UK Government

Prepare. Respond. Recover.

Crisis Communications Operating Model

Foreword

In 2023, volatility and uncertainty are set to be the new normal. In recent years, the word "permacrisis" has entered our vocabulary to describe the sense that the world is being struck by an extended period of instability and successive unforeseen events - from a global pandemic, to a large-scale land war on the continent of Europe, to the highest inflation seen in the UK for almost 50 years.

As government communicators, we can be proud of the vital service we have provided during these times of crisis. We have shown how quality communication can ensure the public has access to accurate information, communicate the actions and behaviours they can adopt to protect themselves and others, and explain what the government is doing and why.

While each crisis and emergency requires a unique response, what is common is that these events are defined by the need for rapid decision making and the ability to quickly recognise the requirements of the situation, and flex existing resources, capabilities, structures and staff to meet those requirements. That's why I'm pleased to publish this paper clarifying how the communication function will structure itself, and allocate roles and responsibilities to prepare, respond and recover from crisis situations. It builds on the excellent work in recent years to create a comprehensive bank of resources to train crisis comms professionals, including the Emergency Planning Framework (PRIMER) and Crisis Communication: A Behavioural Approach. This operating model does this by:

Clarifying roles and responsibilities - Defines the role of Directors of Communication (DoCs) and GCS during a crisis, and how both will report to No10

Embed comms into crisis management & preparedness structures - Define how we will support the Resilience Directorate and COBR Unit - including through contingency planning

Grow our community and help us work together - Create a community of over 100 cross-government crisis communicators, who can be surged to where they are needed most during a crisis

Remove operational barriers - Update the central procurement, finance and logistics arrangements to guarantee they are fit for purpose

Build our crisis comms expertise - Review existing L&D resources - updating where required and capturing recent learnings

Keep up to date - Create a living structure, that can be flexed to learnings as we inevitably deal with more crises situations

We do not know what or when the next crisis will be - but what we do know is, there will be one. Communications will have a vital role to play in this next crisis, as it has in all previous crises. This paper sets out what we need to do in order to be ready.

Simon Baugh

Chief Executive, Government Communication

Government Communication Service (GCS) Crisis Communication Strategy

The GCS Emergency Planning Framework (2018) outlines how we plan, develop and implement an effective response during a crisis. The resource focuses on 6 critical stages which make up a crisis communications response, known as PRIMER.

PRIMER stands for:

Plan - It is essential to have a communications contingency plan in place, regularly update it and know where it is for when it matters.

Rehearse - A crisis response works best if tested in advance, and doing this with partners can ensure we build important relationships in calmer times.

Implement - Getting it right from the start can be critical – it's important to set up a crisis response in the right way to deliver from the get go.

Maintain - Crisis scenarios can be a test of stamina and character – it's important to maintain quality while supporting your team.

Evaluate - It is crucial to measure what's getting through and what's not – we use a comprehensive GCS Evaluation Framework 2.0 to measure impact in real time and refine our approach.

Recover - Communication has an important role in rebuilding trust and confidence – this includes capturing learnings, and updating our structures.

Executive Summary

1. The UK Central Government Response Concept of Operations (2013) recognises the importance of good communication during a crisis, identifying it as a fundamental characteristic of effective emergency response. As outlined in the Government Communication Service's recent framework Crisis Communication: A Behavioural Approach (2022), during a crisis it is critical to act quickly to provide accurate information to the public and key stakeholders about what is known, the steps the government is taking and why, and to tell the public what they should do and when they can expect more information.
2. In an age of fast moving information, there is a real risk that inaccurate information will spread quickly during an emergency situation. This can jeopardise the government's efforts to manage the immediate emergency and deal with its lasting consequences. It is therefore critical that communication professionals are part of decision making at every stage of the planning and response process.
3. The 2022-25 Government Communication Service (GCS) Strategy commits to formalising the communication function's crisis structures, roles and responsibilities. This will ensure we have a formal process to guarantee the right voices are part of crisis decision making, and that recent learnings are embedded into our responses. This paper complements existing resources available to GCS members on how to deliver crisis communication, in addition to the recent publication of the UK Government Resilience Framework (December 2022) and the creation of the Resilience Directorate within the Cabinet Office's Economic and Domestic Secretariat (EDS). In addition, it will enable communications to be fully aligned with the COBR Unit, which leads the UK Government's response to acute emergencies and drives further professionalisation of emergency management in government.
4. This paper sets out a series of commitments which will empower the communication function to support the UK Government's crisis management infrastructure and No10 during a crisis response. Summarised in Diagram 1, these commitments outline how we will support the three main phases of emergency management: preparation (pre-planning and building resilience); response (management or mitigation of an immediate risk or stopping things getting worse); and recovery (the activity of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating structures).
5. At its core, it commits to creating a cross-government body of crisis communication professionals coordinated by a central GCS Crisis Team. This infrastructure will help departments prepare for the next crisis by Strengthening our Resilience, respond to crisis by working to a shared Concept of Operation, and Build Capability during the recovery phase across our teams.

