

The Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage & Intervention Maritime & Coastguard Agency

# UK National Contingency Plan Exercise CELTIC DEEP Report

# DIRECTORATE OF HM COASTGUARD

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Client: MCA

Version 1.0

#### Location

• This Document will be located on the Government web site https://www.gov.uk/.

## **Revision History**

• Date of this revision: 28/01/2021

Revision Date	Summary of Changes	
22 December 2020	First Draft (version 0.1)	
12 January 2021	Amendments made following comments received from the exercise sponsor (version 0.2)	
26 January 2021	Amendments made following comments received from heads of cells (version 0.3)	
28 January 2021	Document approved for release (version 1.0)	

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Government Web site	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications	

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Exercise CELTIC DEEP was a multi-agency exercise which took place in October 2020 to test the United Kingdom's (UK) response to a major shipping incident within the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- 1.2 Government departments, local authorities, the shipping industry, and their contractors were all tested in their response to a major shipping incident.
- 1.3 The exercise was planned and coordinated in an efficient manner ensuring the overall aim and objectives were met (see Appendix E), while also maximising opportunities for learning, including acknowledging the potential effects of human factors while promoting the importance of constructive feedback and appropriate behaviours.
- 1.4 The exercise, which had been rescheduled from June 2020 due to the ongoing impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), was conducted almost entirely remotely, with only a few participants operating from their workplace.
- 1.5 Previous National Contingency Plan (NCP) exercise reports were considered throughout the exercise planning process with recommendations, observations and areas of good practice noted to assist in the evaluation of continual improvement.
- 1.6 All cells<sup>1</sup> which were formally evaluated were engaged with the scenario development and their role within the NCP fully tested.
- 1.7 The conclusion was the exercise aim "*To test and verify the UK's National Contingency Plan for response to marine pollution from shipping, under remote working conditions*" was met and while showing that the NCP was broadly effective, a number of areas were identified where further refinement is recommended.
- 1.8 Points raised by the evaluation team, the command team and all participants are included in this report, with the objective of further improving the UK's response to a major salvage and/or environmental incident. These points should be reviewed and considered by the appropriate organisation.
- 1.9 A summary of the online exercise feedback form, sent to all participants, is included in Section 8. The general view of the submissions of this form is in support of the findings of the exercise evaluation team.
- 1.10 This report also acknowledges the support and feedback received from all participants and officials through the planning, execution, and evaluation of the exercise.
- 1.11 The importance of teamwork, willingness, and enthusiasm to enable the exercise to be successful was key and everyone involved are thanked for their part in achieving this.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> As per the NCP, the term 'cell' in this report refers to any centre, cell, unit, group, team, or similar grouping term used within the response to the exercise.

## 2. Exercise Director Summary

- 2.1 Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all individuals and organisations for their participation in this exercise; without you, the exercise would not have been possible.
- 2.2 The planning did not come without its challenges and I commend all members of the planning team for the successful delivery.
- 2.3 Whilst the exercise was conducted remotely, it should be noted that most response personnel involved in a pollution and/or salvage incident, would usually manage the incident remotely in the first instance, travelling to site as and when required. However, this is the first time all national cells (as defined in the NCP) have been tested under remote working conditions.
- 2.4 Whilst it would be fair to say that this worked, I think it is also fair to say there is room for improving how we would respond under remote conditions; examples of this can be found later in the report.
- 2.5 I would also like to note that this exercise was designed to test plans and processes and not the single individuals involved in the response, although there are occasions when reference is made to lead individuals or chairs of cells.
- 2.6 Where this occurs, every effort has been made to ensure that any recommendations are identified because of a process issue and not in relation to personal performance.
- 2.7 It must, however, be said that where evaluations and observations have identified issues in relation to individuals, these can be put into two categories: 1) experienced, but lacking competence, and 2) competent but lacking experience. Each organisation is responsible for identifying where competency and experience may be an issue and address those internally.
- 2.8 A few final words on forward planning and incident escalation potential. Whilst it is important to respond to the incident presented at the time, it is equally important to think and plan ahead and identify what else could happen, all the time keeping stakeholders informed whilst also seeking their input. Whilst there may be a lead agency or representative for part(s) of the incident, seldom does that agency or individual work alone.
- 2.9 Stakeholder engagement and interaction is critical to resolving a situation and we should all make time to build these relationships before incidents occur.
- 2.10 Finally, I hope that both those that participated and those that have an interest in the NCP will benefit from the observations and recommendations presented in this report, with the aim of improving how we respond to marine pollution and salvage incidents in the waters around the UK.

## Lisa

Lisa McAuliffe, Exercise Director

## 3. Introduction

- 3.1 The purpose of the NCP is to ensure that there is a timely, measured, and effective response to incidents of, and impact from, marine pollution from shipping and offshore installations.
- 3.2 The UK must meet many national and international legal obligations to plan and prepare for pollution and salvage and the NCP addresses part of these obligations.
- 3.3 The owners and masters of ships and the operators of offshore installations bear the primary responsibility for ensuring that they do not pollute the sea. Port and harbour authorities are likewise responsible for ensuring that their areas operate in a manner that avoids marine pollution. All aforementioned are responsible for responding to incidents involving their assets within their area of jurisdiction.
- 3.4 However, ships, offshore installations and port and harbour authorities may face problems which exceed the response capabilities they can reasonably maintain by themselves and their contractors, and in these circumstances the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) may need to use national assets to support the response to a marine pollution incident.
- 3.5 The response structure expected to be established for a significant pollution and/or salvage incident is detailed in the NCP. See image below:



Figure 1: Shipping - Incident Management Framework

3.6 The NCP sets out the circumstances in which the MCA deploys the UK's national assets to respond to a marine pollution incident.

- 3.7 The HM Coastguard Directorate within the MCA includes responsibility for maritime, coastal, aeronautical, and counter pollution operations, HM Coastguard policy and standards and other than during incidents, the SOSREP team. In addition, the directorate includes several other functions in support of operations, such as infrastructure, governance, and resilience.
- 3.8 The Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention (SOSREP) is empowered to act and provide overall direction for salvage, intervention, and the prevention/mitigation of marine pollution in relation to shipping and offshore installations. In the absence of the SOSREP, the deputy or designated personnel are empowered to exercise the SOSREP's powers.
- 3.9 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Section 2, places a duty upon Category 1 responders to prevent an emergency, reduce, control, or mitigate its effects, in relation to their functions and take any other action in connection with it. Local Authorities are Category 1 responders and are required to prepare and implement local response plans based on this requirement.
- 3.10 The purpose of this report is to capture lessons learnt from the exercise and produce recommendations, observations, and areas of good practice for all participating organisations to consider adopting during an incident.
- 3.11 HM Coastguard Standards Branch will monitor the progress and conclusion of the recommendations and observations assigned to the MCA.
- 3.12 The NCP Strategic Group will monitor the actions taken on all recommendations and observations, but it will be the responsibility of individual organisations to consider and develop any observations assigned to their own organisation.
- 3.13 While the majority of participants were responding remotely, the exercise director emphasised the importance of adhering to all relevant Government and organisational guidance on COVID-19, including anyone who was operating from a workplace.
- 3.14 All participants in the exercise had responsibility for their own and others' safety and there were no reports of any injuries or damage to the environment during the exercise.

## 4. Exercise Overview

- 4.1.1 Exercise CELTIC DEEP was conducted in real time on 20 and 21 October 2020.
- 4.1.2 Originally scheduled to be held in southwest Wales in June 2020, due to COVID-19, the decision was made to postpone the exercise. Given ongoing uncertainties, the exercise was rescheduled for October and planned and conducted remotely.
- 4.1.3 This was the first time that an NCP exercise did not have physical involvement by the majority of participants, however, there was participation from over 200 individuals and 40+ organisations, with 9 cells being formally evaluated in line with their individual objectives.
- 4.1.4 The exercise was designed to activate the strategic, tactical and operational levels of the various response organisations and included the involvement of MCA's Office

of the Chairman and Chief Executive, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Aviation and Maritime.

- 4.1.5 The scenario began with a blackout and loss of propulsion on the Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) tanker 'NEWRA', which was bound for the Port of Milford Haven, resulting in a collision between the 'NEWRA' and a bulk carrier 'EKUL', 25nm southwest of Milford Haven. There were no injuries on board either vessel, and the 'EKUL' reported no significant damage and was therefore able to continue passage to Warrenpoint.
- 4.1.6 The 'NEWRA' sustained damage to the starboard aft quarter, resulting in a release of Low Sulphur Fuel Oil (LSFO) from the starboard bunker tank. With a continued loss of power, a controlled venting of LNG took place on the following morning.
- 4.1.7 While the exercise was 'paused' overnight, there was no jump in time and a briefing at the start of day two by the exercise director, ensured all exercise participants were provided with the same summary of the scenario and actions to date.

#### 4.2 Exercise Sponsor

- 4.2.1 Exercise CELTIC DEEP was sponsored by the MCA's director of HM Coastguard.
- 4.2.2 The sponsor organisation was accountable for the delivery of the event and for ensuring lessons were captured, with commensurate corrective actions and solutions implemented across the sponsor organisation, in this case the MCA.
- 4.2.3 The exercise sponsor has no authority to direct other organisations to act on the recommendations made in this report. Therefore, observations have been made as an alternative for all NCP stakeholders to consider.

#### 4.3 Exercise Planning Team

- 4.3.1 The exercise director appointed for exercise CELTIC DEEP was accountable to the exercise sponsor for the preparation and delivery of the exercise.
- 4.3.2 The core planning team (Appendix A) assembled by the exercise director to provide experience and expertise in key areas, included members from the MCA, as well as external organisations.
- 4.3.3 Additional specialist input was requested on an ad hoc basis.
- 4.3.4 The planning team held monthly meetings between October 2019 and October 2020. Due to COVID-19, all meetings were held remotely and because of the enforced date change for the exercise.

#### 4.4 Exercise Command Team

- 4.4.1 The exercise director established a command team which included most of the planning team, plus additional members, to assist with the execution of the exercise.
- 4.4.2 Due to the circumstances, most of the command team were working remotely and therefore utilised several communication options, predominantly Microsoft Teams (MS Teams). Further detail on communication methods used during the exercise is included in Section 9.

#### 4.5 Exercise Evaluation Team

- 4.5.1 The exercise director assigned a lead evaluator, who was responsible for the management of the evaluation team and for the production of this final exercise report.
- 4.5.2 The evaluation team was put together from a range of stakeholders, drawing on operational experience and knowledge of the NCP and multi-agency working.
- 4.5.3 This team was responsible for the evaluation of the key response cells during the exercise, in accordance with the agreed evaluation criteria, to determine to what degree the objectives for that cell had been achieved.
- 4.5.4 Given the complexities of the remote evaluation, and to provide additional support, a member of the directing staff was allocated to certain cells.
- 4.5.5 Further information of the evaluation process is detailed in Section 5.

#### 4.6 Media Operations

- 4.6.1 The original concept of assessing the media response to CELTIC DEEP had been to utilise external players to represent members of the press corps, including radio and TV, in situ at Milford Haven. The change in concept to a remote exercise as a result of COVID-19 meant that this was no longer possible.
- 4.6.2 The remote nature of the exercise provided a challenge for planning the involvement of the media response. Heather Skull from the MCA coordinated the content development, with support provided by Lowson Media, with both also providing media inputs throughout the exercise.
- 4.6.3 The number of organisations who were prepared to "play" in the exercise from a media perspective was limited, and eventually just six took part, namely the MCA; Natural Resources Wales (NRW); Port of Milford Haven; Oil Spill Response Limited OSRL); K-Line Shipping and Ambipar. The DfT had a limited media involvement on day two.
- 4.6.4 No central media briefing cell was possible due to remote working however, key agencies participated and liaised via MS Teams and email.
- 4.6.5 As the lead authority, the MCA Press Office agreed a pre-exercise public press release with other participating authorities. The purpose of the release was to make the public aware that an exercise was taking place and thereby allay any public concern.
- 4.6.6 Further information on the media response is contained in section 6.11.

#### 4.7 Observers

- 4.7.1 Requests were received and observers initially identified when the exercise was scheduled for June.
- 4.7.2 Due to the change in circumstances caused by COVID-19, no observers were involved in the exercise.

## 5. Evaluation Process

- 5.1.1 Nine cells were formally evaluated as part of Exercise CELTIC DEEP. The objectives for these are included in Appendix E:
  - Marine Response Centre
  - Salvage Control Unit
  - Wales Environment Group
  - HM Coastguard, including the NMOC and ARCC in Fareham and Milford Haven CGOC
  - Department for Transport
  - Dyfed Powys Local Resilience Forum
  - Port of Milford Haven
  - Multi-agency Media Response
  - K-Line Shipping
- 5.1.2 The evaluation team provided a qualified and independent review of how each of these cells responded to the scenario, and how they each dovetailed into the NCP and other independent responding organisation's emergency plans.
- 5.1.3 The lead evaluator emphasised that the exercise was to be evaluated in a *fair and constructive* manner, using pre-prepared evaluation forms ensuring a consistent format for the development of this exercise report and effective analysis of any common themes. Broad topics of Establishment of the Response Cell, Response Cell Operations, Communications and Teamwork were included on each form, with bespoke evaluation criteria listed for specialist functions.
- 5.1.4 While being a national exercise, with an official evaluation, the exercise and evaluation was conducted in a safe environment to ensure positive learning could be achieved. Feedback was not requested for individual performance and instead concentrated on procedural improvements.
- 5.1.5 Other than the evaluators attending the HM Coastguard operations centres or at the Port of Milford Haven, each was evaluating the response remotely and therefore were mostly limited to evaluating the success of the online meetings. However, additional evaluation was also achieved via the monitoring of emails, output from meetings and the inclusion of the evaluators in MS Teams chat groups.
- 5.1.6 The lead evaluator and members of the evaluation team reviewed past NCP exercise reports prior to the exercise and during the compilation of this report. Of particular relevance, the recommendations and observations of the two most recent exercises (SHEN and GREY SEAL) were analysed and while the evaluation team did not assess the progress of these, a number were noted as also being relevant to the findings from CELTIC DEEP.
- 5.1.7 To broaden the scope of the exercise evaluation, an online feedback form was created and distributed to all participants. Elements from the responses are included throughout this report and a summary is provided in Section 8.

- 5.1.8 The online feedback form included questions relating to remote working and human factors, to understand more about the effectiveness of an exercise, or incident response, managed in this way.
- 5.1.9 The evaluation reports received from each evaluator have been analysed, along with additional responses from other organisations and that of the online participant feedback. The outputs from these have been summarised in this report as:
  - Recommendation A key item or area identified by the evaluation team which would benefit from an improvement to further enhance the effectiveness of a response in the future, and which will carry recommended remedial action. Recommendations are only recorded against the MCA or SOSREP function.
  - Observation A key item or area identified by the evaluation team of particular note, but which does not come with a recommended course of action. All observations should be considered, with individual organisations responsible for any desired outcome.
  - Good practice An item or area identified by the evaluation team of particular benefit, which resulted in a positive response or contribution during the exercise, and should be encouraged in future.
- 5.1.10 A 'hot wash-up' was completed by the evaluators at the end of each day, to capture any immediate areas of concern, and for those after the end of day one, to highlight any points to be addressed overnight.

## 6. Evaluation reports

The following reports are split by specific cells, but also summarise key areas such as exercise development, remote working, and human factors. The lead evaluator has also analysed common themes and summarised these separately.

#### 6.1 Exercise development and delivery

- 6.1.1 The evaluation of the planning, development and delivery of the exercise was completed by the lead evaluator, with consideration given to the results of the online feedback.
- 6.1.2 Multiple members of the planning team were also required to participate in some of the exercise cells, or provide role-playing injects. While perhaps unavoidable in many cases (due to finite staff resources), this is not an ideal scenario and can lead to unintentional artificiality or confusion.

Observation 1 (Ref 6.1.2): having members of the planning team, command team or role-players also participating within the exercise can cause additional confusion and unnecessary complexity, therefore where possible, should be kept as separate roles. 6.1.3 The exercise director led the planning team very effectively and following the initial meetings, utilised an evolving PowerPoint presentation to provide status updates. This was a clear and effective way of ensuring all members were fully aware of the exercise development and it is noted this was also highlighted in a previous report.

Good practice 1 (Ref 6.1.3): using a regularly updated PowerPoint presentation to guide planning meetings enables an efficient way of summarising progress at each stage.

- 6.1.4 The initial intention was to hold some planning meetings in person to allow for enhanced interaction, however, all were ultimately held remotely. While some early connection challenges resulted in the use of conference calls, the majority of meetings were held using MS Teams, which performed well and allowed for screen sharing of the briefing PowerPoint referenced in 6.1.3.
- 6.1.5 In the early planning stages, there were key elements which were required to be confirmed including exercise dates, venues, scenario, and a shipping company. These elements are very much inter-dependent on each other and therefore waiting for a shipping company to be determined, resulted in difficulty confirming dates and venues.
- 6.1.6 Prior to the exercise being postponed, the exercise dates were initially confirmed in June, however, there were subsequent issues in finding suitable accommodation to host the various cells, including the command team.

Observation 2 (Ref 6.1.5, 6.1.6): prebooking venues at least six months in advance of expected exercise dates, will help ensure achieving good availability

6.1.7 Additional dates were sought by the exercise director and planning team once it became clear a physical exercise in June would not be possible. Options in October, December and the new year were considered, with a preference to complete it as early as possible being agreed.

Observation 3 (Ref 6.1.7): considering additional exercise dates as a contingency would assist in efficient rescheduling, should a postponement be required

- 6.1.8 An exercise budget was allocated to the exercise director, although due to the significant savings associated with the exercise being conducted remotely, much of this was not required. However, it should be recognised that approximately 75% of the budget may have been utilised had the exercise been run physically and with a deployment demonstration combined.
- 6.1.9 It was noted that due to budget allocation over two financial years, there may have been complications around some commitments such as booking accommodation and the requirement to spend a certain quantity before the end of the first financial year.

Observation 4 (Ref 6.1.9): important to be aware of any budget breakdown and what impacts this may have on exercise planning

6.1.10 A number of technical and software options were discussed as part of exercise planning and these are expanded upon as a cross exercise learning in Section 9.

6.1.11 An MCA SharePoint site was utilised for all the exercise documentation and this was a very efficient way of sharing and developing relevant content. Organisations external to the MCA were able to be provided with access, allowing all the planning team visibility of the documentation.

