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# Communications Workshop

**26 February 2009**

ORGANISED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD COUNTERMEASURES WORKING GROUP (AFCWG) AND  
HELD AT HEALTH PROTECTION AGENCY, CENTRE FOR RADIATION, CHEMICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL  
HAZARDS, CHILTON.

## Summary Report

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### WORKSHOP SPONSORS



FOOD  
STANDARDS  
AGENCY



Environment  
Agency



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Radiation and radiation emergencies are considered as hot topics by the media. The challenges faced by organisations responding to these events are significant. Therefore, it is important to get the right message across. If organisations are not ready for this challenge when a radiation incident occurs, there may be genuine risks to people and communities, as well as to the reputations of responders. All organisations have crisis communications plans to address their communication needs. These are often developed in isolation and without reference to partners. The issues faced in a radiation emergency are complex and inter-related. Different organisations are responsible for different parts of the response, and 'own' different issues. This makes communications with the public, media and communities complicated.

The Communications Workshop was prompted by a need to bring planners and communication specialists together to understand their roles and responsibilities, the communications challenges they face and to start planning effective communications together. The principle aims of the workshop were to:

- explore how responding organisations would work together to inform, advise and communicate with communities and the media in the event of a radiation emergency:
- to raise awareness of the risks, pitfalls and best practices through the assessment of existing procedures and the sharing of experiences:
- to offer an opportunity for emergency planners and communications professionals to meet and work together.

Twenty two organisations were invited to participate in the workshop and of these; nine took part on the day. These included representatives from central and local government and the nuclear industry. Emergency planners and communications specialists were both well represented, making the total number of participants 20. The event was attended by individuals with good experience of crisis communications and this was shared throughout the day.

The workshop achieved a balanced mix of briefing, facilitated group work and feed back sessions and was organised around three themes:

- Communication challenges
- Roles, responsibilities, messages and audiences
- Working together to communicate effectively

The themes were explored in the context of a hypothetical nuclear emergency scenario. This provided a common thread throughout the day and a focus for discussion.

Some sixty communication challenges were identified by delegates covering a wide range of topic areas including: diversity, reaction and perceptions of the audience;

media management; quality, consistency and presentation of the messages; and complexity of roles and responsibilities of responding organisations. Discussion distinguished between challenges that could be resolved relatively easily, from those that would require considerable resources and multi-agency buy-in e.g. dealing with the burden of public enquiry or the management of a minor radiation incident when public perception is of a major risk. The latter types of challenges were explored in terms of the actions needed to progress a solution, the resources that might be required, organisations to lead the work and a timeline for completing it. Many of these challenges require engagement, planning and project management at a national level.

The scenario itself highlighted numerous issues concerning recovery from a nuclear accident. Some of these issues were grouped into key messages that would be given, including the audiences for each message, who owned it and how it could be delivered. The need for sharing intelligence was identified so that consistent messages would be given to the public and other key stakeholders during all stages of an incident. It was agreed that further work on partnership communication plans need to be grounded in and around the major incident work which is already in place and to feed communications planning into emergency planning. Some ideas that were put forward included a shared Q&A brief, a single point of contact for public and media enquiries (i.e. a sufficiently informed expert spokesperson) and developing a joint website to help organisations share information during an incident. Furthermore, Regional Resilience Fora were identified as a possible vehicle for taking forward partnership working on communications.

Feedback from delegates suggested that the workshop provided a good opportunity for networking with technical and communication leads from other responding agencies. The event was also successful in highlighting the importance of communications and the need to act now so that communications professionals are better able to respond to a radiation incident in the future. There was a clear buy-in to this need and an eagerness to work together in resolving the outstanding communication challenges. An action plan was produced to advance work in this area according to the priorities agreed at the workshop.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background to the workshop

Radiation and radiation emergencies are 'hot news' and the challenges faced by organisations responding to these events are significant. We need to get our message across to the public, the media and communities. We need to be clear about the risks and what people need to do. We need to speak with authority and credibility.

If we are not ready for this challenge when the worst happens, there may be genuine risks to people and communities, as well as our reputations. It is important we get our communications right in a crisis so people who have been affected can take appropriate action. We need to manage crisis communications in a joined-up way that looks after our reputations.

The Communications Workshop was prompted by a need to bring planners and communication specialists together to understand their roles and responsibilities, the communications challenges they face and to start planning effective communications – together.

## 1.2 The communications challenge in a radiation crisis

Responding organisations have technical and operational responsibilities to fulfil in the response to a radiation emergency. Although the responsibilities and issues they face may be different, the process they go through to deliver their responsibilities follows a similar pattern, for example:

- Gather, analyse, interpret data
- Formulate advice
- Communicate, inform and advise
- Action or change of behaviour in target audience (the outcome)

All organisations will have crisis communications plans to address their communication needs. These are often developed in isolation and without reference to partners. The issues we face in a radiation emergency are complex and inter-related. Different organisations are responsible for different parts of the response, and 'own' different issues. This makes communications with the public, media and communities (for example, farmers, retailers, industry) complicated.

In a radiation crisis, responding organisations also need to be clear about what the issues are and who we need to inform, advise and influence. We need to understand who will do this, when and how. This means planning how we will work together to communicate effectively in an emergency, so we know what we will do and what our partners will do. Our response will be more effective if our messages are clear, unambiguous and co-ordinated. This will help achieve the outcomes we want and protect our reputations.

### **1.3 Workshop aims and objectives**

The principle aims of the workshop were to:

- explore how responding organisations would work together to inform, advise and communicate with communities and the media in the event of a radiation emergency;
- to raise awareness of the risks, pitfalls and best practices through the assessment of existing procedures and the sharing of experiences;
- to offer an opportunity for emergency planners and communications professionals to meet and work together.

The workshop provided an opportunity for emergency planners, technical specialists and communications professionals to meet and work together. The purpose was to raise awareness of communications challenges during a radiation emergency, but not necessarily solve them. Delegates attending the workshop have responsibilities for planning and communications for a wide variety of crises – not just radiation. This was an opportunity to make useful contacts with colleagues in partner organisations and to continue working together on plans for effective communication after the workshop.

The workshop programme was designed to:

- help delegates understand the consequences of a radiation emergency for people and environment;
- explore the communications challenges these events present;
- understand roles, responsibilities, issues, audiences and messages and who owns them;
- get delegates thinking about what we can do together to ensure our communications work effectively when the worst happens;
- start the work on 'partnership communications' for organisational communications response plans.

A list of organisations invited to attend and represented at the workshop are included in Appendices A and B respectively.

## **2 WORKSHOP FORMAT**

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### **2.1 Preparing delegates for the workshop**

To ensure that the workshop achieved its aims, delegates were asked to prepare for the workshop by undertaking the following tasks.

