



Fire and Rescue Service  
Operational Guidance  
National Co-ordination  
and Advisory Framework



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Operational Guidance  
National Co-ordination  
and Advisory Framework**

September 2009  
Department for Communities and Local Government

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## Foreword

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Catastrophic and large-scale emergency incidents place significant demands on local fire and rescue services and have often required a national co-ordinated response from across the country.

Such incidents may occur over a protracted period and require extensive resources, logistical support and specialist advice and guidance. While existing response arrangements and support mechanisms have ensured that these incidents have been dealt with effectively, the need for a more formal framework has become evident.

Within the *Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11*, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser has responsibility for the co-ordination of national assets during catastrophic and major emergencies. In doing so it is important that incidents of

national significance are effectively co-ordinated and that suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that ministers receive the necessary advice, guidance and support to ensure that the impact of such events on the wider community are minimised.

I am particularly grateful to the Chief Fire Officers Association for assistance in supporting the development of a framework that would support the co-ordination of resources and provide the appropriate level of information during such incidents.

This guidance has been designed to be a robust yet flexible document and can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the incident. It will be tested and refined further in the coming months.

It is anticipated that the Framework will provide support for fire and rescue services in the resolution of major incidents and afford them valuable support particularly in their interface between local and central government.

It is important that practitioners capture their observations and experiences in the application of the Framework and give us the necessary feedback to ensure that it continues to evolve and remains effective in meeting its objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'K' followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that tapers to the right.

Sir Ken Knight

# Executive summary

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This document describes the purpose and scope of the National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF). The NCAF is a structure offering assistance during incidents that are of national significance or require national co-ordination.

The development of the NCAF began following a request by the Secretary of State to the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) for assistance in supporting the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA) during incidents which may have national significance and/or require national co-ordination. With this aim, the framework for an enhanced provision of information and co-ordination during such incidents described in this document has been developed.

The need for, and benefits of, the above arrangements have been clearly demonstrated during significant national incidents. What has been just as beneficial, and has developed through formal, informal and professional networks, is national co-ordination and specialist advice during these events. The development of these networks can be traced through the following incidents:

- severe flooding of the city of Carlisle, January 2005
- fire at the Buncefield oil terminal in Hertfordshire, December 2005
- widespread flooding across England in 2007
- North Sea tidal surge, November 2007
- the loss of four firefighters in a warehouse blaze in Atherstone on Stour, Warwickshire, November 2007; and
- the 2008 South West severe weather warning.

The need for a formal framework to enhance previously informal arrangements is evident. This document sets out a framework for this enhanced level of support and provision, it includes:

- guidance and support to the locally affected Fire and Rescue Service(s)
- guidance and support to enable a national interoperable response
- the provision of support and information to the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser
- guidance and support to the government department responsible for the Fire and Rescue Service
- the provision of professional Fire and Rescue Service advice and support to Ministers and the Cabinet Office (COBR).

This document provides guidance for the respective roles and responsibilities for those that will operate within the Framework during incidents which have national significance and/or involve national co-ordination, including:

- The Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA)
- The National Strategic Adviser Team (NSAT)
- The National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT)
- Subject Matter Adviser (SMA)
- The CLG Emergency Room
- The Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre (FRSNCC).

Neither the NCAF itself, or any of its components, remove any of the statutory duties of the local Fire and Rescue Authority or the responsibilities of the Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) or Commissioner accountable to it. The CFO or Commissioner retains the responsibility to resolve the incidents that occur within their area. Similarly, the NCAF does not attempt to remove or replace any existing response arrangements. The framework is designed to be flexible and adaptable to ensure that it supplements and augments them, whilst enhancing national support arrangements.

# 1 Introduction

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The purpose of the National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) is to enable the provision of support and advice to the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS)<sup>1</sup> and central government during incidents that are of national significance and/or require national co-ordination.

This will also include the professional and timely advice on incidents involving an FRS response that is provided for ministers and other government departments that meet within the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR). The NCAF will provide a clear and coherent methodology for co-ordinating national resource mobilisation when preparing for and responding to such incidents.

The following paragraphs identify the roles and responsibilities for the various components of the framework, demonstrating the direct lines of communication that will ensure accurate and timely information is shared in support of the needs of the incident. The framework has been designed for co-ordination, advice and to ensure there is the provision of national support to the affected FRS.