Good practice 2 (Ref 6.1.11): the utilisation of SharePoint for exercise documentation is an effective way of managing exercise development and delivery

6.1.12 There were some technical issues identified in setting this up, particularly for those from external organisations to the MCA. However, having a member of MCA ICT as part of the planning team was invaluable to overcoming these challenges.

Good practice 3 (Ref 6.1.12): including MCA ICT as part of the planning and command teams is invaluable to assist in smooth running of an exercise

- 6.1.13 The exercise director was required to spend considerable time creating and updating documentation, rather than being able to concentrate on coordinating the efforts of the planning team.
- 6.1.14 It was clear that delays did occur while waiting on some input from members of the planning team, and as a result, much of the scenario was developed far too late and responses received after stated deadlines.

Observation 5 (Ref 6.1.13, 6.1.14): it is vital that all planning team members fully engage with the planning process and regularly check and update exercise documentation according to set deadlines.

Observation 6 (Ref 6.1.13, 6.1.14): future exercise directors to allocate specific actions to planning team members with expectations that status reports are provided at each planning meeting, establishing sub-groups for specific topics as required.

6.1.15 While requested by the exercise director, few members of the planning team provided a named backup to support as part of resilience planning.

Observation 7 (Ref 6.1.15): all key members of the planning team should arrange for someone to provide backup, for resilience.

- 6.1.16 Overall, the exercise was prepared and delivered on time, with important input from all members of the planning team.
- 6.1.17 It is also recognised that all members of the planning team were delivering input to the exercise preparation, while dealing with personal and organisational challenges because of COVID-19.
- 6.1.18 The exercise director circulated the exercise orders to all participants in good time, allowing adequate briefing and preparation. These were again distributed, along with the telephone directory, immediately before the exercise.

#### 6.2 Exercise command

- 6.2.1 Having the command team operating remotely was challenging and did not allow for straightforward communication, however, the exercise ran smoothly throughout, and all queries or issues identified were handled in a timely manner.
- 6.2.2 MS Teams was identified as the preferred method of communicating during the exercise and a number of channels setup for the planning, evaluation, and command teams. WhatsApp groups were also established as a backup, should there be issues with MS Teams.
- 6.2.3 On the most part, MS Teams performed well for this purpose, although there were a couple of members who were not able to access all functionality and some identified the range of options as confusing and difficult to manage.

Observation 8 (Ref 6.2.2, 6.2.3): ensure there is one consistent means of communication plus a backup available for **all** the command team and evaluators, and all members test and are confident in the operation before utilising in an exercise. The backup should only be used if the primary does not work.

6.2.4 An exercise command log was created to enable evaluators and command team members to input and track activities occurring during the exercise. This proved to be invaluable as a means of assessing relevant activities, including scheduled meetings, key updates and emails or reports. The log was originally intended to be accessed via the relevant MS Teams channel, however, providing the direct link was more beneficial, particularly for those with limited MS Teams functionality.

Good practice 4 (Ref 6.2.4): a digital exercise command log is an excellent way of managing the flow of information between the command team and evaluation team

- 6.2.5 While the command team was made up of a number of individuals and directing staff, partly co-located with exercise cells, much of the coordination activities fell to the exercise director and lead evaluator. While this was manageable, it was not efficient and resulted in a very high workload throughout the two days. This was not helped by commanding the exercise remotely.
- 6.2.6 At times throughout the exercise, members of the command and di-staff team were required, or chose, to take part in exercise meetings. While this may provide additional situational awareness, it did lead to a higher workload with the potential for a conflict of priority and confusion over roles.
- 6.2.7 The exercise director was required to deal with a high number of phone calls, many of which were not directly related to the command of the exercise.
- 6.2.8 The national exercise email account was included by participants to good effect, as was recommended in a previous report, allowing the command team to monitor many of the communications. However, a constant flow of emails over the course of the two days was challenging to administer and it was apparent that not all emails being sent included this address.

Observation 9 (Ref 6.2.5, 6.2.8): two members of the command team, with an understanding of expected email content, available at all times to monitor the national exercise email account, would allow for suitable breaks and contingency

6.2.9 Key reports, minutes and emails received into the national exercise account were saved onto SharePoint and referenced in the command log, allowing all planning team members to access them as required.

Good practice 5 (Ref 6.2.9): saving important emails and attachments onto SharePoint, and referencing in the command log, is an effective way of sharing this information, without the requirement for forwarding multiple emails

6.2.10 The exercise ran as per the expected timeline with very few issues encountered. Feedback from participants indicate that the scenario provided a suitable and realistic challenge throughout the two days.

Recommendation 1 (Ref 6.1, 6.2): a document should be created by the MCA, with guidance on how to effectively develop and execute a national exercise, including templates for terms of reference, evaluation reports and recognised exercise good practice.

#### 6.3 HM Coastguard Maritime Operations

- 6.3.1 Via a national network of 11 coordination centres, HM Coastguard maritime operations is responsible for the initiation and coordination of civil maritime search and rescue within the UK's search and rescue region. In addition, and as one of six functions, maritime operations provides a 24-hour response and coordination service, to respond to pollution at sea within the UK EEZ.
- 6.3.2 The HM Coastguard operational response was from the Coastguard Operations Centre (CGOC) in Milford Haven, with support from the National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) in Fareham.
- 6.3.3 The lead evaluator, in discussion with the relevant evaluators, consider that while a number of learnings were identified, the HM Coastguard objectives for this exercise were met. Details of all objectives are included in Appendix E.
- 6.3.4 The Strategic Planning Room at the National Maritime Operations Centre was not utilised due to COVID-19 however, remote strategic elements were tested.
- 6.3.5 There was some initial confusion and delay at the outset of the incident regarding vessel names and positions, however, this was due to exercise artificiality and was addressed by directing staff.
- 6.3.6 An early team briefing was undertaken by the Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator (SMC) which ensured everyone was aware of the information to date and what actions were required.
- 6.3.7 The duty controller was notified in good time, who in turn informed the duty maritime commander, providing them with a detailed summary report.

- 6.3.8 Following initial information gathering and analysis, including the use of Automatic Identification System (AIS) for situational awareness, the incident was classified as 'Alert', however following the collision, this was upgraded to 'Distress'.
- 6.3.9 The phase classification was questioned by the duty controller since there were no search and rescue (SAR) resources responding, however, given the potential risk, the evaluator assessed this as being an appropriate emergency phase classification. Resources and other emergency services had been informed, although a consideration for the SMC could have been to bring lifeboats to immediate readiness.
- 6.3.10 A mission statement was completed, although it should have been actioned earlier and updated more frequently.
- 6.3.11 The Port of Milford Haven were notified by the CGOC and ongoing engagement was maintained throughout.
- 6.3.12 The port requested information from the CGOC on several occasions, which were not able to be answered at the time due to updates being required from duty officers.
- 6.3.13 Meetings in the operations room were structured with good two-way discussions around factors such as damage, cargo, volatility of cargo, leakage/explosions, and the need to warn other shipping. The requirement and benefits of a Temporary Exclusion Zone were also discussed at an early stage.
- 6.3.14 The team within the CGOC did not initially use 'Facts, Factors, Deductions and Output' or an incident timeline during their mission planning, although this was rectified during the second day.
- 6.3.15 The HM Coastguard Operational management System (OmS) was referred to and used throughout, and early use of search planning software ensured a constant prediction of any impact from the 'NEWRA' with land.
- 6.3.16 A major incident was declared by the HM Coastguard duty maritime commander however there was considerable discussion around this, and the duty controller appeared to be waiting on input from the duty Counter Pollution and Salvage Officer (DCPSO).

Recommendation 2 (Ref 6.3.16): the process for declaring a major incident should be reviewed and clear instruction given on activation and triggers.

- 6.3.17 Initial flow of information between the CGOC and the DCPSO was good, although as the incident progressed, there was more support provided by additional CPSOs, which resulted, on occasion, with multiple communication channels into the CGOC and duplication of effort
- 6.3.18 In addition, there was also a disconnect between the CGOC, the NMOC, and the DCPSO/MRC. The reason for this is unclear however, more link calls could have been established to ensure a consistent brief was provided.
- 6.3.19 Due to this, situational awareness within the CGOC was limited.

Recommendation 3 (Ref 6.3.17, 6.3.18): during a counter pollution or salvage incident, a single CPSO should maintain contact with the CGOC, up until such time as a coastguard liaison officer is assigned as part of a NCP cell(s), to ensure timely information exchange and avoid duplication of effort.

- 6.3.20 Multiple situation reports (SITREP), including defect reports, SAR situation reports and pollution reports, were requested and prepared by the CGOC staff during the course of the exercise.
- 6.3.21 In addition, EU SITREPs required three separate reports (collision, not under command and pollution), however, this tied up operators as each one needed to be completed separately, despite duplicated information.

Lead evaluator comment: a previous report also noted the requirement for multiple reports, requiring duplication in effort to complete. There is currently work being undertaken by the MCA to explore ways of streamlining the compilation of reports.

Recommendation 4 (Ref 6.3.20, 6.3.21): the MCA should review the process for compiling formal SITREPs to remove, where possible, duplicated data entry.

- 6.3.22 There were some inaccuracies in the quality of the information included in some SITREPs, though this was recognised by the operations team and amended.
- 6.3.23 The team in the CGOC recognised the benefit of having reports checked for accuracy by another officer before they are sent, and once they did, this improved the quality of information.

Recommendation 5 (Ref 6.3.23): the MCA should consider implementing a process where all formal reports, or other communications, which are sent by a CGOC, are quality checked by another officer and confirmed by a log entry.

- 6.3.24 Feedback suggested that there were insufficient pollution reports (POLREP) issued, although there appeared to be a misunderstanding on who requests these are sent.
- 6.3.25 An updated POLREP was requested by a CPSO late on day one, however, the requested format was not compatible with the structured message, specifically around word limit, which caused delays in issuing.

Lead evaluator comment: several external organisations were waiting on the issue of the first POLREP and once received, as highlighted in 6.3.22, there were a number of inaccuracies. The position was rectified with an updated version, although there were still errors, including with the wind and tide. POLREP 2 was sent in the morning of day two although this related to the report of pollution from a yacht and otherwise appeared unrelated. POLREP 3, a more complete report, sent mid-morning of day two, is likely the report which was originally delayed.

Recommendation 6 (Ref 6.3.24): the MCA to review the POLREP standard operating procedure and ensure clearer instruction is provided on when one is required, and who makes this decision.

Observation 10 (Ref 6.3.25): the limits on the POLREP wordcount in the HM Coastguard incident management system (ViSION) resulted in messages from the CPSO not being compatible.

- 6.3.26 There appeared to be some confusion regarding the type of gas and the potential impact, however, this was due to a misunderstanding of what LNG was.
- 6.3.27 There was also confusion over who was attending which cell as there was a lack of clear direction being received at the CGOC.
- 6.3.28 It was recognised that the functionality of the HM Coastguard zone email addresses is ineffective. Several emails were observed to be sent to this address, with no apparent response.

Recommendation 7 (Ref 6.3.28) the MCA review the effectiveness and use of the zone email addresses to ensure received emails are actioned in a timely manner

- 6.3.29 On the second day, the coordination of the medical evacuation of a crew member was handled well, with good considerations and questions from the team, particularly around the requirement for the ship venting, and any subsequent impact on the SAR helicopter.
- 6.3.30 The master and crew of the tugs on-scene were requested to ascertain if there were any gas alarms activating, and the assessment of risk was relayed to the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC).
- 6.3.31 While managing the incident admirably, the SMC was required to attend a number of meetings which impacted their ability to lead the team, particularly as it required significant time away from the operations room. This was partly caused by initial difficulty encountered for the CGOC logging into MS Teams meetings, until the station iPads could be utilised.

Recommendation 8 (Ref 6.3.27, 6.3.31): the MCA to review and confirm the role of the SMC and on-call officers in support of operational and tactical meetings, including the role of the Coastguard Liaison Officer.

Observation 11 (Ref 6.3.31): headphones for CGOC iPads, for use within the operations room, would have been beneficial.

- 6.3.32 The CGOC team worked very well together, handling calls and requests professionally and calmly. Their professionalism was excellent throughout.
- 6.3.33 The SMC was new to this scale of incident but did an excellent job, seeking advice from their team when appropriate and ensuring the team were updated when significant information was received. Occasionally the SMC reverted to the tactical commander to challenge comments or discussion points respectfully but firmly.
- 6.3.34 The SMC, along with senior managers, ensured the welfare of all staff and that resilience was in place. The SMC also nominated a deputy during any absence from the operations room.

Recommendation 9: HM Coastguard tactical and strategic response group meetings should be included in more day to day processes so that they become the norm. The value of these groups during COVID-19 has been recognised and this needs to be replicated during incidents. The integration of these meetings within existing structures such as the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and NCP, should be considered.

6.3.35 Feedback was being received into the operations room from external stakeholders that there was frustration on the changing/delaying of multi-agency meetings. For example, the start time for one meeting was updated three times and the purpose changed, then within a short time frame changed back again. This led to some confusion and duplication of effort by the team.

Observation 12 (Ref 6.3.35): when meetings are arranged, it is unprofessional to cancel these, or update agendas. If a chair is busy, a deputy should be appointed as other responders are expecting meetings and are likely in need of the updates.

#### 6.4 Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre

- 6.4.1 The UK ARCC supports the emergency services by tasking and coordinating SAR aviation assets in order to locate and retrieve persons in distress, potential distress or missing, provide for their medical or other needs and deliver them to a place of safety.
- 6.4.2 The ARCC in Fareham was officially evaluated, however, it was recognised by the evaluator that they only had a relatively minor role and had no defined specific objectives.
- 6.4.3 The exercise provided a useful opportunity for discussion and planning between the ARCC and the MCA fixed wing provider, 2Excel and communications between both parties were good.
- 6.4.4 There was a real-world requirement for the fixed wing aircraft concurrent to the scenario request, however, this was managed by the ARCC using the prioritisation document.
- 6.4.5 There was a poor flow of communications coming into the ARCC from other MCA cells and a critical piece of information, that the incident had not been declared a major incident, was not passed to the ARCC.

Observation 13 (Ref 6.4.5): the MCA did not apparently use the major incident checklists, which would have aided the correct notification. This can be linked to Recommendation 3.

- 6.4.6 More frequent and timely updates from the MRC would have allowed the ARCC to effectively forward plan for the coming hours and days, including for further engagement and planning with 2Excel.
- 6.4.7 The request for aerial surveillance on day two was not received by the ARCC or 2Excel, however, the evaluator noted that this could have been a result of the pause of activity overnight.

Recommendation 10 (Ref 6.4.7): the MCA consider reviewing the ARCC operations guide regarding the tasking of MCA aviation assets during large scale incidents.

6.4.8 Notification of the intention to vent LNG was not received by the ARCC and a request for restricted airspace did not come until after the venting had started. These requests take time to process and therefore a timely receipt is vital.

Lead evaluator comment: the lack of notification in regard to venting is in conflict to that raised in 6.3.29 and 6.3.30, however on further investigation, this is considered to be explained by a variance in timing.

Observation 14 (Ref 6.4.8): it can take a significant amount of time to action a request for restricted airspace with relevant authorities and therefore if one is required, early notification to the ARCC is important.

6.4.9 Real world incidents on day two reached an unusually high level, for the time of year, and highlighted the importance of holding an exercise outside of peak season.

Good practice 6: the scheduling of exercises involving the ARCC should be conducted out with peak season, as was the case with CELTIC DEEP, to avoid conflict with real world incidents.

Good practice 7: this exercise prompted useful learning and discussions within the ARCC team on responding to non-Search and Rescue incidents which the MCA is responsible for, and for planning with 2Excel.

#### 6.5 HM Coastguard Tactical and Strategic Coordination

- 6.5.1 HM Coastguard mobilised and chaired coordinating groups to assist in the multiagency coordination of the exercise response.
- 6.5.2 The effectiveness of these groups was evaluated, with comments contained below also incorporating those raised by external organisations.
- 6.5.3 There was confusion caused by a disconnect between the MCA tactical and strategic commanders regarding the provision of a 'METHANE' message<sup>2</sup>.
- 6.5.4 This was also evident regarding the establishment of the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) and MRC as a joint entity, before subsequently being separated.
- 6.5.5 Decisions in the TCG were somewhat 'confused' by the requirement to dovetail and defer to other cells and groups established, rather than creating a joint understanding of risk and developing options and contingencies.
- 6.5.6 While brief situational updates were provided, neither the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) Joint Decision Model (JDM) or an agenda were used to structure the meetings.
- 6.5.7 The consequences of this were:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> From JESIP, METHANE is an established reporting framework which provides a common structure for responders and their control rooms to share major incident information.

- partners did not have opportunity to provide updates or opportunities for interoperable or joint working
- no 'battle rhythm' was set for subsequent meetings
- no suitable minutes were issued
- no common operating picture/mapping was formulated or referred to
- no METHANE or situational update provided to stakeholders
- nothing was published on Resilience Direct
- little or no resilience planning
- the LRF established an additional TCG to co-ordinate the shoreline response efforts.
- 6.5.8 The Port of Milford Haven commented that the TCG meetings were not structured, with no clear remit or administration such as agendas and minutes.
- 6.5.9 However, the Port of Milford Haven highlighted that there was a lack of strategic direction from HM Coastguard, who commented that this was impacting other stakeholders and responders who were in turn contacting the CGOC.
- 6.5.10 The secretariat for the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) effectively promulgated information, including actions, decisions, minutes, and documentation for all participants to reference.
- 6.5.11 Key decisions impacting strategic effectiveness were communicated from the SCG and relayed to the heads of other cells and groups.
- 6.5.12 Summary notifications before meetings included key information and MS Teams links for stakeholders. MS Teams was both effective and appropriate for hosting the HM Coastguard TCG and SCG and matters were discussed freely and openly throughout all meetings.
- 6.5.13 All meetings were run in a professional manner, however focus was on sharing information rather than using the JDM and wider Warning and Informing, dovetailing media strategies and identifying collaboration or mutual aid opportunities which is a key principle of civil contingencies and LRF TCG/SCGs.

Lead evaluator comment: The Port of Milford Haven has provided additional comments regarding the strategic response below.

