



**Cabinet**Office

# Civil Alerting Workshops

Summary report

August 2012

# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Workshop objectives.....	3
Workshop process.....	4
<b>Summary of current alerting capabilities</b> .....	<b>4</b>
What is out there? .....	4
Further sources of information .....	5
<b>The alerting gap?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Key challenges to alerting.....	5
<b>DSTL Criteria</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Draft alert messages</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Potential Future alerting capabilities</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Extending Floodline Warnings Direct .....	10
Cell Broadcasting.....	12
Social Media .....	12
Other potential future alerting capabilities.....	13
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Next Steps.....	14
<b>Annex A Civil alerting questionnaire</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Annex B Workshop agenda</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Annex C DSTL criteria</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Annex D Refined DSTL criteria</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Annex E Draft alert messages</b> .....	<b>20</b>

# INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of this report is to present the findings of the seven civil alert workshops held by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) between Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012. The full workshop programme is below.

Area	Date of visit
Avon and Somerset	11th June
Derbyshire	15th June
Suffolk	20th June
Wales	22nd June
Scotland	26th June
South Yorkshire	4th July
Kent	6th July

2. CCS worked with colleagues from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to identify the workshop areas. Consideration was given to achieving a good mix of locations, risk profiles and geographic spread. Thought was also given to the upcoming Olympic Games and the impact this would have on

the ability of certain areas to participate in the workshops. CCS were also keen to work with the Devolved Administrations; Glasgow and Cardiff were two of the workshop venues while separate conversations have been held with colleagues in Northern Ireland regarding the work.

3. CCS are extremely grateful for the help and participation of all workshop areas. Particular thanks go to the individuals who helped facilitate and organise the visits, as well as all those who attended and provided such useful contributions.
4. This report will not mention specific areas by name; instead the overall key findings from the process will be presented.

## Workshop objectives

5. These workshops form part of a wider programme of work emanating from the Government's commitment in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (2010) to evaluate options to improve UK civil alerting.
6. The specific objectives of the workshops were to:
  - Understand existing alerting capabilities employed by Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and Strategic Coordination Groups (SCGs) and the rationale behind this;

- Understand the current gaps in these alerting capabilities;
- Validate findings from the Defence Science Technology Laboratory on ‘what makes an effective alert system’.
- Gather views on potential future improvements to civil alerting.

### Workshop process

7. Prior to the workshops, areas were sent a questionnaire asking for information regarding risk profile and current alert capabilities employed. A blank copy of this questionnaire can be found at **Annex A**. The majority of questionnaires were returned and provided information that proved useful in building up an understanding of the area prior to the visit.
8. The workshops generally ran from 1030-1500 and were split into a mixture of presentations and group discussions led by colleagues from CCS. A full agenda can be found at **Annex B**. Each workshop was attended by an average of 14 people from a variety of category one and two responder organisations including the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Health Protection Agency, local authorities and UK Power amongst many others. A summary report for each area was produced following the workshop so that a record of the key discussion points were preserved. This was circulated to all

attendees for comment to ensure agreement on content.

9. In addition to the individual summary reports, case studies of different alert capabilities were also obtained including different message notification systems in use. The aim of this was to build up a greater understanding of the variety of alert capabilities currently employed.

# SUMMARY OF CURRENT ALERTING CAPABILITIES

### What is currently being used?

10. A wide variety of alerting capabilities are currently employed. These vary from place to place, and even within the same Local Resilience Forum (LRF). A number of alerting methods are currently used including leafleting, area visits, websites, door knocking, social media, SMS messaging, landline phone calls, PA systems, sirens, loudhailers, FWD and even church bells. No one area relied on one form of alerting. The majority of areas employed some form of message

notification system. These were opt-in systems and had limited take up.

11. Responders stressed the importance of having a mixture of established and modern alert capabilities, views on which were best were mixed with most agreeing that a combination was best.

### Further sources of information

12. It was generally felt that the public wanted to be signposted to TV or radio for further information after they had received an alert. This is supported by a survey commissioned by CCS which showed they were indeed the two most popular choices. Websites were also cited as a good place to signpost people to for further information. Responders discussed that people will check a number of other sources to verify what they have been told in an alert message, during an emergency. As such it is important that consistent information is disseminated via a range of methods.