This document should be considered as the overarching document for the NCAF structure, however it does not imply that all of the components will be automatically activated during every incident that requires a national response. The NCAF structure has been designed to be flexible enough to adapt to the nature, scale and requirements of the incident and to support those managing it.

This document seeks to strengthen FRS resilience in the preparation of, and the response to, incidents of national significance and/or require national co-ordination. It will be subject to continuous review following lessons learnt from such incidents.

The framework is designed to provide national advice and co-ordination in order to support the safe and speedy resolution of any emergency which may have national significance, whether national assets are deployed or not.

The *Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11*<sup>2</sup>, provides information on the role of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and identifies some of the responsibilities of that officer for national co-ordination and advice during incidents which have national significance. It also identifies the role of the National Strategic Advisory Team and the Communities and Local Government Emergency Room.

<sup>1</sup> Where the term FRS is used, this also refers to the 46 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, all of whom have signed up to a national mutual aid agreement.

<sup>2</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/nationalframework200811.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/nationalframework200811.pdf)

This Framework supplements and augments existing response arrangements – it does not replace them. The responsibility for resolving such incidents effectively and safely is still one that belongs to the local FRS together with the adoption of safe systems of work, such as the national Incident Command System. However, the introduction of this Framework does offer additional support with the intention of taking away some of the added burdens associated with such incidents from the affected FRS, and helping them to resolve the incident more effectively.

## 2 National Co-ordination and Advisory Structure

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This framework is divided into two broad components. The first of these includes the physical location where certain activities/requirements are carried out; the second relates to the teams and individuals that have defined roles and responsibilities while working within these locations.

### Locations

- CLG Emergency Room (CLG ER)
- FRS National Co-ordination Centre (FRSNCC)
- Strategic Holding Areas (SHA).

### Teams

- Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA)
- CFRA Duty Officer
- National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT)
- National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT)
- Subject Matter Advisers (SMA).

The following paragraphs outline the framework and the varying components that operate within it.

## 2.1 Locations

### 2.1.1 Communities and Local Government Emergency Room

The CLG Emergency Room originated as the Fire Emergency Information Centre (FEIC), and was formed in preparation for the millennium and the perceived risks that were associated with it concerning the failure of FRS mobilisation nationally.

The merits of maintaining such a national information centre on an ongoing basis were identified and the Emergency Information Support Group (EISG) was established to provide a central hub for information and was utilised during the period of national industrial action. In more recent years, EISG gave advice and secretariat support to the Director of Fire and Resilience and the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA) during other serious national incidents. EISG also provided cross-governmental and Fire and Resilience Directorate (FRD<sup>3</sup>) strategic advice to the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre (FRSNCC) and Fire Gold whilst also liaising with the appropriate Regional Government Offices. EISG also provided cross-government and international co-ordination and support. The role and function has been re-named the CLG Emergency Room, and it is actuated for a range of incidents involving CLG departmental interests, including those not related to an FRS response.

During activation, the CLG Emergency Room will be considered as the hub of the *Advisory and Co-ordination Framework*. It will be responsible for achieving the most effective distribution of New Dimension (ND) assets during any major emergency. In close liaison with FRSNCC, it will plan and advise on national co-ordination of ND assets, whilst providing the strategic oversight on the decisions being made and the maintenance of national resilience.

The CFRA will discharge most of his functions during incidents that have national significance and undertake national co-ordination through the CLG Emergency Room. The CLG Emergency Room will consist of a team who will be responsible for supporting the CFRA and the CLG Resilience Team and providing comprehensive advice and support capability to the NSAT, FRS and FRSNCC. Their responsibilities will also include the preparation of timely information in the form of briefings and support to any other key stakeholders as required.

<sup>3</sup> Communities and Local Government (CLG) are the Government lead for fire and rescue, and FRD is a Division within CLG who oversee this responsibility.

The operational design of the CLG Emergency Room is based upon a cell format where teams operate within defined specialist cells. These cells are not considered compulsory during all incidents and their requirement will be dependent on the type and size of incident being dealt with. The cells include:

- Fire and Rescue Operations
- Regional Resilience Team (RRT)
- Scientific and Technical
- Security
- Fire and Rescue Policy.

