Injured people are encouraged to read the CPIL leaflet which explains how to find a local solicitor who has achieved a high level of expertise within the college.
  9. These details are also available on [www.consumersafetywatch.com](http://www.consumersafetywatch.com). Injured people should also ask their solicitor if they have signed up to the Consumer Charter.
  10. Claimants can also be reassured that every APIL member has signed up to a code of conduct (and that breaches of the code are enforced).

#### The Law Society

11. The Law Society has produced guidelines to ensure that in the event of a disaster all solicitors who are instructed by potential claimants form themselves into a coherent group.
12. Any solicitor who has been instructed is required to register as soon as possible with the Law Society's Multi-Party Action Information Service (MPAIS) on 0870 606 2522, which then acts as a central point of contact. The role of the MPAIS ends when the registered firms arrange for a lead firm or steering committee to be appointed where the scale of the disaster makes it appropriate.
13. The lead firm or steering group will then co-ordinate the litigation in terms of identification of claims, funding and information. It must consider the establishment of a website as a means of disseminating information. It is also required to undertake active involvement in any related inquiry or inquest and to liaise with other claimant firms about arrangements for any memorial or funeral service if necessary.
14. Contact should be made by those activating the Family Assistance Centre with the Law Society's Multi-Party Action Information Service who will be able to advise on which firms of solicitors are involved. In the longer term links should be made with the lead firm or steering committee – who will be involved with litigation, inquests, any public inquiry and possibly memorial services.

## Annex A: Document Background

1. When ACPO first started to consider this guidance there was a great deal of commitment by responders to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated and for bereaved families, survivors and communities to be dealt with appropriately and with due consideration being given to personal circumstances and requirements, together with religious and cultural needs.
2. Much of this work has resulted in a number of good recommendations and observations on what should be done to ensure an effective response. However, what is still lacking is a delivery mechanism – i.e. a definitive plan.
3. Following the terrorist attacks in New York 2001, comprehensive Family Assistance Centres were set up.
4. Such Centres must be capable of making best use of 21<sup>st</sup> century communications and technology.
5. Previous work must be consolidated and developed into a definitive document that leaves no room for misinterpretation, misunderstanding or uncertainty over roles and responsibilities.
6. Establishing Family Assistance Centres, as developed through the planning process, will be pivotal to the success of the response. To reflect the purpose for which such a centre may be needed, this must be a sophisticated establishment, where bereaved families and survivors can receive information and appropriate support from all the responding agencies, without the need for referral elsewhere.
7. It is appropriate for the energy of responding agencies providing humanitarian assistance to be focused in the FAC. A generic template for such a Centre makes it easier for those responders to ensure consistency of facilities, regardless of where the emergency occurs and whatever its origin.

### Bramshill Meeting, January 2003 and Steering Group

Early in 2003 a meeting took place at the National Crime and Operations Faculty (NCOF), Bramshill, Hampshire, between Disaster Action, ACPO and the NCOF.

The purpose was to discuss how a more integrated approach between agencies could be developed in responding to bereaved families and survivors following major emergency.

In order to progress this, a workshop was held at Bramshill in June 2003, attended by almost 40 separate organisations.

At the conclusion, a steering group was established, chaired by ACPO and consisting of a small number of statutory and voluntary organisations.

The purpose of this group was to oversee the actions arising from the June workshop and consider how to develop a more integrated approach in the future.

It was decided at the first meeting of the steering group that there is a requirement to develop a national multi-agency template as a means to deliver consistency and agreement across the board in responding to bereaved families and survivors.

This steering group, following wide consultation with other appropriate organisations, has developed this document.

### Bramshill Workshop June 2003

A multi-agency workshop was held at the police National Crime and Operations Faculty, Bramshill, Hampshire on 6-7 June 2003.

Its purpose was to consider the contribution each organisation can make to improve the overall service to families and communities throughout each phase of the response to a major emergency.

In addition, it had a further objective of identifying the actions necessary to move towards a common integrated approach to a successful multi-agency response to families and communities in the short, medium and long-term aftermath of a major emergency.

The main findings at the conclusion of this event were:

- The need to establish a steering group to look, amongst other issues, at family liaison in the context of major emergencies as opposed to family liaison in other scenarios.
- The need for guidance on 'the human aspects' to supplement the Civil Contingencies Bill.
- The requirement to develop a code of confidentiality.
- The need to assess what is available by way of support within local authorities across the country.
- There should be a list of airlines and their family assistance capability, including call centres.
- There should be clear links and co-ordination between operators and Network Rail.
- The road industry need to work on a programme of preparation and support, considering lessons learnt from the air industry.
- The Marine Accident Investigation Branch is to continue briefing families within the investigative process.
- The Civil Contingencies Secretariat should ensure that the needs of families receive the necessary profile in resilience planning, with the various roles and responsibilities being identified, recognised and articulated.
- The voluntary sector needs to be part of the steering group and become more relevant in the overall structure.

