



Home Office

# Critical incident management

**Version 13.0**

Border Force, Immigration Enforcement and UK Visas and Immigration

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# About this guidance

This guidance sets out the Immigration Enforcement (IE), UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and Border Force (BF) policy for critical incident management.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that in the event of a critical incident occurring, there is a clear system in place for all officers to follow to ensure that the incident is managed appropriately and in a consistent manner.

## Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or Head of Unit cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then please email IE National Command and Control Unit or Border Force National Command Centre UKVI Critical Incident Management Hub.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

## Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **13.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **25 August 2021**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

Guidance updated in line with:

- new Hydra Gold Training.
- section inserted on the role of the Strategic Reference Group
- additional Border Force information inserted.
- Training and Skills Unit (TASU) details inserted for critical incident training
- detailed first aid, enforcement visits and oversight and misconduct investigations information removed and replaced with Horizon links
- new sections included – aide memoire for 'The Golden Hour Considerations' and mandatory referral definitions
- new IE National Command and Control (NCC) contact details included
- trauma risk management detail included

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Introduction

The department has developed capability to manage critical incidents, both operational and non-operational, through a command structure and following the basic principles of critical incident management. The main body of the document is standardised. Where information is pertinent to only one section of the business this is clearly stated.

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Definition of a critical incident

This section describes the standard definitions of different types of critical incidents across Immigration Enforcement (IE), UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and Border Force (BF). An incident must meet one of these definitions for it to be defined as critical. There are several types of critical incidents which depend on the scope of the impact, specifically if the scope of the incident goes beyond one business area to manage.

There are 3 categories of critical incident:

- local critical incident
- IE, UKVI or BF national critical incident
- Cross Borders, Immigration and Citizenship (BICs) critical incident

## Local critical incident

A local critical incident is:

- any incident where the outcome or consequence of that incident is likely to result in serious harm to any individual, significant community, public confidence, or business impact
- an incident that is likely to result in a significant impact on the confidence of the public in BF, IE or UKVI
- an incident that will require special arrangements and professional incident management capability to respond

## Immigration Enforcement, UKVI or Border Force national critical incident

This is a national critical incident where one or more of the points in a local critical incident is met and the impact of the incident and response to mitigate this impact involves more than one command within IE, UKVI or BF.

## Cross Borders, Immigration and Citizenship (BICs) national critical incident

This is where one or more of the points in a local critical incident is met and the impact of the incident and response to mitigate this impact involves more than one command within the BICS.

## What is a critical incident

In the wider context, critical incidents as a whole are incidents and events of any scale outside of the usual business activity that can result in serious consequences.

They can be both operational and non-operational. What follows are examples only and are not exhaustive:

- **operational:**
  - death of any person
  - serious injury to any person
  - hostage taking of any person
  - terrorist attack
  - attempt or threat of suicide or self-harm
  - arson
  - assault
  - escape from detention
  - encounter with serious crime
  - riot or public disorder
  - media presence or involvement
  - multi-agency “blue on blue” incident
  - industrial action
  - serious corruption or criminal acts
  - local security threat
- **non-operational:**
  - pandemic
  - legal action
  - serious data breach
  - breach of procedure
  - corruption, misdemeanour or crime
  - unexpected crisis
  - a specific high-profile case for example one involving public figures or one which brings the Home Office into adverse media attention

The first priority for the command is to work with the other agencies and support the emergency services in their endeavour to preserve life both of staff and members of the public.

## Common objectives

The common, primary objectives for the Home Office, the police and other emergency services in respect of an emergency or major incident are to endeavour to:

- save and protect human life
- relieve suffering
- contain the emergency, limiting its escalation or spread
- provide the public and businesses with warnings, advice and information
- protect the health and safety of responding personnel
- safeguard the environment
- as far as reasonably practicable, protect property
- maintain or restore critical activities
- maintain normal services at an appropriate level, especially those which protect the public



- promote and facilitate self-help in the community
- undertake investigations and inquiries
- facilitate the recovery of the community
- maintain the public reputation of the Home Office
- evaluate the response and recovery effort
- identify and take action to implement lessons learned

## Business continuity management

Each business area, command or directorate has a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in place.

Copies of IE business area BCPs are centrally held by the Risk and Assurance Team in the IE National Command and Control Unit.

Copies of BF business area BCPs are held locally within each Regional Command and Control Unit (RCCU) and Terminal and or Port.

This guidance focuses on managing the incident itself whereas BCPs are focused on business recovery in a prioritised manner. Where appropriate, business continuity management must run parallel and maintain close lines of communication, or officially link into the critical incident command structure.

## Critical Incident Response

### Local critical incident

Critical incidents which occur within a local business area will normally be managed locally by that business area's command and control procedure.

Where a critical incident goes beyond the capabilities of a local command it will be escalated. See: [the escalation process map](#).

### National critical incident

A national critical incident is managed through a national command structure led by a National Gold Commander.

These are incidents that cause major disruption to the business preventing the organisation from meeting its objectives and falling beyond the capabilities of business continuity management.

Some examples of these are listed [in the Example of national critical incident section](#).

At times, there will be an incident that affects a number of agencies or organisations. These incidents will be managed through a command structure but will have several commanders, representing each agency, forming command groups.

## Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

When working in command groups the principles of JESIP are followed and it is the aim of JESIP is to ensure the emergency responders are trained and exercised to work together as effectively as possible, at all levels of command in response to major or complex incidents.

BF, IE and UKVI are **not** a category responder within Civil Contingencies but adheres to and must have a good understanding of how emergency services work together to advise on major incident planning.