- To read and understand the Nuclear Emergency Planning and Liaison Group Consolidated Guidance: Chapter 4 Roles and responsibilities of

responding organizations; Chapter 13 Media Briefing Centres; Chapter 14 Media Briefing Centre User Guide

- To understand the role of their organisation in the event of a radiation incident. Delegates will be asked to explain this briefly (30 seconds) at the workshop.
- To understand their internal procedures and plans for responding to a radiation emergency. Delegates will need a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the response and how they relate/interact with communications professionals.
- To read through the scenario. (See Appendix C) and to Identify some of the issues (e.g. food, water, waste) that their organisation has responsibility for. Delegates will also need to note issues that their organisation would be concerned about that would be addressed by others.
- To think about some of the challenges their organisation faces in working with other organisations in responding to an emergency.

## 2.2 Workshop programme

The workshop achieved a balanced mix of briefing, facilitated group work and feed back sessions and was organised around three themes:

- Communication challenges
- Roles, responsibilities, messages and audiences
- Working together to communicate effectively

The themes were explored in the context of a hypothetical nuclear emergency scenario (Appendix C). This provided a common thread throughout the day and a focus for discussion. The workshop programme is given in Appendix D.

### 2.2.1 Communication challenges

#### 2.2.1.1 *Aims*

- To provide a chance for delegate groups to 'form' so they could 'perform';
- To clarify roles and responsibilities;
- Establish a common understanding of why we need to communicate effectively in a crisis;
- Establish a common understanding of communication challenges and get agreement on these.

#### 2.2.1.2 *Methodology*

Delegates were divided in to two groups and tasked to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of your organisation in a radiation incident?

2. What is your high level role as communicators and what do you need to do for your organisations in times of crisis? What do organisations want their communications people to do? What are you trying to achieve?
3. What are the challenges to good communications?

## **2.2.2 Issues, ownership, messages and audiences**

### **2.2.2.1 Aims**

- To explore the consequences of an off-site release of radioactivity for people and environment;
- To explore the actions that need to be taken;
- To identify communication tasks (message, audience, channels) to ensure the right response;
- Note further communications challenges.

### **2.2.2.2 Methodology**

Delegates remained in their working groups and were asked to consider how people and communities would react to the consequences of a nuclear accident under five topic headings:

1. Clean up of inhabited areas
2. Food production
3. Food in allotments and gardens and wild foods
4. Drinking water
5. Management of waste

Delegates considered what people would be worried about and the questions that they might ask. This pointed to the advice that responding organisations would need to provide and the tasks they would need to undertake to convey the message. Delegates were asked to select topics on which advice would need to be developed and communicated: getting back to normal; providing reassurance on contamination; clean up and disposal of contaminated wastes; Drinking Water; domestic/wild food; explanation of the difference between the size of the areas identified for sheltering and evacuation compared with those for food restrictions.

The next step was to explore the actions necessary to get the right messages across about these issues. To focus discussion, the project team provided a simple table to capture and organise ideas. Delegates looked at the audiences that needed to be reached, the message to be communicated and the organisation responsible for getting the message across.

## **2.2.3 Working together to communicate effectively**

### **2.2.3.1 Aims**

- To get delegates to take ownership of solutions to communications challenges.
- To get commitment to support future communications planning

- To encourage communications professionals to come together to plan radiation crisis communications

#### 2.2.3.2 *Methodology*

Delegates were asked to return to their work groups and review the communications challenges they had identified throughout the day. They were asked to assess which ones were likely to be 'quick wins' that could be dealt with quickly and easily.

Delegates prioritised the remaining communications challenges, planned the actions needed to progress a solution, noted the resources required and organisations to lead the work. Each group presented their top three challenges and their plans for addressing them to their colleagues.

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## 3 **OUTPUTS FROM THE WORKSHOP**

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### 3.1 **Communication challenges**

Discussion highlighted the complexity of organisational roles and responsibilities in a radiation emergency and the impact this has on effective, joined-up communications.

In a radiation crisis, communications professionals need to help technical specialists issue clear advice on what people need to do and provide reassurance to communities affected. Doing this effectively will protect our credibility and reputation. Communications professionals also need to shield technical staff from the media frenzy so they can get on with their important role of assessing and advising on the evolving crisis.

The following challenges were identified from discussion in Session 4 and during later workshop sessions.

- Audiences are diverse and their reaction to a crisis is difficult to predict. In general the public and media tend to exaggerate the risks associated with radiation
- VIP visits and politics are a distraction to good communications;
- Incidents are hard to define (we sometimes don't realise we are dealing with one) and the response may be complex
- Advice on different issues e.g. water, food, sheltering and evacuation may appear to be in conflict
- Large quantities of information need to be collated, managed and made available to responders and communications professionals so messages can be co-ordinated
- The need to meet the demands of the media, to monitor what they are saying, and the practicalities of getting messages across during a protracted radiation incident – cannot be emphasised enough
- The quality, consistency and presentation of our communications are difficult to maintain

- Good communications are inhibited by the complexity of roles and responsibilities of organisations involved

Detailed outputs from Session 4 are presented in Appendix E.

### 3.2 Issues, ownership, messages and audiences

Table 1 provides an example of how the information on issues, messages, audiences and media was recorded by the group dealing with reassurance on environmental contamination.

**TABLE 1 Providing reassurance on contamination**

Message	Audience	Medium
Get area back to normal	Residents, businesses and stakeholders	
Reassurance on key issues, positive focus	Public responders on the street	Media Public Meeting Police liaison street
We are monitoring and assessing health	Media, public	Co-ordination
Risk is low, what is the real risk, in context	Media, public	Who is first in line Local responder
This is what you do/say to self-presenters	GPs, hospitals	Help Lines shared Q+A Incident pack

#### 3.2.1 Working together to communicate effectively

By the end of Session 6, delegates had a common understanding of the communication challenges they face. They thought the following challenges could be dealt with fairly quickly and easily: potential solutions have been noted in [blue](#).

- There are delays in getting radiological monitoring data turned into clear advice. [Delegates suggested that embedding communications personnel in STAC might help.](#)
- We do not know who leads on communications in our partner organisations. [Use the Workshop contact list as a starting point for identifying and reaching communication professionals.](#)
- Peoples' understanding of radiation varies. Generally people have an exaggerated perception of the risks. [Nuclear new build provides an opportunity to clarify the risks.](#)
- How do we explain risk to a non-technical audience? [We should be taking opportunities to do this as part of our day jobs e.g. awareness campaigns. Nuclear new build may provide an opportunity for this.](#)
- A Q&A pack for a radiation crisis may not be helpful for all events. Every incident is different. [Delegates suggested the possibility of producing shared Q&A briefs.](#)

- For some types of radiation incident – our planning is limited or we don't have plans at all. [We need to be clear about what defines an incident. What are the triggers for implementing our emergency plan and crisis communications plan?](#)

Delegates also noted those communications challenges that required engagement, planning and project management at a national level. They made a start on setting out the people, resources and actions that were needed to progress these substantial projects. The key points from discussion are summarised below.