## Annex B: Existing Guidance, Legislation and Recommendations

This document does not seek to replace existing work already completed in this area of major emergency response; in particular the Cabinet Office's *Emergency Preparedness* and *Emergency Response and Recovery* and the Home Office's *Guidance on Dealing with Fatalities in Emergencies*.

Two other important documents to read in conjunction:

- *The needs of faith communities in major emergencies: some guidelines*, which includes specific advice on responding to the needs of various religious faiths following a major emergency, together with recommendations for developing a more integrated approach.
- *ACPO Family Liaison Strategy*: The role of the police Family Liaison Officer is clearly outlined in the Association of Chief Police Officers' *Family Liaison Strategy* – their role is one of an investigator, including assisting with the identification aspects following a mass fatality incident.

The Emergency Planning Society published *Responding to Major Emergency: the Human Aspects* in 1998. This guidance document is a distillation of comments and observations by delegates from a wide range of professional and personal backgrounds that attended workshops at the Emergency Planning College, Easingwold in 1996 and 1997.

*Major Disasters: Planning for a Caring Response* was published in 1990. This comprehensive work, chaired by Mr A.J. Allen, Chief Executive of Berkshire County Council, and sponsored by the Department of Health, makes a significant number of specific recommendations, identifying actions to establish good practice.

Common threads throughout these documents include the:

- ◆ Recognition of high trauma and stress that bereaved families and survivors will experience.
- ◆ Need for a wide range of organisations to have appropriate plans in place to provide an appropriate response.
- ◆ Requirement to ensure staff are adequately trained and engage in suitable exercises.

## Existing Legislation and Guidance

The Civil Contingencies Act establishes a generic legislative framework for emergency planning in the United Kingdom, establishing a clear set of roles and responsibilities for local responders. There is currently no legislation within the UK that deals specifically with humanitarian assistance following an emergency. Certain legislation facilitates the development of robust plans to respond to this issue, in particular the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1976.

## Public Inquiries

A number of public inquiry reports have also had a major impact on the response by a wide range of agencies in respect of the humanitarian aspects of a major emergency or other critical incident. These include:

- ◆ 1999 report by Sir William MacPherson of Cluny, into the murder of Stephen Lawrence.
- ◆ 2000 report into the Ladbroke Grove rail major emergency by Lord Cullen.
- ◆ 2001 report into the identification of victims following major transport accidents, by Lord Justice Clarke.

Common themes in the reports include the need for effective family liaison, recognising the need for openness when dealing with bereaved families and survivors, and the development of joint protocols between various agencies to ensure an appropriate, effective response.

Royal Liverpool Children's Inquiry (Alder Hay), published in 2001, also makes a number of recommendations impacting on how authorities should deal with families following unexpected death, with much emphasis on suitable plans, including those for serious incidents, and for openness and effective communication with families.

The recommendations are specifically targeted at NHS Chief Executives and NHS Trusts, clinicians, coroners and pathologists. The report also deals specifically with post mortems, organ/tissue retention and child death.

## Annex C: Other Related Documents

Lord Justice Clarke's *Public Inquiry report into the Marchioness Disaster* Recommendations 19,20, 22 and 28.

*Emergency Preparedness*, Cabinet Office, 2005. This is statutory guidance under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

*Emergency Response and Recovery*, Cabinet Office, 2005.

Allen A.J. (1991) *Disasters: Planning for a Caring Response* – Report of the Disasters Working Party, HMSO London

British Psychological Society (2002) *Psychological Debriefing* – Report of Professional Practice Board Working Party BPS, Leicester

Emergency Planning Society (1998) *Responding to Disaster: The Human Aspects* Emergency Planning Society

Family Support Workers Group - *When Disaster Strikes: Supporting the Victims of Trauma and Loss* (1998), Stirling Council, Stirling

Institute for Employment Studies (1998) *From Accidents to Assaults: How organisational responses to traumatic incidents can prevent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the workplace* HSE Contract Research Report 195/1998 HMSO Norwich

Newburn T. (1993) *Making a Difference? Social Work after Hillsborough* National Institute for Social Work, London

Police Research Unit & Occupational Health Unit (2000) *Managing Post-Incident Reactions in the Police Service* Contract Research Report 290/2000 HMSO Norwich

## Annex D: Useful Websites

Air Accident Investigation Branch

<http://www.dft.gov.uk>

Association of Chief Police Officers

<http://www.acpo.police.uk>

Ambulance Service Association

<http://www.asa.uk.net>

Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies On a Local Level (APELL)

<http://www.uneptie.org/pc/apell/disasters/lists/technological.html>

BASICS

<http://www.basics.freemove.co.uk/basics/home.htm>

BBC Connecting in a Crisis

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/connectinginacrisis/index.shtml>

Benfield Hazard Research Centre

<http://www.benfieldhrc.org>

Blake Emergency Services

<http://www.blakeemergency.com>

Blue Shield (National Preservation Office)