The JESIP Principles are:

- **co-locate** - with commanders as soon as practicably possible at a single, safe and easily identified location near to the scene
- **communicate** - clearly using plain English
- **co-ordinate** - by agreeing the lead service. Identify priorities, resources and capabilities for an effective response, including the timing of further meetings
- **jointly understand risk** - by sharing information about the likelihood and potential impact of threats and hazards to agree potential control measures
- **shared situational awareness** established by using [METHANE](#) and the [Joint Decision Model](#).

## The command structure

The Gold (strategic), Silver (tactical), Bronze (operational) command structure is role based rather than grade based. Each role is allocated according to skill, expertise, location and competency. Within this system the Gold, Silver and Bronze Commanders have specific roles.

### Gold Commander

Holds ultimate responsibility for the handling and outcome of the incident and sets the strategy for dealing with it. There will only ever be a single Gold Commander for the organisation. A suggested grade for this appointment at local level is HMI/SO/SEO and above.

The Gold Commander determines the strategy for managing an incident including any tactical parameters that the Silver or Bronze Commanders should follow. The Gold Commander must retain strategic oversight of the incident. While Gold Commanders should not make tactical decisions, they will be responsible for

ensuring that any tactics deployed are proportionate to the risks identified, meet the objectives of the strategy and are legally compliant.

Important responsibilities of the Gold Commander:

- assume overall command of the incident which extends until their period of tenure ends
- set, review, update and communicate their strategy, inclusive of media strategy
- be located in a place where they are easily contactable with all the necessary tools and staff to manage the incident effectively
- remain available for the Silver Commander

See the [Gold Commander checklist](#) for more information.

## Silver Commander

The Silver Commander is responsible for producing the tactical plan following the strategy set out by the Gold Commander. There can be more than one Silver Commander, but each must have a clearly defined and logged remit. A suggested grade for this appointment at local level is CIO/HO/HEO and above.

Important responsibilities of the Silver Commander:

- assume tactical command of the incident
- appoint any further Bronze Commanders as appropriate
- set, review, update and communicate the tactical plan
- be located appropriately to exert their tactical command over the incident- depending on the circumstances this may be:
  - near the scene to offer the best service
  - at a nearby Home Office site
  - at a pre-designated silver control site
  - at a basic command unit or control room

See the [Silver Commander checklist](#) and [Tactical deployment aide memoire](#) for more information.

## Bronze Commander

The Bronze Commander takes the operational decisions necessary to accomplish the Silver Commander's tactical plan. A suggested grade for this appointment at local level is IO/EO or above.

As with the Silver Commander, there can be more than one Bronze Commander as long as each has a clearly defined and logged remit. For example, an incident may require a Bronze Operational Commander, a Bronze Communications Commander and a Bronze Logistics Commander.

Important responsibilities of the Bronze Commander:

- assume operational command of the incident or specified supporting activity
- have a clear understanding of the Gold Commander's strategy, the Silver Commander's tactical plan and their role within it
- be suitably located to maintain effective operational command of their area of responsibility
- review, update and communicate any changes that may affect the tactical plan

See the [Bronze Commander checklist](#) for more information.

## Strategic Reference Group

A Strategic Reference Group (SRG) may be established in the event of a cross BICS critical incident or a critical incident affecting multiple government organisations. The principal function of the SRG is to maintain overarching oversight of how the critical incident is being managed, to provide strategic support to the Gold Commander if required and to consider longer-term strategic implications which may arise from the incident. While the routine updating of ministerial offices should take place through the command structure, it may also be desirable for the SRG or one of its members, to brief ministers or attend meetings such as the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) allowing the Gold Commander to focus on managing the incident.

However, it should be noted that the Gold Commander is ultimately responsible for the management of the critical incident.

The membership of the SRG may vary for each incident. However, it might typically include Duty Board member, senior civil service (SCS) grade 3's, Director General, Permanent Secretary, Home Office legal, Press Office, Trade Union representatives and ministerial advisors.

## Critical incident stages

### Planning for a critical incident

Train, define and implement the gold / silver / bronze command structure, giving ready access to the local Business Continuity Plan, Risk Registers, and emergency communications guidance. Where appropriate, run tabletop exercises including outside agencies and other government departments (OGDs) to assist in future planning.

The recognition and declaration of a critical incident.

It is important that an incident is declared as soon as the potential for a critical situation is recognised. The National Command Centre (BF NCC) and The National Command and Control Unit (IE NCCU) will ensure that all Regional Command and Control Units (RCCUs) are made aware when a national critical incident is called.

Managing the situation and preventing any further escalation of events through the command structure.

Managing a return to normality, recognising when an incident is no longer critical, working with the Business Continuity Plan, debriefing and lessons learned process.

**Related content**

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# Recognising, declaring and managing a critical incident

Anyone can declare a local critical incident (CI) but doing so confers responsibility. Whilst the decision to declare a critical incident should not be taken lightly, it is much better to do so, take the appropriate action and then revoke it, rather than do nothing and increase the potential for escalation. [Critical incident declaration template](#).

In the event of escalation, for example, the incident has gone beyond one business area, the decision to declare a national critical incident lies with the commands' Director, or if out of hours, the Duty Director.

The actions taken earliest during a critical incident ('The Golden Hour') are often the most crucial. [See – Golden Hour Aide Memoir](#).

It is important that an incident is declared as soon as the potential for a critical situation is perceived. You do not require evidence, or for an event to have already occurred, to recognise it's potential to become a critical incident.

## Managing a critical incident through the command structure

### First steps

Early communication of the event is crucial once a critical incident is declared. If the incident is centred around an event where a local command structure is already in place you must alert the appointed Gold, Silver and Bronze Commanders immediately.

All critical incidents that occur in BF must be reported to National Command Centre (BF NCC).

All critical incidents that occur in either UKVI or IE must be reported to National Command and Control Unit (IE NCCU).