Prepare → **Emergency Event** → **Respond** → **Stand down response** → **Recover**

The **GCS Crisis Team** will support delivery of the **Resilience Framework** by:

- Convening a cross-government resilience comms working group to coordinate departmental and local resilience campaigns (including working closely with DLUHC to give advice to local authorities and Local Resilience Forums). This will support the Resilience Framework's fundamental objective of creating a whole of society approach to crisis preparedness and response.
- Coordinate, scrutinise and give central oversight to Lead Government Departments (LGDs) communication contingency plans and input into resilience exercises.
- Create horizon Scans and briefings for Directors of Communication (DoCs) on emerging risks, working closely with the COBR Unit.
- Review and update central procurement arrangements to guarantee they are fit for purpose in the event of a crisis & remove operational barriers.

Level 1: Response to a significant emergency

Scenario: Limited or localised emergency that requires central government response.
Examples: Severe weather-related problems, rail accidents, or outbreaks of avian flu.
Process: COBR likely not convened. LGD DoC take lead on comms, with sign off and oversight from No10 DoC.
People: GCS Crisis Team to provide expert support to LGD (if required) and raise any concurrent risks to No10.
Product: Comms plan, ministerial Q&A, rolling briefing note

Level 2: Response to a serious emergency

Scenario: Emergency with widespread and/or prolonged impact. Risks and consequences owned by a number of government departments, requiring sustained central government coordination.
Example: Terrorist attack, widespread industrial action, major emergency overseas.
Process: SMG/COBR convened. No10 DoC to provide strategic and political direction, and clear all comms lines. CO DoC leading XWH tactical coordination and response.
People: GCS Crisis Team to support No10, CO with XWH coordination and alignment with COBR Unit and Resilience Directorate. Surge support may be requested by DoCs as required.
Product: XWH comms playbook, comms strategy and narrative, ministerial briefing pack, polling and insights, sentiment tracking and analysis and regular briefings to No10.

Level 3: Response to a catastrophic emergency

Scenario: An emergency has occurred which reaches deeply into all parts of the economy and society, and requires leadership from all parts of government.
Example: Deadly pandemic, a conventional attack on the UK, a biological attack, or nationwide electricity failure.
Process: COBR convened. No10 DoC leads the crisis communications response. Chief Executive, GCS takes responsibility for the tactical and operational coordination and delivery of cross-government communications.
People: GCS and CO comms transforms into a cross-government crisis communication hub supporting departmental delivery and allocating resources to departments as required.
Product: Comprehensive communications approach, supported by a national marketing campaign, audience insights & polling, press, stakeholder engagement and digital products.

The **GCS Crisis Team** will build the capability of government to deliver quality communication during a crisis by:

- Creation of crisis comms community of 100 members. The community will support resilience and response (across all three levels), and in the most serious cases be surged to support a departmental or central response. A comprehensive crisis comms L&D programme will be offered to members, to professionalise the network.
- Updated PRIMER framework, taking account of the latest learnings
- Update GCS crisis comms digital course
- Masterclasses, visits & events for community
- Support **Resilience Directorate** exercises and **COBR Unit's** Crisis Management Excellence Programme.

DIAGRAM ONE

Prepare
Strengthening our resilience

6. The UK Government Resilience Framework (2022) defines 'resilience' as the ability to withstand or quickly recover from a difficult situation, and to 'get ahead' of those risks and tackle challenges before they manifest. Led by the Resilience Directorate in the Cabinet Office, the resilience programme is building structures across government which can create a shared understanding of the risks, develop contingency plans, and run exercises to ensure central government departments are prepared for possible crisis situations.

