



Report on a survey of Brexit preparedness at the Local Resilience Forum level: Summary and public health perspective

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Summary

In late 2020, there was the potential for a no deal Brexit an outcome of the final Brexit negotiations. This was paralleled by demands on local authorities to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions adopted to reduce transmission. There was a need to establish if the UK, as a system, was prepared for the potential public health impacts arising from these civil disaster threats arising at the same time. From a public health perspective, it was deemed important to identify gaps in the system, such as certain risks or impacts not being considered, lack of national and regional coordination, or reduced resources to prepare given the extraordinary context established by the pandemic and unpredictable and novel nature of a no-deal Brexit.

Given the limited time and resources available to conduct an assessment of preparedness, a desk-based exercise was undertaken in November and December 2020. All Local Resilience Forums in England and Wales, all Regional Resilience Partnerships in Scotland and Civil Contingencies Policy Branch and Emergency Preparedness Groups in Northern Ireland* were contacted to investigate if and how they were preparing for a no-deal Brexit, what considerations or risks were informing their preparations, who was involved, and what (if any) were the impacts of the pandemic on their ability to prepare. Given the political and high-profile nature of the Brexit proceedings and limited time available to conduct the study it was decided to obtain this information using Freedom of Information requests directed at each of the LRFs or equivalent bodies.

The project was conducted from a public health perspective, meaning the aim of the exercise was to identify if the level of preparedness was in line with being able to mitigate the more immediate public health impacts of a no-deal Brexit and if gaps existed that posed a risk to public health. The report outlines a more detailed background to the project, followed by methods and findings, and provides future recommendations.

****Note: Throughout this report, we use the LRF acronym as shorthand to signify LRFs and equivalent groups in Scotland (Regional Resilience Partnerships) and Northern Ireland (NI Civil Contingencies Policy Branch and Emergency Preparedness Groups).***

1. Introduction

The UK's recent exit from the European Union ('Brexit') is, in many ways, a major event for public health and many important wider determinants of health. Many of the associated implications for public health were highlighted before the UK formally left the Union in early 2020; for example, the Faculty of Public Health (2018) campaigned for the 'Do No Harm' amendment, and van Schalkwyk et al (2019) highlighted multiple mechanisms through which a no deal, and to an extent also a poor deal, posed risks to public health, particularly in the UK. These included through losses of money; people (including key workers); government capacity, including impacts of diverting civil service attention; loss of access to European institutions; loss of the rules by which international trade takes place; and loss of societal norms, associated risks of civil unrest and heightened community tensions - for example in relation to food shortages and in Northern Ireland.

Whilst the adoption of a deal has mitigated some of the worst impacts that may have otherwise occurred under a No Deal scenario, the 'thin' deal that has been agreed leaves many issues unaddressed. Many of the less immediate impacts of no deal that analysts have warned of (e.g. Institute for Government, 2020) are being observed despite the agreed deal, particularly with regard to increased import and export costs, struggling businesses, and increased pressure on the UK's own Union - in part because many of the more challenging issues that were always likely to prove problematic remain unresolved. For example, Politico (2021) highlights multiple important and unresolved policy issues including data flows, financial services, intelligence-sharing, and from a health-focused perspective, medicines approvals, workforce concerns and membership of the European Centre for Disease Control. On the latter question, the Kings' Fund note: 'The UK will be able to request access to the Early Warning Response System on a case-by-case basis to help respond to emerging threats. However, at this stage it is unclear how access will be overseen and managed' (<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/articles/brexit-end-of-transition-period-impact-health-care-system#systems>).

More broadly, there remains a need to learn from the process and ensure that we are better-prepared for future system-wide threats as a result of this learning - whether these threats are foreseen or unforeseen, familiar or novel. The occurrence of, and response to, the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK has highlighted the inadequacy of preparations even for risks right at the top of the UK's national risk register, placing incredible strain on individuals, communities and institutions across multiple areas of social and economic life. The co-occurrence of the pandemic with the EU transition period and negotiations related to the end of the transition period meant that the risks associated with a no deal outcome were, in many cases, heightened, whilst resources for an effective response were inevitably stretched more thinly than might have been the case in the absence of COVID-19.