These teams will refer as appropriate to Home Office Departmental Operations Centre (DOC) and/or Homeland Security Operations.

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### **The role of BF and IE/UKVI NCC(U)**

NCC(U) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All Duty Chief Immigration Officers/Higher Officers and on-call managers (HM Inspectors/Senior Officers and Assistant Director) are gold commander trained. NCC(U) has access to national on call rosters, in order to assist with establishing a national command structure. NCC(U) is there to provide guidance and support to the Gold, Silver and Bronze Commanders.

### **All incidents**

NCC(U) can take responsibility for, or coordinate the following in the event of a critical incident:

- policy, process and coordination support and advice including access to critical incident toolkits and operational plans
- internal communications and notification ensuring accurate and up-to-date information is communicated effectively and appropriately.
- liaising with the relevant teams regarding media handling and press lines
- other support and tasking from Gold and Silver Commanders

NCC(U) is responsible for liaison with Professional Standards Unit and, outside of office hours, mandatory referrals to the Independent Office for Police Conduct, Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland and Police Investigations and Review Commissioner.

### **Local incidents**

If an incident is to be handled locally, NCC(U) must be advised that an incident is occurring. This ensures NCC(U) can escalate the incident if necessary, and valuable time is not lost passing on information later in the event. NCC(U) will be there to provide advice and specialist knowledge and can support the commanders should events escalate or continue over a long period.

### **Escalating and national incidents**

NCC(U) should be informed immediately of any incident with national or serious implications for any other command. NCC(U) will act as a support to any existing

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commanders or assist in establishing an appropriate command structure if none exists. NCC(U) will open and maintain a critical incident log during a national incident.

If a local incident escalates beyond the control and capabilities of the local Gold Commander, NCC(U) must be contacted immediately. NCC(U) will contact the appropriate Director who will act as Gold Commander. It is their role to decide whether or not to declare a national critical incident. If a national critical incident is declared, NCC(U) will notify all relevant parties. [Departmental Operations Centre \(DOC\)](#) are a central body that work alongside operational NCCs/NCCUs offering support and guidance and acting as a single point of contact (SPOC) between the operational arena and ministers and OGDs. Along with contacting NCC(U) when a CI is declared it is good practice to also inform DOC.

## The Golden Hour

The “Golden Hour” is not restricted to 60 minutes. It is the initial period following the incident occurring when the best opportunities exist to take decisive action. See – [Golden Hour Aide Memoir](#) for more information.

## Decision logs and loggists

Accurate, complete and detailed decision logs are crucial to the successful management of any critical incident. Every decision, however minor, must be logged ensuring that the rationale behind the decision is recorded accurately. At the conclusion of any incident, these logs will be made available to the officer conducting the debrief, and if appropriate, to the investigating authorities and the courts.

There are practical difficulties of managing an incident whilst maintaining full and accurate notes therefore it is recommended that wherever possible, commanders appoint suitably experienced personnel to maintain the critical incident log.

The relevant commander remains ultimately responsible for the contents of the logs and must ensure they are of a standard that would allow the commander to return to them up to 7 years later, and know why a decision was made, and defend that decision if necessary. Blank decision logs can be obtained from NCC(U).

## Advisors

Certain critical incidents may require advice from experts, or staff members suitably trained and with in-depth knowledge in that field. At the point a CI is called, consideration should be made to contact and seek assistance from the expert in that field.

## Independent oversight: mandatory referrals

Any incident:



- arising from the use of '[Specified Enforcement Functions](#)' by Immigration Officers and officials of the Secretary of State only when they are exercising police-like powers,
- arising from functions carried out by designated Customs Officials or persons exercising Customs Revenue functions of behalf of the Director of Border Revenue regardless if they have exercised police-like powers
- meeting the referral criteria, see [Categories of incidents which should be referred to the IOPC / PIRC / PONI](#)

will need to be referred to the:

- Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) for England and Wales
- Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland (PONI) for Northern Ireland
- Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) for Scotland

In the event of an incident where referral is deemed necessary NCC(U) must be contacted immediately.

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The incident must be referred regardless of whether or not there is a complaint made.

Incidents will usually be managed locally under existing Gold / Silver / Bronze command structure arrangements and NCC(U) will log the event and offer support and assistance as necessary. NCC(U) will then decide whether the case meets the criteria for referral to IOPC / PIRC / PONI. Where referral is deemed not necessary, they will only keep a record of the incident.

In the event of an incident where referral to the IOPC / PIRC / PONI is deemed necessary:

- in-hours – NCC(U) will make the referral to Professional Standards Unit
- out of hours – NCC(U) will make the referral to IOPC / PIRC / PONI

## Investigating an incident

An investigation may take place following a critical incident. This may be carried out by local management, Professional Standards Unit (PSU) or through Independent Oversight Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC), and Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland (PONI)).

The guidance 'Misconduct investigations conducted by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)' provides detail on how an IOPC investigation will be handled. It is expected that any investigation by either PONI (Northern Ireland) or PIRC (Scotland) would follow broadly similar lines.

The [IOPC guidance](#) provides detail on achieving best evidence in death or serious incident matters.

## Categories of incidents which should be referred to the IOPC / PIRC / PONI

A case will only be referred if it meets the mandatory referral criteria:

- death or serious injury
- serious assault
- serious sexual offences
- serious corruption – restricted to the specified enforcement functions in section 41 of the Police and Justice Act 2006
- criminal offences aggravated by discriminatory behaviour
- any incident which engages [Article 2 \(the right to life\) or Article 3 \(against inhuman or degrading treatment\) of the European Convention on Human Rights](#)
- attempts or conspiracies to do any of the above

If a case does not meet the mandatory referral criteria however, the circumstances are such that you suspect independent oversight is needed, please discuss with the NCC(U)

Additionally, if you are made aware of the death of a person following recent contact with Immigration Enforcement officers or Border Force Immigration (or Customs Officers) exercising [specified enforcement functions](#), this should also be reported to NCC(U).