7. Furthermore, the Resilience Framework recognises that true resilience is a 'whole of society' endeavour. This means that central government cannot prevent and respond to some of the most serious emergencies alone, but rather requires the whole of the system on a local, community and individual level to act. To achieve this, the government must have the right structures in place to communicate clearly to businesses, local organisations, voluntary organisations, community groups, and the public, both in preparation for and during a potential emergency or crisis.

8. An approach setting out how the government will communicate to the public and stakeholders is thus a fundamental element of how we build resilience. Not only must communication experts be integrated into the government's contingency planning process, but also how the government builds resilience across society. It is notable that good practice in this area - informing people in advance of a potential emergency situation - can sometimes severely reduce the likelihood and impacts of a crisis. It is therefore essential that GCS is aligned to the work of the new Resilience Directorate, and able to coordinate input from across government at an appropriate pace.

9. This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of a new crisis communications resilience structure to ensure the communication profession helps develop and deliver the wider resilience programme.

The GCS Crisis Team

10. To ensure communication professionals have appropriate input into emerging plans and exercises, and to drive forward wider resilience building communications, the GCS Crisis Team will be tasked with working closely with the Resilience Directorate and the COBR Unit. The team will have oversight of the various strands of resilience work going on across communications, ensuring it is aligned and supports the aims of the wider resilience programme. The team will also work closely with the National Security Communications Team (NSCT), which oversees contingency planning on national security and foreign policy issues. This team will ensure a GCS representative joins the NSC(R)s and the Resilience Steering Group.

11. Another critical element of the new structure will be ensuring ownership of risk and crisis roles are clear within and between departments. Crisis communication champions will be appointed in each government department to coordinate and deliver the work of the resilience programme. This group will be appointed by Directors of Communication (DoCs) and act as the point of contact for crisis planning and preparation and help maintain information flows across government. This group will integrate into the pre-existing crisis cadres on the policy and operations side. The GCS Crisis Team will regularly convene meetings of the group to review emerging risks and plans, and necessary resilience communications.

Removing operational barriers

12. GCS Crisis team will review and update central procurement arrangements to guarantee they are fit for purpose in the event of a crisis, and ensure Other Government Departments (OGDs) can draw on contracts if required.

13. In addition, the team will identify and remove operational barriers present in the Cabinet Office to ensure effective delivery of the operational model,(this includes getting agreements in advance on access to IT, buildings, telephones, rooms/office spaces).

Risk ownership and contingency planning

14. The National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) is the government's principal tool for identifying and assessing acute risks in the medium-to-long term. It covers the most significant malicious and non-malicious risks facing the UK over the next 2-5 years.

15. The UK Government employs a Lead Government Department (LGD) model. This model ensures each risk is owned by a single government department or arms length body (although LGDs must work with a range of departments and regulators to make sure they are well understood and managed across the risk lifecycle). Additional coordination and support comes from the Cabinet Office with strategic and political direction from No10, particularly when the impact of a risk crosses sectors, is particularly geographically widespread, or poses significant strategic challenges.

16. Given the essential role that communication plays in responding to a crisis, communication colleagues must be closely integrated with policy and operation colleagues throughout the contingency planning process. It is the LGD's comms team responsibility to build contingency plans for the risks they own and lead on the coordination of exercises to play out the planned response. This will take the form of a robust communication plan covering all parts of the crisis, and participation in resilience planning exercises by the LGD. The GCS Crisis Team and NSCT (when the risk is national security or foreign policy related) may offer additional support to the LGD.

17. Many LGDs will already have robust, and well tested communication contingency plans in place for the risks they own. However, the GCS Crisis Team will work with LGDs and the Resilience Directorate to identify where this is not the case, and commission the required input.

Information flows and briefings

18. A joint understanding of risk is a key principle of the UK's Joint Doctrine: the interoperability framework (JESIP).

19. The GCS Crisis Team will ensure communication professionals across Departments and Devolved Administrations are aware of and have a shared understanding of emerging risks. This will enable more effective information flows across communications teams and agreement on appropriate mitigation and response measures.

20. While the NSRA remains the UK's core centralised risk assessment tool, it is not the only government product that monitors civil contingencies risks. The COBR Unit's Forward Look product sets out the key risks expected across the next six months, and, in addition, the unit maintains a weekly Overwatch Register, which assesses the likelihood and impact of risks in the next six weeks.

21. The GCS Crisis Team will be responsible for monitoring these horizon scanning products and adding analysis from a communication perspective, in addition to considering where further communications support may be required for risks of current concern. This will be translated into a new regular comms horizon scan product which will be sent to No10 and DoCs, and will be presented (when appropriate) at monthly DoCs meetings.