During incidents where a FRS has made the request for national support or New Dimension Assets are mobilised, the CLG Emergency Room, together with the FRSNCC, will be actively involved in the co-ordination of resources. There may also be occasions where on receipt of information, either via the Inter-agency Liaison Officer (ILO) network, locally or regionally, or via the National Departmental Security Officer (DSO) network, that identify possible generic threats to the national infrastructure or site-specific threats, a more proactive approach will be required. In these circumstances, there may be a need for pre-deployment of ND resources, in a preparedness phase, to ensure that they are closer to the possible threatened area prior to any occurrence. This will be undertaken in close liaison with the affected FRS.

To support both the affected FRS(s) and the supporting FRS(s) the CLG Emergency Room will act as the hub for the operation of the NCAF and will be the initial point of contact for providing national advice and co-ordination. It will be responsible for supporting the CFRA in the provision of comprehensive advice and support capability to the affected FRS, the Fire and Resilience Directorate (FRD), the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR), the National Strategic Advisor Team (NSAT) and the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre (FRSNCC). The responsibilities will also include, in liaison with the affected FRS, the preparation of timely information in the form of briefings and support to any other government departments.

## **2.1.2 The Communities and Local Government Emergency Room principal roles**

The CLG's Emergency Room principal roles are:

1. Providing advice and secretarial support to CFRA and the Director of FRD and event information to other government departments and ministers as directed by CFRA or Director of FRD.
2. Acting as an FRS central government hub for the collection, distribution and provision of operational, logistical and policy information relating to FRS activity at events of national significance.
3. Liaising with the Government Office Regional Resilience Teams (the RRT cell offers links through to Government Offices) to provide accurate information on the whole incident as appropriate.
4. Co-ordinating cross-government and international support to assist in the provision of resources.
5. Providing cross-government and FRD developed strategic advice to the affected FRS, FRSNCC and NSAT.
6. Maintaining liaison with FRSNCC and the affected FRS on the progress of the incident(s).
7. To assist with the co-ordination of overseas deployments and reception of teams from outside of the UK (in conjunction with other government departments).

Activities in support of these roles could include but not restricted to:

- Proactive cross-government/international planning during incidents which may have national interest and/or involve national co-ordination
- Liaison with the security service and other relevant bodies at local, regional level via the ILO network or nationally via the Departmental Security Officer network
- Liaising with the FRSNCC regarding the mobilisation of resources
- Assisting with logistic function responsibility for obtaining additional resources from outside the FRS (eg foam from the Ministry of Defence/Civil Aviation Authority)
- Recognising the incidents which impact on the affected authority's ability to provide adequate support to the emergency
- Preparing briefs, guides, notes to ministers as directed by the Director of FRD or the CFRA
- Ensuring that sufficient national cover of New Dimension resources is being maintained whilst an incident is being managed, and prioritising additional resources to ensure national resilience is maintained
- Providing support to the affected FRS as necessary
- Advise/liaise with the FRSNCC regarding the mobilisation and relief of NSAT and NRAT
  - When a decision has been made to seek international support, CLG Emergency Room may have a specific role with arranging this<sup>4</sup>
  - Liaison with the devolved administrations in respect of their emergency arrangements.

The CLG Emergency Room's main location is in London with contingency fallback locations both inside and outside the capital.

<sup>4</sup> The UK aims to be self sufficient in dealing with events, and any decision to seek overseas aid would require policy approval, and likely to be brokered through Cabinet office.

### **2.1.3 Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre (FRSNCC)**

The FRSNCC has been established to co-ordinate the mobilisation of ND assets in collaboration with local or regional FRS control centres. The FRSNCC will have an overview regarding the availability of ND assets. The FRSNCC monitors the availability and the location of the ND assets on a day-to-day basis. In the event of an incident that may have national implications, not least the co-ordination of national resources, the FRSNCC, in close liaison with the CLGs Emergency Room, will assist local FRS Mobilising Centres to mobilise the required ND assets.

### **2.1.4 The FRSNCC principal roles (as identified in the MOU)**

The principal roles of the FRSNCC are:

- Mobilisation of ND assets in association with the FRS
- Providing a national co-ordination capability to support the SHAs and the Incident Commander 24 hours a day seven days a week
- Provide a range of mobilising options in liaison with CLG Emergency Room in the event of “allocation confliction”.