See [mandatory referrals to the IOPC – definitions](#) for definitions of the above.

## Joint police and Home Office activity

In the event of a critical incident occurring where a joint Home Office and police team are operating, each organisation has a statutory requirement to report incidents to the IOPC / PIRC / PONI under certain circumstances.

The Home Office obligations are stated in section 2 (1) (a) of [The UK Border Agency \(Complaints and Misconduct\) Regulations 2010](#).

The police obligations are stated in [schedule 3 \(4\) of the Police Reform Act 2002](#).

The decision to refer an incident is an independent decision to be taken by each organisation based upon its own criteria and policies and should not be made solely to emulate the decision of the other. However, on a practical level staff involved in the management of the incident should communicate their intentions to report or not as a matter of courtesy to the other organisation as it may be publicly questioned why one organisation acted differently to the other.

## Sole Home Office activity when police assistance is requested

If the police are called to assist after sole Home Office activity and an injury or death subsequently occurs, then both the police and Home Office would be legally obliged to make a referral.

In the event of the police being called in response to an injury or death having occurred, then only Home Office would be legally obliged to make a referral. In any borderline cases the view should be taken that the referral should be made in the interests of the public confidence in the oversight regime.

## Acting as first responder: death or serious injury

A mandatory referral is not routinely required where a person serving with the Home Office has provided medical assistance to an individual solely as a first responder and the individual dies. The Home Office team should make a referral to NCC(U) who will refer to the Professional Standards Unit for further consideration. This is to ensure that arrangements may be put in place to identify any cases where acts or omissions by a person serving with the Home Office may have caused or contributed to a death.

The standard referral considerations will apply where contact with the Home Office has already occurred prior to the medical emergency.

## Cross departmental support

During a national critical incident, it is likely there will be a need for IE, BF and UKVI to work closely together, with direct support potentially being sought from one command by another. This is particularly true for a number of Border Force critical incidents. Assistance is most likely to be sought by BF from IE during Operation Epic.

There are a number of national critical incident scenarios that Border Force and Immigration Enforcement have already planned for, with protocols and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) held at the Border Force National Operations and Command Centre (NOCC/NCC), RCCUs and local Port and Terminals and for Immigration Enforcement at the National Command and Control Unit.

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# Return to normality

Once the seriousness of an event has receded and the strategy devised by Gold Commander has been achieved, the Gold Commander should declare a formal end to the incident. This must be relayed immediately to the Silver and Bronze Commanders, and all commanders should note it in their logs. This decision must also be relayed to the National Command and Control Unit (NCC/U). All paperwork relating to the incident, including extraneous notes should be collected and retained locally for 7 years.

## Non-Conferral Orders

Where there is likely to be an investigation into an incident either internally or by an oversight body, officers should not confer with others before making their accounts. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to speak with another officer to resolve an ongoing operational or safety matter. Where this conferring has taken place, officers should record this as soon as possible and outline what was discussed, with whom, the location, time and date.

## Debrief and recovery

A debrief, led by the Gold Commander but involving all those who played an active part in the incident (including other agencies), must be held as soon as is practicable following the end of an incident. This is essential to allow the business to return to normal, to highlight any lessons learned in preventing a similar incident occurring in the future, and to air any difficulties or grievances over the handling of the incident.

The advice of the Employee Assistance Programme should be sought to establish if there is a need for a psychological debrief for any of those involved, it should be remembered that participation in such a debrief is voluntary and should not take place until all the legal requirements have taken place.

A detailed written record of any debrief should be made. To ensure lessons are learned and shared through the Home Office a copy of the debrief notes and action points should be sent to the NCC(U). The continued implementation of any Business Continuity Plan throughout the incident should facilitate a recovery and return to business as usual. See: A [lessons learned form](#) and [de-brief model](#).

## Support services for those involved in an incident

There is a variety of support services available to those officers and staff members involved in a critical incident both during the incident and after as follows:

The reaction to a critical incident is a very personal experience and no one can predict what type of incident will induce a traumatic reaction. Post-traumatic stress reactions can be complex and can affect behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to employees who have been involved in a critical incident. The service is also able to provide advice and support to line managers on how to deal with a particular situation. The EAP provides a 24 hour, 7 days a week support helpline.

Advice and support is also available to members through their trade union.

## Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)

The Home Office also has a number of staff trained in Trauma Risk Management (TRiM). TRiM practitioners can offer practical support to colleagues who have dealt with a critical incident or identify when a colleague may be suffering from post-traumatic stress (PTS). This service is available to all staff whilst on duty, or those effected by Traumatic events whilst travelling to and from their place of employment. Officers should speak to their nominated Gold Commander to arrange TRiM support.

For Immigration Enforcement and UKVI The National co-ordinator can be contacted directly at TRiM.  
BF officers should contact BF Wellbeing Leads.

## Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)

The Home Office has a network of staff trained in mental health first aid. Mental health first aiders are a confidential point of contact for Home Office staff experiencing a mental health concern or in emotional distress. They are valuable in providing early assistance to staff who may be developing a mental health concern. MHFAs are trained to spot the signs and symptoms of a range of mental health issues. They offer initial help on a first aid basis but do not offer prolonged, continuing support as they are not trained to be therapists or counsellors. MHFAs are trained to listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis - and even potentially stop a crisis happening. They can signpost individuals to relevant areas of support. If you require support, or would like further information, contact the dedicated inbox.

## Legal advice

Legal will consider all requests to assist where an officer wishes to pursue any legal action or is the subject of legal proceedings. Even if the Home Office or the police are not taking any legal action the officer involved may be able to take out a private prosecution for common assault against the alleged assailant.