#### 6.6 Local Resilience Forum

- 6.6.1 Following an assessment by the lead evaluator and exercise director, taking into consideration the evaluators report and wider observations, it would be unfair to assess whether the LRF objectives have been met on this occasion.
- 6.6.2 This was due to several real-life major events which the LRF were responding to and as a result, were unable to participate fully during the exercise. However, LRF partners did endeavour to participate as much as possible.

- 6.6.3 The LRF acted quickly and efficiently to promulgate key major incident notifications via their notification system. This information included enough detail to enable the partner agencies to meaningfully prepare and contribute to the HM Coastguard TCG and SCG.
- 6.6.4 The LRF responders worked effectively, generating constructive comments and sharing information when given opportunity to clearly identify how they could contribute and add value to the response. All personnel were treated with respect and courtesy.

#### 6.7 Port of Milford Haven

- 6.7.1 The Port of Milford Haven was involved from the start of the exercise, as the 'NEWRA' was due to arrive at the port later that day. As the nearest port to the incident, they were critical to the response as a potential place of refuge, whilst also likely to be severely impacted by the incident, with considerations regarding closure of the port and national critical infrastructure being top priority.
- 6.7.2 Feedback was received from the Port of Milford Haven from the chief executive officer and harbour master team.
- 6.7.3 Due to the port being involved across all three response levels, for ease of establishing observations and recommendations, these have been separated into operational and tactical, and strategic. Details of all objectives are included in Appendix E.

#### **Operational and Tactical response**

- 6.7.4 The Port of Milford Haven responded well to the exercise, despite the challenges faced linking into the MCA command and control structure, which appeared to be confused in its role and lacked structure.
- 6.7.5 The exercise response was far calmer than previous experiences, however, it is felt this was probably due to the port's role in this particular exercise as the majority took place outside of their immediate jurisdiction, and also because most of the activity was virtual. This created a better working environment for everyone, as there was no requirement to host a large number of people.
- 6.7.6 Overall communications were good and port authorities were easy to contact, cooperative and constructive in working towards getting the vessel safely in port, assigning berths and considering the necessary requirements to achieve this.
- 6.7.7 Different members of the port authority were in contact with various cells, including the MRC/TCG and Environment Group (EG), which meant the full picture was not presented to the port to enable them to provide the best support.
- 6.7.8 The Port of Milford Haven should be included within the TCG and it was unclear as to why they were included in the MRC, or what differences there were between the two groups.
- 6.7.9 This resulted in a lack of command and control of the response, which meant capabilities and responsibilities of the port were not understood. For example, the Port of Milford Haven had very little idea of where the oil was and, more importantly, its trajectory, with no up-to-date pictures or mapping provided.

6.7.10 The MS Teams chat facility was being used alongside the meetings, which created confusion.

Lead evaluator comment: further details and recommendations regarding the remote response, and use of available software, is included in section 9.

- 6.7.11 The SCU, which the port took part in, was excellent due to structured meetings and clear objectives.
- 6.7.12 The port representative of the media cell commented that there was no clear media strategy, messages, or command structure for statement sign-off.

Lead evaluator comment: further details of the media response is contained in 6.11. The media evaluator considered the initial meeting between the port, shipping company and MCA to be satisfactory, however, Recommendation 19 highlights the benefits of a Media Response Cell with a defined structure.

6.7.13 The role of the LRF did not seem to be acknowledged or connected sufficiently during the exercise, which resulted in a great resource not being understood or utilised. The consequence of this being the LRF established a separate TCG.

Lead evaluator comment: Recommendation 9 notes the benefit of incorporating HM Coastguard tactical and strategic meetings into existing structures such as the LRF and the NCP.

#### Strategic Response / SCG

6.7.14 The timing of the SCG was too late, as this should have been established to set objectives for the TCG and allowed the TCG to report into the SCG.

Observation 15 (Ref 6.7.14): the benefits of a timely initial SCG meeting, will not only review and address the strategic implications of an incident, but add structure and support to a TCG.

- 6.7.15 The overall strategic strategy did not appear to consider the impact on Critical National Infrastructure or Business and there was a lack of risk management regarding identifying risks and the management thereof.
- 6.7.16 It is important to consider who all the stakeholders are in the incident to ensure plans are put in place to appropriately communicate with them e.g. local residents did not appear to be considered early enough on the first day.

Observation 16 (Ref 6.7.15, 6.7.16): individual members of cells should ensure they raise strategic issues during meetings, for example, if someone feels that critical national infrastructure is a strategic issue, this should be raised and addressed by the cell.

6.7.17 There appeared to be an assumption that the Port of Milford Haven would be used for the berthing of the vessel before any decisions had been taken.

#### 6.8 Wales Environment Group

- 6.8.1 As the standing environment group for Wales, the Wales environment group was mobilised to provide independent environmental and public health advice and guidance to the SCU, the MRC and the shoreline response teams.
- 6.8.2 The evaluator for the EG, supported by a member of directing staff, considered that not all of the EG objectives had been achieved. Details of all objectives are included in Appendix E.

#### Establishment of the Response Cell

- 6.8.3 A pre-arranged EG meeting had been setup prior to the start of the exercise which resulted in the identification of resource, communications and notification procedure not being effectively tested or exercised.
- 6.8.4 The establishment of this prearranged meeting also caused confusion when it was subsequently postponed, then indicated it would be used, before ultimately being cancelled.

Observation 17 (Ref 6.8.3, 6.8.4): for a live play exercise, prearranged meetings should not be arranged if notification and resource identification is part of the success criteria measure of the exercise.

- 6.8.5 The EG was activated following a situational review by one of the organisations within the EG, before any request to activate was received by the NCP response roles or structure. In addition, the first EG meeting had 22 invites which did not reflect a realistic position for a live incident.
- 6.8.6 It was unclear what the roles and organisations of the attendees were with introductions being made by name only and due to no agenda being circulated, log of attendees, or secretariat in place, the first meeting did not function effectively and gave the impression of a lack of coordination.
- 6.8.7 This also led to initially missing key members, namely public health and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), though they were invited later in the exercise.

Observation 18 (Ref 6.8.6): using the initial agenda, as outlined in the Wales Environment Group Plan, would assist in the efficient management of EG meetings.

- 6.8.8 Following the activation of the group and the initial meeting being held, there was no review of what additional resource may be required.
- 6.8.9 Despite the requirement for a deputy chair being requested by the chair, there was not one nominated.

Observation 19 (Ref 6.8.9): the chair of the EG should assign a deputy, to provide resilience.

6.8.10 There was uncertainty over the reason the EG had been setup and questions over whether other cells had been activated.

#### Response Cell Operations

- 6.8.11 Following a review by the EG chair, day two meetings were more informed and coordinated and were recorded to enable accuracy and for post meeting reference.
- 6.8.12 All four of the EG meetings were held at reasonable times, however, the duration of the meetings often exceeded the allocated time, without a check on availability of attendees.
- 6.8.13 The use of Skype for the meeting worked relatively well and those who could not access Skype were able to join by telephone.
- 6.8.14 There was a lot of discussion about using Resilience Direct for the sharing of information during incident response, however, despite it being made clear this did not work for everyone, it continued to be used.

Lead evaluator comment: the use of Resilience Direct and sharing of information is addressed further in Section 9.

- 6.8.15 The chair recognised the need to have an information manager and the possible requirement for Environment Liaison Officers.
- 6.8.16 The status board created by the EG, is mentioned in a positive manner by the JNCC and captured in Good practice 15.
- 6.8.17 During the second EG meeting there was an invite to attend a media briefing, however, no resource was available, and the group was passive in not assisting the chair with options, therefore the decision was made that the EG was unable to attend. This would have been alleviated by the assignment of a deputy chair, see Observation 19.
- 6.8.18 There was no documented information received by the evaluator on information provided to the response in the form of EG advice notes.

Recommendation 11 (Ref 6.8.18): the MCA should consider how all EGs are required to report in writing to NCP cells, to improve consistency

6.8.19 The cell did not demonstrate any task and finish group setup between meetings, with no evidence of progress in preparedness for potential scenarios. The cell response was observed as being passive and reactive, rather than proactive.

Observation 20 (Ref 6.8.19): all members within the EG should be aware of their role and expectations as a representative of their own organisation, and fully participate during EG meetings.

- 6.8.20 Throughout the exercise, the tracking of actions arising took a lot of time during meetings, resulting in not much time for covering the rest of the agenda. This resulted in limited time to discuss decisions and options, or to determine rationale for why decisions were made.
- 6.8.21 During closure of the EG meetings, there were no reviews of actions arising.

Observation 21 (ref 6.8.19, 6.8.20, 6.8.21): an actions tracker/log should be established at EG meeting one and review of actions made at the end of each EG meeting. Any meeting agenda should include a review of actions and allow for everyone to be clear on their assigned actions

6.8.22 Rationale on why an option is being advised, with full documentation for any post enquiry or freedom of information request is critical.

Observation 22 (Ref 6.8.22): clarifying what tasks are being made to the group is critical, then providing a list of documented options and rationale behind advice, to enable cells to take informed decision on next steps

6.8.23 There was no record, including timesheets, to permit the recovery of costs, which is particularly important when trying to reclaim them, as rational and justification for all costs incurred must be accurately recorded.

Lead evaluator comment: the point above can be considered under Observation 28.

**Communications** 

6.8.24 All members attending an EG meeting should follow good meeting etiquette and if not demonstrated, be reminded by the chair of what is required and why.

Lead evaluator comment: further detail regarding meeting etiquette is included in section 9.5.

- 6.8.25 Day two communications included pre circulation of meeting minutes, agenda and supporting information, which enabled all attendees to have the same information available.
- 6.8.26 During the third EG meeting, the information manager was proactive in clarifying an action.

Good practice 8 (Ref 6.8.26): seeking confirmation of actions at the time, enables clear messages and actions to be recorded in minutes or logs

6.8.27 The emails sent by the chair of the EG did not carry any signature details of incident role, which led to added confusion of what was being arranged and by who.

Observation 23 (Ref 6.8.27): including the incident role and contact details for each cell members within an email signature would be beneficial for all.

Observation 24: a generic EG email address for the chairs to permit the collation and then subsequent record keeping and sharing of information would be beneficial. This will likely only be accessible to the parent organisation.

<u>Teamwork</u>

6.8.28 During the initial meeting, the group did not give the impression of working as a team as when there were questions or comments by the chair to the group, no responses would be received.

- 6.8.29 This did improve during subsequent meetings, with more individuals becoming involved.
- 6.8.30 During the exercise, it was not evident of any chair-to-chair calls to the respective cell heads to serve as an introduction or encourage wider response teamwork between the cells.

Observation 25 (Ref 6.8.30): the chair of the EG, if not contacted by any of the cell heads, should make contact with them, to foster team working and explore if there are any issues.

Technical Elements

6.8.31 The MCA asked the EG if dispersant was appropriate to be used, with a response seeming to be from impression rather than being quantified.

Lead evaluator comment: the consideration of how EGs should report to the MCA is captured under Recommendation 11.

- 6.8.32 There was no task given to the EG to assess the potential impact of dispersant in the immediate and longer term. This should include socio-economic factors such as fishing and/or shellfish impacts to the food chain.
- 6.8.33 There appeared to be either a misunderstanding and / or lack of knowledge regarding Places of Refuge (PoR), with the group initially looking at a port of refuge before being corrected by the Port of Milford Haven that it is a place of refuge rather than a port of refuge.

Observation 26 (Ref 6.8.33): the EGs would benefit from training on PoR and what may be required of them during a request.

6.8.34 The EG was asked for ideas or preference on booming locations, but they did not consider area sensitivities and rationale for options or provide a list of recommendations vs rationale to enable informed decision making.

Observation 27: the EG should be proactive and consider developing advice on/setting-up subgroups for specialist areas i.e. use of dispersant.

6.8.35 The Wales EG Response Plan did not appear to be used during the response.

Observation 28: a review of the procedures for activation of the Wales EG, including use of the Wales EG Response Plan, circulation of information and completion of templates within the plan would give greater clarity and purpose for the group. This should then be presented to all Wales EG members, so they have a full understanding of the role and remit of the group.

Post exercise note: Marine Scotland hosted a case study session in December to share learning points from three previous incidents. Members of the Wales EG were able to attend the session, which was well received.

6.8.36 The Met Office provided feedback that in order to produce a Chemical Meteorology (CHEMET) forecast accurately, the use of real weather during an exercise is

preferred. Where this is not possible, at least 48-hours of weather data prior to the start of the exercise is useful.

Observation 29 (Ref 6.8.36): for future exercises, where real weather is not being used, it may be beneficial for participants to have weather history for at least 48-hours prior to the start of the exercise.

#### 6.9 Marine Response Centre

- 6.9.1 The MRC considers and implements the most appropriate means to contain, disperse, and remove potential pollutants from the marine environment based on all the information available to them. In almost all cases involving a national response, the MCA establishes an MRC at the most appropriate location, however, for this exercise the cell was run entirely remotely for the first time.
- 6.9.2 The evaluator, with support from a member of directing staff, considered two of the three objectives for the MRC had been successfully met. Details of all objectives are included in Appendix E.

#### Establishment of the Response Cell

6.9.3 Normally, as per the NCP, the head or deputy head of the counter pollution and salvage branch, would be informed of a significant incident and take on the strategic direction, advising the team prior to the establishment of the MRC, and ultimately making the decision to form the MRC. For this exercise the duty coastal commander was assigned to chair the MRC in absence of the head of counter pollution and salvage.

Recommendation 12 (Ref 6.9.3): if the MCA are to use the strategic commanders to chair the MRC, definition of the role and triggers for activating the on call strategic commander should be confirmed and written procedures promulgated, so that there is clear and universal understanding.

- 6.9.4 There appeared to be a delay in the tasking of the surveillance aircraft which should have been tasked soon after the initial details of the incident were revealed and certainly as soon as it was reported there was oil in the water.
- 6.9.5 Despite requests, there were some delays in receiving the Material Safety Data Sheet from K-Line on the first day, which contributed to the MCA counter pollution team being unable to assess the severity of the incident, however, this may be attributable to exercise artificiality.
- 6.9.6 When the cell was activated, the first meeting was only attended by MCA staff and as such, it was determined this was not a valid MRC, therefore an hour later, the full MRC was called.
- 6.9.7 Many core members of the MRC were initially mobilised, including those from the MCA counter pollution function within HM Coastguard and liaison officers from the EG, local authority and the shipowner plus the MCA's appointed response contractor.

- 6.9.8 However, other key roles such as the HM Coastguard liaison officer (until the end of day two), MCA press officer, representatives from the MCA's aerial surveillance and dispersant spraying contractors and those from the P&I club, were not included.
- 6.9.9 A notable gap was the assignment of a sufficient number of administrative officers, including a room manager, to assist in managing MRC documentation including minutes, contact lists, actions/decisions, resource tasking logs and position reports.
- 6.9.10 The loggist however did an excellent job of minuting the MRC meetings, but additional resource was not available, despite several requests, to assist in keeping the other documentation up to date.
- 6.9.11 While on this occasion the MRC was being run remotely, a virtual room manager would have been useful to track attendance and control admittance to the MRC, as well as providing overall coordination of the administrative functions within the MRC.

Lead evaluator comment (Ref 6.9.9, 6.9.11): the requirement for additional administrative support within the MCA is outlined in section 10, specifically Recommendation 28.

- 6.9.12 Some of the standard roles of members within the MRC were not understood or assigned, which at times led to ad-hoc tasks and other members, such as the CPSOs, being overburdened.
- 6.9.13 In addition, some roles or tasks were overlooked, particularly regarding the cost recovery and finance responsibilities of the resources and claims lead and the coastguard liaison officer.

Observation 30 (Ref 6.9.12, 6.9.13): should the MRC agenda have been used, some standing items would have been included.

**Response Cell Operations** 

- 6.9.14 The chair maintained effective control of proceedings, while correctly deferring to the expertise of the team in most instances, requesting their views on possible courses of action.
- 6.9.15 However, it appeared at times that some MCA team members had a lack of awareness and/or previous exposure to oil spill response and the NCP structures.

Good practice 9 (Ref 6.9.14): deferring to relevant expertise within a cell for specialist knowledge is essential for sound coordination.

6.9.16 It appeared at times, that there were detailed discussions within the MRC meetings regarding the planning of shoreline response activities, which sits with the LRF TCG, and with regard to stabilising the casualty vessel, which sits with the SCU. It is important to consider these elements to provide a 'big picture' awareness of a response, and while doing so didn't have any severe impact on the function of the MRC, the meetings may have benefited from a brief overview of the salvage and shoreline response areas rather than discussing them at length.

Recommendation 13 (Ref 6.9.16, 6.9.15): the MCA should consider establishing a competency based training programme for MCA MRC participants, covering roles, responsibilities and processes, and ensure everyone who may be expected to be part of an MRC are able to take part in at least one meaningful exercise a year.

- 6.9.17 The existing roles, processes and templates designed for an effective MRC response were circulated to the chair by members of the group, however, those outlined in the JESIP were favoured.
- 6.9.18 While the JESIP standard agenda provided structure during meetings, standard critical topics such as cost recovery, future operation planning, finance, and communications, as per the MRC timeout agenda, were not covered.
- 6.9.19 This resulted in the structure being unclear, and meetings overrunning, despite the efforts of the chair, which was problematic given the volume of work each individual had to deal with.
- 6.9.20 Since the JESIP and MRC agendas both begin with an initial situation report, incident briefings were accurate, and all discussions recorded. Action points were recorded and highlighted within these minutes but no clear priority order or timeline for completion was shown.
- 6.9.21 On day two, the chair began to incorporate elements of the MRC agenda into the JESIP agenda and in the final MRC meeting the original MRC agenda was in use. Both of these changes resulted in a marked improvement in how these meetings were conducted, with a more timely, focused pace and all of the necessary subject matter being covered.
- 6.9.22 Meetings were initially scheduled as hourly however, this did not allow sufficient time to progress actions, or allow for subgroups to form such as for at sea containment and recovery planning. On day two, this was amended to every two hours and meetings were managed more effectively, becoming more spread-out allowing actions to be completed.
- 6.9.23 Previous MRC meeting minutes were shared on the MRC SharePoint site however, this was only accessible to MCA staff.

Lead evaluator comment: further information relating to the use of SharePoint is included in section 9.3.