Activities in support of these roles should include but not be limited to:

- Providing monitoring and tracking capability for FRS ND assets 24 hours a day seven days a week
- Notifying the CFRA Duty Officers of ND mobilisation
- Passing to the CLG Emergency Room instances of where reasonable mobilisation requests have not been actioned
- In liaison with CLG Emergency Room or at the request of an FRS, the pre-deployment of resources eg on reports of widespread flooding.

## 2.1.5 Strategic Holding Areas (SHA)

When a large or serious incident occurs and there is a requirement for a significant deployment of FRS and possibly other emergency service resources, a suitable holding area will be needed to accommodate them for an indefinite period of time.

The SHA will be an area with suitable space and facilities to accommodate large numbers of crews, appliances and equipment, where these resources can standby or rest while awaiting deployment to marshalling areas and from there to the scene of operations.

In conjunction with the Local Resilience Forums, suitable sites have been identified throughout England (Devolved administrations have also identified SHAs in their areas), and this information is held on a central database. The database, which is managed by the NRAT, is available to the FRSNCC.

The SHA will be the hub of Enhanced Command Support (ECS) activity, which will include logistics, communications and operational planning work. The pre-identified SHAs do not preclude the use of other more appropriate SHAs, depending on the prevailing circumstances.

- The use of a particular SHA would normally be decided at Gold Command, however there may be occasions where sharing this decision with the CLG Emergency Room would be advantageous because of its national overview, eg additional information from other simultaneous incidents or intelligence being received
- Once an SHA has been nominated, the FRSNCC would mobilise assets to that location where they would be managed by an Enhanced Command Support Officer (ECSO) and ECS team
- The ECS team will hold assets at the SHA or release them to the incident as required by the Incident Commander and requested by the affected FRS control centre.

A more detailed explanation of the SHA can be found within the Communities and Local Government Strategic Holding Area Document.

## 2.2 The Teams

The Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA) oversees and maintains responsibility for the NCAF structure. During activation, the appropriate members from the National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT) will support the CFRA. In conjunction with CFOA, two Chief Fire Officers from each Region have been nominated to undertake the NSAT role.

To assist the NSAT the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) will provide the expert capability support and advice at a regional and national level. The NRAT is made up of personnel seconded from the FRSs. The NRAT will assist the CLG Emergency Room and FRSNCC functions. It will also support silver commanders where appropriate in liaison with the affected FRS.

The Subject Matter Advisers (SMA) are team members with specific skills and knowledge and are able to offer advice on the tactical elements of ND capabilities. These members may be provided by local arrangement within the FRS but will also offer expertise support to the NCAF.

### 2.2.1 Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA)

The CFRA, or in his absence a nominated NSAT member, will be responsible for the co-ordination and advisory structure during incidents which may have a national interest and involve national co-ordination. This will include providing timely professional advice to the Secretary of State, the Director of FRD, other government departments and the FRS. The CFRA will discharge this requirement through the CLG Emergency Room and where applicable, through the NCAF.

The role of the CFRA or nominated NSAT includes:

- Attending COBR meetings as required and providing advice to Ministers
- Providing advice to the Director of FRD as required
- Liaising with Secretary of State or other ministers on FRS issues
- Advising on any national mobilisation dispute resolution, should the need arise
- Liaison with FRSs/Gold Commanders
- Co-ordination of cross-government and international logistics support to the Incident Commander/s where applicable.

The CFRA has overall responsibility for support and advisory functions including the National Strategic Advisory Team.

## 2.2.2 CFRA Duty Officer

Within the Office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser there are nominated staff to fulfil the role of CFRA Duty Officer. They work on a rota system designed to ensure that cover is maintained 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

They are the first point of call for a range of activities including the receipt of any requests that have been made from FRSs for national support via the FRSNCC. FRSNCC will liaise with the CFRA Duty Officers on a day-to-day basis.

Through other networks, the CFRA Duty Officer will also receive information, or pre-warnings of possible circumstances that could have significant impact on the FRS. Their continuous contact with FRSNCC, the Regional Resilience Team, other government departments (Cabinet Office, DEFRA, EA, Met Office etc) ensures that the CFRA Duty Officer maintains a current overview on any situations developing or possible threats that may require response at a national level. In these circumstances, an assessment will be made and in close consultation with the CFRA (or designated deputy), a decision will be made as to whether there is a requirement for activation of the CLG Emergency Room. Once it has been activated, it will be capable of providing support for an indeterminate period and the CFRA Duty Officer will carry out the managerial roles of the CLG Emergency Room.