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# Complaints

Complaints arising during or following a critical incident should be passed to the incident Gold Commander.

Any allegations or complaints received through existing complaints processes will be considered by the Professional Standards Unit who will decide a way forward.

Formal complaints which meet the criteria for independent review should be referred as follows:

- real-time complaints whilst the incident is live –National Command and Control Unit (NCC/U), which should be passed to the Professional Standards Unit as soon as practicable
- complaints submitted in the weeks after an incident has closed – Professional Standards Unit

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# Further information and training

Further information on critical incident management and lessons learned is available from National Command and Control Unit.

Training in critical incident management is available. It is the responsibility of all directors to ensure their staff receive the relevant training. This is available from the Training and Skills Unit (TASU).

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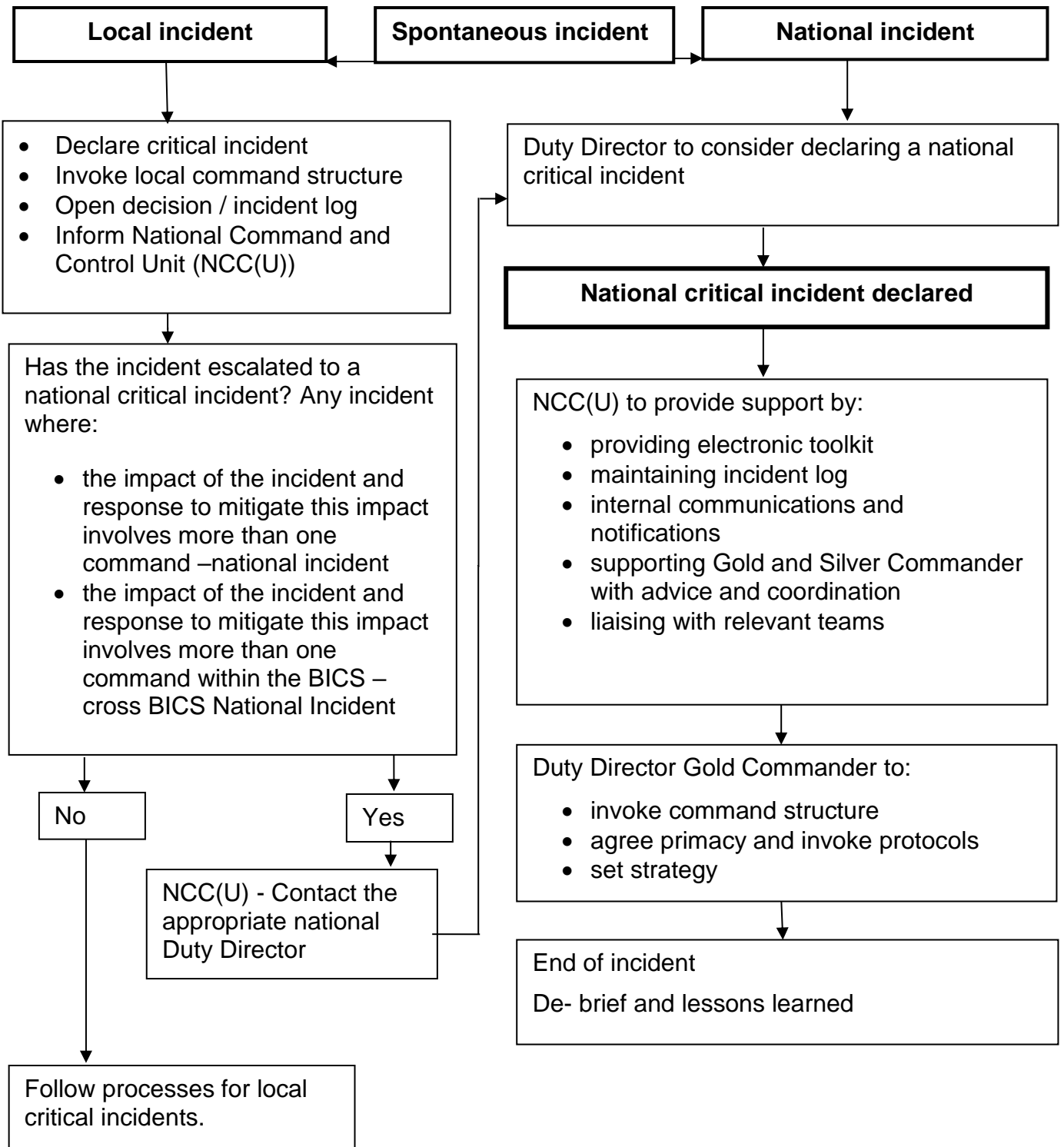
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# Escalation process for critical incidents



## Related content

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# Example of national critical incidents

The following are examples of national critical incidents:

- unexpected mass immigration event for example mass expulsion of people by a foreign power
- acts of terrorism directly affecting BICs
- loss of access to several Home Office, BF, IE and UKVI premises
- natural disasters and severe weather conditions (for example ash clouds, snow or floods)
- major loss of IT systems
- major disruption of utility, power, or communications networks
- widespread and prolonged industrial action by staff or by third parties
- concerted and sustained action or disorder by protest groups seriously affecting Home Office, BICs sites
- act of terrorism, civil unrest or war which, though not directly targeted at the Home Office, or BICs, has a significant effect on the functions of our business

The above is not exhaustive but listed to provide examples of a national critical incident, differentiating from those managed locally.