13. It is clearly recognised that no single form of alerting will reach 100% of the intended target audience. Even with a range of methods it is very difficult to achieve; civil alerting must be regarded as 'best endeavours' or 'the best for most.' Responders generally felt that current alerting capabilities in their area were sufficient for the risks they faced. However, there was the strong feeling that this could be improved in a number of

ways, particularly the number of people that can be contacted and the speed with which messages can be disseminated.

## THE ALERTING GAP

### Key challenges to alerting

14. Responders agreed that one of the difficulties in getting alert messages out to members of the public is capturing 'people on the move.' Whilst door knocking or landline calls might be useful for alerting those inside it is the people who are commuting to work or away from their homes that were identified as difficult to reach.

15. Responders also supported the view that speed was an issue with current alerting capabilities. The 'golden hour' after onset of an emergency was seen as key for getting information out to the public, yet it was felt that overall current alerting tools are unable to do this. It was also felt that the process to alert other responders is too slow. At the moment this is generally done via a telephone ring round and in some instances can take up to two hours before all relevant authorities are notified. This delay may impact the ability to send alerts to the public quickly.

16. Public apathy and lack of awareness about emergency preparedness generally and alerting in particular was seen as a real challenge. The concern raised was that people would either not understand alert messages sent to them or they would be ignored.

17. Other 'hard to reach groups' who provide further challenges to alerting were also discussed. Individuals may be classed as hard to reach for a whole variety of reasons; ultimately they will all have very specific individual requirements for how they want or need to receive alerts which need to be reflected in the method used. Those with a disability for example such as the blind or the deaf will require alerts in a format suitable for them. People who do not speak English again will need to receive alerts in a format that makes sense to them. In areas where there are large populations of people who may not speak English as their first language, this may require particular consideration.

18. Geography of an area can make some alert capabilities redundant. For example large areas will not be alerted in their entirety by one siren or by an officer door knocking. In addition rural communities may be more difficult to alert than urban areas as people are more sparsely located so messaging has to be over a wider area.

19. The inability of many current forms of alerting to allow receipting of a message

was also seen as a gap. If responders could record and monitor who had definitely been alerted and who had not then this would assist with the redistribution of resources to those who need it.

20. The use of social media was seen by some as another challenge. Whilst it was recognised that it can be a very effective tool for disseminating messages, it is also very easy to lose control of information once posted as it can be embellished and re-tweeted for example, with ease. It can be extremely resource intensive to monitor and respond to queries via social media which can detract from the response if not managed appropriately.

21. Ensuring clarity of process for alert activation and having clearly defined roles and responsibilities were seen as key to successful alerting. Any confusion here could slow down the alerting process. Clear processes and agreement of messages will save time. It was agreed that consistency of messages was another challenge particularly with cross border incidents. Again having predefined processes in place for activation and predefined message sets were seen as ways of addressing this.

22. One of the most commonly cited issues for developing this issue further was a lack of money and resources. One delegate commented that there may be a hesitancy to address any significant

alerting gaps because there are no resources available to do anything about it.

# DRAFT ALERT MESSAGES

## DSTL CRITERIA

23. The Defence Science Technology Laboratory (DSTL) were commissioned by CCS to produce 'The effectiveness of civil alert systems; a review of the literature.' One of the key products from the paper was a list of criteria defining an 'effective alert system.' CCS wanted to check this list against the understanding and practical experience of emergency responders and to get their views on the content. A full list of the DSTL criteria can be found at **Annex C**.
24. Overall delegates agreed that the list accurately summed up the criteria of what would make an effective alerting system. They did however make some suggestions for additional criteria. These included interoperability, low cost, low maintenance, resilient, accessible by all, risk appropriate, believable and simple.
25. The DSTL criteria has since been refined and amended to incorporate the comments provided at the workshops, this can be found at **Annex D**.
26. Prior to the workshop CCS produced a series of 'mock' alert messages based on three emergency scenarios – a contaminated water supply, toxic gas release and an attack at a train station. The alert messages were produced in a number of formats: email, tweet, SMS message and cell broadcast message. Automated voice messages were also recorded using the Floodline Warning Direct system. The scenarios were chosen at random and the impacted areas were all fictional.
27. The aim of this exercise was to gauge responder views on the mock alert messages; to determine thoughts on content, presentation and what they thought was the most effective format for alert messages. Examples of the written draft messages and the transcripts of the audio messages can be found at **Annex E**. Views of the responders on each message format are detailed below.
- Audio message
28. There were mixed views on the automated voice used for the message. While some felt it was distorted and did

not like it, others felt it was clear. There were some parts of the message where the voice skipped over or jumbled the words. If desired, the message can be configured to improve diction and pronunciation; however it was accepted that it would never be the same quality as a clear human voice.