<http://www.bl.uk/services/npo/npo.html>

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

<http://www.bacp.co.uk>

British Civil Defence

<http://www.britishcivildefence.org>

British Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org.uk>

British Standards Institution

<http://www.bsi-global.com>

British Transport Police

<http://www.btp.police.uk>

Cabinet Office

<http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk>

Central Office of Information

<http://www.coi.gov.uk>

Chamber of British Shipping

<http://www.british-shipping.org>

Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association

<http://www.cacfoa.org.uk>

Civil Contingencies Secretariat

<http://www.ukresilience.info>

Department of Health

<http://www.dh.gov.uk>

Department for Transport

<http://www.dft.gov.uk>

Directgov

<http://www.direct.gov.uk>

Disaster Action

<http://www.disasteraction.org>

Disaster Central

<http://www.disaster-central.com>

Disaster Database (BASICS)

<http://www.basedn.freemove.co.uk>

Disaster & Emergency Management On The Internet

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/por/disaster.htm>

Disaster Help (FEMA)

<http://disasterhelp.gov>

Disaster Insurance Information

<http://www.disasterinformation.org/stats.htm>

Disaster Research Center, Delaware University

<http://www.udel.edu/DRC>

Disaster Survivor Support

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DisasterSurvivorSupport>

Disaster Timeline

<http://www.disaster-timeline.com>

Emergency Planning College  
<http://www.epcollege.gov.uk>

Emergency Planning Society  
<http://www.emergplansoc.org.uk>

Environment Agency  
<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

European Commission, Civil Protection  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/index.htm>

European Crisis Management Academy  
<http://www.ecm-academy.nl>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (USA)  
<http://www.fema.gov>

Federal Emergency Management Agency Library  
<http://www.lrc.fema.gov>

Federation Nationale de Protection Civile (France)  
<http://www.protection-civile.org>

Fire Service College  
<http://www.fireservicecollege.ac.uk>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
<http://www.fco.gov.uk>

Gender and Disaster Network  
[http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography\\_research/gdn](http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/geography_research/gdn)

Government News Network  
<http://www.gnn.gov.uk>

Health Protection Agency  
<http://www.hpa.org.uk>

Health and Safety Commission (Consultative Documents)  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult>

Health & Safety Executive  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

Home Office  
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>

Home Office (Terrorism)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism>

House of Commons

[http://www.parliament.uk/about\\_commons/about\\_commons.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/about_commons/about_commons.cfm)

HSE Books

<http://www.hsebooks.co.uk/homepage.html>

HSE Local Authority Unit

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau>

Institute of Civil Defence and Disaster Studies

<http://www.icdds.org>

International Air Transport Association

<http://www.iata.org>

International Disaster Information Centre

<http://www.disaster.net>

International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters

<http://www.usc.edu/schools/sppd/ijmed>

International Police Association

<http://www.ipa-iac.org>

Internet Journal of Rescue and Disaster Medicine

<http://www.ispub.com/>

Interpol

<http://www.interpol.int>

Kenyon International Emergency Services

<http://www.kenyoninternational.com>

Legislation

[http://www.hms.gov.uk/legislation/about\\_legislation.htm](http://www.hms.gov.uk/legislation/about_legislation.htm)

Local Authorities Research & Intelligence Association

<http://www.laria.gov.uk>

Local Government Association

<http://www.lga.gov.uk>

London Emergency Services Liaison Panel

<http://www.leslp.gov.uk>

Major airline disasters  
<http://dnausers.d-n-a.net/dnetGOjg/Disasters.htm>

Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
<http://www.mcga.gov.uk>

Medecins Sans Frontières  
<http://www.msf.org>

Meteorological Office  
<http://www.meto.gov.uk>

National Homeland Security Knowledgebase  
<http://www.twotigersonline.com/resources.html>

National Statistics  
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

Northern Ireland, Central Emergency Planning Unit  
<http://cepu.nics.gov.uk/>

United Kingdom Airlines Emergency Planning Group  
<http://www.ukaepg.org>

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
<http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

Police  
<http://www.police.uk>

Public Sector Benchmarking Service  
<http://members.benchmarking.gov.uk>

Railway Inspectorate  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/railways>

Ready Gov (US)  
<http://www.ready.gov>

RedR  
<http://www.redr.org>

Rowland Brothers International  
<http://www.rowlandbrothersinternational.co.uk>

Stationery Office (TSO)  
<http://www.tso-online.co.uk>

Swiss Reinsurance  
<http://www.swissre.com>

Survive: The Business Continuity Group

<http://www.survive.com>

UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs

<http://www.reliefweb.int>

UK Parliament, Assemblies & HMSO

<http://www.hmso.gov.uk>

UK Psychotraumatology

<http://www.uktrauma.org.uk>

Virtual Library

<http://www.vlib.org.uk>

World Institute for Disaster Risk Management

<http://www.drmonline.net>