## **Related content**

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# METHANE method

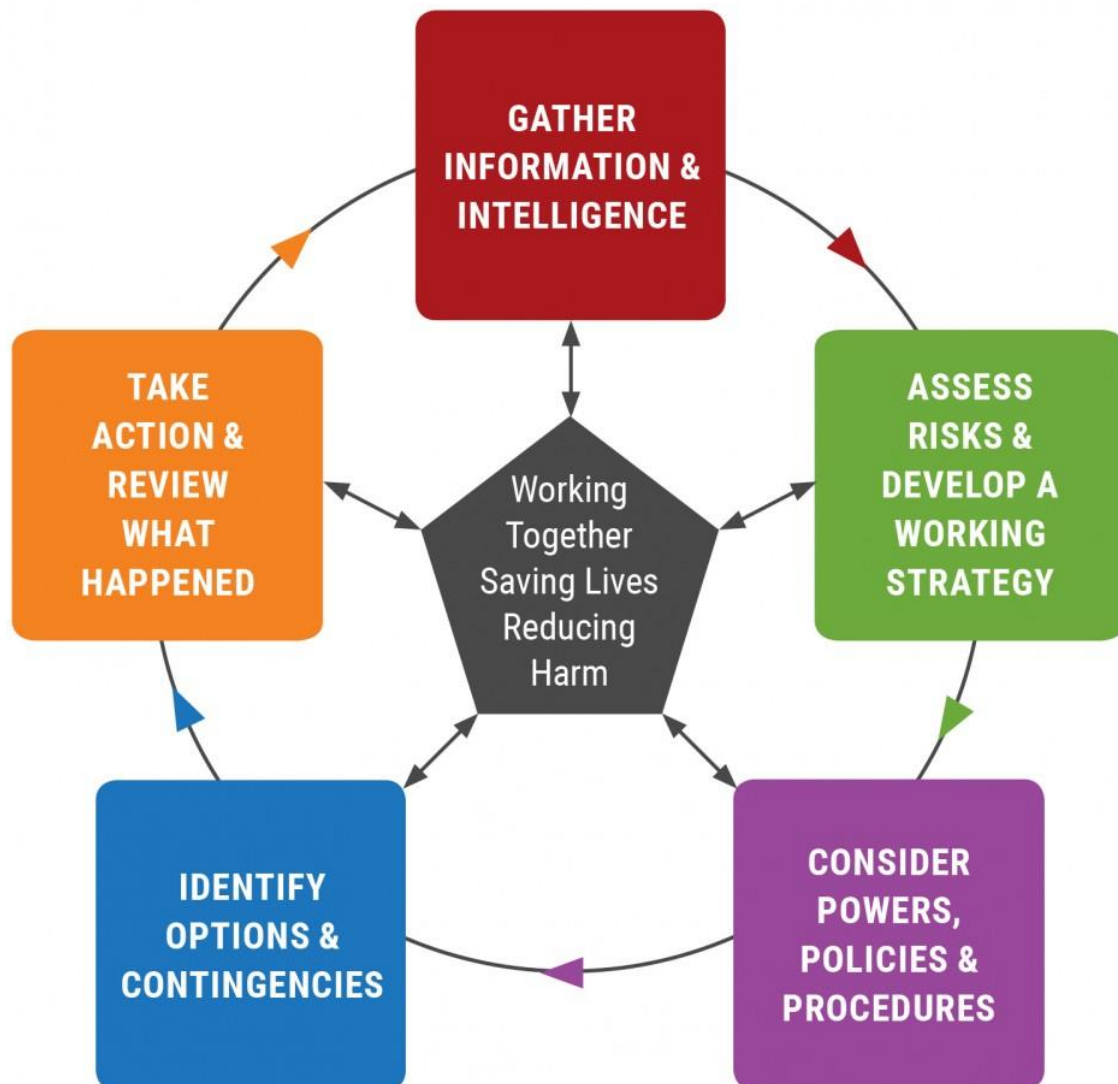
The METHANE report was initiated following the Pollock report findings of 2013, it lists in chronological order what information is needed by emergency services in order to assist at a Major Incident, note that IE does not use the wording Major, BICs uses Critical, therefore the M of METHANE can be dropped when reporting.

- major incident declared
- exact location
- type of incident
- hazards present or suspected
- access routes that are safe to use
- number, type, severity of casualties
- emergency services present and those required

## **Related content**

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# Joint Decision Model



Working together, saving lives, reducing harm:

1. Gather information and intelligence.
2. Assess risks and develop a working strategy.
3. Consider powers, policies and procedures.
4. Identify options and contingencies.
5. Take action and review what happened.

## Related content

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# Gold, Silver and Bronze Commander checklists, including COBR information

The Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) meets to discuss high-priority issues that cross departmental borders within Government. In most cases COBR is convened as part of the Civil Contingencies Committee, which plans Government responses in times of emergency. The function of COBR is to determine Government policy and strategy in relation to an incident and provides a forum for the co-ordination of the Government response. The operational control of the incident remains in the hands of the Gold Commander although COBR arranges for any specialist assistance required and importantly is the single source of Government communication with Gold Commander.

## Generic checklists for commanders

The checklists are intended to provide an aide-memoire for commanders when dealing with critical incidents. The suggested actions within the lists are not exhaustive, are not necessarily to be followed in the order given and may vary with each incident. The lists are not prescriptive, and all commanders must be prepared to make decisions and take action appropriate to the unique circumstances of the incident.

## Gold Commander

A strategy must be set to establish a structured dynamic response to critical incidents at the earliest opportunity. This will improve the likelihood of a successful outcome, including community confidence.

Gold Commanders should obtain the electronic critical incident (CI) management pack from the National Command and Control Unit (NCC(U)).