#### *3.2.1.1 National system to share and collate organisational positions on an incident*

The group envisaged a website for use by members of the multi-agency group. The website would provide a platform for the sharing of latest information on an event. It would be co-ordinated by the Police with help from Central Office for Information. Steps to make this happen include buy-in from partner organisations, website co-ordination and a process to draft and upload information. It was noted that the National Resilience Extranet led by the Cabinet Office may fulfil this need.

#### *3.2.1.2 Arrangements for dealing with a minor radiation incident where the risks are trivial but the public perceive there are major risks to health*

There was a general feeling that the National Arrangements for Incidents involving Radioactivity (NAIR) continues to provide an effective response to low impact events involving radioactivity. However, the group wondered if NAIR could be improved to include better co-ordination of communications with the public. This work would need to involve stakeholders including HPA-RPD, the Police and Environment Agency.

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## **4 NEXT STEPS**

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In Sessions 7 and 8 (Bringing it Together and Next Steps), delegates were asked to highlight key areas for future work on communications. Their priorities have been included in the Action plan presented in Table 2. Delegates also noted communication challenges outside their control and where there was a need for central government or partner organisations to take a lead.

### **4.1 Points of agreement**

#### **4.1.1 Networking**

All delegates agreed that the event was successful and it provided a good opportunity to network with technical and communication leads from other

responding agencies. Delegates were keen to progress these networks and relationships.

#### **4.1.2 Communications is top of the agenda**

The event was successful in highlighting the importance of communications and the need to act now so communications professionals are ready to respond to a radiation incident. There was buy-in to this need and an eagerness to work together in resolving the outstanding communication challenges.

#### **4.1.3 Sharing best practice**

The event was attended by individuals with good experience of crisis communications and this was shared throughout the day. There is a strong desire to identify ways to share experiences further.

#### **4.1.4 Widen the scope – bring on board more partners and forums**

Regional Resilience Fora were identified as one possible vehicle for taking forward what we are doing – nationally. There is a need to get Communications back on the agenda at these (and other) meetings.

#### **4.1.5 Finding a good fit for this work to progress**

Delegates agreed that further work on partnership communication plans needs to be grounded in and around the major incident work which is already in place and to input communications planning into emergency planning. Once Chapter 14 of the NEPLG guidance has been redrafted, it might be useful for delegates of the Workshop to review it.

#### **4.1.6 Expert spokespersons**

There was support for a sufficiently informed 'Expert Spokesperson' that could represent all organisations when speaking to the media, particularly in the early stages of an incident. This would ensure consistent and accurate messages are communicated.

#### **4.1.7 Strong support for sharing information.**

Everyone supported the need for sharing intelligence so we are consistent in our messages to the public and other key stakeholders during all stages of an incident. Some ideas put forward included a shared Q&A brief, a single point of contact for public and media enquiries and developing a joint website to help organisations share information during an incident.

**4.1.8 Finding the resource to take this forward**

There was uncertainty about the resources that would be available to take forward some of the suggestions from the workshop (e.g. website). This will need to be reviewed at a follow up meeting.

TABLE 2 Action plan

What (activity)	When (deadline)	Who (is leading)	Who owns the output?	Completed? (Y/N)
<p>1. Identify radiation incident Q and A briefs which are already available. Develop a core script and question and answer brief on radiation incidents to be shared across all the responding agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate the list of questions from the workshop</li> <li>• Assign the relevant organisations to provide the answers and get the answers signed off internally</li> <li>• Produce a single document that can be used by all responding agencies</li> <li>• Ensure there is a version control and review system updated</li> </ul> <p><b>Comment:</b> There needs to be a strong co-ordinated drive from HPA, FSA , EA and other communications professionals to make this happen.</p>	Sep 09	Nathan Fletcher, Environment Agency with input from all responding agencies technical leads	Organisations who contribute to the Q and A brief	N
<p>2. Follow up call with Sue Fletcher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can this group feed into NEPLG?</li> <li>• When will the NEPLG guidance be updated – how will it be reviewed?</li> <li>• How do we get the comms people engaged in the existing guidance / media briefing centre user guide etc?</li> </ul>	May 09	Carol Attwood	NEPLG	N
<p>3. Hold a review meeting / teleconference to discuss next steps and future working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion to include whether a different working group is needed or can this be achieved through the existing NEPLG communications group</li> <li>• Further discussions to explore how we involve other stakeholders in planning communications for incidents – how much do we involve other pressures groups, local groups, NGOs?</li> </ul>	June 09	Nathan Fletcher (EA) with input from communications leads from responding organisations	HPA, FSA, EA, (Invite Chair of NEPLG Media Subgroup and representation from all organisations who attended the workshop)	N
<p>4. Review the attendance list and identify those organisations who were not able to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek the involvement of those key organisations through technical leads</li> <li>• Identify the comms leads and share the outputs of the workshop</li> </ul>	Sep 09	Carol Attwood – shared with HPA and FSA	HPA, FSA, EA	N

What (activity)	When (deadline)	Who (is leading)	Who owns the output?	Completed? (Y/N)
5. Communicate the outcomes of the workshop to relevant groups – get input and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations at regional forums</li> <li>• Internal audiences to own organisations</li> <li>• NEPLG</li> <li>• AFCWG</li> </ul>	Sep 09	Everyone who attended	AFCWG	N
6. Revisit your own organisations crisis communications plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start to develop the section that includes working with partners</li> </ul>	Sep 09	Everyone who attended	Each responding agency	N
7. Build relationships with those who attended and start to build relationships with other organisations key to our response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate contact details</li> <li>• Circulate information on roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Everyone who attended	Each responding agency	N
8. Develop key definitions for scenarios – what constitutes a radiation incident	Feb 2010	Environment Agency, FSA and HPA	Every responding agency	N
9. Identify how communications professionals would respond to this type of incident	Feb 2010	Environment Agency, FSA and HPA	Every responding agency	N
10. Develop a system for integrating each responding agency and sharing information – online / partners website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create links from each organisations website – interlinking websites</li> <li>• Present a business case for the development of a website for the partners – staging server in case of an incident</li> <li>• Explore how the responding agencies can optimise the use of CASWEB (Police model) – provides a single phone number</li> </ul>	Feb 2010	To be confirmed at review meeting	Police Recovery – Local Authority	N
	Jun 09	Environment Agency		
	Sep 09	Police - other agencies?		
<b>Comment:</b> This project is ambitious. We need a ‘champion’ at high level to make this happen.	Feb 2010	Police		
11. Develop a rota of key spokespeople from each organisation who would be prepared to speak on behalf of the responding agencies – it will operate on a rota	Feb 2010	Environment Agency, FSA, HPA	Organisations involved	N