- 6.9.24 Although the JESIP agenda was shared on screen, the evaluator would have expected to see an incident log, actions/decisions list, oil spill modelling, records of equipment packages deployed/vessels allocated, incident action plans, and charts plotted with zones of operation for oil spill response vessels.
- 6.9.25 During normal circumstances, information is displayed around the room on charts, projected displays, whiteboards, and pro-forma documentation. As this was not possible due to remote meetings, and certain standard MRC documentation not being used, it contributed to a lack of a live, clear, and coherent common operating picture between the MRC and other cells, and even at times within the MRC.

Lead evaluator comment: section 9 contains further information on the remote response, including relevant recommendations.

- 6.9.26 Participants found it difficult to keep up to date with the volume of information being circulated via phone, text message, conference call, WhatsApp, email and MS Teams, as well as read documents. As a result of there being no clear communication channel, some details were missed.
- 6.9.27 Key decisions were recorded in the minutes, but these were not disseminated so could only be accessed by those who had access to the MCA SharePoint site for the exercise. Decisions should have been recorded in a separate log and included in an MRC SITREP to be circulated.

Recommendation 14 (Several references throughout 6.9): the MCA review what systems and procedures the MRC should utilise to ensure common understanding and effective incident management.

- 6.9.28 An overnight resilience plan was requested by the evaluator however, it was considered that the cell could shut down overnight as all members were available by phone. Given the level of activity still taking place, a developing incident, and a number of outstanding actions, it is unlikely that this would have been possible in a real incident.
- 6.9.29 It is more likely that cell members would have continued working throughout much of the night, monitoring the incident, liaising with contractors travelling to scene and planning and preparing operations to take place at first light the following day.
- 6.9.30 It was also clear that there was not the resilience within the team to continue working at this pace for a prolonged period, as individuals were working flat out and could not have continued in that manner for more than a few days. With no plan for relief, there would have been a limit in terms of how long the MRC could have functioned.

Recommendation 15 (Ref 6.9.28, 6.9.30): consideration should be given to improving the resilience of the MRC for a protracted incident.

Lead evaluator comment: resilience of the MRC, and other cells, has been noted in previous exercise reports.

#### **Communications**

- 6.9.31 Communications were, for the most part, conducted in accordance with established response procedures, and the DCPSO notified all relevant duty officers in a timely manner.
- 6.9.32 MRC communications were mostly maintained via the meetings, conducted over MS Teams, email and the MS Teams chat function.
- 6.9.33 Despite working remotely, MRC members were, for the most part kept up to date with incident developments and response actions being undertaken within the cell, and team members cascaded any information received from outside of the cell promptly.
- 6.9.34 External communications relied on the heads of cells brief attended by the chair, the circulation of DCPSO briefs, and the use of liaison officers. However, external stakeholders were kept up to date with key pieces of information as required, such as the results of modelling and data on oil types.

6.9.35 DCPSO SITREPs were circulated, however as per 6.9.9 and 6.9.27, there were no MRC SITREPs.

<u>Teamwork</u>

- 6.9.36 The MRC as a whole, and individual teams within it (such as the team set up to manage at sea containment and recovery) worked cohesively. Teamwork and mutual support were demonstrated and is recognised as a genuine strength.
- 6.9.37 While a greater burden did fall on those more experienced team members, see 6.9.12, the support and guidance that they lent to the newer team members is what enabled the MRC to function and to fulfil its objectives.

Good practice 10 (Ref 6.9.37): the use of experienced response team members to support those who were newer and less experienced was a positive approach by the MCA MRC members.

- 6.9.38 Almost universally throughout the entire exercise, a collaborative approach was shown to the completion of tasks or problem solving and the sharing of knowledge and expertise, and the offering of support was the norm.
- 6.9.39 An at sea containment and recovery operation sub-group, led by a CPSO and including the logistics and claims lead, contractor representatives, and the Port of Milford Haven, collaborated well to improve what had been a disjointed picture with regard to asset and vessel allocation, and zones of operation, into a coherent plan.

Good practice 11 (Ref 6.9.39): the use of an at sea containment and recovery operation sub-group worked well, and was productive and collaborative

6.9.40 There appeared to be no process or procedures for the activation of a new contract recently being agreed with OSRL, which caused some initial confusion between team members.

Recommendation 16 (Ref 6.9.40): the MCA should develop operating procedures for the mobilisation of OSRL.

Technical Elements

6.9.41 The MRC operated effectively in assessing the pros and cons of a spraying response strategy, however, they did not include the expertise of the contractor.

Observation 31 (Ref 6.9.41): when tasking response assets, such as spraying aircraft or marine resources, it is important to have full engagement with relevant contractors.

6.9.42 Positive discussions were held regarding the amenability of the type of LSFO spilled and the process for gaining approval from NRW for a test spray. The initial day one test spray was deemed ineffective by directing staff, and while a second spray was considered, it was decided that with little oil remaining on board and the apparent rapid weathering of the escaped oil, there was unlikely to be any benefit to justify this additional application.

- 6.9.43 However, any risks associated with conducting a low altitude spray campaign over a vessel in the process of venting an asphyxiant gas, or of spraying in proximity to responding vessels and salvors, were not discussed. It was not clear whether the air crew had been briefed on these risks.
- 6.9.44 From the outset, at sea recovery and shoreline protection and clean-up were discussed as response options and the MCA's stockpile was alerted and mobilised at an early stage. However, the discussions and planning, at least for the initial day and a half of the exercise, were limited in depth and detail and were at times, confusing.
- 6.9.45 Environmental sensitivities based on modelling were reviewed, as was the prioritisation of specific areas. Priority sites for booming were requested from the EG and discussion held on closing beaches, conducting Shoreline Clean-up and Assessment Technique surveys, and obtaining shallow draft vessels to deploy equipment close to shore at the sensitive sites identified.
- 6.9.46 Much of the confusion surrounded the allocation of responding vessels and it appeared on day two, that certain vessels allocated for the MCA's at sea containment and recovery operation had been double booked and were also assigned to OSRL.

Lead evaluator comment: the MRC evaluator questioned how realistically this element had been exercised, and if these vessel owners/brokers were contacted. This was monitored by the command team during the exercise and there were opportunities for the MRC to have rectified this.

- 6.9.47 PofR were discussed on the afternoon of day two with the EG and local authority representatives, after an outstanding action was highlighted by a MRC member, and prior to a formal request being received from the SOSREP. No conclusion was reached prior to the end of the exercise, though topics such as weather, environmental sensitivities and shoreline type were considered.
- 6.9.48 The chair attended a press conference and liaised with the MCA press officer but did not report back on this to the MRC, therefore, the impact of the media was not discussed.
- 6.9.49 Several oil spill models were created during the exercise by MCA, OSRL and by the Valero Terminal, the latter giving a more granular view of the Milford Haven Waterway.

Recommendation 17 (Ref 6.9.49): a separate modelling sub-group should be established in future exercises and incidents to compare and contrast different modelling runs in order to produce a single, unified picture.

#### 6.10 Salvage Control Unit

6.10.1 During a shipping incident, the primary role of the SCU is to monitor salvage operations and actions that are being taken and/or proposed relating to salvage activity and to ensure that such actions do not have an adverse effect on safety and the environment. The SOSREP determines the requirement for a SCU taking into consideration the nature and scale of the incident.

6.10.2 The evaluator, with support from a member of directing staff, considered the exercise objective for the SCU was successfully met. Details of all objectives are included in Appendix E.

#### Establishment of the Response Cell

- 6.10.3 The SOSREP was notified by the DCPSO in a timely manner and while the SOSREP briefing template was not used, it is noted that the use of this template is not mandatory, as long as the relevant information is communicated.
- 6.10.4 The first SCU was called for the morning of the second day, which was within an appropriate timescale considering the progression of the scenario.
- 6.10.5 The SOSREP provided an effective statement outlining the intentions for the meeting and the stakeholders who would be represented, including an independent salvage advisor.

#### Response Cell Operations

- 6.10.6 Once meeting timings had been agreed, the SOSREP support officer made suitable arrangements for the remote meetings, circulating the agenda to those required in advance and managing the MS Teams meeting set up admirably.
- 6.10.7 In addition to 6.10.6, the support officer did an outstanding job of arranging the meetings, minutes, actions, and housekeeping. However, the evaluator felt this was too much for one person and this role would benefit from some back up admin support.

Recommendation 18 (Ref 6.10.6, 6.10.7): the SOSREP review the resilience of the SOSREP support officer and consideration given into providing administration support to this role.

The lead evaluator notes that this has been raised during previous exercise evaluations. However, on discussion with those within the cell, they do not feel this role is overburdened. Recommendation 28 may be considered as an alternative to providing SCU administrative support as required.

- 6.10.8 The SCU was expertly chaired by the SOSREP who ensured suitable round table introductions were made and the individual's role at the meeting was clear to all.
- 6.10.9 The SOSREP support officer did an excellent job of sharing any information received by the SCU appropriately.
- 6.10.10 The use of MS Teams white boards and files could be explored for future, however it is appreciated that at the time of the exercise, SCU members (who represent many different organisations) had differing capabilities regarding the use of MS Teams.
- 6.10.11 The SCU meetings, while managed effectively, would have benefited from some remote meeting etiquette being circulated in advance, and/or run through at the start of the meeting.

Lead evaluator comment: regarding 6.10.6, 6.10.10 and 6.10.11, further details and recommendations regarding the remote response, and use of available software, is included in section 9 and Observation 48: all organisations should consider

developing and utilising a set of rules, or good practice, for the management of remote meetings, and incorporate these into standard agendas, *however, it is noted that additional capabilities are available for consideration in future. New functionality within MS Teams has now been released, which was not available during the exercise.* 

6.10.12 The support officer recorded quality minutes and actions, and the SOSREP issued SITREPs in a timely manner, containing accurate information.

#### **Communications**

- 6.10.13 The communication between DCPSO and SOSREP was by telephone and therefore could not be evaluated. However, this is normal practice and from 'Protocol for Notifying the Duty SOSREP v4 June 2020', there is no requirement for the DCPSO to follow up verbal communications with the SOSREP by written/email unless specifically requested.
- 6.10.14 The same protocol states that all email correspondence should use the generic SOSREP address. However, it was noted that this email address was not used systematically, and emails were seen to be directed specifically to the SOSREP individually. The evaluator did note, with limited email traffic observed, it could not be concluded whether this is an issue.
- 6.10.15 Multiple communication methods were utilised to good effect, including email, phone, conference call and MS Teams. No issues were noted, however, the SOSREP should be clear about the preferred means of communication.

Observation 32 (Ref 6.10.15): the SOSREP being clear about their preferred communication methods would be beneficial.

- 6.10.16 The evaluator observed the development of good team working and communications during the second SCU, as working relationships and understanding of each-others work increased.
- 6.10.17 There was good use of local knowledge and useful debate ensuing e.g. between salvors/ship owner and harbour master, and detailed sensitivity information provided by the EG representative.
- 6.10.18 The SOSREP's calm manner instilled calm and confidence with members of the SCU less used to incidents of this nature and the format of the SCU, resulting in good communication and exchange of information.
- 6.10.19 The MCA press officer was present at both SCU meetings and had direct communication with the SOSREP in between. The SOSREP attended press conferences and very much saw the benefit of managing the press pro-actively.

#### <u>Teamwork</u>

- 6.10.20 Effective chairing and housekeeping by the SOSREP and support officer, resulted in all members fully contributing and being treated with respect and courtesy.
- 6.10.21 The SOSREP's experience and knowledge resulted in effective liaison with stakeholders.
6.10.22 A heads of cells meeting was held on day two, conducted by conference call. This was effective, with all parties giving a good summary of their up-to-date situation.

## 6.11 Media Response

- 6.11.1 The evaluator considers that the two main objectives of Exercise CELTIC DEEP with regard to media response were achieved successfully.
- 6.11.2 Given the circumstances, in addition to his evaluation role, the media evaluator was also required to provide media inputs virtually, sharing this task with the MCA's senior press officer.
- 6.11.3 This led to a greater degree of exercise artificiality and also caused some difficulty for the senior press officer, as she was also a member of the exercise planning team.
- 6.11.4 It was agreed for exercise and recording purposes, that press queries should only be sent by email which was another artificial situation but notwithstanding these unfortunate constraints, the revised arrangements worked well in testing the communications systems of the MCA in line with the stated aims and objectives of the exercise.
- 6.11.5 By evaluating remotely, the evaluator was not privy to every aspect of internal discussion and negotiation, only to those that were recorded and therefore visible, however, the "virtual" exercise concept achieved the stated aim and objectives satisfactorily.
- 6.11.6 Although the exercise was conducted remotely, this will provide a useful pointer to how a future incident might have to be managed. To that end, useful learning points were gained, and a generally excellent response sustained over two busy days.

## Establishment of the MCA Media Response

6.11.7 An initial media inject to Milford Haven CGOC was referred immediately to the MCA press office, however, a reply to a second enquiry was "nothing of interest" happening at that time, even although the incident was well under way.

Lead evaluator comment: training or workshops are routinely offered to MCA operational staff who require additional guidance in responding to media enquiries.

- 6.11.8 Initial enquiries were responded to personally by the MCA press office with an agreed holding statement following in a timely manner, initially on social media and then formally to all media. The DfT was also briefed by the senior press officer, as well as the MCA's chief executive and HM Coastguard director.
- 6.11.9 At an early stage, there appeared to be pressure of media enquiries building on the MCA press office, with the evaluator noting concern at the level of available resources to handle the growing number of enquiries.
- 6.11.10 Some enquiries sought information on different aspects of the incident and for which a brief holding statement would not suffice. That said, this was a good initial media response to the incident while facts were still a little unclear.

- 6.11.11 The evaluator was not aware of what internal arrangements were being made with regard to roles and responsibilities within the MCA press office. Contact was made directly between the senior press officer and the press officer, principally to confirm the holding statement, however, it was evident that the press office was actively contacting and discussing matters with external organisations, which was sound practice.
- 6.11.12 Active contacts were made between the MCA press officer, the K-Line press officer and the Port of Milford Haven communications manager and the suggestion was made that a conference call be held on MS Teams. This was in anticipation of a greater media response being required for upcoming lunchtime TV and radio news bulletins, which was a timely and satisfactory action.
- 6.11.13 The meeting was managed and conducted satisfactorily by the MCA press officer who updated the others on the situation and a free discussion and exchange of opinions was held.
- 6.11.14 It was unclear at this stage whether a Media Briefing Room or Cell had been formally established and if so, who might have been required to be present for meetings of that cell.

Recommendation 19 (Ref 6.11.14): the MCA should review the process for establishing a Media Cell, during qualifying incidents, with a defined structure and list of attendees, a clear set of responsibilities and the necessary resources and ongoing resilience to handle the task in hand.

## Media Response Operations

- 6.11.15 The MCA press office was actively responding to requests from the shipping minster for updates and discussing possible statement updates with external agencies and, importantly, with the SOSREP.
- 6.11.16 A 'real-world' incident impacted on the MCA press office and it was clear that staffing levels were inadequate to effectively handle the growing scale of the incident and the rising level of media enquiries.
- 6.11.17 A K-Line statement was issued, which had been seen in advance by the MCA, and while this aided the flow of information to the media, it also generated more queries about likely pollution. Unfortunately, times of response to media queries lengthened considerably at this point.
- 6.11.18 External agencies, with the notable exception of K-Line, offered little or no response to the many media queries they were receiving and often failed even to acknowledge or reply to them. This was extremely disappointing and in many ways was unrealistic and unacceptable, especially as some of them had key questions to answer that were not totally within the MCA's remit to deal with.

Recommendation 20 (Ref 6.11.18): the MCA, while playing a vital coordination role for the release of media information during a major incident, should seek ways to avoid being left by external agencies to handle all media responses should those agencies choose not to respond directly with their own personnel.

6.11.19 At one stage the MCA press officer attended a lengthy salvage control meeting, removing her from the front line of press response and leaving the senior press officer, who was also a member of the planning team, to wear two hats and respond on her behalf. It was no surprise that she coped well, but it further illustrated the stretching of MCA press office resources.

Recommendation 21 (Ref 6.11.9, 6.11.16, 6.11.19): consideration should be given to strengthening the permanent MCA press team as current resources do not allow a comprehensive and fully effective media response to a major incident that extends over 12 hours or a number of days or weeks.

Lead evaluator comment: it is recognised that at the time of the exercise, some permanent MCA press team were unavailable, and the MCA were not able to bring in wider support, as they would during an incident.

- 6.11.20 On the second morning of the exercise the MCA press officer organised what was called a "media cell" meeting with herself and external agencies. This was well attended and a commendable initiative but again removed her from front line queries at a crucial time, which may relate to the structure identified in Recommendation 19.
- 6.11.21 This meeting agreed unanimously that it would be advantageous to hold prelunchtime press interviews. For a variety of reasons, however, including opposition from some of those who would have been involved, this did not take place, much to the consternation of the MCA press team, not to mention an expectant media.

Observation 33 (Ref 6.11.21): offering training to MCA senior leadership may improve the understanding of the importance of press interview timing.

- 6.11.22 The MCA press office continued to work with the external agencies however, and also with the DfT who eventually responded to the media, but through the MCA, suggesting the shipping minister would visit the area the next day. This would have been controversial as that was scheduled as the first day of the Welsh COVID-19 lockdown.
- 6.11.23 It was concerning that following the release of a good press release by the MCA press officer to external agencies, it took over 30 minutes before a reply from one of those agencies, with some substantial amendments, some of which involved opinion and style rather than correcting factual errors.

Recommendation 22 (Ref 6.11.23): the MCA press team should rigorously enforce a 10-minute rule when seeking comments from external agencies on planned press releases to avoid unnecessary delay, confusion and other agendas being followed.

## Communications

- 6.11.24 Communications, internally and externally, were conducted in accordance with established response procedures and that the frequency and means of communications, although limited by circumstances, were appropriate.
- 6.11.25 All the communication channels agreed in advance for the exercise were used. The MCA press office acted in a professional, calm and collected manner, showing a

willingness to work with external agencies and a desire to provide a good service to the media, despite this not always being possible due to factors out with their control.

- 6.11.26 Communication channels were used effectively and in accordance with established procedures.
- 6.11.27 It was not possible to fully evaluate the recording of information internally due to the remote evaluation but judging by email exchanges, it seemed that information was being shared at an appropriate level and frequency.

