

HEALTH SERVICE EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICERS' MEETING: THURSDAY 7th September 2006

Present: Harry Scott (Chairman), Scottish Executive Health Department
Lorraine Dunlop, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Allan Penman, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Les Callaghan, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Pauline Jones, Forth Valley NHS Board
Alan Dorn, Greater Glasgow NHS Board
John Creswell, Grampian NHS Board
Helen Docherty, Health Protection Scotland
Margaret Walters, Orkney NHS Board
John Taylor, Shetland NHS Board
Gary Hardacre, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sean Doohan, Scottish Executive Health Department
Douglas Grewar, Tayside NHS Board

1. Apologies

1.1 Richard Abel, Jim Blythe, Alan Dorn, Tom Gibson, Mike Herriot, Andy McDonald, Yvonne McGrinder, Alex McSorley, Alan Robertson and Baxter Tocher.

2. Welcome

2.1 Harry welcomed Pauline Jones the new HEPO for Forth Valley NHS Board to the group.

3. Minutes of the last meeting- 18th May 2006

3.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

4. Actions arising

4.1 *Para 4.1* The Chairman advised the group that the Scottish Executive alert levels had been updated. The chairman was happy if you group used alert levels that suited their local area. The new alert levels were circulated around the group for information.

4.2 *Para 4.4* Shetland had still not received any replacement batteries from 3M. Sean agreed to follow this up with 3M and report back to Shetland NHS Board.

Action: Sean

4.3 *Para 4.5* The Chairman commented that the term JHAC may change. Gary Hardacre commented that during a recent incident the SAS had a member on the JHAC but should also be represented on the Chief Constables co-ordinating group.

4.4 *Para 7.1* The Chairman commented that he felt the new call out procedures were working well. John Taylor mentioned that we may be made aware of an incident in Shetland around Water.

4.5 *Para 10.1* The group discussed the different e-mail systems that their Board used. The chairman made a request that all HEPOs look at registering onto a secure system by the end of the year. It was commented that anyone could register on NHS net and this was secure. (website- <https://www.nhs.net/>). The reason this request had been made was that during an emergency there would be issues around sending restricted emails to non secure sites.

5. Exercise Winter Willow

5.1 The Chairman gave the background to the exercise. Exercise Winter Willow is a UK wide pandemic influenza exercise sponsored by the Cabinet Office and the Department of Health in London, and organised by the Health Protection Agency. The exercise will be run in two stages, stage 1 on Tuesday 30 January, and stage 2 on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 February 2007.

5.2 Phase 1 will be a one day table top event involving Ministers in London and the Devolved Administrations and will concentrate on policy matters when the WHO issues Pandemic Alert Level 6 (UK Alert Level 2 – isolated cases in the UK). Phase 2 will be a two day event involving Ministers, Officials and organisations listed below and will deal with issues arising from WHO Alert Level 6 (UK Alert Level 4 – widespread cases in the UK).

5.3 Harry Scott distributed copies of documents showing the national planning structure and the information flow scheduled to take place during stage 2.

5.4 There would be Ministerial involvement in the exercise, and in London this would be chaired by Patricia Hewitt. In Scotland, members of the Ministerial Group on Civil Contingencies, excluding the Minister for Transport, were expected to participate.

5.5 The Chairman advised that NHS Boards involved should make their decisions on how they wanted to exercise their own area. He also commented that other Boards not involved could observe.

6. Audits of NHS Board

6.1 The Chairman commented that either he or his deputy had now visited most NHS Boards. The Audits had gone well with mainly minor points raised. Follow up visits will take place in 6 months time to assess the progress of any issues raised.

6.2 Les Callaghan commented that he had a useful audit tool that he would pass to the secretariat to be circulated around the group.

7. HMIMMS Courses

7.1 Douglas Grewer raised this issue- There had been a HMIMMS course planned to take place in Glasgow that NHS Tayside staff would attend. Unfortunately this was cancelled. Douglas wanted to try arranging another training day in Scotland to save staff having to travel to Manchester. Gary Hardacre commented that Dave Ritchie at Basics Education had run an event before and was looking at running future events in Scotland. Gary agreed to discuss this with Basics and report back to the group.