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What (activity)	When (deadline)	Who (is leading)	Who owns the output?	Completed? (Y/N)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each organisation to insert names of at least two key spokespeople willing to speak on behalf of all the agencies</li> <li>Each organisation is responsible for briefing their spokespeople and making sure they are media trained.</li> </ul>	Dec 09			
<b>Comment:</b> This project is ambitious. We need a 'champion' at high level to make this happen.	Dec 09			
12. Join up communication strategies by:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating clearly about our role and about radioactivity in the environment through existing campaigns and the platforms such as nuclear new build</li> <li>Providing each organisation a forward look of key communications milestones</li> <li>Cross-selling our messages through each others channels / campaigns – provide a list of key channels and deadlines for submissions</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Each organisation has their own responsibility to do this but delivers a benefit to all	Organisations involved	N
	Sep 09	Environment Agency / HPA / FSA to lead		
	Jul 09			

## **APPENDIX A Organisations invited to attend the workshop**

Avon and Somerset Police

British Energy

Central Office for Information

Department of Energy and Climate Change

Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Environment Agency

Food Standards Agency

Gloucestershire Constabulary

Government Decontamination Service

Government Information and Communications Service

Health Protection Agency

Kent County Council

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Police

Ministry of Defence

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Thames Valley Police

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Suffolk Constabulary

Welsh Assembly Government

## **APPENDIX B Organisations represented at the workshop**

British Energy

Central Office for Information

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Environment Agency

Food Standards Agency

Gloucestershire Constabulary

Government Decontamination Service

Health Protection Agency

Lancashire County Council

## APPENDIX C Hypothetical accident scenario

### C1 BACKGROUND TO INCIDENT

A hypothetical accident occurred at Trumpton nuclear power station yesterday (1<sup>st</sup> August), resulting in an offsite release of radioactivity to atmosphere which travelled in a south westerly direction. The site operator implemented the site emergency plan to protect members of the public from exposure to radiation. This led to evacuation of the population 1km downwind from the Trumpton site. These people were advised to take their pre-distributed stable iodine tablets prior to evacuation. People living in Middleton, Northam and Southley were advised to shelter until the plume had passed. At 7 am today it was declared that there was no threat of a further release and sheltering advice was lifted. Monitoring data indicate that radioiodine ( $^{131}\text{I}$ ) and radiocaesium ( $^{134}\text{Cs}$  and  $^{137}\text{Cs}$ ) were deposited in the area.  $^{131}\text{I}$  is relatively short-lived and will decay rapidly in the environment; the dose from  $^{131}\text{I}$  is essentially delivered in the first few months. Cs is long-lived and will remain in the environment for years; therefore doses from Cs will be delivered over many years. Nevertheless, for the levels of radionuclides deposited, doses to members of the public from inhalation of the plume, external radiation and ingestion pathways are likely to be less than the public dose limit (1 mSv/y). Figure 1 shows a map of the area, indicating the land use, populated areas, major transport routes and the evacuated zone.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has issued an emergency order under FEPA\* which stipulates a range of agricultural activities that are prohibited. The FEPA order defines the area in which activity concentrations in food are likely to be in excess of the CFILs (Council Food Intervention Levels) and which are therefore restricted for human consumption. This area extends out to a few tens of kilometres downwind from the site and covers cereals grown for human consumption and milk. The extent of the FEPA orders covering cereals and milk are shown in Figure 2. These are likely to be in place for several weeks. The relationship between CFILs and the resultant individual doses is complex and difficult to calculate generically. These doses depend on the sources and composition of an individual's diet and the variation of radionuclide concentrations within the food as a function of time. Even if it is assumed that 10% of each food was contaminated at the CFILs throughout the year, the doses from consuming each food would only be a few hundredths of the dose from background radiation in a year.

### C2 DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The area surrounding Trumpton power station is largely rural with one large village called Middleton, some small hamlets and farms. There are a number of farms affected by the FEPA order. Information on the agricultural production and amounts of food affected is given in Table C1. Some details of Middleton and the hamlets of Northam and Southley are given in Table C2. Drinking water supplies for the area come from a

\* FEPA – Food and Environment Protection Act (1985)

nearby reservoir which is also used for fishing and sailing (see Figure 1). There is public access to the deciduous woods in the area. The coast around Trumburgh is popular for walking and there are several beaches used by locals and tourists.

### **C3 POTENTIAL ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED**

On the day following the incident there will be pressure from members of the public and the media for various communications teams to provide information and advice on certain key issues:

- Is the drinking water safe? Do alternative supplies need to be considered?
- Is it safe to eat food growing in garden/allotments?
- Is it necessary to carry out clean up in the evacuation zone? What about Middleton, Northam and Southley? Where will any waste arising from clean-up go?
- Why is the duration and extent of sheltering small compared to the restrictions imposed on food?
- What is going to happen to all the milk being produced? Where will the waste go?
- What can be done to produce less/ uncontaminated milk and crops?
- What is going to happen to businesses in the area?

It is important to recognise that scientific and technical experts who provide advice on these issues require access to a range of information including reliable measurement data. These data can be difficult to obtain on a short timescale due to various constraints such as capacity of the detection equipment, complexity of analytical procedures and availability of samples. Measurement data for radionuclides such as  $^{131}\text{I}$ ,  $^{134}\text{Cs}$  and  $^{137}\text{Cs}$ , which are relatively simple to detect, can still take several days to produce. Therefore, decisions may have to be based on the precautionary principle in the short-term.