In 2019, van Schalkwyk et al. assessed the health risks of a 'no deal' Brexit and argued that 'the government's claims that it is prepared for no deal are implausible and, at best, might mitigate some of the worst consequences.' Wolff (2019) similarly argued that mitigation of the 'immediate very significant administrative and logistical challenges in trade' might to some extent be mitigated by the preparations underway 'but are unlikely to be sufficient'. We sought to revisit the question of preparedness, including through a survey of local resilience forums (in England and Wales) and equivalent bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland, from a public health perspective.

The creation of multi-agency local resilience forums, corresponding to police areas, was required by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This aimed to update the previous structures, which we set up for 'civil defence' in relation to foreign powers, to improve emergency preparedness, response and recovery for a wider range of threats, including domestic and natural ones. The Act also defined Category 1 and 2 responders ('core' responding organisations such as local authorities and emergency services, and key co-operating responders, such as utilities providers and transport bodies, respectively) and their civil contingencies responsibilities. Category 1 responders (and by extension LRFs) are required to undertake risk assessments (for risks that could result in a major emergency in their territory) and maintain them in a publicly accessible Community Risk Register.

The context in which we undertook this survey was one in which a 'no deal' outcome appeared a realistic eventuality, and with little updated information having been made publicly available by the UK Government over the course of 2020, regarding the country's state of preparedness and taking concurrent risks related to COVID-19 into account. Government guidance to Local Authorities and NHS organisations regarding preparedness instructed close working with LRFs to ensure plans for business continuity in the case of a no deal Brexit. The National Reasonable Worst Case Scenarios ('Operation Yellowhammer') Planning Document was leaked and then published approximately a year earlier, before knowledge of the additional challenges likely to be imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it paints a concerning picture.

It opens: 'Public and business readiness for a no deal will remain at a low level and will decrease to lower levels because the absence of a clear decision on the form of the EU Exit (customs union, no deal, etc) does not provide a concrete situation for third parties to prepare for. Readiness will be further limited by increasing EU Exit fatigue, due to the second extension, of article 50 which will limit the effective impact of current preparedness communication.' Similarly, there was no central source or repository for relevant actors to obtain a national overview of the preparations occurring (or the impact of factors such as COVID on them) at more local levels, across geographies.

In this project, we set out to address this gap in understanding, to inform public health, health and care leaders and professionals of the types of preparations undertaken at LRF or equivalent levels across the four nations, and to explore areas of potential learning for future threats and emergencies.

More broadly, we sought to evaluate the extent to which a national public health body is able to quickly and reliably gauge the UK and local areas' level of preparedness for an event involving significant disruption and multiple identified risks to health and determinants of health.

2. Methods

Through the Faculty of Public Health, we wrote to all LRFs in England (n=38) and Wales (n=4), all Regional Resilience Partnerships (RRPs; n=3) in Scotland and the Emergency Preparedness Groups in Northern Ireland (who we contacted via the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Policy Branch in Stormont), in early November 2020. This was a request for information regarding their preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period and the potential event of a no-deal Brexit, made under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) but where requested by respondents we also agreed to responses under a less formal, non-FOI route. This approach was based on discussions among the authors and the FPH. Given the political and contested nature of Brexit, lack of transparency, and short time scales, it was felt that requesting responses under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) would provide more evidence and in a timely manner.

The initial letter (full text available in Supplementary Material) explained the purpose of the survey and requested the following information, in five areas:

1. Is the LRF* undertaking (or has it undertaken) specific preparations/simulations for the end of the transition period?

If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking/has undertaken, and approximate timings for these preparatory activities.

If no, why not?

2. Is the LRF* preparing for the potential impacts of a no-deal Brexit specifically?

If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF* is undertaking.

If no, why not?

3. What considerations are included in your preparations (e.g. food and/or medicine shortages, civil unrest, other risks)?

Please provide details if not outlined in the answers above.

4. Who is the LRF* working with regarding the Brexit preparations (e.g. local health and social care providers? Local public health teams? Local emergency services?)

Please detail who is involved in the preparations as members of the LRF and as external organisations and/or stakeholders.

5. Has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the LRF*'s ability to prepare for the end of the transition period and for a no-deal Brexit? If so, please detail in what way.

*Or equivalent body in Scotland (Regional Resilience Partnerships) and Northern Ireland (NI Civil Contingencies Policy Branch and Emergency Preparedness Groups).

15 working days later, we responded to thank those who replied and to send a reminder email to those from whom a response had not yet been received.