Building resilience amongst wider audiences

22. At the core of the new Resilience Framework are the three fundamental principles: that we need a shared understanding of the risks we face; that we must focus on prevention and preparation; and that resilience requires a whole of society approach. The framework commits to exploring ways to make our communications around potential risks personalised, and more relevant, actionable and easily accessible. The comms community commits to supporting these efforts.

Respond

Crisis comms Concept of Operations

23. The Civil Contingencies Committee (COBR) is the primary crisis management function of the UK Government. It leads the UK Government's response to acute emergencies, coordinating different departments and agencies. The COBR Unit sits within the Cabinet Office's National Security Secretariat.

24. No10 Comms will give strategic and political direction in all crisis situations, working with LGD DoCs and the Central GCS Team as per the categories below.

25. It is vital that communication professionals are able to support and advise ministers and officials in all emergency scenarios. Thus, GCS must ensure communications are adequately aligned with the work of the COBR Unit and LGDs comms teams understand their roles and responsibilities. This section of the operating model outlines how GCS will ensure it is able to work closely with the COBR Unit to deliver a tailored response to emerging crises, and support both a departmental and No10 led crisis comms response.

Levels of Emergencies

26. Not all crises impacting the UK require a central government response; some require only a local response. The majority of these kinds of emergencies will either be managed by local blue light responders and/or Local Resilience Forums. In these cases GCS will not be required to formally stand up a crisis communication response but may provide support to LGDs who own the risk materialising.

27. The UK Central Government Emergency Response CONOPs outlines three levels of emergency response which are likely to require direct central government engagement. GCS' crisis comms playbook will mirror the CONOPs, with three levels of response dependent on the severity of the situation, outlined below. The level of response stood up will be determined both by the advice from the COBR Unit and the judgement of DoCs and the Chief Executive of Government Communications.

Level 1: Response to a significant emergency

Scenario: An emergency has occurred that requires a response from a LGD to work alongside the emergency services, local authorities, other government departments and local organisations. The vast majority of emergencies and crises will require this level of response. Example: Examples of emergencies on this scale include most severe weather-related problems, such as a localised flood, rail accidents, or outbreaks of avian flu.

Process: COBR will likely not be convened in this scenario. It is likely that the LGD will already have taken the lead on responding, however, if necessary, GCS will work with COBR to confirm the LGD, communication responsibilities, and scope out any required additional support. The LGD will take the lead on coordination where necessary with other government departments. The LGD Director of Communication will attend Small Ministerial Groups (SMGs), supporting their Ministers who will likely chair these meetings. LGDs DoCs will also be expected to coordinate with relevant cross-government policy and operation officials and provide regular updates to No10 for sign off and strategic direction.

People: The LGD Director of Communication will be the most senior communication official responsible for coordinating and delivering the response to the crisis. The GCS Crisis Team will support the LGD comms team as and when required, if necessary liaising between COBR Unit and LGD comms team. The GCS Crisis Team will be responsible for highlighting any potential and concurrent risks that will require additional comms support. They will also be responsible for updating No10 DoC on the situation as it develops.

Level 2: Response to a serious emergency

Scenario: An emergency has occurred that threatens a wide and/or prolonged impact. The risk and consequences are owned and managed by a number of government departments, requiring a sustained central government coordination effort and support from a number of departments and agencies. The threshold for this response is high, with the expectation that these events will be rare.

Example: Examples of an emergency at this level could be a terrorist attack, widespread industrial action, widespread and prolonged loss of essential services, a serious outbreak of animal disease, or a major emergency overseas with a significant effect on UK nationals or interests.

Process: COBR will likely be convened in this scenario. By default, the associated DoC of the Minister and/or Official who chairs COBR will take the lead on immediate response to the crisis with the GCS Crisis Team (and/or appropriate NSCT) assisting to coordinate cross-government input. In the most serious cases, COBR is likely to be by a Cabinet Office Minister, including up to the Prime Minister. In such cases, No10 DoC will provide strategic and political direction, and clear all comms lines. CO DoC will take the lead on XWH tactical coordination and response. No10 DoC/ CO DoC will attend COBR and Small Ministerial Group (SMGs).