29. It was felt that the language used was directive and that this should be the way all messages are written so that people can take positive action. It was also felt that messages should tell people explicitly not to call the emergency services. This is particularly pertinent as a recent Cabinet Office survey conducted into emergency preparedness among the public showed that 25% of people asked said they would call the emergency services for further information in a real emergency. This may cause issues for responders as control rooms and contact centres reach capacity preventing those with genuine incidents getting through.

30. Responders commented that the signpost to further information is one of the most important parts of the alert message. As such it was felt that this should be at the start of the message and repeated at the end. Concern around how these demands for further information would be met was a common theme. Responders questioned the ability to man phones or stand up a call centre to deal with public enquiries without sufficient

resources available and at very short notice.

31. Some responders suggested that the length of the audio message could be shorter as this would keep people engaged and relay only the most important information. It was also suggested that a recognisable audio sound could be played at the start of the message to alert people to the fact that this is something important that they need to listen to. A similar technique is used in the US where a commonly recognised alert tone is used to precede all alert messages.

32. It was felt that the message content should be simple, but specific to the individuals concerned. The impacted area should be geographically defined. Telling people 'your local area has been affected' was seen as too vague.

## SMS & Cell Broadcast

33. Responders felt the short succinct nature of SMS and Cell Broadcast messages was good. The fact that they are bound by character restraints (160 characters and 93 characters respectively) forces the author of the message to relay only the most vital information. One criticism of the slightly shorter cell broadcast message however, was that it did not include a signpost to further information

34. There was a concern that people may think the cell broadcast message was a hoax if they were not used to receiving messages that way. It was suggested that this could be addressed by an awareness and exercising campaign.

## Tweet

35. It was felt that tweeting would only be appropriate for some scenarios. A terrorist incident for example may be an inappropriate incident to tweet about as it may draw people to the scene or prove a particularly delicate communications issue, best handled through more formal methods.

36. The short succinct nature of the messages was again seen as the best way of alerting. The size of the audience that tweets can reach especially with re-tweeting was another positive for this form of alerting.

## Email

37. Some responders felt that email was not a true form of alerting. This was because it was regarded as a slower time medium of communication. It has the potential to include more information, which will take longer to draft (if not pre-defined) and may take longer to come across if held in a full inbox or the person is not aware of the fact they have received a new email. There was also concern that alert emails

may be regarded as spam and as such ignored or even filtered out by email clients.

38. Whilst emails were seen as useful as they are not bound by character limits and so can give more detailed information, shorter alerts conveying the most vital information were seen as the best form of communicating.

## General Feedback

39. Some of the more general feedback covering all message formats included the importance of public trust in the message. It was felt that branding of the message was key to this and would have to be from a recognisable and trusted source. 'UK ALERT' was the source of each draft alert message and there was some discussion about whether this was right. This follows the approach being employed in the EU. Some suggested it should simply be 'ALERT' or 'EMERGENCY' again this may be a case of individual preference. Regardless of how the messages are phrased a public awareness campaign would be essential so that people are aware of what the messages mean for them.

40. Protocols for activation and sending out of alert messages would have to be very clearly defined. Responders felt it was important that roles and responsibilities were clear around activation and management but may vary from area to

area depending on resource availability and current command and control structures in place.

41. There was support for the pre-drafting of generic messaging given the time and effort this would save in a real emergency. There were some concerns raised that pre-drafting of detailed message content would not be appropriate due to the variety of ways in which incidents can play out.

42. There was also some debate around the choice of scenarios for the message format. It was felt for example that use of these kinds of alert messages during a terrorist incident may counteract directions by police and in the extreme may even prove dangerous if they give away an individual's position or set off secondary devices. It was felt the first scenario on toxic gas would be the most appropriate for these kinds of messages as it would provide the public with an alert to a no notice emergency, where you could map or estimate the impacted area and send out messages accordingly. It was felt the second scenario would be more for the water (or more generally utilities) company to deal with using their existing procedures

43. The key point that came out of the discussion was the importance of having a diversity of message formats. No one format was universally preferred reflecting individual preferences for receiving

information. Most responders commented that a combination of message formats would be the optimum way of conveying information to the public.