In instances where LRFs/equivalent groups replied to ask if a reply not through the FOI route would be acceptable, we agreed to this less formal approach.

We summarised the responses in tabular and in narrative form, for each question asked, including numbers of responses where these themes were discussed. We also synthesised themes that emerged from the responses which were not specifically asked about in the FOI questions.

3. Findings

3.1 Overview of survey responses

A total of 14 LRFs responded with a detailed response by mid-January 2021, and a further four reported not being subject to the FOI Act but provided some or limited information (without answers to each of the 5 questions posed in the letter). For example, one LRF stated: 'rest assured we are planning as an LRF for the EU transition and the risks it may create and regular meetings are being held'. Two of these four stated specific reasons for not sharing specific details (that the information is Official Sensitive in one case, and that doing so 'would prejudice or be likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs' in the other).

A total of 8 LRFs (of 38) in England advised that they would not be responding as LRFs are not bound by FOI legislation. 2 of these LRFs passed the request on to one or more individual member organisation(s) within the LRF, but we did not receive further responses from these member organisations in either case.

The timeliness of replies was very variable; the 20 working days allowed in the FOI Act for responses ended on December 3rd. 7 of the 38 English LRFs surveyed had provided detailed responses by the 20 working-day deadline of December 3rd 2020; 5 detailed responses were received after this, including some in January 2021.

There were also significant differences in the response rate between devolved nations. A majority (12 of 14) of the detailed responses that were provided related to LRFs in England.

2 of the 4 Welsh LRFs provided a detailed response when we confirmed that a response not through the FOI route would be acceptable; these were very similar.

The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Policy Branch advised that they had consulted with the relevant business areas within the Executive Office, and given their central coordination and oversight role advised that the Department does not hold any of the requested information. They suggested writing to the Department of Communities in respect of their role in liaising with Local Government and the Department of Justice in their liaison role with the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

For each of the Scottish RRFs, we were advised that: 'The Regional Resilience Partnership is a forum made up of multi-agency public authorities and therefore not subject to FOISA legislation.' We were advised to contact each authority individually; however unfortunately this was beyond the scope of this project.

3.2 Details of responses provided to Questions 1-5

(See also table in Appendix 1 for a summary of responses, excluding question 4).

Question 1. We asked ‘Is the LRF/RRP undertaking (or has it undertaken) specific preparations/simulations for the end of the transition period?’ alongside a request for a summary of this work. This elicited a range of responses; most LRFs reported having carried out risk assessment and contingency planning, in some cases citing the RWC scenario planning assumptions provided by the Cabinet Office ([Operation Yellowhammer](#) in 2019 and a shorter document focused on UK borders in September 2020¹). Some LRFs (7 of the 14 who provided detailed responses) described meeting regularly to review these risks against partner agencies’ preparations, and to update planning assumptions iteratively.

Simulation or table-top exercises were mentioned as part of the preparations undertaken in 2 of 14 detailed responses (though it is worth noting this was not asked specifically), and workshops or similar multi-agency events in a further 2.

Question 2. We asked ‘Is the LRF/RRP preparing for the potential impacts of a no-deal Brexit specifically? If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking.

If no, why not?’) In responding to this, a majority of the LRFs who provided a detailed response (12 of 14) reported preparing for a ‘No Deal’ scenario specifically or as a focus of their work, whilst 2 LRFs reported that they were preparing for all possible eventualities or taking an ‘All Hazards’ approach.

Risk registers related to the end of the EU Transition period were signposted to or provided only by 4 LRFs in their responses (across all questions); others mentioned having undertaken risk assessments (with limited further detail) or having reviewed RWCS planning assumptions provided by central Government.

Question 3. This question focused on specific risks or considerations - ‘What considerations are included in your preparations (e.g. food and/or medicine shortages, civil unrest, other risks)?

Please provide details if not outlined in the answers above’. 4 respondents provided information on specific areas of focus or concern, whilst a further 3 provided detail within signposted or attached risk registers. Specific risks highlighted in these responses included impacts of border controls on highways/traffic congestion, public disorder/civil unrest, food supply chains and resilience, medical supplies, disruption to key supply chains; these were categorised according to multiple different frameworks. One respondent also highlighted risks around workforce issues and impact on benefits and low income families, another risks related to social care. One reported that the group was reviewing incorporating areas of social and economic change in conjunction with COVID-19 recovery planning.