The CFRA Duty Officer roles include:

- Managing and directing activities to ensure the efficient functioning of the CLG Emergency Room
- Supporting the CFRA and National Strategic Advisory Team
- Producing reports/briefings for onward transmission to COBR/IMRG ministers etc, ensuring that strict deadlines are met
- Attending IMRG if required
- Providing professional and Technical advice to ministers and other senior officials at COBR/IMRG as required
- Providing the overnight contact for the 'out of hours' duty officer
- Opening and staffing the CLG Emergency Room as appropriate
- Providing professional advice and support to FRS and other organisations as necessary
- Maintaining up-to-date information within the CLG Emergency Room and ensuring that all incoming relevant information is disseminated as appropriate
- Maintaining an up-to-date daily log of events for handover of shift to oncoming personnel
- In liaison with the CFRA, closing the CLG Emergency Room operations.

### **2.2.3 National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT)**

In conjunction with CFOA, two Chief Fire Officers from each Region have been nominated to undertake a National Strategic Advisory role and be part of the National Strategic Advisory Team. This provides sufficient resilience in terms of numbers and geography. Their role is to assist the CFRA in the provision of national support and advice to both the affected FRS Gold Commander and the lead government department for the FRS. For them to effectively carry out their role as part of the NSAT, they may be requested to attend or be mobilised to the appropriate location, for example:

- COBR (in the absence of the CFRA)
- The CLG Emergency Room
- FRSNCC
- The affected FRS (liaison with the CFO/Gold Commander)
- The Regional Government Office.

### **2.2.4 COBR**

In the absence of the CFRA, a nominated NSAT member may be required to attend COBR to provide government ministers with updated information and to advise them on FRS issues. They should maintain the link between COBR and the CLG Emergency Room ensuring that timely two-way information is available. This and other information will be utilised to develop plans and provide advice accordingly. The degree to which information is shared and the method of communicating it will be dependent upon the nature of the information and the security requirements associated with it.

## 2.2.5 Communities and Local Government Emergency Room

Within the CLG Emergency Room, the NSAT member may be required to:

- Oversee the direct activities to ensure the efficient functioning of the CLG Emergency Room (the NSAT member will be supported by the CFRA Duty Officer, however in the absence of the CFRA the CFRA Duty Officer will report direct to the NSAT)
- Ensure that briefings and communication strategies are established along with the appropriate communications link with other NSAT members, FRSNCC and all key stakeholders
- Ensure that the CFRA is supported and briefed on a regular basis
- Provide strategic advice on the national deployment and support of assets and personnel
- Assist in the resolution of mobilising conflicts in liaison with FRSNCC
- Gain an overview of the incident/s and develop situational awareness of events including security threat updates relevant to FRS operations
- Ensure a national oversight is maintained and any emerging risks are identified and actions taken accordingly to adequately reduce the impact of those risks
- Ensure an overview of the threat to and the capability of critical components of the FRS national infrastructure
- Undertake strategic liaison with other NSAT members.

## 2.2.6 FRSNCC

Within the FRSNCC, the NSAT member will be required to:

- Liaise with the manager of FRSNCC
- Guide and support FRSNCC with regard to the co-ordination and deployment of assets in line with national strategy
- Undertake strategic liaison with the CLG Emergency Room regarding the disposition and mobilising priority of assets
- Ensure the provision of regular briefs to CLG Emergency Room regarding the co-ordination and mobilisation of assets
- Provide strategic guidance and determine solutions to any mobilising conflicts that may arise.

## 2.2.7 Liaison with the affected FRS

When there is a request for support from the affected FRS or the CFRA, it is anticipated that the NSAT will be in a position to:

- Provide strategic support and information to the affected FRS Gold Commander relevant to the incident(s) and the national situation (this could include the provision of information relating to other ongoing national events and the deployment of assets)
- Assist with horizon scanning including any up-to-date threat and security situation developments
- Liaise with and providing information and support to the CLG Emergency Room as part of the communications strategy
- Liaise with the CLG Government Office representative at Gold Command.

*Note: it is not assumed that the nominated NSAT is always required to attend the FRS to undertake all or any of the above.*

An NSAT member will **not** be mobilised to be a Gold Commander, monitor performance or to carry out any form of operational assurance. The key role is to provide critical liaison and support within the Co-ordination and Advisory Framework.