Below is a list of suggested actions for Gold commanders handling critical incidents. It is not intended to be exhaustive and is not listed in any defined order

- open decision log (appoint a loggist if necessary)
- appoint a Silver Commander if appropriate or obtain contact details of any existing Silver and Bronze Commanders
- appoint staff to undertake the business as usual work
- devise and implement overall CI Strategy Plan
- define the overall intention
- determine the parameters
- determine what resources are needed
- determine specialist skills required
- legal considerations
- human rights considerations

- community impact
- the health and safety of the public and staff involved
- media implications
- agree and advise Silver Commander of the strategy
- if multi agency involvement: establish contact with other partner Gold Commanders and decide primacy in the handling of the incident with partner agencies
- identify and liaise with other partners (such as the emergency services, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Border Force, other government departments)
- appoint gold support staff, and any tactical advisors
- feed into the Strategic Reference Group
- consider resources and specialist skills required to deal with the incident and obtain them
- approve Silver Commander's tactical plan before implementation
- ensure sufficient and appropriate resources are available to Silver Commander to enable implementation of the strategy
- throughout the incident, review and update the strategy depending on information received and the events which occur. Relay further strategic decisions to Silver Commander
- maintain objectivity and avoid being drawn into tactical decision making
- ensure the command structure is in place and monitor its effectiveness
- monitor the effectiveness of Silver Commander's tactical plan
- keep NCC(U) informed of any developments
- keep any Strategic Reference Group or Duty Board members apprised of the incident and developments
- formally close CI (record in decision Log) and advise Silver Commander
- lead the formal de-brief.

## Silver Commander

Below is a list of suggested actions for Silver commanders handling critical incidents. It is not intended to be exhaustive and is not listed in any defined order:

- establish the instigation of critical incident management procedures
- open decision log and record all decisions taken
- if decision made to instigate CI procedures, brief Gold Commander and take their strategic instructions
- appoint a loggist (if necessary)
- appoint officers to undertake business as usual while you are a Silver Commander.
- if appropriate appoint silver support staff and tactical advisors
- obtain and agree Gold Commander's strategy.
- develop and co-ordinate the tactical plan considering:
  - gold Commander's strategy
  - legal considerations
  - human rights considerations

- community Impact considerations
- health and safety
- if multi agency establish and maintain contact with other partner Silver Commanders
- inform NCC(U) and liaise for further support.
- if appropriate appoint Bronze Commanders to deal with specific aspects of the incident for example the media, business area.
- if necessary, seek authority for additional staff or resources from Gold Commander
- if the incident continues over a long period, co-ordinate the change-over of staff and commanders including your own.
- liaise closely with Bronze Commander and obtain regular updates
- brief staff and keep them updated
- ensure the Bronze Commander operations meet with the strategic and tactical plan
- provide regular updates to Gold Commander and take their further instruction on the strategic handling of the incident
- continually review tactical plan to support the strategic overview and relay any new instructions to Bronze Commander
- when advised of stand down by Gold Commander, advise Bronze Commander
- attend formal de- brief
- collate all records of the incident including decision logs
- if appropriate arrange relief of staff
- ensure staff health and welfare is considered (for example refreshments)

## Considering tactical deployments – aide memoire

### Tactical deployment aide memoire

When considering tactical deployments as Silver Commander. It may be useful to bear some of the below questions in mind:

**What** - what are the aims and objectives to be achieved?

**Who** - who by, police, emergency services and partner agencies, what resources are available?

**When** - timescales, deadlines and milestones in delivery of tasks.

**Where** – locations?

**Why** - what is the rationale within the overall aims and objectives set by the Gold Commander?

**How** - how are these tasks going to be achieved, what barriers to achieving them may be encountered?

## Bronze Commander

Below is a list of suggested actions for Bronze commanders handling critical incidents. It is not intended to be exhaustive and is not listed in any defined order

- inform nominated Silver Commander if you have declared the incident
- open decision log and record all decisions taken
- appoint Bronze Deputy / support staff / tactical advisors if appropriate
- attend any relevant briefing
- if feasible and necessary, take control of your nominated function, area and people present
- consider the best place to undertake your command role, consider functions and resources.
- conduct initial and ongoing risk assessments as the incident progresses.
- appoint loggist to record chronological events and decisions made (including reasoning and outcome)
- ensure resources are deployed as directed by the Silver Commander
- if necessary, seek additional Bronze Commanders from Silver Commander to deal with specific aspects of the incident
- if appropriate, liaise with other internal and external departments (Home Office Legal, Border Force)
- if the incident continues over a long period, ensure handover period is sufficient
- assist or liaise with other agencies and services as required at scene or at Bronze Commander level
- ensure relevant records are completed and collated including any records that have a bearing on the incident
- refer the media to Press Office or Media Bronze Commander
- provide regular updates to Silver Commander and take their further instruction
- ensure staff are briefed and updated
- when the incident is ended stand down as the Bronze Commander
- partake in formal de- brief

### Related content

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# Critical Incident Notification

When notifying NCCU of a critical incident, you will need to set it out as follows:

## **Official – sensitive**

### **Declaration of a critical incident**

Time:

Date:

Incident declared by:

Command role:

Reason for declaration:

Initial strategy:

Initial conference call at (time):

Telephone number:

First Sitrep will be issued at:

## **Related content**

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# The Golden Hour aide memoire

The “Golden Hour” is the initial period following the incident occurring when the best opportunities exist to take decisive action. Below is a list of suggested actions in no specific order. To note that the “Golden Hour” is not restricted to 60 minutes.