1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920675/RWCS_for_our_borders_FINAL.pdf

Question 4 asked about the organisations involved in LRFs'/RRPs' preparedness work. In responding to it, a majority of responses described wide representation from both Category 1 and Category 2 responders as defined in the CCA. Responses often cited involvement and/or LRF representation from emergency services, local authorities, NHS, PHE, military, local government, transport authorities e.g. Highways England, Transport for London, local public transport providers) and utility companies, central Government departments and the voluntary sector.

Question 5. 'Has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the LRFs ability to prepare for the end of the transition period and for a no-deal Brexit? If so, please detail in what way.' A majority of those who offered a view on question 5 reported that COVID-19 planning was not at the expense of Brexit emergency planning, often because the bulk of this preparatory work had occurred pre-COVID, whilst several acknowledged that the two need to be considered in tandem, as concurrent risks.

Resourcing issues were sometimes mentioned in responses to this question: one LRF reported that COVID-19 had had 'a huge strain on the same limited resources required to respond to D20'; another that 'Covid has significantly increased the workload and demands on time for a number of LRF members, specifically those associated with Public Health and Resilience.'

Others mentioned some perceived benefits to integration of improved coordination processes across the two threats, and in some cases, meetings took place consecutively, or agendas covered both issues. For example, Hertfordshire noted that 'the EU Transition TCG is part of the current COVID-19 multi-agency response structure rather than being dealt with separately. This makes it easier to escalate issues and to identify and address any interdependencies or conflicting resource requirements.'

3.3 Other themes - timing of preparations; structures used; shared learning and peer review

Several responses indicated that a majority of their preparatory activities had been conducted from 2018-2019, and had then sought to refresh their assumptions and review preparedness in 2020, alongside concurrent issues such as COVID-19, but fewer specific events and preparatory activities were discussed as having taken place in 2020.

With regard to the organisational structures adopted for EU Transition-related activity, two LRFs reported having established an Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) focused on EU Transition, whilst others had formed working groups, sub-groups, contingency planning groups or Task and Finish groups focused on reviewing reasonable worst case scenarios and preparations for EU Exit. A minority described EU Transition planning work being integrated into structures set up to respond to all winter risks (including COVID-19), e.g. within the agendas of the Strategic Coordinating Group and Delivery Coordinating Group in the case of London.

Themes of shared learning and assurance and/or review by peer LRFs were mentioned in 2 responses; learning from reviewing other areas' multi-agency plans was mentioned only by 1 respondent LRF, whilst another LRF described feedback received from MHCLG indicating that their preparations were ahead of most LRFs, despite this not being a high-risk LRF.

4. Discussion

Preparedness

A majority of the LRFs that responded to our survey assured us of their preparedness for a no deal Brexit scenario and in some cases this was backed up by specific measures, such as tabletop exercises or multi-stakeholder workshops undertaken. The risk assessment and planned work described had often been undertaken from 2018-19, and updated as required (for example to take account of concurrent risks posed by COVID-19) during 2020.

Openness

However, many others either elected not to respond, citing that FOI legislation did not apply to them as an organisation, or did not provide detailed responses. The reasons for, or drivers of, the variability around these decisions on whether to share information remain somewhat unclear. A 'best case' scenario might be that the detailed responses received were typical of all LRFs. However, it is possible that the non-respondents' situations and levels of preparedness were poorly represented by the respondents'. Respondents providing detailed information may have been more confident of their risk assessments and preparedness and therefore happier to share information, whilst non-responders may be less assured of the robustness of the planning and actions they have in place.

Overstretched LRFs

It is clear that many LRFs, and their constituent member organisations, have been thinly stretched through 2020 and 2021 to date by the key role they play in the COVID-19 pandemic response. The C19 National Foresight group is a cross-government organisation working with partners to support Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in response to COVID-19. In May this year the COVID-19 National foresight group described 'responder community exhaustion' (Peters, 2020). Little has changed to relieve this situation since then, and a number of responses to our survey highlighted limited resources amongst the challenges they are contending with, particularly in the context of concurrent COVID-19 and Brexit work. The foresight group's report criticised a "paucity of information and intelligence" provided from central Government, which left LRFs, such as councils, police, and medical professionals, "isolated from national decision-making and unable to effectively plan and strategise response[s]."