## POTENTIAL FUTURE ALERTING CAPABILITIES

### Extending Floodline Warnings Direct

44. Responders were positive about the way in which the EFWD trial was run. It was seen as a worthwhile exploration of a potential alert capability, especially with the Environment Agency contract renewal for the system due in 2015. Responders provided feedback which is detailed below.

45. If the system were to be expanded for risks other than flooding, it was felt that activation would fall to the emergency services due to the fact that they operate 24 hours a day seven days a week. Issues were raised here about resourcing and training for those needed to operate the system, especially given current constraints on resources.

46. Responders felt that the system provided a useful way of targeting specific, predefined parts of the population. They commented that there were some risks where this system would benefit the response. In particular it was felt it would be useful to notify populations living around COMAH sites or in reservoir areas. Some utilities incidents such as water contamination may also benefit from this approach although there would need to be an assessment of how this might affect current arrangements.

47. The system data which enables the user to see who has received the message was seen as a very useful tool as it would enable the emergency services to determine who had been alerted and who had not.

48. As for the trial itself, responders commented that it would have been useful to have sent out alerts at different times of the day and that 1000 was not the best time as many people would not have been at home. It was suggested that sending out all alerts again in the evening or using different sectors of the Public Information Zone (PIZ) to send out different alert messages may have been more useful and potentially provided more survey participants.

49. One caveat to the trial findings was that those who had received the alert and then provided feedback in the subsequent survey had also received a substantial

amount of pre-trial communications. This was a point reiterated by responders who felt that this gave a biased sample as people may not have reacted to the message in the same way in a real emergency without any prior awareness. The fact that the population who received the alert would also have received regular communication from the COMAH site again make them a potentially biased sample as they are likely to be more risk aware than the average member of the public. While the extent of the communications campaign may have biased the sample, it was felt that this was necessary to ensure that the population were aware that the alert messages were part of a trial and not a real incident.

50. Responders commented that the public alert message should have been more direct in terms of what it told people to do. While this may be a valid point it was vital during the trial that both CCS and all other project stakeholders were happy with the content of the message. One very important consideration was that the message would not induce any unnecessary alarm and should make clear that the trial was a test, not a real emergency.

51. Despite all the pre-trial communications sent out, there was still only a relatively small number of opt-ins to the follow up survey (239 out of 5,700). While this could have been due to the time of day the alert

was sent it is also further evidence of public apathy.

52. Concerns were raised about resilience and penetration of the system. If there were to be a telecommunications failure the system could potentially fall over. Also the Extended Direct Warnings (EDW) component of the system does not reach those who are not at home or do not have a landline, it would also not be an appropriate way to contact deaf members of the community. These points again demonstrate that as with all other alerting capabilities, extended FWD would not be sufficient for alerting the entire population as a standalone alerting system.

53. Despite the fact that responders felt the system would benefit the response to the scenarios outlined above, the general view from responders was that it was not an essential tool needed for their area. Responders generally felt that current arrangements were sufficient and that this would duplicate existing message notification systems in place (despite the fact that these are opt in) and it would not provide sufficient additional value given the cost and resource implications. It was felt that LRFs do not have the money at present to fund development or subscription to any system and that the return on investment would be low.

54. Cell broadcasting was generally seen as 'the way forward for civil alerting'. It was seen as the only truly new capability that would provide a significant impact in terms of addressing current alerting gaps and improving capability. It would target the transient population, a key problem at present. It would also reflect social and technological trends about the way people communicate and how.

55. In addition the fact that this is an opt out system, not requiring public sign up, was seen as a huge positive, particularly with the reluctance from the public to sign up to receive emergency alerts.

56. Concerns were raised about mobile coverage - cell broadcasting would not work if individuals did not have a signal and messages would not be stored to view later. It was recognised that follow up messages could be sent to combat this. Other points around branding and awareness of messages were seen as key issues that would require public education.

57. It was recognised that the system would not be a 'catch all' however the introduction of cell broadcasting was seen as very positive, worthy of further exploration with the potential to go some way in addressing current gaps in alerting capabilities.

## Cell Broadcasting

## Social Media

58. Responders felt that use of social media will increasingly play a part in communications with the public during an emergency. All areas used some form of social media, to varying degrees, this will only increase. The key challenges raised by responders who use social media have already been outlined in the report. Workshop attendees were keen to reiterate that use of social media can be very resource intensive and whilst it is not expensive to set up, management of it can be.