## 2.3 National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT)

The National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) will provide advice and support to the NSAT member, and the CFRA, relating to the overall incident(s) or a particular capability as required. Due to their experience and knowledge in the various fields of ND and being suitably trained to carry out the various functions required, this team will work alongside the NSAT members at various locations, including the CLG Emergency Room and FRSNCC. In addition to these, there may be a requirement for a member of the NRAT to be mobilised to a SHA (where they can provide personnel to undertake the role of Enhanced Command Support Officer (ECSO), and other roles as necessary, including logistics) or to provide, upon request from the Gold Commander, support to the Silver Commander.

To ensure that the NRAT maintain their operational support role, the NRAT Secretariat manages a rota system for their 24/7 national and regional coverage.

The NRAT will have key role dependent functions at each of the positions within the structure.

### 2.3.1 Community and Local Government Emergency Room

Within CLG Emergency Room, the NRAT member(s) will form part of the operations cell and be required to:

- Work in liaison with, and provide support to, the NSAT and the CFRA Duty Officer
- Co-ordinate NRAT members on the changing requirements of the incident
- Implement the communication network with NRAT
- Provide capability advice to CLG Emergency Room and other key stakeholders.

### 2.3.2 FRSNCC

Within FRSNCC, the NRAT member will be required to:

- Provide support to NSAT member in FRSNCC
- Work in liaison with and support the FRSNCC Manager
- Provide briefing to the CLG Emergency Room
- Provide capability advice where required
- Work in liaison with and support to the ECSO.

### 2.3.3 SHA

Within a SHA, the NRAT member will be required to carry out the role ESCO or Logistics.

**Enhanced Command Support Officer (ECSO) responsibilities include:**

- Managing ECS activities
- Managing the SHA in liaison with the affected FRS
- Managing ECS briefings and updates
- Ensuring liaison between SHA, affected FRS, CLG Emergency Room and FRSNCC
- Facilitating requests for support from the Silver Commander using the agreed communications Channels
- Liaising with other NRAT members.

**LOGISTICS responsibilities include:**

- Managing the logistical needs of the SHA
- Liaising with NRAT/IC and provide logistical support as required (welfare issues/liaison with local authority partners etc.)
- Establishing communications links with key stakeholders.

### 2.3.4 Silver Command

At Silver Command, the NRAT member may be required to:

- Provide support and information to the Silver Commander
- Liaise with and providing information to CLG Emergency Room with due regard to the command structure
- Liaise with the NRAT member at the relevant SHA
- Liaise with the NSAT member at the relevant Gold Command.

**NRAT members will not be mobilised to assume command of an incident or sector. Their key role is to form a critical link within the Co-ordination and Advisory Framework.**

## 2.4 Subject Matter Adviser (SMA)

The Subject Matter Advisers (SMA) are members of the team who have been identified within the FRS and work with the ND capabilities on a day-to-day basis. They will initially include Mass Decontamination, Urban Search and Rescue and High Volume Pumping subject matter experts. The SMA will provide detailed tactical capability relevant advice to the Incident Commander at Silver and/or Bronze levels. The list of SMAs and therefore the assurance of competence will be maintained by the capability leads. SMAs will only be mobilised by the FRSNCC who hold the list, in liaison with the home FRS.

**SMAs will not be mobilised to assume command at Silver or Bronze levels or monitor performance.**

## 3 Devolved administrations

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Discussions are ongoing with the devolved administrations to ensure that appropriate mutual aid arrangements are in place where it is appropriate to have them.

## 4 Mobilising Authority Process

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The FRSNCC mobilising arrangements are currently underpinned by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 (the Emergencies Order), local mutual aid agreements and the National Mutual Aid Protocol. All 46 English FRAs are signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol. These require fire and rescue authorities to respond to particular fires and emergencies, give powers to respond to other eventualities, support to/from other services, and enter into reinforcement schemes. It is agreed that the FRSNCC and CLG Emergency Room arrangements will be embraced within the FireControl Project (RCC) Concept of Operations.