A mixed picture and incomplete assurance

In summary, the picture is one of incomplete assurance, and where information on planning and risk assessment is available, this is rarely particularly detailed. It is apparent that many Local Resilience Forums have been working under very challenging circumstances through 2020, and have been limited in the extent to which they can plan for the EU Withdrawal, with or without a trade deal, by a lack of relevant and detailed information being made available to them in a timely way by central Government, and a reported lack of two-way communication (as per the C19 Foresight group report referenced above). Additionally, their governance structures differ – sometimes significantly – from one another, as do the ways that the police force geographies on which LRFs are based coincide with the footprints of key member organisations, such as Tier 1 and 2 local authority and NHS organisational footprints. This adds further complexity and may explain some of the substantial variations in approach reflected in the survey responses.

Inadequate national planning guidance

The 2019 'Operation Yellowhammer' Reasonable Worst Case Scenarios (RWCS) (HMG 2019) - which, together with the additional border RWCSs released in 2020, were referred to as a primary reference point for LRFs' risk assessments in approximately half of the detailed responses reviewed - themselves have a number of limitations. They make no reference to possible risks related to air traffic control, information technology concerns, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), waste management and export, amongst other issues. Despite the already high levels of food security being experienced in the UK prior to Brexit, food and food insecurity is addressed with a single sentence: 'low-income groups will be disproportionately affected by any price rises in food and fuel.' The report states that 'law enforcement data sharing between UK and EU will be disrupted' but lacks further discussion of the implications or consequent actions under consideration for international terrorism, drug and human trafficking or other areas. There was no consideration of potential impacts of failures of component or services supply, which are important in many public sector services, including health and social care, as well as for industrial plants (which could also pose significant risks to public health, should their ability to function be disrupted unexpectedly).

The RWCS also treated the risks identified by individual government departments as separate and additive, and failed to recognise or acknowledge them as potentially multiple and compounding, with small individual risks which could become amplified were they to co-occur. Serial and multiple incidents have the potential to result in complex, cascading emergencies, whose socio-economic and health impacts can be widespread and difficult to predict (Cutter, 2018). A further concern is that the potential for longer-term impacts on local economies which LRFs would not generally regard as 'emergencies' and therefore not within their remit, but multiple single individual risks to the economy may compound and add to the prospects of a 'rising tide' or 'slow-burn disaster.' Arguably, the current focus on 'resilience' as a product of risks assessment and planning for specific risks - a civil contingencies-focused approach - may neglect these kinds of systemic risks and the need to build underlying resilience within communities, for example by strengthening incomes, food security, access to services and social cohesion.

Nationally, the Cabinet Office-led Resilience Capabilities programme encompasses 22 workstreams, covering essential services and functional, structural and supporting capabilities. The reference document on the role of LRFs (Cabinet Office, 2013) sets out their roles within this programme as follows: "The programme aims to build capability to meet the requirements of the National Resilience Planning Assumptions and therefore to ensure that there is a robust infrastructure of response and recovery in place to deal rapidly, effectively and flexibly with the consequences of all kinds of civil emergencies, including both threats and hazards. Some of the work LRFs undertake as their duties and/or as best practice ways of working contribute to the delivery of this programme." It also notes the lack of a legislative duty on any Civil Contingencies Act responders to promote community resilience, whilst recognising that there are examples of good practice on this by many local areas.

Governance: transparency and accountability

This exercise raises important questions and points of consideration with regards to the governance of preparedness in the UK. From the perspective of the LRFs and equivalent bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland, there was substantial diversity in the interpretation of the applicability of FOI legislation to them as a distinct body. According to the interpretation of one legal scholar, analysis of the legislation would suggest that it does not apply directly to the LRF and instead individual public bodies who are members of the LRF are subject to FOI legislation. On the other hand, the Cabinet

Office's Reference Document for the Partnerships expects them to have procedures for handling FOI requests (Cabinet Office, 2013). The situation therefore remains ambivalent, and it appears that even LRFs themselves may not have a consistent position on this. This lack of clarity raises potential concerns about transparency and accountability regarding the activities of (some) LRFs from a public scrutiny perspective.