Good practice 12: the early use of IT by the MCA press office to communicate and interact with various stakeholders and agencies involved in the incident at often geographically remote locations ensured a timely and accurate flow of information between them that could be beneficial to imparting appropriate information to members of the public. The inter-relationships built up at an early stage between the MCA, external agencies and government departments proved subsequently to be very useful.

## <u>Teamwork</u>

- 6.11.28 It was evident that throughout the exercise the MCA press team worked well together and shared information effectively.
- 6.11.29 All communications internally and externally were respectful and courteous, despite tensions rising over the attitudes displayed by some of the other agencies involved.
- 6.11.30 Key decisions impacting on strategic, tactical, and operational effectiveness of the response were communicated to all levels regularly and effectively.

Good practice 13: members of the MCA press office team freely shared emerging information between them to ensure a consistency of response to media enquiries. They proactively offered situation briefings to MCA senior management and to ministers from an early stage in the incident. The importance of this briefing internally was well illustrated when one member of the press office team was temporarily waylaid, and colleagues were able smoothly to step in and fill the void until she returned.

#### Press Conferences

- 6.11.31 The two press conferences held during the exercise were a success in terms of organisation, content, and delivery.
- 6.11.32 The MCA press office required substantial influence within the MCA to ensure both press conferences were held at an appropriate time for the media, after requests for alternative times were suggested by senior officers.
- 6.11.33 The representatives who appeared were well informed, articulate, and effective, disseminating useful information in a calm and controlled manner. The press officers who organised and facilitated these events did a good job in difficult circumstances.
- 6.11.34 During the second press conference there was some desire by the facilitator to conclude it quickly as those taking part had other operational duties to which they had to attend, but it ran on for an additional 10 minutes and could comfortably have continued for much longer.

Recommendation 23 (Ref 6.11.32, 6.11.34): the MCA should review the importance and benefit of senior officers attending press conferences and providing media interviews versus their working responsibilities during a major incident to avoid conflicting requirements. Consideration should be given to allocating a senior command officer, deputy SOSREP or operational officer as press spokesperson to handle media interviews thereby allowing other senior staff to concentrate on their operational roles in the incident.

6.11.35 While functional, it was of some concern that the system used for the online press conference, MS Teams, required a degree of authorisations and technical tweaks to be effective. If online briefings and press conference are to be used in future with a wide variety of journalists and MCA officers, a better platform for handling this at short notice will be required.

Good practice 14: It was good practice to have senior officers appear at a press conference not only early but also well-briefed in a major incident to provide accurate information and instil public confidence in the ongoing operation. This is notwithstanding Recommendation 23 regarding the use of senior officers in an MCA spokesperson role.

Recommendation 24 (Ref 6.11.35): the MCA should, as a matter of urgency, establish an effective and easily deployed IT platform for conducting online press conferences with a number of remotely located journalists. Such a platform will allow the MCA to maintain an effective, efficient, and expedited emergency response.

Overall Media Recommendations and Observations

- 6.11.36 The task of running Exercise CELTIC DEEP remotely was a major one for the directing staff and added a significant level of complication into the exercise. That said, it was an excellent opportunity instead to test remote links and workings as COVID-19 has shown an increasing emphasis on online press conferences, especially on TV, and interviews being conducted remotely from locations as diverse as cliff tops and main streets to domestic kitchens and spare bedrooms.
- 6.11.37 It was disappointing that many of the key agencies involved in the incident chose not to participate in media work and that most of those who did chose largely to ignore or dismiss the importance of an effective and swift media response from their key personnel.
- 6.11.38 The press conferences were a conspicuous success as was the level of online cooperation between the MCA, external agencies, and ministers.

Recommendation 25: consideration should be given to establishing a Media Response Team within the MCA, utilising MCA staff from out with the day-to-day press team. These people should be trained and exercised by the permanentpress staff, perhaps for one day every six months, to assist the press team with information gathering and distribution, telephone responses and administrative tasks during a major incident to allow the press officers more time and space to do their own specialised jobs.

Observation 34: the MCA should work with partner agencies to consider further how best to utilise social media during a major incident, and to what level the inevitable inaccurate and excessive uses to which it is put by individuals should be countered. This should be a key part of the Media Cell's planned strategy.

Lead evaluator comment: it is noted that the exercise planning team elected not to include exercise social media streams, and therefore alternatively, social media injects were provided.

## 6.12 Department for Transport

- 6.12.1 The evaluator for the involvement of the Department for Transport (DfT), which included participation from the minister, has summarised their involvement into a number of observations.
- 6.12.2 During the exercise it was apparent immediately that the recent Ministerial change and some staff moves had not been made to the notification list.

Observation 35 (Ref 6.12.2): DfT should review the MCA incident notification email list address periodically to ensure if remains current.

6.12.3 Changes to personnel and the remote working necessitated by COVID-19 restrictions led to the omission of individuals from certain email chains.

Observation 36 (Ref 6.12.3): DfT should have a number of established group emails to ensure that contact between Private Office, Communications, Operations Division has no single point of failure.

6.12.4 The minister raised a concern that if he was not on duty then he might not be contactable.

Observation 37 (Ref 6.12.4): key personnel should have a list of emergency telephone numbers beyond what would normally be available e.g. Minister's Office should have the minister's personal number.

6.12.5 The Minister's Office were advising the minister immediately on receipt of SITREPs but these often-contained additional information that was not key to the minister's involvement.

Observation 38 (Ref 6.12.5): Operations Division should provide abridged versions of the SITREPs to the minister drawing attention to salient points and noting where any action might be required. This can be done orally when time is of the essence or availability suggests it may be the better option. The Minister's Office should wait on these versions before informing the minister, irrespective of what other information has been received.

6.12.6 The Minister's Office occasionally responded directly to queries and copied DfT colleagues into its response.

Observation 39 (Ref 6.12.6): ministerial concerns should be raised via Operations Division rather than directly. Operations Division should prioritise communications and should ensure all concerns are answered.

6.12.7 The minister raised a concern that whilst he was fully informed it may appear from the outside that he was not as involved as might be expected.

Observation 40 (Ref 6.12.7): consideration should be given to the timing and frequency of ministerial or departmental tweets to ensure that our involvement is recognised. Each incident should be considered on its own merits as to the frequency and content of any tweets.

6.12.8 The issues raised by remote working meant that senior DfT officials were too closely involved in the DfT's response.

Observation 41 (Ref 6.12.8): Operations Division should have a Grade 7 lead in any incident, suspending business as usual as necessary, who leads on ministerial and communications liaison and determines when senior Operations Division support might be necessary.

6.12.9 The minister advised that in an incident he would be in contact with No 10.

Observation 42 (Ref 6.12.9): Officials and Private Office should have a procedure for ensuring No10 are aware and the potential major effect on an area of significant tourist, ecological and natural value.

6.12.10 The minister considered that he was in a position to make senior level calls if necessary, to assist the response teams.

Observation 43 (Ref 6.12.10): consideration should be given to any assistance ministers might be able to provide to those responding e.g. direct conversation with company CEO

## 6.13 K-Line Shipping

- 6.13.1 This exercise provided K-Line with an opportunity to conduct a more in-depth exercise than they would normally execute themselves.
- 6.13.2 K-Line not only aided the Planning Team, contributing to the scenario development with stability modelling etc. but they also provided a vessel master for the duration of the exercise.

- 6.13.3 This provided a more realistic environment and an ability to inject real life information and challenges.
- 6.13.4 K-Line's interaction with the UK Government agencies was positive, with good liaison with the SOSREP and the Port of Milford Haven.
- 6.13.5 A key learning for K-Line was that regarding media, with an increased appreciation of how this may work during an incident.

# 7. Additional participant feedback

While not officially evaluated, several organisations who participated in the exercise provided valuable feedback. Their comments are detailed below.

## 7.1 Svitzer UK

- 7.1.1 Svitzer were initially notified of the incident by the Port of Milford Haven early on the first day, and initially prepared two tugs, which were mobilised mid-afternoon and on-scene that evening, with a third tug identified if required.
- 7.1.2 On day two, HM Coastguard requested one of the tugs escort the Royal National Lifeboat Institution lifeboat in towards the tanker, to check for any gas using onboard detectors.
- 7.1.3 Svitzer noted that they do not have many masters available who can sail outside of port limits. Should the exercise have occurred on a different day, it would have severely reduced the ability to send tugs, potentially with only one available to go out of port limits.
- 7.1.4 Equally, a second potential issue is that only being able to tow over the bow means other than in flat calm conditions, it would be doubtful if the tugs could do more than just hold the tanker in position.
- 7.1.5 Once the tugs are outside of Very High Frequency radio range and mobile reception, Svitzer have no method of contacting them so communications would have to be relayed through the Port of Milford Haven, another vessel, or HM Coastguard. This makes tasking assets, and tracking fatigue and rest hours of the tug crews very difficult.
- 7.1.6 Since the tugs only have a four-person crew, or six outside of port limits, they are not able to provide a 24-hour operation. During the exercise, there was an expectation that the tanker would be held in position while a response was initiated. This would not have been possible without exhausting crews and at some point, after the phase moved from emergency to salvage and therefore a commercial venture, the tugs would have returned to the Haven to continue contracted work.
- 7.1.7 As Svitzer were running the exercise as per their new COVID-19 procedures, only crews from within the port were used. This resulted in two tugs being tied up while crews were used for those tugs going outside of port limits, reducing the number of operating tugs within the port to seven.
- 7.1.8 Svitzer do not have any masters with salvage experience, or those that do are nearing retirement, and this may have an impact in future if assistance is required.

- 7.1.9 Communications started very well during the exercise however, they were lacking on day two, with uncertainty over where the tanker was or what assistance was required.
- 7.1.10 Overall, it was really good to see how a large exercise fared, and while COVID-19 precautions may have made the participation more complicated, it was perhaps representative of a realistic response should an incident occur in the early hours.

## 7.2 Marint – Towage and Salvage Brokers

- 7.2.1 The exercise was as realistic as it possibly could be and Marint followed procedures as normal.
- 7.2.2 The owners/underwriters of the vessel were contacted to seek what services they required, and this resulted in the sending through of offers for tugs and other vessels, initially to Gard and then to Resolve, who were appointed as salvors.
- 7.2.3 A vessel was confirmed, following which Marint were mostly observers to the exercise since under the terms of the Lloyds Open Form, the salvors take on the responsibility for instructing the vessel.
- 7.2.4 These exercises are always worthwhile to refine own procedures as necessary and to meet, albeit virtually, with other service providers to the MCA.

## 7.3 Joint Nature Conservation Committee

- 7.3.1 The JNCC were not officially notified until late on day one by NRW, so missed the first day of the exercise which was disappointing. They would have expected an earlier notification from either the MCA or NRW, particularly as the incident remained offshore for the entirety of the exercise.
- 7.3.2 JNCC were invited to the first EG on day one, however, this was subsequently cancelled for them and no other notifications were received.

Lead evaluator comment: see 6.8.4 for information regarding the cancellation for this meeting.

7.3.3 Due to a clash of meetings on day two, it would be useful to organise meetings via a central calendar, or an outline scheduled of events held within a file, or on Resilience Direct.

Observation 44 (Ref 7.3.3): a central calendar should be developed for all exercises or incidents to support the timing and scheduling of cell meetings

- 7.3.4 Although JNCC joined late, it was apparent that others had also been missed out of the information flow for some elements, particularly the modelling output. It is suggested that these elements are automatically uploaded to Resilience Direct and the group is notified when these are available to view.
- 7.3.5 The 'incident status board and overview info', uploaded to Resilience Direct, was very helpful in finding information in one place and have all information that is required for the EG meetings.

Good practice 15 (Ref 7.3.5): the use of an incident status board, stored on Resilience Direct, provided an excellent overview

- 7.3.6 It would be useful to know whether Resilience Direct is required in advance of the exercise as login details take several hours to come through if you do not have an account. This is not used very often in other exercises so it would be useful if this was highlighted in the initial emails in the weeks before the exercise for this to be organised.
- 7.3.7 It was suggested that MS Teams would be used for meetings as they can be left open and files can be saved to the channel, though it is understood that it was not possible for this exercise.

Lead evaluator comment: the use of MS Teams is expanded on in section 9 however current MCA policy does not consider MS Teams chat to be a suitable method of securely sharing official files.

## 7.4 Resolve Marine

- 7.4.1 Overall, the drill was comprehensive and involved, with a realistic element to it.
- 7.4.2 Utilising the MS Teams platform seemed to work nicely.
- 7.4.3 There was surprise at how the salvage component appeared to be a bit forgotten, particularly in the early stages of the response.
- 7.4.4 Following the initial calls and as the response developed, organisations realise the importance of the salvage component and start asking questions. From past experience this is quite normal and absolutely fine but is always a point of attention.
- 7.4.5 In general, working with the MCA is a pleasure and it is hoped that other authorities adopt a similar approach. It is always a bit tricky getting organised but once the SCU meetings are in place, the system seems to work.

## 7.5 ITOPF

- 7.5.1 ITOPF are routinely called during shipping incidents, by the P&I Club.
- 7.5.2 Unfortunately, there was some confusion regarding notification of ITOPF due to the fact that the P&I Club were not aware they were participating.
- 7.5.3 It would also be normal practice for the MCA to make contact with ITOPF again, unfortunately, despite ITOPF attempting to make contact with the MCA, they did not respond quickly, and as a result they did not manage to join any of the first day's meetings.
- 7.5.4 Whilst managing to attend the overnight briefing on day two, having missed the entire first day, it was difficult to contribute much as the response was already well underway and they had missed a lot of key discussions.
- 7.5.5 The exercise being virtual made this harder, as there was no opportunity to catch up and ask questions outside of the formal meetings, as there would be if attending an exercise or real incident in person.

## 7.6 Irish Coastguard

- 7.6.1 The Irish Coastguard was asked to be part of the exercise, due to the 'EKUL' being on passage to Warrenpoint and the potential for any pollution to migrate towards Ireland.
- 7.6.2 Active notification and brief to the Irish Authorities regarding the transit of casualty vessel to Warrenpoint was made by HM Coastguard.
- 7.6.3 However, later during the incident when more became known about the 'NEWRA', there was less communication.
- 7.6.4 Possibly a result of a lack of communication and possibly due to exercise play not following procedure, notification of the mobilisation of the European Maritime Safety Administration (EMSA) spill response vessel from Cork was not made to the Irish Coastguard.
- 7.6.5 The Irish Coastguard made two requests, by phone and email, to HM Coastguard for an incident command team liaison officer to be provided. It is not clear why this was not actioned.
- 7.6.6 There also appeared to be a lack of utilisation of EMSA SafeSeaNet for incident detail and SITREP.

Observation 45 (Ref 7.6.6): proactive and positive briefings between states is encouraged to ensure awareness, early notification, and co-operation. This would be further enhanced with a commonly agreed virtual briefing platform i.e. MS Teams and assigned liaison officers.

## 7.7 Other organisations

- 7.7.1 There were many more organisations involved in the exercise, of whom all played a critical role in the execution of the exercise scenario.
- 7.7.2 All appear to welcome the involvement in this exercise and suggested that processes were followed, and they were content with the response.
- 7.7.3 There were several organisations who were not contacted, which is believed to have been a direct result of exercise artificiality or not following process.

## 8. Online feedback

- 8.1.1 An online feedback form was provided to all participants of Exercise CELTIC DEEP. The aim of this was to gather additional information over and above that provided by the evaluators and included questions on the effectiveness of remote working and human factor elements.
- 8.1.2 In total, 35 participants completed the form, and these have been analysed by the lead evaluator. There were many comments received which cannot all be included in this report but any which are not reflected, will be considered separately with the relevant department and/or organisation.
- 8.1.3 Based on the exercise objective "To test and verify the UK's National Contingency Plan for response to marine pollution from shipping and offshore installations, under

remote working conditions", those who responded had a 78% agreement. However, they showed an 82% agreement when asked if the exercise enabled them to effectively practice their response in the case of an actual shipping disaster.

- 8.1.4 There was 91% agreement that respondents were treated with respect and courtesy during the exercise and 82% agreement in feeling adequately prepared to respond to related real-life scenarios, as a result of the exercise.
- 8.1.5 Remote working is expanded upon in section 9, however, 63% of those who responded were operating remotely during the exercise with the majority, 91%, either working in a private office space at home, or in a room at their home not designated for working, but without significant interruptions (e.g. bedroom with door shut).
- 8.1.6 In considering whether they were able to respond effectively during the exercise from a remote environment, there was 75% agreement however when compared to how well they could have responded in person there was 62% agreement. In addition, only 56% agreement that they would prefer to participate in future exercises remotely.
- 8.1.7 In regard to ICT systems and internet connections working effectively, there was 90% agreement, with only four people reporting problems, mostly related to the availability of software such as Zoom or MS Teams.
- 8.1.8 Questions relating to human factors were included in the survey, and these will be analysed by MCA experts, then compared against future exercise results.



Figure 2: stress definitions

- 8.1.9 The majority of those responding, 94%, indicated they were within the calm or eustress categories before the exercise began. The same percentage was reported during the exercise, although 26% indicated they had a maximum stress level within the distress or stress categories.
- 8.1.10 There was 79% agreement that those who responded felt rested prior to the exercise, with 51% agreement in feeling exhausted after the exercise.

Good practice 16 (Ref 8): the use on an online feedback form provided a thorough analysis of exercise participants comments, giving a wider view on the success factors. This should be considered for all future exercises.

# 9. Remote Operations

- 9.1.1 Some of the biggest challenges and learnings from this exercise, unsurprisingly, has been related to the management of a multi-agency incident conducted remotely.
- 9.1.2 The overall view of the response to this exercise was positive and showed that doing so remotely was entirely possible.
- 9.1.3 There were concerns about the lack of a common operating platform which contributed to difficulties effectively communicating with all organisations taking part, particularly sharing information in a consistent, efficient, and secure way. See Recommendation 30.
- 9.1.4 While there are many different technical options available, it is clear that a key factor in the success of any of these is the familiarity of individuals with these platforms.
- 9.1.5 There were observations raised by individuals stating their confusion over the number of communications methods available, which became overwhelming to deal with, with no single platform which suited all participants.
- 9.1.6 Most incidents involving counter pollution and salvage are managed remotely during the initial stages of an incident. It should be noted that for all previous national exercises, response teams have pre-mobilised to the scene of the incident, which, while never detracting from the objectives of the exercise, has potentially led to confusion about how long it would take to mobilise a team to the scene of an incident and the appreciation for how remote working in the initial stages is managed.
- 9.1.7 This section highlights the main areas for consideration based on the platforms which were used during the exercise. While not recommending one over any other, there are clear advantages to some platforms and other options may be considered as an incident management solution.
- 9.1.8 When working remotely, the same care and attention must be taken with equipment and information as when you would be operating in person. This is particularly relevant when considering the sharing of information of a sensitive nature.
- 9.1.9 Consideration should be given to those who may be responding to an incident in person, or are for example travelling, and how they access remote meetings.

