LESSONS IDENTIFIED BUT NOT LEARNED: THE CHALLENGE FOR UK INTEROPERABILITY

Dr Kevin Pollock
PRESENTATION CONTENT

- UK Interoperability
- Onion Model (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992)
- Mock Bureaucracy (Gouldner, 1954)
- Research Findings
- The Challenge for UK Interoperability
- Creating a Learning Culture
UK INTEROPERABILITY

Doctrine & Organisation
Operational Communications
Shared Situational Awareness
Joint Exercising & Training

‘the extent to which organisations can work together coherently as a matter of routine’
RESEARCH

Emergency Planning College
Occasional Papers
New Series

Number 6
Review of Persistent Lessons
Identified Relating to
Interoperability from Emergencies
and Major Incidents since 1986

Dr Kevin Pollock
A report commissioned by the Cabinet Office Civil
Contingencies Secretariat

EPC
Occasional Papers
New Series

Number 13
Interoperability
Theory & Practice in UK Emergency Management

Dr Kevin Pollock   Eve Coles

Pollock, Kevin (2012) An examination of Scotland’s strategic
coordinating groups to determine whether they are capable of delivering
resilience and enhanced crisis management capabilities. PhD thesis.
“The strategies implemented in an organisation influence, and are influenced by, the organisation’s structure and culture and the psyche of individuals” (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992)
Mock Bureaucracy

“an organisation with a counterfeit front deceitfully designed to impress key stakeholders with appropriate principles and well-ordered practices, while hiding internal fragmentation and ad hoc operation” (Jermier et al., 1991)
### Onion Model & Research Findings

| Strategy | • Demand for New legislation  
|          | • Lack of Strategic Leadership  
|          | • No Executive Monitoring |
| Structure | • Inadequate Communication  
|           | • Complexity |
| Culture | • Failure to Assume Responsibility  
|         | • Blame Culture |
| Beliefs & Values | • Inadequate Training  
|                | • Failure to Learn |
“We don’t learn lessons. There are repeat events. We go through the same logistical issues, usually equipment and comms. We don’t sit down and incorporate them properly”
Lessons Identified But Not Learned

1985 Bradford City Football Ground Fire
New legislation & Highlighted issues had been subject of numerous Inquiries over a period of 60 years

1987 King’s Cross Underground Station
No incentives to pursue findings and recommendations or to translate them into action
“Crisis is not the time to be building networks, but it will highlight how successful you’ve been in building them”
LESSONS IDENTIFIED BUT NOT LEARNED

2010 Cumbria Shootings
Communications failings between the police and ambulance caused priorities to be misunderstood

2007 Floods
In terms of scale, complexity and duration, this is simply the largest peacetime emergency we’ve seen
“I think there’s an element of self-protection, we don’t want to admit what went wrong. We don’t want to highlight that there are lessons to be learned. An example is the terrorist incident. We were told it was good but in certain areas it wasn’t.”
LESSONS IDENTIFIED BUT NOT LEARNED

1999 Ladbroke Grove Rail Crash
Lessons from accidents inhibited by the ‘blame culture’

2000 Victoria Climbe Murder
The suffering and death of Victoria was a gross failure of the system and was inexcusable
“Just telling people to cooperate will not achieve interoperability”
LESSONS IDENTIFIED BUT NOT LEARNED

2005 London Bombings
Basic misunderstandings between emergency services as to their respective roles and responsibilities…Training is vital to reduce confusion

1988 Piper Alpha Oil Rig Explosion
Senior Management were too easily satisfied the system was operating correctly…they adopted a superficial response when safety was raised by others
THE INTEROPERABILITY CHALLENGE

“…there is no point in holding inquiries or publishing guidance unless the recommendations are followed diligently. That must be the first lesson”
OVERCOME THE INTEROPERABILITY CHALLENGE – CREATE A LEARNING CULTURE

Leadership commitment & communication

Adopt explicit standard & philosophy

Establish organisational structure for learning

Involve staff by training & communication

Monitor & audit lessons identified to completion

Include learning as performance measure
ANY QUESTIONS?