

Terms of Reference for the 999/112 Strategic Group

Purpose

To consider strategic, high-level, policy-related issues that affect the 999/112 service. The Group shall focus particularly on issues that cut across all the Emergency Services in the UK. Policy issues are likely to embrace both procedural and technical. Operational issues fall outside the scope of the Strategic Group and are discussed by the 999/112 Liaison Committee.

999/112 is a National Service with a number of Emergency Services stakeholders. The Group shall seek to ensure a coherent approach.

Scope

The Group shall be focussed on high-level policy, rather than operational issues.

The term “999/112 service” shall embrace all the links from the “call” being placed through to resolution: the device used to initiate the “call”, receipt of the message by the BT Call Handling Agent; forwarding to the Emergency Services control room and resource dispatched.

The Group shall not be restricted to just the traditional 999/112 voice / SMS service and shall embrace other means of communication that have the potential to add value to a response such as imagery and social media.

The Group shall embrace how the traditional 999/112 service can interface with non-emergency responses to deliver more efficient and effective outcomes.

Authority

The Group has been formed to ensure that the operationally-focussed 999/112 Liaison Committee has a clear mechanism for upward reporting. This reporting line was stressed by the Liaison Committee as vital in the light of technical change (e.g. requirements from the Emergency Services to BT to upgrade their call handling platform) and the need for this change to be considered across the responder community.

Membership

- Policy leads in the departments responsible for responders that **primarily** receive 999/112 calls: **HO** (Police & F&RS) and **DHSC** (NHS Ambulance Trusts)
- Policy lead for **DfT** as the department responsible for eCall and the 999/112 call-handling **Marine Coastguard Agency** (and BTP).
- Policy lead from **DCMS** since all “calls” traverse ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) platforms which are becoming increasingly data-focussed and DCMS have the “digital” lead

- The Chair 999/112 Liaison Committee, representing the ‘blue light’ community ¹
- **Ofcom**, the communications regulator that provides the statutory basis for Communications Providers handling 999/112 traffic
- **Cabinet Office** for support of cross-government policies, by providing expert input to ensure efficient and effective public services and policy coordination and implementation
- Given the complex devolvement of the Emergency Services (captured in the table below) representatives from **Scotland, Wales** and **Northern Ireland**

Governance arrangements

Respecting the stakeholder make-up, leadership of the Group shall be collegiate and embrace the lead departmental policy officials from: CO, HO, DCMS, DH and DfT. The leadership shall rotate amongst these departments, in the order set out above.

The Group will be able to update the Ministerial-level Emergency Services Collaboration and Interoperability Board (ESCIB) with relevant issues, during its (ESCIB’s) lifetime. But it is not part of that Board’s routine business.

The Group shall provide strategic leadership to the Liaison Cttee and that Cttee shall provide operational and technical advice to the Strategy Group.

Meeting Arrangements

Meetings shall be *ad hoc* and at least quarterly to be convened ahead of the Liaison Cttee to help ensure effective co-working and consideration of operational issues. The secretariat and venue for meetings shall be provided by Cabinet Office unless the Group decides otherwise.

Resourcing

The Group does not attract any budget. As a consequence, the Group will find itself making recommendations to budget holders.

Review

The effectiveness of the Group shall be reviewed after one year from the first meeting.

Agreed following the meeting of the 999/112 Liaison Committee 14th March 2021

DCMS Telecoms Security & Resilience Team

May 2021

¹ The 999/112 Liaison Committee is currently chaired by DCMS. However, the chair of this operationally-focussed group will shift to a representative of the blue light services at the next Liaison Committee meeting.

999/112 responder community for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (October 2017)

Lead	Emergency Service														
	Ambulance				Fire and rescue				Coas t guard	Police				Brit Tran Polic e	
	E	W	S	N I	E	W	S	N I	UK	E	W	S	N I	GB	
DHS C	x														
HO					x					x	x				
DfT									x					x	
Scot Parlia			x				x					x			
Welsh Assy		x				x									
NI Assy				x				x					x		
DCMS - responsible for telecoms policy															
Cabinet Office - cross-Government co-ordination															

Notes

- The Civil Nuclear Constabulary (responsible to BEIS) does not respond to 999/112 calls
- MoD police, RAF police, Royal Navy police and Royal Military Police (responsible to MoD) do not respond to 999/112 calls
- Other emergency services fall under the main headings above - e.g. the RNLI lifeboat service is contactable through the Coastguard and Mountain Rescue via the Police
- These 'other' emergency services have varied geographical coverage. RNLI covers the British Isles - UK, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands. Mountain Rescue Ireland covers the island of Ireland.