Currently the mobilisation process includes the following principles:

- Authority to deploy FRS assets rests with the Fire and Rescue Authority hosting those assets
- The FRA affected by the incident may request neighbouring FRSs for cross-border support (this may be through local mutual aid agreements)
- When national support is required or requested the FRSNCC will request support for the incident from appropriate FRAs, which will deploy within the Framework of the national mutual aid protocol and the Emergencies Order
- Central co-ordination may be necessary to support the Gold Commander(s) of serious incidents
- A FRA may be requested to deploy, not deploy, or return from self-mobilising, its resources by the FRSNCC
- The FRSNCC co-ordinates the mobilisation of ND assets, including Mass Decontamination (MD), Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and High Volume Pump resources
- The FRSNCC will work in close consultation with CLG Emergency Room regarding the prioritisation and mobilisation of ND assets.

## 5 Conclusion

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The previous chapters of this document have identified the physical locations within the NCAF, and provide the roles and responsibilities of the teams that work within those locations. The components within this, whether physical or human, are flexible and adaptable. This does not mean however, that during every incident that requires some form of national mobilisation the entire framework will be automatically activated.

FRSNCC provide a track and trace capability of ND resources twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. They maintain a database of these resources, their availability and their location. When a FRS makes a request for ND resources, the FRSNCC makes contact with the supporting FRS holding the resource and FRSNCC will co-ordinate the mobilisation of these resources on a day-to-day basis. If an FRS has a local mutual aid agreement with their neighbouring FRSs, the request for support may go direct to that FRS control, but the FRSNCC will be notified of this local request. Notification to the FRSNCC will also be made if a local FRS has mobilised any of its own ND resources, to an incident within its own area. Once these resources have been mobilised, FRSNCC will notify the CFRA Duty Officer of the request and identify which resource has been allocated to the incident. Both the FRSNCC and the CFRA Duty Officer then maintains an overview of national resource availability, identifying any incidents that may be escalating to a degree which will lead to national implications.

The full or partial activation of the NCAF will be fully dependent on the type, size and possible impact of the incident. This judgement will be made following a series of preliminary discussions once information begins to flow from the affected FRS and through to the CFRA and the NSAT. The CFRA Duty Officer has a critical communications role to play in this situation. On receipt of relevant information, this will be passed to the CFRA, or the NSAT in the CFRA Duty Officer's absence, and who will invoke the activation of the communications network which will lead to the assessment of what components of the NCAF will need to be activated.

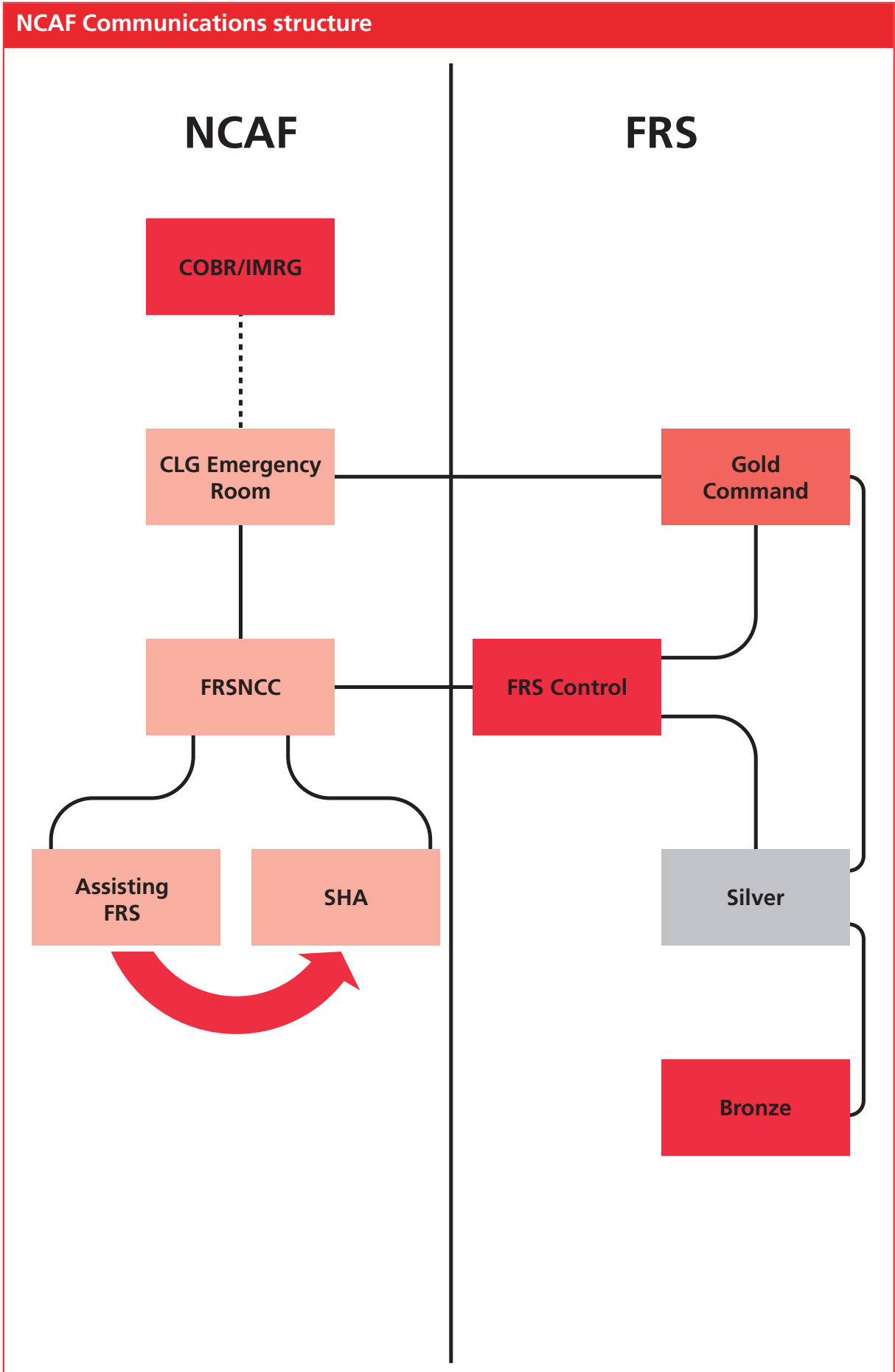
An example of this may be that there is an incident of significant size and nature, but due to its requirements, it would not necessitate the need of a SHA or full NSAT involvement. FRSNCC may still be activated and the CLG Emergency Room might be in operation, but there may not be a need for an NSAT to travel to the actual location. The NSAT may still have a role to play, but one that can be achieved via telephone support. Conversely where there is an incident of national significance and requires national co-ordination and NSATs, supported by NRATs, the NSAT will be fully incorporated into all locations within the NCAF.