Recommendation 26 (Ref 9): during a future revision, the NCP should include content regarding remote responses, including consideration of terms such as 'meetings at the scene'

## 9.2 Microsoft Teams

9.2.1 The main platform used during the exercise, by participants, evaluators and the command team was MS Teams. This has grown in popularity during 2020 and is the replacement for Skype for Business.

- 9.2.2 Most organisations either had full use of MS Teams or were in the process of rolling out the software, however also recognising that this did not account for everyone.
- 9.2.3 MS Teams provided a stable and flexible platform for most users, providing access to video conferencing, screen sharing, instant messaging, and private channels (groups).
- 9.2.4 It was apparent that experience on the use of MS Teams varied and this was a limiting factor, with many participants indicating they would have preferred to use options they were familiar with and often resorting to the use of telephone calls and email.
- 9.2.5 Particularly during exercise planning and command, the use of MS Teams channels was effective, enabling targeted conversations and the sharing of files important to the running of the exercise.

Good practice 17 (Ref 9.2.5): the use of MS Teams channels was an excellent way of targeting chat and file sharing to specific groups, and would be beneficial for future exercises.

Observation 46 (Ref 9.1.9): if MS Teams continues to be the preferred communication method, the MCA should consider those who may not be able to join the meeting via the internet. An option could be to provide the ability to dial in to an MCA hosted MS Teams meeting.

## 9.3 SharePoint

- 9.3.1 It was noted through multiple cells that the MCA staff were able to utilise SharePoint during the exercise, a platform also used by the exercise planning team.
- 9.3.2 MCA ICT were able, during exercise planning, to open up access to the exercise folder for planning and evaluation team members which enabled excellent collaboration opportunities.
- 9.3.3 As per 6.1.12, there were some issues with initial access however these were able to be addressed by MCA ICT allowing all of the planning team to access the required information.
- 9.3.4 During the exercise, however, it was not as successful since participants did not have access to the files which were being referenced by the MCA.

Observation 47 (Ref 9.3): the use of SharePoint is an excellent tool for sharing and collaborating on files and it should be considered as a viable option, should all participants be able to be granted access in a timely manner.

#### 9.4 Resilience Direct

- 9.4.1 Resilience Direct is utilised by category 1 and category 2 responders and is an excellent tool for collaboration during incident response.
- 9.4.2 Several organisations highlighted the benefits of Resilience Direct during the exercise, and this has been replicated through feedback during previous NCP exercises.

- 9.4.3 It was clear that many individuals and organisations were not familiar with the capabilities of Resilience Direct and either did not have access to the portal or were reluctant to use it during the exercise.
- 9.4.4 This meant that the benefits for those that were using the system were limited and ultimately led to more issues regarding access to logs and information.
- 9.4.5 As per 7.3.6, granting access to Resilience Direct can be lengthy and therefore early consideration during a response should be given to who may need access. See 10.1.7.

## 9.5 Management of remote meetings

- 9.5.1 Remote meetings should be given as much respect and attention as a meeting in person would do. It was witnessed several times during the exercise that participants would come and go throughout a meeting, arrive late, deal with other matters during the meeting (e.g. take calls) or continue with other work.
- 9.5.2 It is suggested that chairs of cells consider the best management of remote meetings and incorporate instructions into agendas.
- 9.5.3 As per an in-person meeting, arrangements should be agreed and invites sent out in good time, with the relevant link and details of the platform to be used. Invites should not be forwarded without agreement from the cell head or administrator, to manage the expected list of attendees.
- 9.5.4 Although remote, a member of the cell should be nominated as a 'room manager' to manage and monitor attendees, checking for anyone attending who was not invited, or who may drop out prior to the conclusion. This person can also assist with managing the chat function and use of 'raising a hand'.
- 9.5.5 The management of the meeting should be clearly outlined at the outset of each meeting. The following highlights some areas which may be useful to consider:
  - the room manager runs through the alphabetical participant list asking for each attendee to introduce themselves, including name, organisation, and role within that cell
  - the use of 'raising hand' is encouraged to indicate a wish to comment. It should be noted that depending how an individual is logged into MS Teams, they may not see this option. Also, anyone who is sharing their screen, may also not notice hands being raised and therefore the room manager should assist
  - the chat/instant messaging function can be used to ask questions, however, conversations should be avoided during meetings, and any undertaken out of meetings should be discussed and agreed beforehand
  - if someone has to leave the meeting, or for example take a call, they should indicate this in the chat function
  - while not speaking during the meeting, all microphones should be muted. It is important to note that for those who do not use a headset, having a mic unmuted can cause feedback to the rest of the attendees

the head of cell should determine whether the use of cameras is encouraged. They can help improve the flow of information and engagement between participants, however, they can also cause additional impact on available bandwidth. It could be favourable to use them during introductions, and then switch off, perhaps other than when contributing.

Observation 48: all organisations should consider developing and utilising a set of rules, or good practice, for the management of remote meetings, and incorporate these into standard agendas

9.5.6 Regarding the chat/instant messaging function, it should be noted that current MCA ICT policy is that this must not be used during incident response, however, this is intended to be aimed at CGOC operational staff. While this function can be useful and replicate somewhat the conversations which take place within physical rooms between meetings, it is not secure and will have a varying retention period.

Recommendation 27 (Ref 9.5.6): MCA review the wording of the SYOP regarding the use of MS Teams instant messaging during incident working

## 10. Lead evaluator comments

- 10.1.1 Over and above the individual sections, recommendations and observations detailed throughout the report, there were several areas of particular importance which were applicable to multiple cells.
- 10.1.2 It was clear that administrative and logistical support within the MCA for response to major incidents is lacking. Through cells such as the SCU, MRC and media response, similar comments were raised relating to a requirement for more resource availability.

Recommendation 28 (Ref 10.1.2): the MCA should consider the establishment of an incident response team. The purpose of which would be to support the administrative and logistical elements of a major incident. The cadre of members should be taken from across the agency, provided with suitable training and given the opportunity to participate in regular exercises. This could supplement more specialist response roles highlighted in other recommendations.

- 10.1.3 Several reports from evaluators and participants make comment on the MCA's response being 'confused' and 'lacking direction'. Efforts were made to utilise JESIP and the NCP, however, it was not apparent that either was used effectively and were not aligned.
- 10.1.4 It is vital that the response to a major maritime pollution and/or salvage incident is efficiently coordinated across strategic, tactical, and operational levels. Structures and responsibilities must be clear and unambiguous, ensuring all organisations taking part in the response are familiar with what is expected of them.
- 10.1.5 The Civil Contingencies Act and JESIP outline clear guidelines for multi-agency coordination, however, the NCP contains tried and tested processes for the necessary multi-agency requirements during an at sea pollution or salvage incident.

Recommendation 29 (Ref 10.1.3, 10.1.4, 10.1.5): the MCA should review the response strategies for a major maritime environmental incident and ensure the specific intricacies that are included within the NCP, can be effectively incorporated into multi-agency operations, particularly when other agencies are familiar with, and utilising, the likes of JESIP.

- 10.1.6 While remote operations are covered in detail within section 9, a common issue raised throughout related to struggles regarding a common recognised information picture, and access to a single fit for purpose platform.
- 10.1.7 The availability of Resilience Direct may provide adequate functionality for this purpose, however if it is preferred, significant training and exercising should be undertaken to ensure all MCA responders, and those of partner agencies, have availability and familiarity with using this.
- 10.1.8 Other bespoke packages are available which would provide the MCA with multifunctional options such as communication, information sharing, logs, and status boards.

Recommendation 30 (Ref 10.1.6, 10.1.7, 10.1.8): the MCA should investigate what software platform brings most benefit to a multi-agency response, and provide training and exercise opportunities for everyone who may be expected to use this during an incident.

10.1.9 It is noticeable that many of the observations and recommendations contained within this report have been raised on multiple occasions throughout previous exercise reports, and while these have been addressed by the NCP Strategic Group, with remedial action taken, it highlights the importance of organisations carefully considering the contents of exercise reports.

Observation 49 (Ref 10.1.9): all organisations referenced within NCP reports should be proactive in assessing the observations and recommendations made by evaluators and look to address these in a timely manner.

- 10.1.10 As per Good practice 3, the inclusion of MCA ICT during major exercises and incidents is a vital resource to ensure all technical challenges faced can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- 10.1.11 A number of organisations indicated that the exercise was concluded before all actions could be considered. The exercise was ended once all evaluators were satisfied that the main objectives had either been met or would not benefit from additional exercise play. It was discussed during wash-up meetings however that a day three undertaken at a later date would be very beneficial.

Recommendation 31 (Ref 10.1.11): the MCA look to arrange a follow-on day three, to consider further actions not possible during CELTIC DEEP.

# 11. Conclusion

- 11.1 While Exercise CELTIC DEEP had to be postponed and subsequently managed remotely, it provided a challenging environment for responding organisations and allowed for remote capabilities to be tested.
- 11.2 It is reasonable to suggest that many who participated during the exercise remotely were doing so for the first time and therefore were not entirely comfortable. It was also noticeable that those who had been involved in incidents or exercises via a remote response previously were more familiar in doing so.
- 11.3 While many suggested that their preference was to hold cells in a physical room, this exercise showed that doing so remotely can be just as effective, with the right processes and practice in place.
- 11.4 Although it would benefit from inclusion of more remote elements, the NCP is a tried and tested strategic plan to provide guidance to all stakeholders for incidents regarding pollution and/or salvage from vessels or installations.
- 11.5 Exercise CELTIC DEEP was successful in testing and evaluating the plan in a safe environment, providing key learnings to all organisations.
- 11.6 All organisations should ensure their ongoing familiarisation of the NCP, providing suitable training and exercise opportunities for all their personnel likely to be a part of a response.

# Appendix A - Exercise Team Members

# Core Planning Team

Name	Role	Organisation
Lisa McAuliffe	Exercise Director	MCA
Pete Lowson	Lead Evaluator	MCA
Dominic Stevens	Exercise Secretariat	MCA
Neil Chapman	Planning Team Member	MCA
Heather Skull	Planning Team Member	MCA
Jim Spooner	Planning Team Member	DfT
Pauline Louchart	Planning Team Member	Pembrokeshire County Council
Brian Stewart	Planning Team Member	Port of Milford Haven
Lloyd Swindell	Planning Team Member	K-Line Shipping
Chris Cook	Planning Team Member	K-Line Shipping
Gary White	Planning Team Member	Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales
Nicola Davies	Planning Team Member	MCA
Sam Phillips	Planning Team Member	MCA
Alun Newsome	Planning Team Member	MCA

# Exercise Command Team

Name	Location	Organisation
Lisa McAuliffe	Remote	MCA
Pete Lowson	Remote	MCA
Sam Phillips	NMOC	MCA
Steve Storey	Remote	OSRL
Jason Loach	Remote	Ambipar
Jolene Smith	Humber CGOC	MCA
Jim Spooner	Remote	DfT
John Tulloch	Remote	Ambipar
Chris Cook	Remote	K-Line
Pauline Louchart	Council office	Pembrokeshire CC

Nicola Davies	Milford Haven CGOC	MCA
Gary White	Remote	NRW

# **Evaluation Team**

Name	Location	Cell	Parent Organisation
Pete Lowson	Remote	Lead Evaluator	MCA
Danny Pendrey	Remote	EG Evaluator	Marine Scotland
Stuart Hankey	Remote	EG Di-staff	Environment Agency
Michelle Hickson	Remote	SCU Evaluator	OPRED
Alan Waters	Remote	SCU Di-staff	MCA
Will Crocker	Remote	MRC Evaluator	MCA
Karen Bosman	Remote	MRC Di-staff	MCA
Julie-Anne Wood	Milford Haven	CGOC Evaluator	MCA
Nicola Davies	Milford Haven	CGOC Di-staff	MCA
Jim Spooner	Remote	DfT	DfT
Alun Newsome	CGOC/MHPA	MHPA/LRF	MCA
Chris Cook	Remote	K-Line	K-Line
Mike Lowson	Remote	Media	Lowson Media
Steve Mann	Fareham	NMOC Evaluator	MCA
Dominic Golden	Fareham	ARCC Evaluator	MCA

# Appendix B – Summary of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION TEXT	ASSIGNED TO
RECOMMENDATION 1	A DOCUMENT SHOULD BE CREATED BY THE MCA, WITH GUIDANCE ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY DEVELOP AND EXECUTE A NATIONAL EXERCISE, INCLUDING TEMPLATES FOR TERMS OF REFERENCE, EVALUATION REPORTS AND RECOGNISED EXERCISE GOOD PRACTICE.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 2	THE PROCESS FOR DECLARING A MAJOR INCIDENT SHOULD BE REVIEWED AND CLEAR INSTRUCTION GIVEN ON ACTIVATION AND TRIGGERS.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 3	DURING A COUNTER POLLUTION OR SALVAGE INCIDENT, A SINGLE CPSO SHOULD MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE CGOC, UP UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A COASTGUARD LIAISON OFFICER IS ASSIGNED AS PART OF A NCP CELL(S), TO ENSURE TIMELY INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND AVOID DUPLICATION OF EFFORT.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 4	THE MCA SHOULD REVIEW THE PROCESS FOR COMPILING FORMAL SITREPS TO REMOVE, WHERE POSSIBLE, DUPLICATED DATA ENTRY.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 5	THE MCA SHOULD CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING A PROCESS WHERE ALL FORMAL REPORTS, OR OTHER COMMUNICATIONS, WHICH ARE SENT BY A CGOC, ARE QUALITY CHECKED BY ANOTHER OFFICER AND CONFIRMED BY A LOG ENTRY.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 6	THE MCA TO REVIEW THE POLREP STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE AND ENSURE CLEARER INSTRUCTION IS PROVIDED ON WHEN ONE IS REQUIRED, AND WHO MAKES THIS DECISION.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 7	THE MCA REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS AND USE OF THE ZONE EMAIL ADDRESSES TO ENSURE RECEIVED EMAILS ARE ACTIONED IN A TIMELY MANNER	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 8	THE MCA TO REVIEW AND CONFIRM THE ROLE OF THE SMC AND ON-CALL OFFICERS IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL MEETINGS, INCLUDING THE ROLE OF THE COASTGUARD LIAISON OFFICER.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 9	HM COASTGUARD TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC RESPONSE GROUP MEETINGS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN MORE DAY TO DAY PROCESSES SO THAT THEY BECOME THE NORM. THE VALUE OF THESE GROUPS DURING COVID-19 HAS BEEN RECOGNISED AND THIS NEEDS TO BE REPLICATED DURING INCIDENTS. THE INTEGRATION OF THESE MEETINGS WITHIN EXISTING STRUCTURES SUCH AS THE LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM (LRF) AND NCP, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 10	THE MCA CONSIDER REVIEWING THE ARCC OPERATIONS GUIDE REGARDING THE TASKING OF MCA AVIATION ASSETS DURING LARGE SCALE INCIDENTS.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 11	THE MCA SHOULD CONSIDER HOW ALL EGS ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT IN WRITING TO NCP CELLS, TO IMPROVE CONSISTENCY	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 12	IF THE MCA ARE TO USE THE STRATEGIC COMMANDERS TO CHAIR THE MRC, DEFINITION OF THE ROLE AND TRIGGERS FOR ACTIVATING THE ON CALL STRATEGIC COMMANDER SHOULD BE CONFIRMED AND WRITTEN PROCEDURES PROMULGATED, SO THAT THERE IS CLEAR AND UNIVERSAL UNDERSTANDING.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 13	THE MCA SHOULD CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A COMPETENCY BASED TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR MCA MRC PARTICIPANTS, COVERING ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCESSES, AND ENSURE EVERYONE WHO MAY BE EXPECTED TO BE PART OF AN MRC ARE ABLE TO TAKE PART IN AT LEAST ONE MEANINGFUL EXERCISE A YEAR.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 14	THE MCA REVIEW WHAT SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES THE MRC SHOULD UTILISE TO ENSURE COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTIVE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 15	CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO IMPROVING THE RESILIENCE OF THE MRC FOR A PROTRACTED INCIDENT.	MCA
<b>RECOMMENDATION 16</b>	THE MCA SHOULD DEVELOP OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE MOBILISATION OF OSRL.	MCA