Further analysis is needed to understand the impact and implications of this mode of operation. On the one hand, applying FOI principles to LRFs might undermine the protection of sensitive service operations of individual members of the LRF and pose challenges to collaborative, multi-agency working; on the other hand, open management of information can help to convey and reinforce a stronger degree of public confidence and trust. These are key aspects of community resilience-building approaches, and an important element of effective responses to emergencies. (Wells KB et al 2013; Ryan B et al 2020)

The analysis also raises questions as to who was responsible for assessing the UK's level of preparedness for the impacts of a no-deal Brexit: had worst-case risks materialised, who would be held accountable for inadequate preparedness and how; regarding the transparency of this process; and what capacity there was to be adequately prepared given the context. We understand that there has been a reporting requirement around EU Transition, but not specifically with or without a deal. The Cabinet Office asked a generic question about how prepared LRFs felt they were for EU Transition as part of a wider return for COVID and winter pressures. This was daily reporting from 27th December – 18th January, and it is now weekly.

As far as we have been able to establish, it does not appear to have been in place prior to the Christmas Eve Trade and Cooperation Agreement reached by the UK and EU. It appears that LRFs were to a significant extent left to follow and adapt their own plans with very little detailed guidance, and to implement their own responses without significant additional resource being made available to them, during a period in which there was maximum disruption from an interacting group of forces such as the international container shortage, the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant, impacting on the South East of England in particular, and on cross-channel haulage, and the then potential no deal Brexit. (Rae, McKee, Middleton, 2020; Middleton and Rae, 2020)

Future considerations

These are critical areas of concern as other crises that threaten UK systems as a whole, such as the food and power systems, are likely to occur in the future. The threat of a no-deal Brexit and this exercise expose that there is currently not a robust system that allows for timely and responsive assessment of preparedness by public health professionals in rapidly changing contexts, and clear lines of accountability and participation in decision-making are sometimes lacking; the emergency powers granted by the Civil Contingencies Act may have reduced the potential for democratic scrutiny in times of crisis in particular.

These shortcomings in our current systems should concern public health professionals, and public health should be embedded in the process of reviewing and learning from the Brexit preparations taken. It also highlights why a formal health and equity impact assessment of Brexit in all its forms should have been undertaken by central Government to aid in identifying gaps in preparedness and allow for mitigation strategies to be implemented and evaluated for their effectiveness.

These issues require further investigation and - ideally – a detailed review of the events leading up to the end of the transition period should be performed to ensure lessons can be learned and the UK's systems of governance and preparedness strengthened.

We present this paper for discussion first with LRFs, with a view to incorporating comments and feedback received wherever possible, and then for a wider discussion with the public health and emergency planning communities.

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Air traffic control

<https://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/en/knowledge/publications/7567a3b0/brexit-update-for-aviation>

Geographical Positioning Systems

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07734-x>

Security

<https://www.iiss.org/publications/survival/2018/survival-global-politics-and-strategy-december2018january2019/606-04-inkster-cm>

Waste management

<https://resource.co/article/brexit-risk-waste-and-resources-increasing-says-greener-uk>

Appendix 1

Full responses provided, organised by date received.

Part 1: Cheshire, Merseyside, Suffolk, Wiltshire and Swindon, Nottinghamshire

Part 2: South Wales, East Riding of Yorkshire, London, Hertfordshire

Part 3: Hartlepool, North Yorkshire, Dyfed Powys, Lancashire, Essex

[Part 1:]

| Area | Cheshire | Merseyside | Suffolk | Wiltshire and Swindon | Nottinghamshire |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| Date received | 05/11/2020 | 10/11/2020 | 19/11/2020 | | 30/11/2020 |
| Q1. Is the LRF undertaking (or has it undertaken) specific preparations/simulations for the end of the transition period? If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking/has undertaken, and approximate timings for these preparatory activities. If no, why not? | Risk assessment. TCG currently sitting weekly; SCG commencing mid-November | Review of national RWCSs involving all partner agencies (formed a consensus view); 'unable to disclose information on behalf of individual responder partners' and advise contacting them individually | Exercises section of https://www.suffolkresilience.com/uploads/bhb_Final_Official_SRF_EU_Transition_Emergency_Plan_-_V3.pdf . N.B. Port of Felixstowe virtual workshop date: 11th November 2020 Fuel virtual workshop date: 25th November 2020. | Started planning in September 2018; held a Brexit Workshop on 7 December 2018 and agreed fundamental generic actions - written-up into a local Battle Rhythm. This was revisited several times and updated following delays to the UK's departure and before the UK's exit on the 31st January 2020. Structures paused but not stood down | Preparatory work over the last two years, including risk assessment, a tabletop exercise, and a number of preparatory meetings with LRF partners to understand the implications of EU Exit locally. |