#### Other potential future alerting capabilities

59. At present responders do not seem to be considering any other potential future alerting capabilities other than those already outlined above. There does seem to be an appetite to improve existing capabilities however this is clearly bound by availability of resources and funding.

60. Established forms of alerting such as door knocking and sirens are important however they do have drawbacks. Whilst sirens can be very useful in notifying the immediate area that something has happened they are unable to convey further information. There is a question about whether people actually understand what they are supposed to do when they hear one. They are also inappropriate for contacting urban or larger areas of the population, those with personal music players or those in buildings with double glazing. Door knocking is hugely resource

intensive and may also require responders to enter hazardous areas.

61. The changing socio-technological trends that determine how people communicate and want to receive information means that alerting capabilities need to be reviewed and adapted so that technology can be exploited as appropriate. This does not mean abandoning former capabilities but enhancing what is available in order to meet the challenges of the modern world.

## CONCLUSION

62. The main findings from the workshops are highlighted below:

63. While current alerting capabilities are good there are gaps, most notably the ability of responders to send out messages quickly after an incident (in the first fifteen minutes) and to contact the transient population in an area impacted by an emergency.

64. There was an overwhelming view that public apathy and lack of awareness of emergency preparedness were key barriers to alerting. Responders felt work should be done, particularly in schools to better inform the public about what to do when they receive an emergency alert.

65. Learning from survivors of emergencies should be better recorded in order to preserve social memory and make people more aware of the risks facing them.

66. Extending FWD was seen as one potential option that could improve the response to some risks. Despite this it was not considered a vital tool to be rolled out for current risks profiles. It was also seen as a duplication of current message systems (albeit opt in systems with far less coverage.) The major hesitation was around cost and resource implications locally for what was seen as a system that would not sufficiently enhance current alert capabilities.

67. Cell broadcasting was the most endorsed way forward for improving UK alerting as it would address the need to contact the transient population, would not require people to sign up and would move forward with the way alerting is developing internationally. Issues were raised about cost and resource implications locally however it was felt there was benefit in exploring this option further.

68. Responders recognised the importance of having defined alerting protocols in place both prior to an emergency with the preparation of messages and following the transmission of alerts with the setting up of systems to deal with public enquires that follow. There was some reluctance to pre-draft alert messages due to the

unpredictability of incidents and the different information requirements as the incident continues, however the benefit of pre-drafting generic messages was recognised.

69. There were differing views amongst some responders about what alerting was and how it fits within a broader warning and informing strategy. Some responders classified alerting as getting information out to the public after an SCG had been stood up, three or four hours after the onset of an emergency as opposed to the quicker time alerts required immediately. It is suggested guidance on the alerting cycle is clarified to ensure full understanding and consistency of approach.

## Next Steps

70. Whilst it is recognised that any new potential alerting system will still not reach 100% of the target population it is agreed that there is room for improvement in this area. This could be technological, process driven or about better public awareness. An options paper will be put to Government officials to determine how this work is progressed.

71. The main aim, as this work is taken forward is to improve alerting capabilities and address current gaps. An important part of this will be to increase the number of people that can be reached and the speed with which they receive clear,

comprehensible messages following the onset of an emergency. This will enable people to follow instructions, take protective action and potentially save lives.

Annex A

## National Alerting System: LRF Questionnaire

This survey has been designed to enable the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) to gain a greater understanding of the civil alerting capabilities used in your LRF area. Your contribution is most welcome and it should take you around **20 minutes** to complete.

The objectives of this survey are to identify:

- Priority risks in your LRF
- Dissemination of information to the public regarding civil alerting
- Existing alerting capabilities in place
- Identified gaps in alerting capabilities

This is not intended to be an inspection tool but rather a way to help Government understand how it could improve future civil alerting capabilities. The results of this survey will be discussed in greater depth in the workshop. This consultation is part of a wider programme of work looking to improve civil alerting.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

### Part A- Priority Risks

1. Please complete the table below describing your top 5 priority risks in your LRF, as set out in your local community risk assessment, highlighting the corresponding impacts.