People: The appointed DoC will be expected to use their team to resource the crisis. This means, in the most serious cases, CO Comms and/or NSCT (on national security issues) will take direction from No10 on the response. It is likely that additional resources will be required to support either CO Comms and/or NSCT. In such cases, GCS may provide a surge structure to support (an indicative structure is outlined in Diagram 2). The response will also be supported by other government departments (OGDs) who will be expected to resource their teams accordingly, with surge support provided to DoCs as required.

Level 3: Response to a catastrophic emergency

Scenario: An emergency has occurred that touches upon all parts of the economy and society, and requires leadership from Ministers across Government, including the Prime Minister. This event would have a dramatic and substantial impact on the UK's safety, security, public services, and/or critical systems. The threshold for this response is exceptionally rare, with only the most serious emergencies requiring this level of response.

Example: Examples of this kind of emergency could include a deadly pandemic spreading in the UK, a conventional attack on the UK, a biological attack, or nationwide electricity failure.

Process: COBR will be convened in this scenario. No10 Doc leads the crisis communications response. Chief Executive GCS takes responsibility for the tactical and operational coordination and delivery of cross-government communications.

People: GCS and CO comms transforms into a cross-government crisis communication hub supporting departmental delivery and allocating resources to departments as required.

Overarching principles

28. No10 to provide overarching strategic and political direction, and set their level of engagement. Chief Executive GCS will take on responsibility for operational and tactical delivery for XWH communication response.
29. Wherever possible, crisis management responsibilities should sit with a LGD and not be taken into the Cabinet Office. This includes coordination with other departments, where necessary.
30. Crises by their nature can not be anticipated exactly. It is also possible that key risks if realised would have a direct impact on some or all comms levers and resources. The response structures outlined above will therefore need to be flexible in order to adapt to the circumstances at the time while applying good practice, including lessons from previous emergencies.
31. Communication professionals must rely on subject matter expertise in order to offer appropriate comms advice during crisis situations. These networks, contacts and relationships must be cultivated (in part by the GCS Crisis team) in preparation for a crisis event. Specific skills, knowledge and experience (in addition to clearances) will also be required to respond to some crisis situations.
32. Given the demands of any crisis response and the impact on a societal and at times personal level, a fundamental principle will be ensuring the wellbeing and resilience of our people. The GCS crisis team will work with COBR, the Resilience Directorate and relevant HR teams to embed a people first approach to crisis response. This will include facilitating training on wellbeing and mental health, building in best practice and lessons learned from departments responding to emergency situations on a frequent basis, and ensuring support services are made available to staff in crisis situations.
33. Basic principles for joint working should be applied including identifying priorities, resources, capabilities, battle rhythms and limitations for an effective response.

Moving into the recovery phase

34. The recovery phase formally starts once the crisis situation has been stabilised. Recovery may be carried out at the local, regional, and/or national UK level. In many cases, the LGD for the response phase is different from the recovery phase reflecting the changing nature of the challenge. As with the owner of the response phase, COBR Unit will appoint a LGD for recovery.
35. Once formally in the recovery phase (as determined by COBR Unit), GCS Crisis Comms team will work with the response LGD, NSCT and/or Cabinet Office Comms to handover responsibility for the communication handling to the recovery LGD.
36. Recent emergency and crisis response structures have lasted a prolonged period (long after the initial emergency event), with the core communication structures created to respond both to COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine lasting well over a year each. Following the immediate response to a crisis, the GCS Crisis Team will liaise with COBR to advise DoCs on what level of response is required. It is anticipated that, as time goes on, the responsibility for responding to the lasting consequences of an emergency event will increasingly sit with LGDs and any central response will be stood down.