RECOMMENDATION 17	A SEPARATE MODELLING SUB-GROUP SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN FUTURE EXERCISES AND INCIDENTS TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST DIFFERENT MODELLING RUNS IN ORDER TO PRODUCE A SINGLE, UNIFIED PICTURE.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 18	THE SOSREP REVIEW THE RESILIENCE OF THE SOSREP SUPPORT OFFICER AND CONSIDERATION GIVEN INTO PROVIDING ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT TO THIS ROLE.	SOSREP
RECOMMENDATION 19	THE MCA SHOULD REVIEW THE PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING A MEDIA CELL, DURING QUALIFYING INCIDENTS, WITH A DEFINED STRUCTURE AND LIST OF ATTENDEES, A CLEAR SET OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE NECESSARY RESOURCES AND ONGOING RESILIENCE TO HANDLE THE TASK IN HAND.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 20	THE MCA, WHILE PLAYING A VITAL COORDINATION ROLE FOR THE RELEASE OF MEDIA INFORMATION DURING A MAJOR INCIDENT, SHOULD SEEK WAYS TO AVOID BEING LEFT BY EXTERNAL AGENCIES TO HANDLE ALL MEDIA RESPONSES SHOULD THOSE AGENCIES CHOOSE NOT TO RESPOND DIRECTLY WITH THEIR OWN PERSONNEL.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 21	CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO STRENGTHENING THE PERMANENT MCA PRESS TEAM AS CURRENT RESOURCES DO NOT ALLOW A COMPREHENSIVE AND FULLY EFFECTIVE MEDIA RESPONSE TO A MAJOR INCIDENT THAT EXTENDS OVER 12 HOURS OR A NUMBER OF DAYS OR WEEKS.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 22	THE MCA PRESS TEAM SHOULD RIGOROUSLY ENFORCE A 10-MINUTE RULE WHEN SEEKING COMMENTS FROM EXTERNAL AGENCIES ON PLANNED PRESS RELEASES TO AVOID UNNECESSARY DELAY, CONFUSION AND OTHER AGENDAS BEING FOLLOWED.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 23	THE MCA SHOULD REVIEW THE IMPORTANCE AND BENEFIT OF SENIOR OFFICERS ATTENDING PRESS CONFERENCES AND PROVIDING MEDIA INTERVIEWS VERSUS THEIR WORKING RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A MAJOR INCIDENT TO AVOID CONFLICTING REQUIREMENTS. CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ALLOCATING A SENIOR COMMAND OFFICER, DEPUTY SOSREP OR OPERATIONAL OFFICER AS PRESS SPOKESPERSON TO HANDLE MEDIA INTERVIEWS THEREBY ALLOWING OTHER SENIOR STAFF TO CONCENTRATE ON THEIR OPERATIONAL ROLES IN THE INCIDENT.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 24	THE MCA SHOULD, AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE AND EASILY-DEPLOYED IT PLATFORM FOR CONDUCTING ONLINE PRESS CONFERENCES WITH A NUMBER OF REMOTELY-LOCATED JOURNALISTS. SUCH A PLATFORM WILL ALLOW THE MCA TO MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, AND EXPEDITED EMERGENCY RESPONSE.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 25	CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ESTABLISHING A MEDIA RESPONSE TEAM WITHIN THE MCA, UTILISING MCA STAFF FROM OUT WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY PRESS TEAM. THESE PEOPLE SHOULD BE TRAINED AND EXERCISED BY THE PERMANENT PRESS STAFF, PERHAPS FOR ONE DAY EVERY SIX MONTHS, TO ASSIST THE PRESS TEAM WITH INFORMATION GATHERING AND DISTRIBUTION, TELEPHONE RESPONSES AND ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS DURING A MAJOR INCIDENT TO ALLOW THE PRESS OFFICERS MORE TIME AND SPACE TO DO THEIR OWN SPECIALISED JOBS.	MCA
<b>RECOMMENDATION 26</b>	DURING A FUTURE REVISION, THE NCP SHOULD INCLUDE CONTENT REGARDING REMOTE RESPONSES, INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF TERMS SUCH AS 'MEETINGS AT THE SCENE'	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 27	THE MCA REVIEW THE WORDING OF THE SYOP REGARDING THE USE OF MS TEAMS INSTANT MESSAGING DURING INCIDENT WORKING	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 28	THE MCA SHOULD CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM. THE PURPOSE OF WHICH WOULD BE TO SUPPORT THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICAL ELEMENTS OF A MAJOR INCIDENT. THE CADRE OF MEMBERS SHOULD BE TAKEN FROM ACROSS THE AGENCY, PROVIDED WITH SUITABLE TRAINING AND GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN REGULAR EXERCISES. THIS COULD SUPPLEMENT MORE SPECIALIST RESPONSE ROLES HIGHLIGHTED IN OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 29	THE MCA SHOULD REVIEW THE RESPONSE STRATEGIES FOR A MAJOR MARITIME ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENT AND ENSURE THE SPECIFIC INTRICACIES THAT ARE INCLUDED WITHIN THE NCP, CAN BE EFFECTIVELY INCORPORATED INTO MULTI- AGENCY OPERATIONS, PARTICULARLY WHEN OTHER AGENCIES ARE FAMILIAR WITH, AND UTILISING, THE LIKES OF JESIP.	MCA

RECOMMENDATION 30	THE MCA SHOULD INVESTIGATE WHAT SOFTWARE PLATFORM BRINGS MOST BENEFIT TO A MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE AND PROVIDE TRAINING AND EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE WHO MAY BE EXPECTED TO USE THIS DURING AN INCIDENT.	MCA
RECOMMENDATION 31	THE MCA LOOK TO ARRANGE A FOLLOW-ON DAY THREE, TO CONSIDER FURTHER ACTIONS NOT POSSIBLE DURING CELTIC DEEP.	MCA

# Appendix C – Summary of Observations

OBSERVATION NUMBER	OBSERVATION TEXT	ASSIGNED TO
OBSERVATION 1	HAVING MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING TEAM, COMMAND TEAM OR ROLE-PLAYERS ALSO PARTICIPATING WITHIN THE EXERCISE CAN CAUSE ADDITIONAL CONFUSION AND UNNECESSARY COMPLEXITY, THEREFORE WHERE POSSIBLE, SHOULD BE KEPT AS SEPARATE ROLES.	MCA
OBSERVATION 2	PREBOOKING VENUES AT LEAST SIX MONTHS IN ADVANCE OF EXPECTED EXERCISE DATES, WILL HELP ENSURE ACHIEVING GOOD AVAILABILITY	MCA
OBSERVATION 3	CONSIDERING ADDITIONAL EXERCISE DATES AS A CONTINGENCY WOULD ASSIST IN EFFICIENT RESCHEDULING, SHOULD A POSTPONEMENT BE REQUIRED	MCA
OBSERVATION 4	IMPORTANT TO BE AWARE OF ANY BUDGET BREAKDOWN AND WHAT IMPACTS THIS MAY HAVE ON EXERCISE PLANNING	MCA
OBSERVATION 5	IT IS VITAL THAT ALL PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS FULLY ENGAGE WITH THE PLANNING PROCESS AND REGULARLY CHECK AND UPDATE EXERCISE DOCUMENTATION ACCORDING TO SET DEADLINES.	MCA
OBSERVATION 6	FUTURE EXERCISE DIRECTORS TO ALLOCATE SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS WITH EXPECTATIONS THAT STATUS REPORTS ARE PROVIDED AT EACH PLANNING MEETING, ESTABLISHING SUB-GROUPS FOR SPECIFIC TOPICS AS REQUIRED.	MCA
OBSERVATION 7	ALL KEY MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING TEAM SHOULD ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO PROVIDE BACKUP, FOR RESILIENCE.	MCA
OBSERVATION 8	ENSURE THERE IS ONE CONSISTENT MEANS OF COMMUNICATION PLUS A BACKUP AVAILABLE FOR <b>ALL</b> THE COMMAND TEAM AND EVALUATORS, AND ALL MEMBERS TEST AND ARE CONFIDENT IN THE OPERATION BEFORE UTILISING IN AN EXERCISE. THE BACKUP SHOULD ONLY BE USED IF THE PRIMARY DOES NOT WORK.	MCA
OBSERVATION 9	TWO MEMBERS OF THE COMMAND TEAM, WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF EXPECTED EMAIL CONTENT, AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES TO MONITOR THE NATIONAL EXERCISE EMAIL ACCOUNT, WOULD ALLOW FOR SUITABLE BREAKS AND CONTINGENCY	MCA
OBSERVATION 10	THE LIMITS ON THE POLREP WORDCOUNT IN THE HM COASTGUARD INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VISION) RESULTED IN MESSAGES FROM THE CPSO NOT BEING COMPATIBLE.	MCA
OBSERVATION 11	HEADPHONES FOR CGOC IPADS, FOR USE WITHIN THE OPERATIONS ROOM, WOULD HAVE BEEN BENEFICIAL.	MCA
OBSERVATION 12	WHEN MEETINGS ARE ARRANGED, IT IS UNPROFESSIONAL TO CANCEL THESE, OR UPDATE AGENDAS. IF A CHAIR IS BUSY, A DEPUTY SHOULD BE APPOINTED AS OTHER RESPONDERS ARE EXPECTING MEETINGS AND ARE LIKELY IN NEED OF THE UPDATES.	ALL
OBSERVATION 13	THE MCA DID NOT APPARENTLY USE THE MAJOR INCIDENT CHECKLISTS, WHICH WOULD HAVE AIDED THE CORRECT NOTIFICATION. THIS CAN BE LINKED TO RECOMMENDATION 3.	MCA
OBSERVATION 14	IT CAN TAKE A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF TIME TO ACTION A REQUEST FOR RESTRICTED AIRSPACE WITH RELEVANT AUTHORITIES AND THEREFORE IF ONE IS REQUIRED, EARLY NOTIFICATION TO THE <b>ARCC</b> IS IMPORTANT.	MCA
OBSERVATION 15	THE BENEFITS OF A TIMELY INITIAL SCG MEETING, WILL NOT ONLY REVIEW AND ADDRESS THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF AN INCIDENT, BUT ADD STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT TO A TCG.	MCA
OBSERVATION 16	INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF CELLS SHOULD ENSURE THEY RAISE STRATEGIC ISSUES DURING MEETINGS, FOR EXAMPLE, IF SOMEONE FEELS THAT CRITICAL NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS A STRATEGIC ISSUE, THIS SHOULD BE RAISED AND ADDRESSED BY THE CELL.	ALL
OBSERVATION 17	FOR A LIVE PLAY EXERCISE, PREARRANGED MEETINGS SHOULD NOT BE ARRANGED IF NOTIFICATION AND RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION IS PART OF THE SUCCESS CRITERIA MEASURE OF THE EXERCISE.	EG

OBSERVATION 18	USING THE INITIAL AGENDA, AS OUTLINED IN THE WALES ENVIRONMENT GROUP PLAN, WOULD ASSIST IN THE	EG
	EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF EG MEETINGS.	50
OBSERVATION 19	THE CHAIR OF THE EG SHOULD ASSIGN A DEPUTY, TO PROVIDE RESILIENCE.	EG
OBSERVATION 20	OWN ORGANISATION, AND FULLY PARTICIPATE DURING EG MEETINGS.	EG
OBSERVATION 21	AN ACTIONS TRACKER/LOG SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AT EG MEETING ONE AND REVIEW OF ACTIONS MADE AT THE END	
	OF EACH EG MEETING. ANY MEETING AGENDA SHOULD INCLUDE A REVIEW OF ACTIONS AND ALLOW FOR EVERYONE TO BE CLEAR ON THEIR ASSIGNED ACTIONS	EG
OBSERVATION 22	CLARIFYING WHAT TASKS ARE BEING MADE TO THE GROUP IS CRITICAL, THEN PROVIDING A LIST OF DOCUMENTED	EC
	OPTIONS AND RATIONALE BEHIND ADVICE, TO ENABLE CELLS TO TAKE INFORMED DECISION ON NEXT STEPS	EG
OBSERVATION 23	INCLUDING THE INCIDENT ROLE AND CONTACT DETAILS FOR EACH CELL MEMBERS WITHIN AN EMAIL SIGNATURE WOULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR ALL.	ALL
OBSERVATION 24	A GENERIC EG EMAIL ADDRESS FOR THE CHAIRS TO PERMIT THE COLLATION AND THEN SUBSEQUENT RECORD	
	KEEPING AND SHARING OF INFORMATION WOULD BE BENEFICIAL. THIS WILL LIKELY ONLY BE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PARENT ORGANISATION.	EG
OBSERVATION 25	THE CHAIR OF THE EG, IF NOT CONTACTED BY ANY OF THE CELL HEADS, SHOULD MAKE CONTACT WITH THEM, TO	EC
	FOSTER TEAM WORKING AND EXPLORE IF THERE ARE ANY ISSUES.	L0
<b>OBSERVATION 26</b>	THE EGS WOULD BENEFIT FROM TRAINING ON POR AND WHAT MAY BE REQUIRED OF THEM DURING A REQUEST.	EG
OBSERVATION 27	THE EG SHOULD BE PROACTIVE AND CONSIDER DEVELOPING ADVICE ON/SETTING-UP SUBGROUPS FOR SPECIALIST AREAS I.E. USE OF DISPERSANT.	EG
OBSERVATION 28	A REVIEW OF THE PROCEDURES FOR ACTIVATION OF THE WALES EG, INCLUDING USE OF THE WALES EG RESPONSE	
	PLAN, CIRCULATION OF INFORMATION AND COMPLETION OF TEMPLATES WITHIN THE PLAN WOULD GIVE GREATER	EG
	CLARITY AND PURPOSE FOR THE GROUP. THIS SHOULD THEN BE PRESENTED TO ALL WALES EG MEMBERS, SO THEY	
	HAVE A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE AND REMIT OF THE GROUP.	
OBSERVATION 29	FOR FUTURE EXERCISES, WHERE REAL WEATHER IS NOT BEING USED, IT MAY BE BENEFICIAL FOR PARTICIPANTS TO	MCA
	HAVE WEATHER HISTORY FOR AT LEAST 40-HOURS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE EXERCISE.	MCA
OBSERVATION 30	SHOULD THE MIRC AGENDA HAVE BEEN USED, SOME STANDING THEMS WOULD HAVE BEEN INCLUDED.	INCA
OBSERVATION 31	FULL ENCAGEMENT WITH RELEVANT CONTRACTORS	MCA
OBSERVATION 32	THE SOSREP BEING CLEAR ABOUT THEIR PREEERRED COMMUNICATION METHODS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL	SOSREP
OBSERVATION 33	OFFERING TRAINING TO MCA SENIOR LEADERSHIP MAY IMPROVE THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF	000I(EI
	PRESS INTERVIEW TIMING.	MCA
OBSERVATION 34	THE MCA SHOULD WORK WITH PARTNER AGENCIES TO CONSIDER FURTHER HOW BEST TO UTILISE SOCIAL MEDIA	
	DURING A MAJOR INCIDENT, AND TO WHAT LEVEL THE INEVITABLE INACCURATE AND EXCESSIVE USES TO WHICH IT IS	MCA
	PUT BY INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BE COUNTERED. THIS SHOULD BE A KEY PART OF THE MEDIA CELL'S PLANNED STRATEGY.	
OBSERVATION 35	DFT SHOULD REVIEW THE MCA INCIDENT NOTIFICATION EMAIL LIST ADDRESS PERIODICALLY TO ENSURE IF REMAINS	DET
	CURRENT.	DET
OBSERVATION 36	DFT SHOULD HAVE A NUMBER OF ESTABLISHED GROUP EMAILS TO ENSURE THAT CONTACT BETWEEN PRIVATE OFFICE,	DET
	COMMUNICATIONS, OPERATIONS DIVISION HAS NO SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE.	

OBSERVATION 37	KEY PERSONNEL SHOULD HAVE A LIST OF EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS BEYOND WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE AVAILABLE E.G. MINISTER'S OFFICE SHOULD HAVE THE MINISTER'S PERSONAL NUMBER.	DFT
OBSERVATION 38	OPERATIONS DIVISION SHOULD PROVIDE ABRIDGED VERSIONS OF THE SITREPS TO THE MINISTER DRAWING ATTENTION TO SALIENT POINTS AND NOTING WHERE ANY ACTION MIGHT BE REQUIRED. THIS CAN BE DONE ORALLY WHEN TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE OR AVAILABILITY SUGGESTS IT MAY BE THE BETTER OPTION. THE MINISTER'S OFFICE SHOULD WAIT ON THESE VERSIONS BEFORE INFORMING THE MINISTER, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT OTHER INFORMATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED.	DFT
OBSERVATION 39	MINISTERIAL CONCERNS SHOULD BE RAISED VIA OPERATIONS DIVISION RATHER THAN DIRECTLY. OPERATIONS DIVISION SHOULD PRIORITISE COMMUNICATIONS AND SHOULD ENSURE ALL CONCERNS ARE ANSWERED.	DFT
OBSERVATION 40	CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE TIMING AND FREQUENCY OF MINISTERIAL OR DEPARTMENTAL TWEETS TO ENSURE THAT OUR INVOLVEMENT IS RECOGNISED. EACH INCIDENT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ON ITS OWN MERITS AS TO THE FREQUENCY AND CONTENT OF ANY TWEETS.	DFT
OBSERVATION 41	OPERATIONS DIVISION SHOULD HAVE A GRADE 7 LEAD IN ANY INCIDENT, SUSPENDING BUSINESS AS USUAL AS NECESSARY, WHO LEADS ON MINISTERIAL AND COMMUNICATIONS LIAISON AND DETERMINES WHEN SENIOR OPERATIONS DIVISION SUPPORT MIGHT BE NECESSARY.	DFT
OBSERVATION 42	OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE OFFICE SHOULD HAVE A PROCEDURE FOR ENSURING NO10 ARE AWARE AND THE POTENTIAL MAJOR EFFECT ON AN AREA OF SIGNIFICANT TOURIST, ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL VALUE.	DFT
OBSERVATION 43	CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ANY ASSISTANCE MINISTERS MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE TO THOSE RESPONDING E.G. DIRECT CONVERSATION WITH COMPANY CEO	DFT
OBSERVATION 44	A CENTRAL CALENDAR SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR ALL EXERCISES OR INCIDENTS TO SUPPORT THE TIMING AND SCHEDULING OF CELL MEETINGS	ALL
OBSERVATION 45	PROACTIVE AND POSITIVE BRIEFINGS BETWEEN STATES IS ENCOURAGED TO ENSURE AWARENESS, EARLY NOTIFICATION, AND CO-OPERATION. THIS WOULD BE FURTHER ENHANCED WITH A COMMONLY AGREED VIRTUAL BRIEFING PLATFORM I.E. MS TEAMS AND ASSIGNED LIAISON OFFICERS.	MCA
OBSERVATION 46	IF MS TEAMS CONTINUES TO BE THE PREFERRED COMMUNICATION METHOD, THE MCA SHOULD CONSIDER THOSE WHO MAY NOT BE ABLE TO JOIN THE MEETING VIA THE INTERNET. AN OPTION COULD BE TO PROVIDE THE ABILITY TO DIAL IN TO AN MCA HOSTED MS TEAMS MEETING.	MCA
OBSERVATION 47	THE USE OF SHAREPOINT IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL FOR SHARING AND COLLABORATING ON FILES AND IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A VIABLE OPTION, SHOULD ALL PARTICIPANTS BE ABLE TO BE GRANTED ACCESS IN A TIMELY MANNER.	MCA
OBSERVATION 48	ALL ORGANISATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER DEVELOPING AND UTILISING A SET OF RULES, OR GOOD PRACTICE, FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF REMOTE MEETINGS, AND INCORPORATE THESE INTO STANDARD AGENDAS	ALL
OBSERVATION 49	ALL ORGANISATIONS REFERENCED WITHIN NCP REPORTS SHOULD BE PROACTIVE IN ASSESSING THE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY EVALUATORS AND LOOK TO ADDRESS THESE IN A TIMELY MANNER.	ALL

