

T: 0300 244 4000  
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

William Wragg MP  
Chair  
Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs  
Committee  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

13 July 2020

Dear William

## **DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS SESSION 23 JUNE: FURTHER INFORMATION ON CIVIL CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS**

I was pleased to be able to attend the recent session alongside Jeremy Miles MS and Gordon Lyons MLA, and to provide the Committee with information on the Scottish Government's response to Covid 19 and Coronavirus legislation.

During the session, I undertook to follow up in writing to provide the Committee with further information in response to the question on the Scottish Government's obligations on emergency planning and preparedness under the Civil Contingencies Act, the safeguards in place to ensure these obligations are complied with, and whether they are coordinated across the UK.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a number of duties on Responders identified in the legislation. It is the responsibility of the individual responder agencies to ensure compliance with the legal duties placed upon them by the Act. Structures which support responders in Scotland to carry out those duties - the North, East and West Regional Resilience Partnerships - are set out in the associated Civil Contingencies Act (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013. The Regional Resilience Partnerships bring together senior representatives of all the statutory responders to ensure effective multi-agency collaboration, provide strategic direction and agree priorities, in order to make Scotland more resilient.

In addition to Regional Resilience Partnerships there is The Scottish Resilience Partnership (SRP) which acts as a strategic policy forum for resilience issues. The SRP provides collective assurance to Ministers that statutory responders and key resilience partners are aware of significant resilience gaps and priorities, and are addressing these in line with appropriate and available resources.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

It also provides advice to the resilience community on how best to ensure that Scotland is prepared to respond effectively to major emergencies. The SRP is made up of a core group of the most senior statutory responders and key resilience partners.

Scottish Government officials, along with other Devolved Administrations, work very closely and regularly with colleagues in the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat on all aspects of Emergency and Resilience preparedness and delivery. A four-nations approach is taken to many key aspects of civil contingencies planning and response work, including risk assessment; the production and updating of doctrine and guidance; exercising; training; response and recovery.

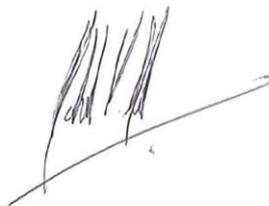
When the particular circumstances of an emergency require co-ordination and support from the UK Government, the Cabinet Office will consider mobilising UK Government plans. If the decision is to mobilise those plans, links will normally be established with the Scottish Government's own resilience response arrangements.

The UK Government maintains dedicated crisis management facilities within COBR. These facilities provide a venue for collective decision-making and communication during emergencies. COBR is fully activated in the case of emergencies with wide or prolonged impacts requiring sustained support from a number of UK departments and/or the Scottish Government and other devolved administrations.

For emergencies affecting Scotland, links would be established with the Scottish Government through the Cabinet Office and Scotland Office. Scottish Ministers and officials would expect to attend COBR.

I hope this letter is helpful in providing more information on our obligations and our approach to civil contingency planning and preparedness, and how this is coordinated across the UK. I wish to also take this opportunity to clarify one point I made in the Committee session on a different topic. On the powers contained within the Coronavirus Act 2020, where I noted that the provisions relating to emergency volunteers were examples of provisions which had been not used in or not applied to Scotland, these provisions were included in the Act by the UK Government as applying to Scotland but at this time they have not been commenced or used in practice.

I am copying this letter to the Deputy First Minister for his portfolio interests.



**MICHAEL RUSSELL**

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Accredited  
Until 2020