	Risk				
Fatalities					
Casualties					
Size of geographic area (sq miles)					
Numbers of properties					
Need for mass-shelter (numbers of people)					
Need for mass-evacuation (numbers of people)					

### Part B- Civil Alerting information

6. Is information about preparing for civil emergencies disseminated to the public?

a) Yes, specific information is sent out to residents and/or businesses in specific hazardous areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Yes, generic information is sent out to all residents across the LRF	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Yes, a combination of specific and generic information is sent out	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Yes, although not sent information is available for the public	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) No, information is sent out	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If you answered yes to Q6 (a, b c or d) via what medium is this information disseminated (tick all that apply)?

a) Leaflet/Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) TV	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Websites (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Email	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) SMS	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Recorded messages	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Public liaison committees (or equivalents)	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If you answered yes to Q6 (a, b or c) have you had any feedback on the impact this information has had? (For example, requests for more information/ increased website hits/social media mentions etc)

### Part C- Existing alerting capabilities

9. How are the public currently notified of an emergency in your area within the first two hours?

The Emergency Services (on the scene)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landline telephone call	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recorded voice message to mobile	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fax	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smartphone App	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional Media (Newspaper or broadcast)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Door knocking	<input type="checkbox"/>
SMS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minicom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Siren	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loudhailers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pagers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other [please specify]	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. What advice is given to members of the public in the first two hours of an emergency?

11. Do you have a notification capability in place? (I.e. a form of alerting the public which involves sending them a message about the emergency direct to them). If yes answer questions 13 -20. If no skip to question 21.
12. Does the system allow the user to send targeted messages to a specific group of people?
13. How have you incorporated the needs of diverse communities within your arrangements?
14. Do the public have to opt in to the system (i.e. sign up) or are they automatically included on the system?
15. Can the system record message receipt?
16. How quickly are messages transmitted?
17. Can the system support use of second languages?
18. Who has responsibility for activation of the alerting system?( i.e. who would push the button to send out alert messages)
19. Who has responsibility for maintaining the alerting system? (i.e. testing the system, ensuring data/training is up to date)
20. What is the annual cost for this system
21. Who provides this system?
  
22. What are the existing command and control arrangements in place for notifying the emergency responders within the LRF?
  - a. Who performs?
  - b. How many organisations are notified?
  - c. How long does this take?
23. What is the protocol for issuing lines to the media following the onset of an emergency?
24. Does the LRF communications plan consider how social media might be used in the event of an emergency?
25. Are there plans to utilise the websites of emergency responders during an emergency to cascade information?
26. If yes to Q25, how often are these updated?
27. Please populate the table below to indicate what arrangements the LRF have in place to deal with public enquiries during an emergency, and the organisation who leads on this. Please put 'Lead' in the box for the organisation would take the lead for this arrangement and 'Support' for the organisation that would support on this arrangement.

	LRF Organisations			
Arrangements for dealing with public enquiries	Police	Fire	Local Authority	Other- Please specify
Telephone				
Email				
Social Media				
SMS				
Fax				
Smart phone App				
Minicom				
Door Knocking				

Officers on location				
Other- Please specify				

#### Part D- Identified gaps in alerting capabilities

28. Based on the answers provided in sections A-C, what – if any - are the weaknesses in current alerting capabilities in your area?
29. Have you activated or exercised your alerting capabilities in the last year?
- a) In a live event? (Please supply the number of activations)
  - b) In an exercise? (Please supply the number of activations)
30. If you answered yes to Q27 a or b, what positives or learning points did you identify?
31. For the statements below please provide an appropriate mark from 1-5 to identify where your current systems stand in relation to:
- a) **Speed of message transmission** (1= I can instantly send a message out to the public, 5= It takes me 24 hours to send a message to the public) ..../5
  - b) **Messages to the public** (1= I have access to pre agreed specific message templates to send out to the public for a number of risks, 5= I have generic message templates/lines to take in place)  
..../5

Thank you for your time.