Figure 1 Map of area

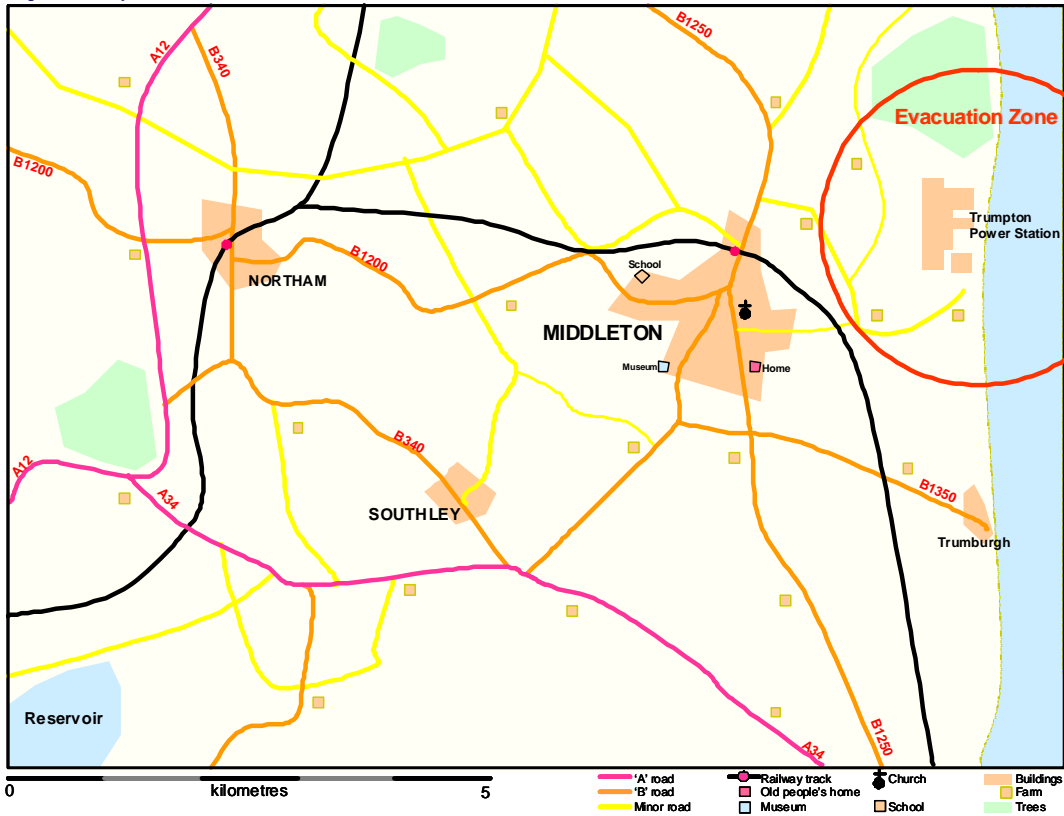
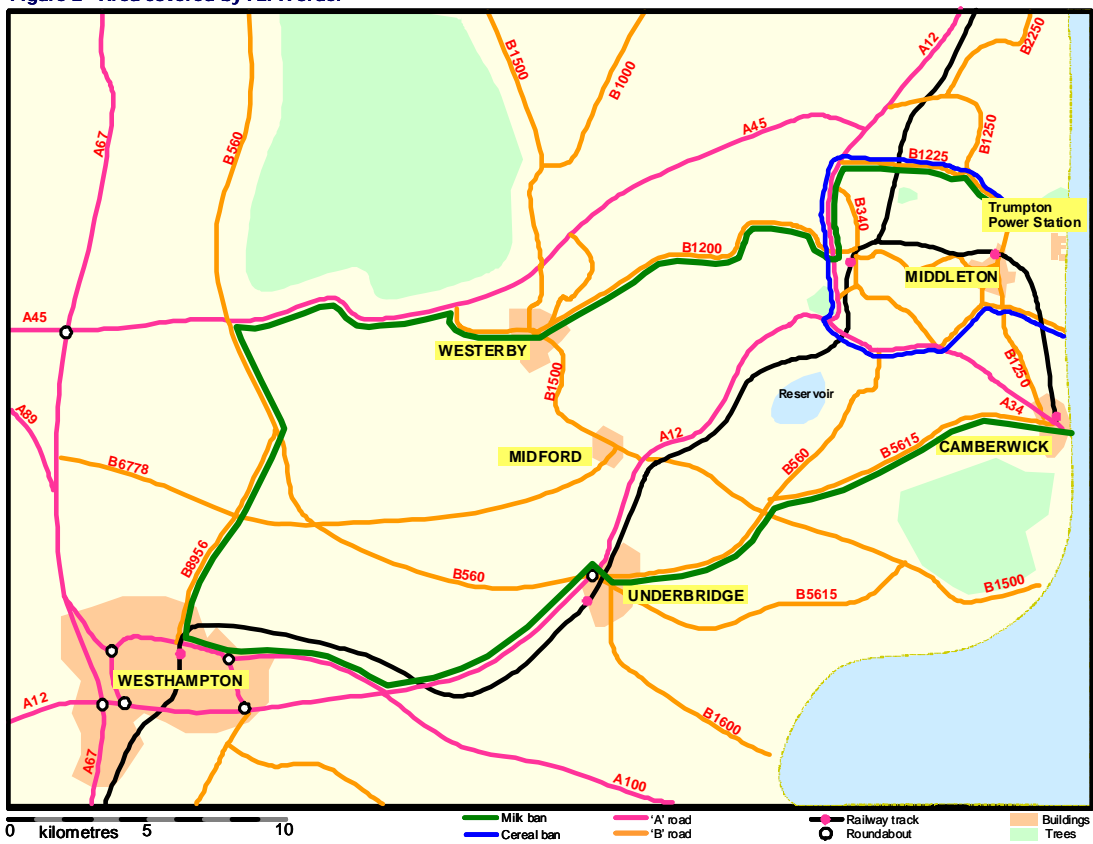


Figure 2 Area covered by FEPA order



**TABLE C1 Information on agricultural production**

Type of production	Initial quantities of food affected		
	Exceeding CFIL (FEPA area for cereals)	Exceeding CFIL for I (FEPA area for milk)	Exceeding CFIL for Cs <sup>a</sup>
Cereals	3.4 10 <sup>4</sup> tonnes	-	-
Milk	-	1.1 10 <sup>5</sup> l/d	1.7 10 <sup>4</sup> l/d
Numbers of allotments in Middleton	30		
Estimated households with vegetable plots within cereal FEPA area	200		
a The area where <sup>137</sup> Cs activity concentrations in milk exceed the CFIL is the same as the FEPA order area for cereals			

**TABLE C2 Information on settlements**

	Middleton	Northam	Southley
Size	2.5 km <sup>2</sup>	0.5 km <sup>2</sup>	0.3 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	4,500	1,000	700
Number of schools	1 (currently shut for summer holidays)	0	0
Old people's home?	Yes	No	No
Museum	Yes	No	No
Sewage treatment works	Southern edge of Middleton		

## APPENDIX D Workshop programme

	0900	Registration and assignment of delegates into work groups	HPA/Golder
1	0930	Welcome	Cathy Alexander
2		Introduction to the day	Carol Attwood
3		How we will work together	David Collier and Anne Nisbet
<b>4</b>	<b>1015</b>	<b>Communication challenges</b> Group work briefing	David Collier
	<b>1025</b>	<b>Tea and coffee in breakout rooms</b>	
		Group work Feedback in plenary	Facilitators
<b>5</b>	<b>1110</b>	<b>Issues, ownership, messages and audiences</b> Group work briefing Group work	David Collier  Facilitators
	<b>1200</b>	<b>Lunch in Atrium / discuss group work</b>	
		Group Work... Continued Feedback in breakout rooms Return to plenary	Facilitators David Collier
<b>6</b>	<b>1345</b>	<b>Working together to communicate effectively</b> Group work briefing Group work Feed back in breakout rooms	Louisa Chrisostomou  Facilitators  David Collier and Louisa Chrisostomou
	<b>1515</b>	<b>Tea and coffee in Atrium</b>	
7		Bringing it together	David Collier
8		Next steps	Carol Attwood
	1630	Close	Cathy Alexander

## APPENDIX E Session 4: Communication challenges

The challenges that emerged from discussion in Session 4 and during later workshop sessions are summarised in the table below. Where potential solutions to challenges were discussed, these have been noted in [blue](#).