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| <p>2. Is the LRF preparing for the potential impacts of a no-deal Brexit specifically?</p> <p>If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking.</p> <p>If no, why not?</p> | Signposted to risk register | 3 specific impacts highlighted - implicit 'yes' | No – the LRF are not preparing for a specific 'no-deal', the LRF are preparing for all eventualities that could occur. | Yes - 'All of the above. D20 is unique and so we are planning for the unknown.' | Will manage the response to any potential impacts (from any source) over the winter period. |
| <p>Q3. What considerations are included in your preparations (e.g. food and/or medicine shortages, civil unrest, other risks)?</p> <p>Please provide details if not outlined in the answers above.</p> | Signposted to risk register | <p>i. Traffic/Freight Disruptions at the Port of Liverpool</p> <p>ii. Business and economy – Local Authorities working through the implications against all relevant sectors</p> <p>iii. Public Disorder/protests</p> | Planning for all eventualities, not specifically for a No Deal | Planning for the unknown. SCG and TCG sitting weekly, planning for twice weekly from Jan 2021. Other multi-agency structures for intelligence and communications feed in to these. | RWCS contextualised to local circumstances |
| <p>5. Has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the LRFs ability to prepare for the end of the transition period and for a no-deal Brexit? If so, please detail in what way.</p> | No | COVID has created challenges for all partners but core roles/responsibilities can be continued | COVID: no | Need to consider in parallel, strain on limited resources | Treating COVID as a concurrent event |

[Part 2:]

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| Area | South Wales | East Riding of Yorkshire | London | Hertfordshire |
| Date received | 02/12/2020 | 03/12/2020 | 01/12/2020 | 09/12/2020 |

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| <p>Q1. Is the LRF undertaking (or has it undertaken) specific preparations/simulations for the end of the transition period? If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking/has undertaken, and approximate timings for these preparatory activities. If no, why not?</p> | <p>The main preparation by the LRF is ensuring robust response arrangements (regardless of the cause of an incident), are and remain in place'. Review of several LRF multi-agency plans. Partner organisations doing their own business continuity planning.</p> | <p>Meeting regularly since July 2020 to review the risks associated with the end of the transition period, in addition to the contingency planning carried out for the risk of a no deal Brexit in 2019.</p> | <p>End of Transition is included in the agenda for the Strategic Coordinating Group and the Delivery Coordinating Group which is meeting to deal with all Winter risks including Covid-19 (since October 2020).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continuing the work of the Brexit Contingency Planning Group, established in 2018 - risk assessment and sharing information to all partner agencies. · Agenda item in the London Resilience Forum since at least 2018. · (From Q2 - 'has included developing multi-agency risk assessments, "playbooks" with suggested actions for partners for selected risks, preparing reports for Government and supporting the development of strategic coordination arrangements for Brexit in London.') | <p>EU Transition TCG established to oversee all multi-agency preparations for EU Transition. The main focus of activity is making sense of the RWCS and what it means locally. This is primarily taking the form of a risk assessment which will enable the TCG to ascertain mitigation measures and address potential planning gaps.</p> |
| <p>2. Is the LRF preparing for the potential impacts of a no-deal Brexit specifically? If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking. If no, why not?</p> | <p>The LRF focus from a civil contingencies perspective is a 'No Deal' scenario and potential risks that may materialise from such an outcome. But focus is on ensuring robust response arrangements (regardless of the cause of an incident).</p> | <p>Yes. The LRF prepared specific contingency plans for a number of the risks identified in the LRF risk register</p> | <p>Yes - multi-agency Summit held to consider no-deal Brexit in September 20. Preparing for the risk of a short-notice, no-deal Brexit.</p> | <p>Yes - this is the reason why a specific EU Transition TCG has been established.</p> |