## Annex B

# National Alerting System: LRF Consultation Agenda

Time	Outline Agenda	Duration
10:30	Introduction & Welcome – Aims and objectives of the session	00:15
10:45	Workshop Session 1: Current Alerting Protocols  <b>Aim:</b> to understand risks facing the area, levels of public emergency preparedness and the current alerting capabilities in place.	01:00
11:45	CCS Presentation: What we learnt from the EFWD Trial and possible ways forward	00:20
12:05	Discussion of findings from CCS trials	00:30
12:35	<b>LUNCH</b>	00:45
13:20	Workshop Session 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft alert messages</li> <li>• Potential Future Alerting Methods</li> </ul> <b>Aim:</b> To understand views on potential future alerting capabilities and the impact this would have on existing arrangements.	02:00
15:20	Conclusion and next steps	00:10
15:30	<b>CLOSE</b>	

## Annex C

## DSTL Criteria for an 'effective alert system'

<b>Speed:</b>	The rate at which the warning is delivered to the intended audience
<b>Locality</b>	The extent to which the alert is geographically targeted to those who are affected by the emergency
<b>Targeting:</b>	Once the locality is identified this is the extent to which the right people are notified of an alert and that those who did not need to know about it were not communicated with.
<b>Spontaneity:</b>	The extent to which an individual has to complete an action to receive an alert (i.e. opting in)
<b>Non intrusiveness:</b>	Whilst in normal mode the alert medium should not interfere with the recipient's usual activity.
<b>Automated operation:</b>	The potential for the alert system to switch from normal mode to alert mode without the need for manual intervention.
<b>Ubiquity:</b>	The extent to which the alert method excludes people from receiving a message.
<b>Support for second languages:</b>	The potential for alert messages to be sent in additional languages.
<b>Content:</b>	The variety of formats employed to present information.
<b>Presentation:</b>	The ease at which the message is interpreted by the recipient.
<b>Receipting:</b>	Ascertaining whether the message has reached the intended recipients.
<b>Security and performance:</b>	The extent to which the system could be appropriately accessed and is available for use

## Refined Criteria for an ‘effective alert system’

<b>Speed</b>	The rate at which the warning is delivered to the target audience
<b>Targeted</b>	The extent to which the alert is geographically targeted to individuals who need to receive it, and does not reach recipients who do not need it
<b>Automatic registration</b>	The system will not require active registration but will automatically sign people up.
<b>Intrusive</b>	When activated the alert will interrupt the recipient’s current activity.
<b>Automated operation</b>	The potential for the alert system to switch from normal mode to alert mode without the need for manual intervention.
<b>Inclusivity</b>	The method should not exclude people from receiving a message due to the technology used or their individual needs for receiving messages.
<b>Format</b>	The variety of mediums used to present information.
<b>Comprehension</b>	The ease at which the message is interpreted by the recipient.
<b>Receipting</b>	Ascertaining whether the message is interpreted the recipient.
<b>Security and Resilience</b>	The extent to which the system could be appropriately accessed and is available for use.
<b>Support for additional languages</b>	The potential for alert messages to be sent in additional languages.