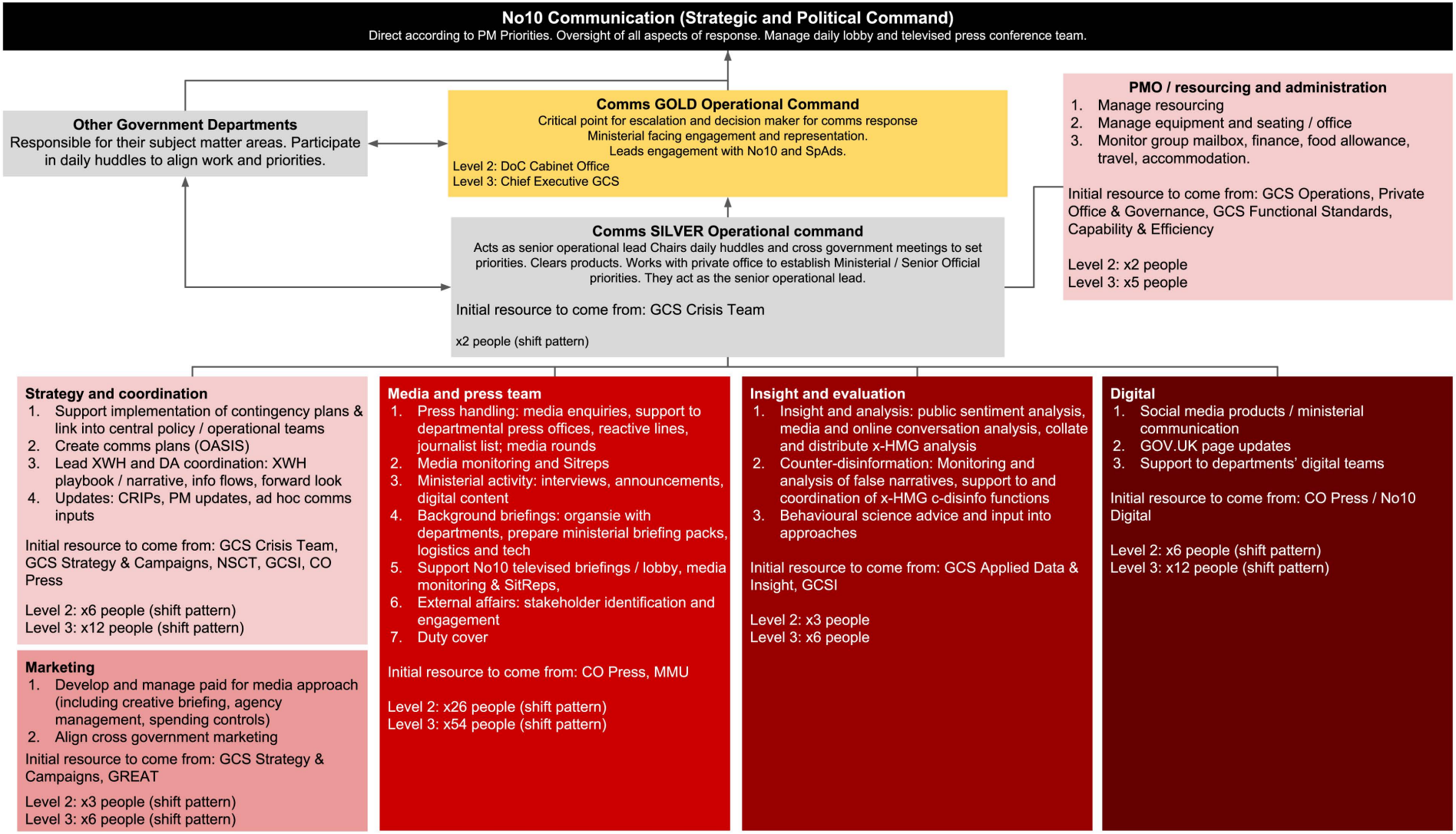
No10 Communication (Strategic and Political Command)
Direct according to PM Priorities. Oversight of all aspects of response. Manage daily lobby and televised press conference team.
Other Government Departments
Responsible for their subject matter areas. Participate in daily huddles to align work and priorities.
Comms GOLD Operational Command
Critical point for escalation and decision maker for comms response
Ministerial facing engagement and representation.
Leads engagement with No10 and SpAds.
Level 2: DoC Cabinet Office
Level 3: Chief Executive GCS
PMO / resourcing and administration
1. Manage resourcing
2. Manage equipment and seating / office
3. Monitor group mailbox, finance, food allowance, travel, accommodation.
Initial resource to come from: GCS Operations, Private Office & Governance, GCS Functional Standards, Capability & Efficiency
Level 2: x2 people
Level 3: x5 people
Comms SILVER Operational command
Acts as senior operational lead Chairs daily huddles and cross government meetings to set priorities. Clears products. Works with private office to establish Ministerial / Senior Official priorities. They act as the senior operational lead.
Initial resource to come from: GCS Crisis Team
x2 people (shift pattern)
Strategy and coordination
1. Support implementation of contingency plans & link into central policy / operational teams
2. Create comms plans (OASIS)
3. Lead XWH and DA coordination: XWH playbook / narrative, info flows, forward look
4. Updates: CRIPs, PM updates, ad hoc comms inputs
Initial resource to come from: GCS Crisis Team, GCS Strategy & Campaigns, NSCT, GCSI, CO Press
Level 2: x6 people (shift pattern)
Level 3: x12 people (shift pattern)
Marketing
1. Develop and manage paid for media approach (including creative briefing, agency management, spending controls)
2. Align cross government marketing
Initial resource to come from: GCS Strategy & Campaigns, GREAT
Level 2: x3 people (shift pattern)
Level 3: x6 people (shift pattern)
Media and press team
1. Press handling: media enquiries, support to departmental press offices, reactive lines, journalist list; media rounds
2. Media monitoring and Sitreps
3. Ministerial activity: interviews, announcements, digital content
4. Background briefings: organsie with departments, prepare ministerial briefing packs, logistics and tech
5. Support No10 televised briefings / lobby, media monitoring & SitReps,
6. External affairs: stakeholder identification and engagement
7. Duty cover
Initial resource to come from: CO Press, MMU
Level 2: x26 people (shift pattern)
Level 3: x54 people (shift pattern)
Insight and evaluation
1. Insight and analysis: public sentiment analysis, media and online conversation analysis, collate and distribute x-HMG analysis
2. Counter-disinformation: Monitoring and analysis of false narratives, support to and coordination of x-HMG c-disinfo functions
3. Behavioural science advice and input into approaches
Initial resource to come from: GCS Applied Data & Insight, GCSI
Level 2: x3 people
Level 3: x6 people
Digital
1. Social media products / ministerial communication
2. GOV.UK page updates
3. Support to departments' digital teams
Initial resource to come from: CO Press / No10 Digital
Level 2: x6 people (shift pattern)
Level 3: x12 people (shift pattern)