Tactical considerations:

- victims – identify, support and sensitively preserve evidence
- scenes – identify, preserve, assess and log- consider whether police assistance is required to preserve or secure the scene- consider whether it is appropriate for officers involved in the incident to remain at the scene for a prolonged period
- suspects – identify, arrest and preserve evidence
- witnesses – identify, support and prioritise- note first account and description of any suspects
- log – decisions, reasons, resources, conditions, circumstances
- clear lines of responsibility – identify, inform, brief, coordinate and review
- family / community - identify, inform, establish needs / expectations / concerns, primary support, sensitivity
- physical evidence – preservation, CCTV, escape routes, public transport routes, ambulances
- prevent contamination – victims, suspects, scenes, exhibits
- intelligence – identify, prioritise, maximise, exploit, consider community and open source intelligence
- community concerns – establish through lay advice, anticipate possible developments, risks to public confidence, rumours
- media strategy – use the Immigration and Borders Secretariat and Immigration Enforcement Secretariat in the early stages of any incidents- adopt principles of basic media strategy

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# Specified enforcement functions

They are as listed in [section 41 of the Police and Justice Act 2006](#) and regulations made under this section. They include:

- powers of entry
- powers to search persons or property
- powers to seize or detain property
- powers to arrest people
- powers to detain people
- powers to examine people or otherwise to obtain information, (including power to take fingerprints or to acquire other personal data)
- powers in connection with the removal of people from the UK

These powers include:

- surveillance and associated activity
- the non-exercise of the above powers (for example the failure to use a power when required to do so- this will be restricted to matters relating to officer's conduct and will not cover Home Office policy decisions for example, not to detain in certain cases)

The powers do not include:

- the making of an immigration decision
- the making of any decision to grant or refuse asylum
- the giving of any direction to remove persons from the UK

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# Mandatory referrals to the IOPC: definitions

Incidents resulting in any of the below criteria, will need to be referred to the Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC)

## Death or serious injury

Serious injury means a fracture, a deep cut, a deep laceration or an injury causing damage to an internal organ or the impairment of any bodily function.

## Serious assault

The offence is committed when a person assaults another, thereby causing actual bodily harm such as:

- loss or breaking of a tooth
- temporary loss of sensory functions (which may include loss of consciousness)
- extensive or multiple bruising
- displaced broken nose
- minor fractures
- minor but not merely superficial cuts
- psychiatric injury that is more than fear, distress or panic

## Serious sexual offences

'Serious sexual offences' shall be construed as including all offences under the Sexual Offences Acts of 1956 to 2003 that are triable only on indictment and such other offences under the said acts of 1956 to 2003 appearing to an appropriate authority to be an offence where a Magistrates' Court would be likely to decline jurisdiction.

## Serious corruption

Restricted to the specified enforcement functions in [section 41 of the Police and Justice Act 2006](#).

The term 'serious corruption' shall refer to conduct that includes:

- any attempt to pervert the course of justice or other conduct likely to seriously harm the administration of justice, in particular the criminal justice system
- payments or other benefits or favours received in the connection with the performance of duties where a Magistrates' Court would be likely to decline jurisdiction

- corrupt controller, handler, informer relationships
- provision of confidential information in return for payment or other benefits or favours where the conduct goes beyond a possible prosecution for an offence under [section 55 of the Data Protection Act 1998](#)
- extraction and supply of seized controlled drugs, firearms or other material

Attempts or conspiracies to do any of the above.

## **Criminal offences aggravated by discriminatory behaviour**

Any incident which engages Article 2 (the right to life) or Article 3 (against inhuman or degrading treatment) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Article 2 states that

everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law.

Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary:

- (a) in defence of any person from unlawful violence;
- (b) in order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent escape of a person lawfully detained;
- (c) in action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection.

Article 3 states that no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Additionally, if you are made aware of the death of a person following recent contact with Immigration Enforcement Officers exercising specified enforcement functions, this should also be reported to IE National Command and Control Unit (NCC)

### **Related content**

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# Lessons learned/debrief template

<b>Lessons learned/debrief</b> <b>Business area or team:</b> <b>Point of contact:</b>
What went well
What should be improved
Recommendations
Other information

De- brief officer:

Signature:

Time and date:

Please send a copy of this form by email to feed into the national lessons learned process.

**Related content**

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# Debrief model

As a generic guide to de-briefing the following model can be used:

- who attended and where?
- what happened?
- why?
- what did we learn?
- what next time?

Following a critical incident there should be a de-brief led by the Gold Commander.

If the incident was traumatic the Gold Commander should arrange contact with the wellbeing team or employee assistance programme (EAP).

Is staff welfare at a critical stage? Yes or No?

If No - discuss alternatives.

If Yes:

- full de-brief by Gold Commander within 48 to 72 hours after closure of the incident
- if staff have been seriously affected by the incident, they should be offered support- this should be reviewed, and the option of professional support considered

## **Related content**

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# Glossary of terms

Abbreviation	Meaning
ADM	Airport Duty Manager
BAU	Business As Usual
BCPs	Business Continuity Plans
BF	Border Force
BFSE&E	Border Force Southeast & Europe
BICs	Cross Borders, Immigration and Citizenship
CI	Critical Incident
CIO/HO/HEO	Chief Immigration Officer/Higher Officer/Higher Executive Officer
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms
DOC	Departmental Operations Centre
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
HMI/SO/SEO	Her Majesty's Inspector/ Senior Executive Officer
HO	Home Office
ICE	Immigration, Compliance and Enforcement
IE	Immigration Enforcement
IO/ EO	Immigration Officer/ Executive Officer
IOPC	Independent Office for Police Complaints
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme
MHFA	Mental Health First Aider
NCC	BF National Command and Control
NCCU	IE National Command and Control Unit
OGD	Other Government Departments
PIRC	Police Investigations and Review Commissioner
PONI	Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland
PSU	Professional Standards Unit
RCCUs	Regional Command and Control Units
SCS	Senior Civil Servants
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SRG	Strategic Reference Group
TRiM	Trauma Risk Management
UKVI	United Kingdom Visas and Immigration

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# Useful contacts:

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