# Appendix D – Summary of Good Practice

GOOD PRACTICE NUMBER	GOOD PRACTICE TEXT
GOOD PRACTICE 1	USING A REGULARLY UPDATED POWERPOINT PRESENTATION TO GUIDE PLANNING MEETINGS ENABLES AN EFFICIENT WAY OF SUMMARISING PROGRESS AT EACH STAGE.
GOOD PRACTICE 2	THE UTILISATION OF SHAREPOINT FOR EXERCISE DOCUMENTATION IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF MANAGING EXERCISE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY
GOOD PRACTICE 3	INCLUDING MCA ICT AS PART OF THE PLANNING AND COMMAND TEAMS IS INVALUABLE TO ASSIST IN SMOOTH RUNNING OF AN EXERCISE
GOOD PRACTICE 4	A DIGITAL EXERCISE COMMAND LOG IS AN EXCELLENT WAY OF MANAGING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE COMMAND TEAM AND EVALUATION TEAM
GOOD PRACTICE 5	SAVING IMPORTANT EMAILS AND ATTACHMENTS ONTO SHAREPOINT, AND REFERENCING IN THE COMMAND LOG, IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF SHARING THIS INFORMATION, WITHOUT THE REQUIREMENT FOR FORWARDING MULTIPLE EMAILS
GOOD PRACTICE 6	THE SCHEDULING OF EXERCISES INVOLVING THE ARCC SHOULD BE CONDUCTED OUT WITH PEAK SEASON, AS WAS THE CASE WITH CELTIC DEEP, TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH REAL WORLD INCIDENTS.
GOOD PRACTICE 7	THIS EXERCISE PROMPTED USEFUL LEARNING AND DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE ARCC TEAM ON RESPONDING TO NON-SEARCH AND RESCUE INCIDENTS WHICH THE MCA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR, AND FOR PLANNING WITH 2EXCEL.
GOOD PRACTICE 8	SEEKING CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS AT THE TIME, ENABLES CLEAR MESSAGES AND ACTIONS TO BE RECORDED IN MINUTES OR LOGS
GOOD PRACTICE 9	DEFERRING TO RELEVANT EXPERTISE WITHIN A CELL FOR SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE IS ESSENTIAL FOR SOUND COORDINATION.
GOOD PRACTICE 10	THE USE OF EXPERIENCED RESPONSE TEAM MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO WERE NEWER AND LESS EXPERIENCED WAS A POSITIVE APPROACH BY THE MCA MRC MEMBERS.
GOOD PRACTICE 11	THE USE OF AN AT SEA CONTAINMENT AND RECOVERY OPERATION SUB-GROUP WORKED WELL, AND WAS PRODUCTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE
GOOD PRACTICE 12	THE EARLY USE OF IT BY THE MCA PRESS OFFICE TO COMMUNICATE AND INTERACT WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT AT OFTEN GEOGRAPHICALLY REMOTE LOCATIONS ENSURED A TIMELY AND ACCURATE FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THEM THAT COULD BE BENEFICIAL TO IMPARTING APPROPRIATE INFORMATION TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. THE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS BUILT UP AT AN EARLY STAGE BETWEEN THE MCA, EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS PROVED SUBSEQUENTLY TO BE VERY USEFUL.
GOOD PRACTICE 13	MEMBERS OF THE MCA PRESS OFFICE TEAM FREELY SHARED EMERGING INFORMATION BETWEEN THEM TO ENSURE A CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSE TO MEDIA ENQUIRIES. THEY PROACTIVELY OFFERED SITUATION BRIEFINGS TO MCA SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND TO MINISTERS FROM AN EARLY STAGE IN THE INCIDENT. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS BRIEFING INTERNALLY WAS WELL ILLUSTRATED WHEN ONE MEMBER OF THE PRESS OFFICE TEAM WAS TEMPORARILY WAYLAID, AND COLLEAGUES WERE ABLE SMOOTHLY TO STEP IN AND FILL THE VOID UNTIL SHE RETURNED.
GOOD PRACTICE 14	IT WAS GOOD PRACTICE TO HAVE SENIOR OFFICERS APPEAR AT A PRESS CONFERENCE NOT ONLY EARLY BUT ALSO WELL-BRIEFED IN A MAJOR INCIDENT TO PROVIDE ACCURATE INFORMATION AND INSTIL PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE ONGOING OPERATION. THIS IS NOTWITHSTANDING RECOMMENDATION 23 REGARDING THE USE OF SENIOR OFFICERS IN AN MCA SPOKESPERSON ROLE.
GOOD PRACTICE 15	THE USE OF AN INCIDENT STATUS BOARD, STORED ON RESILIENCE DIRECT, PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT OVERVIEW
GOOD PRACTICE 16	THE USE ON AN ONLINE FEEDBACK FORM PROVIDED A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS, GIVING A WIDER VIEW ON THE SUCCESS FACTORS. THIS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR ALL FUTURE EXERCISES.
GOOD PRACTICE 17	THE USE OF MS TEAMS CHANNELS WAS AN EXCELLENT WAY OF TARGETING CHAT AND FILE SHARING TO SPECIFIC GROUPS, AND WOULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR FUTURE EXERCISES.

# Appendix E – Exercise Aim and Cell Objectives

## **Exercise Aim**

- To test and verify the UK's National Contingency Plan for response to marine pollution from shipping, under remote working conditions

## Salvage Control Unit

- To exercise the SOSREP function in relation to a major shipping incident, establishing a Salvage Control Unit and testing communication protocols across Government.

## HM Coastguard

- To exercise the national network, including the Strategic Command Room, in relation to a major maritime incident.
- To test National Maritime Operations decision making at strategic and tactical levels.
- To exercise the warning and informing interfaces between Maritime Operations and all stakeholders (internal and external) up to ministerial level.

## Marine Response Centre

- To exercise the NCP's major incident alerting and response activation procedures, culminating in a coherent and effective national commitment.
- To exercise the Marine Response Centre (MRC), assess the effectiveness of current internal procedures and to test the command and control and interfaces and interdependences across all response levels, looking particularly at interactions between the MRC and other maritime and participating land based response cells, e.g. the Salvage Control Unit (SCU), the Environment Group (EG), Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) functions, cross-government and inter-agency liaison, and the co-ordination of public communication arrangements.
- To exercise the process and procedures for determining Places of Refuge for vessels involved in major incidents.

## Media Response Centre

- How the press team build relationships within the MCA in a major incident and how much they know who they need to go to and what they need from them.
- Test the press team's ability to run media conferences and build relationships across other partner organisations and their process and procedures of doing so.

## **Department for Transport**

- To exercise the Maritime Resilience Team in its response to a major maritime incident, particularly the role expected of it and the support it provides to the MCA and Ministers.
- To ensure that the MCA and DfT press offices have an understanding of their respective roles during the incident.
- To familiarise the Minister and his officials with the procedures and stakeholders during a major maritime incident.

## **Environment Group**

- To test if communication between the core Wales Environment Group and deployed Liaison officers is efficient and effective.
- To test if information, advice, or guidance required by response groups can be accessed, processed and delivered in a timely manner to aid response groups decision making.
- To test if record keeping by the Wales Environment Group are fit for purpose to defend any advice and guidance given.

# **Dyfed Powys Local Authority**

- To test and validate the activation of and the arrangements set out in the Port of Milford Haven Contingency Plans, the Wales Environment Group Plan and the DPLRF Shoreline Pollution Response plan.
- To test the interaction between the DPLRF/Port plans and the MCA's National Contingency Plan specifically testing the strategic decision-making process accounting for the political and socio-economic significance of the Milford Haven Waterway and associated Critical National Infrastructures.

- To live test the communication and remote working arrangements between agencies and the command and control structure established for the At Sea, Port, CGOC, Contractors and shoreline responses, specifically in light of new COVID response practices and re-strictions.
- To evaluate the response and management of an LNG release incident, and its implications, offshore and within harbour limits.
- To exercise the multi-agency preparedness and response to an oil spill washing on the shoreline, including Special Area of Conservation and SSSIs.
- To evaluate the potential implications and inherent challenges of COVID on the management of the response and the operational arrangements.
- To exercise officers in their role, responding to a maritime pollution incident impacting on the Dyfed Powys area.
- To identify and address lessons learnt from the exercise to improve the response and coordination to a maritime pollution incident impacting on the Dyfed Powys LRF area.

## Port of Milford Haven

- To assess the capability and competency of Silver (Tactical) and Gold (Strategic) command to manage an incident.
- Ensure that key response objectives as per the MHPA Emergency and Waterway Pollution Plans are established and achieved.
- Assess the software and processes in place for managing a significant incident.
- Assess both internal and external communication pathways and information sharing.

## K-Line Shipping

- Demonstrate ability to adequately react to emergency situation onboard managed vessel
- Co-ordinate relevant emergency services to successfully bring distressed vessel to a safe condition
- Communicate internally and externally effectively so that all parties are aware at all times of the situation and the escalating or deescalating circumstances.

# Appendix F - Glossary of Terms

Title	Abbreviation	Description/Definition
Automatic Identification System	AIS	AIS is an automatic tracking system that uses transceivers on ships to track vessels.
Air Rescue Coordination Centre	ARCC	The UK ARCC (a Coastguard Operation) provides aeronautical and maritime search and rescue services, supporting emergency services by tasking and coordinating SAR aviation assets in order to locate and retrieve persons in distress, potential distress or missing, provide for their medical or other needs and deliver them to a place of safety.
Cell		As per the NCP, the term 'cell' in this report refers to any centre, cell, unit, group, team, or similar grouping term used within the response to the exercise.
Coastguard Operations Centre	CGOC	Strategically located operations centre, staffed by Coastguard as part of a UK-wide network of centres, monitoring the regional picture, adjusting to flexible work distribution controlled by the NMOC, coordination and communication functions for offshore or coastal emergency response.
Commander	Commander	A Coastguard officer with strategic accountability for the integrity and discharge of HM Coastguard maritime, or coastal, operations within the UK area of interest including the international arena and strategic command control and management of the HM Coastguard national operations network, considering the risks presented to UK interests and citizens in the marine and littoral areas.
Controller	Controller	A Coastguard officer with tactical management oversight and responsible for the quality of Coastguard operations, in either the functionally within the UK area of interest or within defined sub area(s) of the national or international area of operation.

Coronavirus Pandemic	COVID-19	Coronavirus disease is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.
Common Recognised Information Picture	CRIP	A single, authoritative strategic overview of an emergency or crisis that is developed according to a standard template and is intended for briefing and decision-support purposes.
Defects Report	DEFREP	A report received by vessels to notify HM Coastguard if they are involved in an incident, accident or pollution event, and/or a report sent by HM Coastguard to notify the DCPSO and others of an observed or reported accident or incident such as broken-down vessels where corrective/preventative action is required.
Duty Counter Pollution Salvage Officer	DCPSO	An MCA officer during a period of duty responsible for technical and operational response to pollution and / or salvage incidents.
Department for Transport	DfT	A UK Government Department responsible for transport.
Directing Staff		Directing Staff (Exercise Directors) play a role in all types of exercises and report to the Exercise Controller. They have access to the whole exercise programme and ensure that it proceeds according to plan.
Exclusive Economic Zone	EEZ	An exclusive economic zone (EEZ), as prescribed by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is an area of the sea in which a sovereign state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind.
Environment Group	EG	The Environment Group (EG) provides a single advisory line on public health and environmental issues at sea to all response cells
European Union Situation Report	EU SITREP	Used by EU member states to exchange reports in order to enhance the safety and efficiency of maritime traffic, improve the response of authorities to incidents, accidents or potentially dangerous situations at sea, include search and rescue and contribute to better prevention and detection of pollution by ships.

Facts, Factors, Deductions and Output	FFDO	Part of the HM Coastguard process for developing a mission plan.
Her Majesty's Coastguard	HM Coastguard	The search and rescue division of the MCA.
Information Communication Technology	ICT	Technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications.
Information Manager		Role withing the Wales Environment Group Response Plan with overall responsibility for maintaining and updating information on the Environment Group operation room status boards.
Joint Decision Model	JDM	Joint emergency services model specified by JESIP as consistent method for Commanders to help bring together the available information, reconcile objectives and make effective decisions.
Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme	JESIP	A programme aiming to improve the way in which the blue light services work together at major and complex incidents.
Joint Nature Conservation Committee	JNCC	A public body that advises the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation.
K-Line		K-Line is a marine transportation company that owns a fleet of ships that includes dry cargo ships (bulk carriers), container ships, liquefied natural gas carriers, Ro-Ro ships, tankers and container terminals.
Liaison Officer		Liaison officer allocated to response cells to provide a communication link for information sharing in and out of the cell.

Liquified Natural Gas	LNG	Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is natural gas that has been cooled to a liquid state, at about -260° Fahrenheit, for shipping and storage. The volume of natural gas in its liquid state is about 600 times smaller than its volume in its gaseous state.
Lloyds Open Form		Lloyds Open Form provides a regime for determining the amount of remuneration to be awarded to salvors for their services in saving property at sea and minimising or preventing damage to the environment
Local Resilience Forum	LRF	A forum formed in a police area of the United Kingdom by key emergency responders and specific supporting agencies. It is a requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
Loggist		A trained individual allocated to take immediate minutes of discussion and ensure all actions allocated are fully recorded and are made transparent to all parties.
Low Sulphur Fuel Oil	LSFO	Heavy fuel oils are referred to as low sulphur fuel oil if their sulphur content is below 1%.
Maritime & Coastguard Agency	MCA	An Agency of the Department of Transport.
METHANE	METHANE	Joint Emergency Services major incident reporting methodology specified by JESIP as consistent method of sharing incident information; Major emergency. Exact location. Type of incident. Hazards Access. Number of casualties. Emergency services.
Marine Response Centre	MRC	A coordination centre established by the MCA in major maritime pollution cases requiring a national response. It may be co-located at a suitably equipped CGOC or port that supports the at sea response to a pollution and / or salvage operation.

Material Safety Data Sheet		Material safety data sheets provide information on chemical products that help users of those chemicals to make a risk assessment. They describe the hazards the chemical presents, and give information on handling, storage, and emergency measures in case of accident.
Microsoft Teams	MS Teams	Microsoft Teams is a persistent chat-based collaboration platform complete with document sharing, online meetings, and many more extremely useful features for business communications.
Natural Resources Wales	NRW	A Welsh Government Sponsored Body providing advice and regulation to industry and the wider public and voluntary sector relating to the environment and its natural resources.
National Contingency Plan	NCP	A plan that ensures a timely, measured and effective response to Marine Pollution from Shipping and Offshore Installations incidents.
National Maritime Operations Centre	NMOC	The main operations centre, staffed by Coastguard, located at Fareham in Hampshire. The NMOC sits at the hub of UK-wide network of operations centres, monitoring the national picture, adjusting work distribution throughout the network, and providing command, control, coordination and communication functions for offshore or coastal emergency response.
Office of the Chief Executive		The senior management branch in an organisation.
Operational management System	OmS	The authoritative source of reference and guidance for use by all operational Coastguard officers, including policy, operational procedures, operational detail, and references.
Oil Spill Response Limited	OSRL	Industry-funded cooperative which exists to respond to oil spills wherever in the world they may occur, by providing preparedness, response, and intervention services.

P&I Club		A P&I club is a mutual insurance association that provides risk pooling, information and representation for its members.
Place of Refuge	PoR	Where a ship in need of assistance can take action to enable it to stabilise its condition and reduce the hazards to navigation, and to protect human life and the environment. It may include a port, a place of shelter near the coast, an inlet, a lee shore, a cove, a fjord or a bay or any part of the coast. Because of the many variable factors involved, and the variety of risks, a decision to grant access to a place of refuge can only be taken on a case-by-case basis.
Pollution Report	POLREP	A report of any known or potential pollution made by CGOC's / NMOC on receipt of a notification of pollution to ensure accurate and timely dissemination of information to relevant internal MCA and national authorities and organisations.
Royal National Lifeboat Institution		The Royal National Lifeboat Institution is a charity that saves lives at sea, through lifeboat search and rescue, lifeguards, water safety education and flood rescue.
Resilience Direct		Resilience Direct is an online private 'network' which enables civil protection practitioners to work together – across geographical and organisational boundaries – during the preparation, response and recovery phases of an event or emergency.
Strategic Coordinating Group	SCG	A multi-agency group of strategic commanders that takes overall responsibility for the multi- agency management of the emergency and to establish the policy and strategic framework within which lower tier command and coordinating groups will work.
Salvage Control Unit	SCU	A unit established to support SOSREP during shipping and marine salvage incidents.
Search Mission Coordinator	SMC	The Coastguard assigned to co-ordinate the response to an actual or apparent maritime distress situation, this function exists only for the duration of a specific SAR incident.
Situation Report	SITREP	A situation report is a form of status reporting that provides decision-makers and readers a quick understanding of the current situation. It provides a clear, concise understanding of the situation—focusing on meaning or context, in addition to the facts.
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Secretary of States Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention	SOSREP	The Secretary of State for Transports representative with powers to intervene in major maritime emergencies by directing Masters, Owners, Operators and Harbours to take specific actions that preserve the safety of life and protection of the UK environment.
Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique		A systematic method for surveying an affected shoreline after an oil spill.
SharePoint	SharePoint	A web-based application that integrates with Microsoft Office primarily as a highly configurable document management and storage system.
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI	A conservation designation denoting a protected area in the United Kingdom.
Tactical Coordinating Group	TCG	A multi-agency group of tactical commanders that meets to determine, coordinate and deliver the tactical response to an emergency. Note: the TCG may also be known as the Silver Group.
Temporary Exclusive Zone		Section 100A(1) provides power for the Secretary of State to designate a TEZ around a "ship, structure or other thing".
United Kingdom	UK	The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom
ViSION		The HM Coastguard incident management system

Very High Frequency	VHF	VHF is a range of radio frequency electromagnetic waves (radio waves) from 30 to 300 megahertz (MHz)
WhatsApp		Messenger is a cross-platform instant messaging application that allows iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone and Nokia smartphone users to exchange text, image, video and audio messages for free.
Zone	Zone	The concept of Coastguard operations requires the UK to be divided into manageable areas of operational responsibility. There are currently 36 geographic areas allowing HM Coastguard to provide support and / or take operational control of resources and incidents within those zones.