**TABLE E1 Communication challenges**

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Audience	Diversity	How do we reach people who may be deaf or have learning disabilities, whose first language is not English or people with no access to TV, radio or internet?
	Reactions and perceptions	<p>How do we monitor public reaction to our crisis communications? How do we measure perceptions?</p> <p>We are so busy dealing with the challenges of getting the message out – we have limited time and resource to monitor reaction?</p> <p>Peoples understanding of radiation varies. Generally people have an exaggerated perception of the risks. <a href="#">Nuclear new build provides an opportunity to clarify the risks.</a></p> <p>People panic and over react e.g. During the floods householders stockpiled bottled water to such an extent that supplies ran short.</p>
Incident	Definition	What is a radiation incident? This is not very easy to explain.
	Complexity	<p>In some cases, a minor radiological incident will point to a much bigger underlying crisis e.g. chemicals.</p> <p>Sometimes we don't know we are dealing with an incident – the event develops slowly then escalates. We have plans and infrastructure for major events. We need arrangements for incidents where the risks and impact are trivial impact but where public perceptions of risk are disproportionately high.</p>
Media management	Demand	<p>24 hour news is today's reality. How do we feed the beast? <a href="#">Consider appointing a media spokesperson who can speak for all/selected responding organisations.</a></p> <p>Communications tend to be London-centric swallowing resource and effort which should otherwise be directed at local/regional needs.</p> <p>How can we deal with enquiries from media outside the affected area? E.g. other UK regions, overseas interest?</p> <p>How can we deal with the volume of public enquiries?</p> <p>If information demands are not satisfied, the void will be filled by 'local experts'.</p>

Monitoring	<p>The media industry is large, complex and demanding. How can we monitor what the media is saying effectively?</p> <p>How do we channel the multitude of questions that are being asked in a way that is efficient and avoids duplication of effort? Who will provide answers to the raft of questions? How do we work with the Police to field the questions coming in? <a href="#">Single point of contact for media enquiries.</a></p> <p>We have outward flows of information to deal with as well as looking after internal communications with our own people.</p>
Practicalities and logistics	<p>In the July floods, every press release we received had a different contact phone number (in July floods), this made the process of connecting up messages difficult.</p> <p>Emergency response communications are generally well co-ordinated. However, a much wider network of communications professionals, journalists, news agencies, will come to us for advice. How can we manage this?</p> <p>There are some aspects of communication in an emergency which are difficult to control and manage. For example, in the event of a nuclear emergency – employees at a nuclear site will be in contact with their families and friends leading to flows of information which vary in perspective, completeness and accuracy. When this reaches the wider community – it may lead to confusion and distract attention from authoritative sources of information.</p> <p>Command and control centres and media management centres may be directly affected by the crisis. Communication infrastructure may be severely disrupted.</p>
Technical support	<p>As communications professionals, we don't know where to go for the answers to questions people are asking.</p> <p>We need the right technical expertise from our own organisations as soon as possible to ensure scientific/technical content of early messages is correct. There are also delays in getting radiological monitoring data turned into clear advice. <a href="#">Delegates suggested that embedding communications personnel in STAC might help.</a></p> <p>A Q&amp;A pack for a radiation crisis may not be helpful for all events. Every incident is different. <a href="#">Delegates suggested the possibility of producing shared Q&amp;A briefs.</a></p>
Time-line	<p>The timeframe for restoration of the environment and return to normal living is likely to be in the order of months or years. Effective communications need to be maintained to assist the long term recovery of communities.</p> <p>An important message can be lost if released when the focus is on another high profile issue. Poorly timed communications can undermine what our partners are trying to achieve and vice versa.</p>
Message	<p><b>Quality</b></p> <p>People can access information easily from a range of sources; internet, radio, TV. However, they may not be authoritative, accurate, complete, reassuring or focussed on what they need to do to minimise the risks.</p>

Consistency	<p>Local authorities may operate at County and District level. Messages need to be consistent and elected members need to be kept up to speed with events and the response.</p> <p>Radiation emergencies may impact on nation states – England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Administrations need to ensure messages are consistent across national boundaries.</p> <p>Emergency responders need to ensure that when they speak to colleagues about an event, the information and message they convey is consistent with that reported to the media.</p> <p>Early on in a radiological emergency the Local Authority (e.g. Environmental Health Officers) may be the source of advice on environmental impact. As time moves on, national agencies may become the source of authoritative advice e.g. Environment Agency. We need to ensure a consistent message as the locus for advice and information shifts from local to national agencies.</p> <p>People think we are not presenting the truth if as experts we issue conflicting or inconsistent advice.</p>
Presentation	<p>The nuclear operator will be perceived as the 'enemy' – they caused the radiation emergency and will be the focus of blame. Should government organisations and agencies appear on the communications platform with the 'enemy'? e.g. Health Protection Agency alongside British Energy in a press conference.</p> <p>We need to explain risk clearly, simply and authoritatively.</p>
Organisations	<p><b>Complexity of roles and responsibilities</b></p> <p>Organisational responsibility for radiation incidents is split between a range of lead government departments – depending on the scenario or the 'phase' (response/recovery) of the emergency.</p> <p>Many organisations have a role in the response to a radiation incident. Understanding their role and what they do is a major challenge. Ensuring their communications are joined up is a major problem.</p> <p>Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) Strategy Group, Impact Management Recovery Group (IMRG) and Science Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) confound good communications by creating new routes which need to be supplied with information.</p> <p>Some departments won't communicate.</p> <p>Organisational roles and responsibilities are so complex we don't know who to refer queries to.</p> <p>There are so many organisations involved, it is difficult to get an overall picture of the messages reaching the public, media and communities. How can we co-ordinate more effectively to ensure we sustain a high level perspective in order to manage communications strategically.</p> <p>Organisations and departments are constantly changing. Our plans are constantly changing as we learn from exercises and real events. This impacts on our ability to maintain joined-up and effective communications.</p>