(Action: Gary Hardacre)

8. JHAC Plan

8.1 Helen Docherty talked the group through her paper- A template JHAC plan would be issued shortly to all HEPO's through the secretariat for local use/development. The plan was originally produced by HPS to enable the 4 NHS Boards within Strathclyde to provide a joint response to exercise cutty sark in April 2006. The plan contains information on role and responsibility of JHAC, tasks to be undertaken and staffing levels. together with action cards and suggestions for documentation to be used. The plan was revised based on the Exercise Cutty Sark experience.

9. Scottish Ambulance Service- Participation in multi-agency exercises

9.1 John Taylor sought clarification on the SAS commitment to participate in multi-agency exercises in order to satisfy the requirements of The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (Part 6, Paragraph 25). Within the Shetland Emergency Planning Forum (SEPF) it has been accepted that, costs arising from the annual full forum exercise would "lie where they fall" unless previously agreed during the planning phase. In the past SAS has participated in the annual full forum exercise without charging for attendance. Any other exercise requiring attendance has attracted a charge to the host organisation. This is accepted in Shetland and works well. John is looking for a firm commitment is made by the SAS to play its part in multi-agency exercises. The "status quo" to remain i.e. - with regard to the annual full forum exercise, costs lie where they fall to all participating agencies unless otherwise agreed. Any other exercise within the training year to attract a charge for attendance where appropriate.

9.2 Gary Hardacre updated the group on what he thought the position was. Gary wasn't aware that the SAS wasn't participating in exercises in the islands. If the exercise is part of a licensing commitment the SAS will do cost recovery for example Nuclear/Airport Exercise. Outwith individual divisions Gary's department hold a budget specifically for training and exercising but have to prioritise which exercises this is used for depending on benefits to the organisation. Gary agreed to discuss with the National Exercise programme group and look at securing funding for 1 exercise per year in the islands. The Islands are different from other areas as they only have the limited number of staff at any one time to perform the key tasks. If SAS participate in exercises on the Islands they must pay staff over time, travel costs and find people willing to take part.

(Action: Gary Hardacre)

10. O2 Airwaves

10.1 Douglas Grewar talked the group through his paper- NHS Tayside had received correspondence from O2 about there communication system "Airwaves". The system is being used by all Police Forces, Ambulance Trusts and Fire Services in England. Douglas currently uses radio's issued by the SAS. Gary Hardacre agreed to check if the radio's issued by the SAS where suitable for Hospital use.

(Action: Gary Hardacre)

11. PPE2

11.1 Douglas Grewar stated NHS Tayside found it difficult to find volunteers to staff the mobile decontamination units. The group discussed using the SAS or Fire brigade for decontamination in a major event. It was felt this was not practical as the Blue light services may not be able to respond to the hospital depending on the nature of the emergency.

11.2 Gary Hardacre commented that the new suits would have no technical issues and would be easier to use. Lorrette commented that she had run a recruitment drive poster that was very successful. Douglas agreed to try and recruit volunteers again and wanted to make the group aware the difficulties he was facing.

12. Alert Levels updated

12.1 The Chairman advised the group that the Scottish Executive alert levels had been updated. The chairman was happy if you group used alert levels that suited their local area. The new alert levels were circulated around the group for information

13. New Deputy in Emergency Planning Branch

13. The Chairman commented that he had recently recruited a new Deputy. She would be joining the team by the end of October.

14. Any other Business

14.1 John Taylor commented that he would be moving Offices again to a purpose built Office in Shetland.

14.2 Alan Dorn raised the issue of Reassurance monitoring- and asked if it were possible for a Sort Team to carry out monitoring at the scene. Gary Hardacre commented that the SAS were working on something with HPS around decontamination and it would depend on the situation.

14.3 Douglas raised the issue of ACOLCC- He had been contacted by O2 about registering numbers. The chairman commented that the whole system is under review and that we are waiting to hear back from the Cabinet Office on the latest position.

14.4 Carol Fraser raised the issue of working group on Quality assurance for pandemic flu- Carol had agreed to join the Working Group. The group was chaired by Jim Miller. The purpose of the group was to develop standards for pandemic flu in a similar format to NHS QIS standards. The timeframe is short draft due out to Boards by End October. The project had been cleared with Ministers and they were keen to see this work progressed. Carol raised the issue that Boards will be Audited out and she had agreed to look cross over between NHS QIS Audit and Scottish Executive Audit. The checklist that Colin Robertson had produced during his visit to Boards was a useful tool and could be issued.

15. Date of Next Meeting

15.1 The next meeting will take place in December. The date will be confirmed nearer the time.