## Draft Alert Messages

Tweet

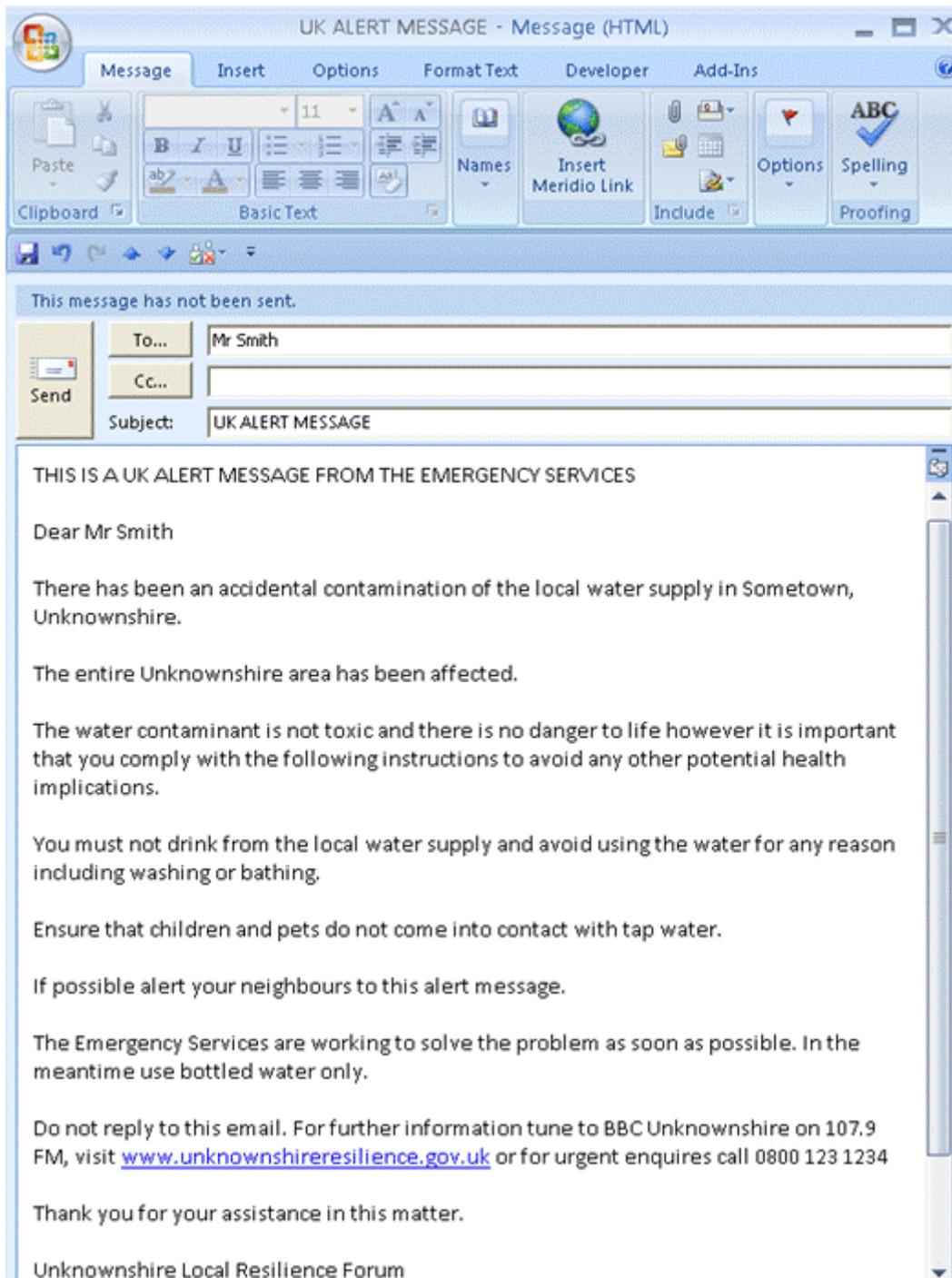
***#UK-ALERT 1300 030512 Water supply in Sometown has been contaminated DO NOT USE until further notice. Tune into radio 107.9FM for more info***

SMS

Cell Broadcast



# Email



## Audio Scripts

<p><b>Message one</b></p>	<p>This is an important UK alert message from the Emergency Services</p> <p>The local water supply in Sometown has been contaminated. Do not drink or use tap water until told that it is safe to do so. The water contaminant is not toxic however it is important that you comply with these instructions</p> <p>The Emergency services are working to resolve the problem. For further information tune to BBC Sometown on 1 0 7.9 FM, visit <a href="http://www.sometownresilience.gov.uk">www dot sometown resilience dot gov dot uk</a> or call 0 8 0 0 1 2 3 1 2 3 4</p> <p>It is important that you press 1 to acknowledge this message or press hash to replay</p>
<p><b>Message two</b></p>	<p>This is an important UK alert from the Emergency services</p> <p>A large toxic chemical release has occurred at X Shire Water treatment works.</p> <p>Go indoors immediately, close all windows and doors and stay inside. DO NOT GO OUTSIDE. Further instructions will be issued via BBC X Shire on 1 0 7 .9 FM.</p> <p>Emergency alerts have been issued to the surrounding area</p> <p>The Emergency Services are responding to this incident</p> <p>For further information tune to BBC X Shire on 1 0 7 . 9 FM, visit <a href="http://www.Xshireresilience.gov.uk">www dot X shire resilience dot gov dot uk</a> or call 0 8 0 0 1 2 3 1 2 3 4</p> <p>It is important that you press 1 to acknowledge this message or press has to replay</p>
<p><b>Message three</b></p>	<p>This is an important UK alert from the Emergency Services</p> <p>A major incident has occurred at Fortune City train station. Leave the area immediately and take shelter indoors. Do not attempt to approach the area.</p> <p>Tune in to BBC Fortune City on 1 0 7 .9 FM for further updates</p> <p>The Emergency Services are responding to this incident and have activated their major incident procedures.</p> <p>Visit <a href="http://www.fortuneresilience.gov.uk">www dot fortune resilience dot gov dot uk</a> for further information or call 0 8 0 0 1 2 3 1 2 3 4</p> <p>It is important that you press 1 to acknowledge this message to repeat press hash</p>