The CLG Emergency Room is the hub of the NCAF and forms the critical link between the affected FRS and with ministers and officials. Information will flow from many different stakeholders into the room, the information will be gathered, assessed and disseminated appropriately. This provision of accurate and timely information will be a two-way process, providing national support and advice to the affected FRS and a flow of information to the ministers and other government departments as required.

The NCAF or the components within it do not remove any of the expectations and responsibilities that are placed on the respective Gold Commanders of their respective Fire and Rescue Authorities for resolving incidents within their areas. It does not replace any of the safe systems of work, such as the Incident Command System, nor does it replace any of the mobilising procedures. It is a system that supports and augments them.

When in operation, the CLG Emergency Room and the FRSNCC will work closely together to ensure that adequate coverage of ND resources is maintained and national resilience is sustained. There may be occasions that result in some form of mobilisation conflict, or incidents where ND resources cannot be released for deployment. It will be an important role for the CFRA or NSAT to ensure that an adequate resolution is achieved.

The NRAT will provide capability advice and support to the other teams who will be located at the various locations within the NCAF. They will also be responsible for setting up and managing the SHA in liaison with the host FRS, if required. The NRAT will carry out the role of Enhanced Command Support Officer and logistics support as appropriate.



## Annex A – Glossary of terms

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DSO	National Department Security Officer
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers Association
CFRA	Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser
CLG	Communities and Local Government
CLG ER	Communities and Local Government Emergency Room
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Room
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
ECS	Enhanced Command Support
ECSO	Emergency Command Support Officer
EISG	Emergency Information Support Group
FEIC	Fire Emergency Information Centre
FRD	Fire and Resilience Directorate
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
FRSNCC	Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre
HQ	Headquarters
ILO	Inter Agency Liaison Officer
IMRG	Impact Management Recovery Group (within COBR)
MD	Mass Decontamination
NCAF	National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework
ND	New Dimension

NRAT	National Resilience Assurance Team
NSAT	National Strategic Advisory Team
RCC	Regional Control Centre
RRT	Regional Resilience Team
SHA	Strategic Holding Area
SMA	Subject Matter Adviser
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue



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