Understanding of roles and responsibilities	<p>What is the role of NHS Direct?</p> <p>We have a new agency to deal with. Government Decontamination Service will be part of the Food and Environmental Research Agency from 1 April 2009.</p> <p>A large number of organisations are involved in ensuring provision of safe water supplies e.g. Defra, Drinking Water Inspectorate, Local Authorities, Environment Agency and Water Utilities. Who does what, when - is not fully or consistently understood by the agencies involved. This impacts on our ability to communicate effectively.</p>
Distractions to good communication	<p>VIP visits</p> <p>Political agendas affect our communications – what we can say, what we can't say, when and how.</p> <p>The media moves so fast, we are forced into being reactive and defending our position. This places heavy demands on our resource and prevents us from being 'proactive' i.e. getting authoritative advice out quickly.</p>
Apparent tensions and conflicts	<p>The nuclear operator advises the Police GOLD commander that evacuation is required out to 1 km. But, the Police Gold Commander may decide to extend the evacuation by another 1 km. Should the nuclear operator meet the cost of clean up in the extended area?</p> <p>People have been evacuated from homes out to 0.5 km and sheltered out to 2 km. However, the Food Standards Agency has introduced precautionary food restrictions out to 40 km. How do we explain this to people?</p> <p>The public and media expect 'action', but the best response may be to do nothing. How do we explain our position?</p> <p>People have been advised that they no longer need to stay indoors. However, they shouldn't eat produce from their gardens. This is confusing.</p> <p>People have been advised that they no longer need to stay indoors – but emergency services personnel have been seen wearing full personal protective equipment and breathing apparatus. People don't understand why and believe their safety is being compromise.</p> <p>How do we explain risk to a non-technical audience? <a href="#">We should be taking opportunities to do this as part of our day jobs e.g. awareness campaigns. Nuclear new build may provide an opportunity for this.</a></p> <p>The precautionary principle needs to be used appropriately and explained carefully.</p> <p>Concepts of radiation dose and risk are not easy to explain. Explanations need to be clear, accurate, understandable and unambiguous.</p>
Information management	<p>During a radiation emergency, each responding organisation will generate information on its priorities and what it is doing, its advice and much more. How can we make this easily accessible to all organisations involved so our communications can be better co-ordinated?</p>
Partners	<p>We don't know who our communications counterpart is in partner organisations. <a href="#">Use the contact list for the workshop as a starting point for crisis communications.</a> – However, in the long term we need a process- we need to get this in place and maintain these links. Nuclear Emergency Planning Liaison Group (NEPLG) may be able to help with this.</p>

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Planning and preparedness

Maintenance of organisational knowledge and learning is an on-going challenge.

For some types of radiation incident – our planning is limited or we don't have plans at all. [We need to be clear about what defines an incident. What are the triggers for implementing our emergency plan and crisis communications plan?](#) Food Standards Agency has developed a matrix of factors to classify when an event is an incident. Environment Agency has a definition and criteria which may help. The Civil Contingencies Act has a definition of a critical incident that may also be useful. A shared understanding of when we are dealing with an incident would be helpful and given the work that has already been done, this ought to be achievable.

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Pressure groups

Pressure groups make heavy demands on our communication resources in a crisis. How can we manage these demands more effectively? [What are the risks and benefits of inviting pressure groups into the media centre?](#)

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Stakeholders

How do we advise and influence organisations who are not our partners but represent sectors of the community we need to reach e.g. trade organisations, charitable organisations, retailers. [Food Standards Agency set up a scoping group to look at this. The results may be helpful](#)

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## APPENDIX F Session 5: Issues, ownership, messages, audiences

**TABLE F1 Issues of concern**

Issue	Leading question	Related questions
Clean up of inhabited areas	Who cleans up?	Is my house contaminated? Who do I talk to about cleaning my home? Who will clean it up?
	Is it safe for me?	Do I need to be decontaminated? Is it safe to go into my garden? How do I know if my garden is contaminated?
What is a safe level of radiation?		I visited the area on the day of the emergency, should I go to the doctors? Can I use ventilation systems? Can I walk in the street? Is my soil ruined, how do I replace it? Can I go back to my home? My car is contaminated- is it safe to drive, who will clean it? Is it safe for me to stay here in the long term? My compost bins had lids on at the time, is the compost safe to use? Can my children play outside? Am I safe outside, who tells me, who do I ask? I drove through the area at the time of the accident, what should I do? What about my pets?
How will the area be cleaned? How do I know it's safe?		Possible conflict re 'PPE' clean up and normality for residents Which areas are actually contaminated? What level of contamination is acceptable?
How long will the clean up take?		What is the method of clean up? How will clean up affect my property?

	When will it be safe?	<p>I want confirmation that my house is free from contamination</p> <p>When can the children go back to school?</p> <p>What gets cleaned first - my property?</p> <p>I work from home when can I go back?</p> <p>Who will support my business and future loss of business?</p> <p>I use my car for business? Who will pay to clean it?</p> <p>Who pays?</p> <p>What will be the effect on house prices?</p> <p>Will you pay for me to move - I don't want to live here now?</p>
Food production	Who do I ask?	Source of advice, one stop shop - timelines
	Who does it?	Haulage firm- my tankers have been used to collect milk on the morning of the accident, who will decontaminate the tank?
	Where does it go, what do I do?	<p>Do you need to cull wildlife?</p> <p>What do I do with the milk waste?</p> <p>Where does the waste go?</p> <p>Can I dump milk in sewers?</p> <p>Should I burn contaminated cereal?</p> <p>Can I go out to milk the cows?</p> <p>How do I dispose of my stocks?</p> <p>What do I do with churns of milk from before the day?</p> <p>Are crops destroyed?</p> <p>What should I do with animal feed, some of it was covered?</p>
	Am I affected?	<p>My field is right in the corner of the affected area (food restrictions), isn't the boundary arbitrary?</p> <p>My cows graze on fields either side of the boundary (food restrictions), what do I do?</p>
	Farm buildings and equipment	<p>Can I wash food and equipment with mains water?</p> <p>Is the milking shed contaminated, can it be cleaned up?</p> <p>Could cattle be destroyed if they are not milked?</p>

	Is it safe for me/can I?	<p>Can I use the water for livestock to drink?</p> <p>Can I put cows out to graze?</p> <p>Is animal feed safe to use?</p> <p>Can I take animals to abattoir or market?</p> <p>I was in the fields when the accident happened, am I ok?</p> <p>Crops are uncovered, can I harvest and sell them?</p> <p>I have eaten my produce, am I ok?</p> <p>When is it safe to replant my crops?</p> <p>Will machinery be contaminated?</p> <p>Should I go shopping 50 miles away, if not where?</p> <p>Who will milk the cows?</p> <p>Will cows be destroyed?</p> <p>Why is it safe for me to go outside but not safe for my animals?</p> <p>I have an organic farm, what will happen to my Soil Association certification?</p>
Domestic produce	Is it safe for me to eat?	<p>Are there some foods that I should avoid?</p> <p>Can I eat the vegetables in my garden?</p> <p>What can I eat?</p> <p>If I cook it properly will it be ok?</p> <p>Crops, are they safe?</p> <p>Can I wash the radiation off the vegetables?</p> <p>What about seeds and bulbs in the ground?</p> <p>Who do I get the information from?</p> <p>Is there a difference between fruit and things grown in the ground?</p> <p>Can I water my plants with water from the water butt?</p> <p>Can I eat the tomatoes in the green house?</p> <p>Are there things I can eat and things I can't?</p>
	Is it safe for my domestic animals?	<p>My pet was in the garden and he has drunk the rain water?</p> <p>Can I feed my pets with hay kept in the garden?</p> <p>I keep pigs who are due to be slaughtered, can I eat the meat?</p> <p>Animals- hens etc- what is the effect?</p> <p>I have got chickens, can I eat the eggs?</p>
	New planting	<p>When can I grow food again?</p> <p>Can I plant new crops?</p>