DIAGRAM TWO

Recover
Capability Building

37. It's important that we have a process in place to identify, learn and share the lessons learned following a response to a crisis. We must update our practices and structures to take account of the lessons learned, and work to build our capability to respond to the next crisis. This section outlines how we will build capability across the communication function to respond to crisis situations.

Crisis communication community

38. The GCS Crisis Team will build and nurture a network of up to 100 comms professionals from across government. This body of experts will act as the backbone of crisis communication expertise across government, deploying their skills set both within departments but also being ready to be surged into the centre in response to a catastrophic emergency. A comprehensive learning and development programme will be designed for this surge team.
39. This community will aim to include professionals outlined in the Modern Communication Operating Model MCOM, and the skill sets that will be required to stand up a crisis response. In addition, it will intersect with other communities (in particular the national security community) to ensure there is a critical mass of people available with adequate clearances to staff national security related crises. In addition, subject matter experts on the most likely risks and threats (from the policy and operation worlds) will be given the opportunity to speak at events and share their knowledge.
40. The GCS Crisis Team and DLUHC will be responsible for building relationships with LRF communication leads, and work with Territorial Offices (TOs) to build connections with crisis communicators within Devolved Administrations (DAs). These person to person relationships will be vital at times of crisis. Possible networking and shared learning events will be organised to share learnings.

Crisis communication formal learning

41. GCS Crisis team will develop a comprehensive crisis communication curriculum, identifying pre-existing crisis training resources as well new external training opportunities.
42. Members of the surge team will be invited to take part in COBR's Crisis Management Excellence Programme, which aims to provide foundational knowledge and understanding of the core principles, legislation, structures and processes of risk and emergency management. The GCS Crisis Team will work with COBR to design the comms elements of the forthcoming course.
43. The GCS Crisis Team will work with the GCS Functional Standards, Capability & Efficiency team to update the GCS Crisis Comms Digital Course, and open this to the surge team cohort.
44. The GCS / COBR will ensure external training opportunities, such as the Emergency Planning College training on crisis communication, are shared with colleagues. This will include Gold, Silver, Bronze training.
45. Following recent learnings from crises such as COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, GCS Crisis Team will explore if a refreshed PRIMER framework is required.
46. The GCS Crisis Team will host regular masterclasses, table top exercises and visits. This will include in-person events where the surge team can get together, network and socialise.

Learning from external experts and retaining institutional memory

47. A formal process of exit interviews will be conducted with those who have led key crisis communications efforts, helping to hand over and retain institutional memory.
48. In addition, there is an ambition to create a board of external crisis communication experts who will be convened quarterly to advise and review the programme.
49. GCS Crisis Team will work with the COBR Unit to further formalise and embed the new crisis comms structures in an updated overarching crisis CONOPs.

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