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| <p>Q3. What considerations are included in your preparations (e.g. food and/or medicine shortages, civil unrest, other risks)?</p> <p>Please provide details if not outlined in the answers above.</p> | <p>"the focus remains on being able to establish and deliver an emergency response regardless of the cause. ... Testing such structures, exercising and training staff on emergency response, roles and responsibilities are the main considerations in mitigating any risk"</p> | <p>In Q1 - mentioned that the main focus is on mitigating disruption at the Humber ports. Signposted to http://www.heps.gov.uk/humber-local-resilience-forum report will upload revised version when completed</p> | <p>Disruption to the supply of fuel and food, and concerns around the impact on social care</p> | <p>Knock-on impacts of border controls on highways, public disorder, food resilience, medical supplies, disruption to key supply chains, workforce issues and impact on benefits and low income families</p> |
| <p>5.Has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the LRFs ability to prepare for the end of the transition period and for a no-deal Brexit? If so, please detail in what way.</p> | <p>Treating COVID as a concurrent event</p> | <p>COVID: no</p> | <p>Staff are tired, financial cost of response arrangements; coordination structures well established</p> | <p>COVID has had minimal impact on Brexit preparations, coordination has been made easier (including to escalate issues and address interdependencies or conflicting resources requirements)</p> |

[Part 3:]

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| Area | Hartlepool | North Yorkshire | Dyfed Powys | Lancashire | Essex |
| Date received | 09/12/2020 | 05/01/2021 | 11/01/2021 | 05/01/2021 | 08/01/2021 |

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| <p>Q1. Is the LRF undertaking (or has it undertaken) specific preparations/simulations for the end of the transition period? If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking/has undertaken, and approximate timings for these preparatory activities.</p> <p>If no, why not?</p> | <p>The LRF has previously undertaken planning and exercising in relation to EU Exit with a range of partners. The majority of work was conducted prior to December 2019. Sub-group established to ensure consideration in advance of December 2020 including reviewing and updating arrangements.</p> | <p>Working group formed to review national RWCSs - formed in 2018. Met regularly during 2019 as the deadline for leaving the EU was delayed. We continue to meet regularly during December 2020 to discuss any impacts.</p> | <p>Planning started in 2018 considering civil contingency risks. Worked with Welsh Govt and agreed a formal reporting structure to monitor any civil contingency impacts. Approach continually reviewed and updated following the delays to the UK's original departure date/s and continues to be reviewed. Preparations were based on the RWCS assumptions - these continue to be updated/revised and incorporated into our current planning. The formal reporting structures established were paused during the on-going UK negotiations with risks continuing to be monitored. Response structures can be reinstated as and if necessary.</p> | <p>Preparations and simulations in 2018 and 2019. A Task and Finish group has reconvened to review preparations - meeting since September 2020. Also regular SCG meetings. The T&F group has responded to specific Govt requests for information, reviewing existing plans and arrangements, and RWC planning assumptions.</p> | <p>Signpost to attached document for details. See also Q2 below</p> |
| <p>2. Is the LRF preparing for the potential impacts of a no-deal Brexit specifically?</p> <p>If yes, please provide a summary of the work the LRF is undertaking.</p> <p>If no, why not?</p> | <p>Yes, the LRF is working on a number of areas of risk identified by HM Government and local partners</p> | <p>The LRF has worked along the various Category 1 and 2 organisations to discuss the potential impacts of no-deal Brexit.</p> | <p>The DPLRF focus from a civil contingencies perspective is for a 'No Deal' scenario and potential risks that may materialise from such an outcome. 'However the main preparation by DPLRF is ensuring that robust response arrangements (regardless of the cause of an incident), are and remain in place.'</p> | <p>Yes, as a Reasonable Worst Case Scenario.</p> | <p>ERF preparations consider 9 themes: response to at port disruption, road disruption, loss of IT access, protest activity, shortages management, community risks, health and social care, utilities risk and business readiness.</p> |

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| <p>Q3. What considerations are included in your preparations (e.g. food and/or medicine shortages, civil unrest, other risks)?</p> <p>Please provide details if not outlined in the answers above.</p> | National RWCSs cited | National RWCSs cited | National RWCSs cited; focus is on an effective emergency response regardless of the cause | All risks reviewed. Considerations include the impact on food and medicine supply chain, civil unrest, and potential traffic congestion. | See Q2. Also signposted to attached doc |
| <p>5. Has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the LRFs ability to prepare for the end of the transition period and for a no-deal Brexit? If so, please detail in what way.</p> | COVID has resulted in an increased workload, particularly for PH and resilience LRF members | COVID: no | Treating COVID as a concurrent event | Not significant impacts on Brexit preparations | Brexit planning has been integrated into existing structures for COVID response |