	Working and Playing	<p>Why can I go outside but not eat the vegetables?</p> <p>I manage an allotment, what can I tell the allotment holders?</p> <p>Is it safe to go outside and pick the vegetables?</p> <p>If I can't eat the food can I let the kids play in the garden?</p> <p>Can I work in my garden?</p> <p>All my tools are at the allotment – are they safe to use?</p>
	How much cost	<p>Cost issues-insurance</p> <p>I can't afford to buy vegetables, how do I feed my family?</p>
	How we communicate?	<p>Consistency</p> <p>Understandable</p> <p>Timeliness</p>
Food restrictions	General information needs	<p>Is the countryside out of bounds?</p> <p>Is this worse than foot and mouth?</p> <p>Why are food restrictions wider than evacuation?</p> <p>Why is there a food ban?</p> <p>How long will the ban be in place?</p> <p>If there is a food ban why am I still allowed to live here?</p>
	Specific advice	<p>Will local farmers loose their organic status?</p> <p>I harvest shell fish, are these affected?</p> <p>I catch fish and land them in the 'ban zone' is this safe?</p> <p>What about the birds?</p> <p>If we can't eat it, is it still safe to walk through?</p> <p>When will my food be safe to eat?</p> <p>Is it ok to eat the pigeons that I shot?</p> <p>How do I get clean food?</p> <p>Can I move livestock?</p> <p>Who will tell me what to do with livestock?</p> <p>Should I shelter cattle and give them potassium iodate tablets?</p> <p>Will all farm animals be killed?</p> <p>I have already eaten something from my garden, am I safe?</p> <p>Who is going to tell me what to do with this milk?</p> <p>Is it better to buy from market stalls?</p> <p>Do I need to stockpile tinned food?</p> <p>Is it ok to eat packaged food?</p>

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Reassurance	<p>What happens if I eat contaminated food?</p> <p>What type of food can be contaminated?</p> <p>Can I still sell my bottled juice?</p> <p>Food supplies left my farm this morning before I heard the news.</p> <p>Do I need to buy supplies in case I run out?</p> <p>Are my apple trees ok, do they need cleaning?</p> <p>Can the sandwich van still come?</p>
Waste specific information	<p>What will happen to all the contaminated foodstuffs and the soil?</p> <p>Where is the food waste going?</p> <p>Where does the contaminated stuff go to?</p> <p>Where can I get advice on safe storage and disposal of food waste?</p> <p>Do I need a permit to store food waste for collection?</p> <p>What will happen to waste food?</p> <p>Who will collect and dispose of food waste?</p>
Compensation	<p>Do I need to be re-housed?</p> <p>Are you going to support affected farmers financially?</p> <p>I will lose my Tesco contract, who will compensate me?</p> <p>What is this going to cost and who will pay?</p> <p>How do I get compensation?</p> <p>Who compensates me?</p> <p>Will farmers be compensated?</p> <p>If I have to slaughter livestock who will compensate me?</p>

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Drinking water	Advice	<p>Can I shower in this water?</p> <p>Can I use the water to wash?</p> <p>Can I wash clothes in this water?</p> <p>Can I use the loo?</p> <p>Can I bathe my children?</p> <p>Can I use the washing machine?</p> <p>Will my hair fall out if I wash it?</p> <p>Will the radioactivity impact on the medication I take?</p> <p>What about my cat/dog?</p> <p>Can I drink the water?</p> <p>Is the water safe if I boil it?</p> <p>What will it do to my kettle?</p> <p>I have a private water supply, should I be worried?</p> <p>Will contaminated water smell different?</p> <p>Would you tell me if the water wasn't safe?</p> <p>Where can I get safe drinking water?</p> <p>Is it safe to go fishing</p> <p>Can I get fish from the reservoir?</p> <p>Can I still wash my fruit and vegetables and then boil them?</p> <p>Will my house plants die if I use tap water on them?</p> <p>Where does my drinking water come from?</p> <p>Birds have drunk from my garden - will they spread radioactivity further afield?</p> <p>How long will it be till the water is safe?</p> <p>How long will the water supply be contaminated?</p> <p>How are you treating the water?</p> <p>Will the supply be cut off?</p> <p>Will my house/pipes be cleaned/decontaminated?</p> <p>Can you test my drinking water?</p> <p>How do you define safe, I don't want any radiation?</p> <p>Are there help lines to advise on water?</p> <p>Who can give me advice about the safety of my water?</p> <p>If it rains will I get contaminated?</p> <p>Are there risks of contamination long term?</p> <p>My child has eczema, does that make any difference to washing clothes or bathing?</p>
	Action on bottled water	<p>Would it be safer to stick to bottled water?</p> <p>Do I need to buy bottled water?</p> <p>Are you going to provide bottled water?</p> <p>Should I stock up on bottled water?</p> <p>Where do I get bottled water from?</p>

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Management of waste	Advice
	Where do I take my household waste?
	Is my household waste hazardous?
	What should I do with my grass cuttings?
	Is my swimming pool safe, does it need new water?
	Can I get my lawn/soil tested?
	Is the waste dangerous, how can it be made safe?
	Will things need to be disposed of?
	How long before my children can play in the garden?
	Do cars need to be specially cleaned?
	Will you resurface the roads?
	Where will the water used to wash the roads go?
	How do I know what needs to be thrown away?
	Who do I contact about waste disposal?
	Is the school contaminated?
	Will they demolish/rebuild the school?
	What about the kid's garden toys?
	Will the clean up cause travel problems, closed roads etc?
	Will my waste be collected?
	How can I get help to clean up?
	What do I do about my garden waste?
	Will waste be shipped abroad?
	Who will manage clean up?
	Should I be using cleaning products on doors and windows?
	Can I relocate for free?
	I don't want to live in my house anymore, will you re-house me?
	Are you going to restore the thatch on my roof?
	Will someone clean inside my house?
	Are you going to valet my car?
	How is this cleaning carried out and who does it?
	I don't want radioactive waste be disposed of or stored near me?
	Will I be able to grow food in my garden again?
	Are the fish in my pond going to be taken away?
	Can I use the normal household waste collection for waste?

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Urban clean-up	General information	How do I avoid spreading radioactivity? Even when cleaned how contaminated is everything? Who will prove its clean? What is waste? How much radiation is required before cleaning takes place? How much waste is expected? Where is waste going? Where will waste be disposed of? When can this start? How do you monitor radiation levels? How do you clean up our streets? How are you looking after the people who are handling the waste? I am a landfill owner, can I get a permit to receive the waste? Who will compensate me?
	Reassurance	What about the people sleeping rough? What about my car, will it be radioactive? If they wear radiation suits, shouldn't we? Are we going to live with this for thousands of years? Are the roads safe to drive on? I live near a landfill site that's receiving LLW, what is being dumped there and is it safe?

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