

Covid-19 Pandemic Second Interim Operational Review

C19 National Foresight Group

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July 2020

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This review is an independent commission by Shaun West and completed by the C19 National Foresight Group. In the spirit of continuous learning and reflection, this document is to be shared with LRFs, Partners and Government Departments.

It is highly commendable that LRFs, Partners and Government Departments have engaged with such a duty of candour directly with this independent review and forthcoming reviews.

Title: Covid-19 Pandemic Second Interim Operational Review Report

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Foreword

This represents our second Covid-19 Pandemic Interim Operational Review, following that which took place in April 2020. At a time of some calling for a public inquiry, this rapid review reaches across all Local Resilience Forums, partners and government, each sharing their compelling personal experiences and lessons, intended to shape and inform the ongoing response and recovery.

This review has once again been delivered by a collaboration between Professor Jonathan Crego M.B.E, Director of the Hydra Foundation, and Dr Rowena Hill and her dedicated team from Nottingham Trent University. Supported by our previous core of subject matter experts namely Deputy Chief Fire Officer Andy Hopkinson and Andy Towler, who kindly contributed practical expertise of civil contingencies, we were privileged on this occasion to be joined by Tracy Daszkiewicz, Sue Whitton and Ian Reed who brought their own response and broader recovery insights. I am very grateful to the whole team for their professionalism, counsel and commitment.

This report reviews the new and uncharted territory negotiated by Local Resilience Forums, partners and government, as all are tested mid-crisis exchanging timely information across newly emerging structures, relationships and political landscape. This report also reflects the formidable contribution and public service of each Local Resilience Forum, partner, volunteer and government department. The most enduring emergency response in modern times continues and every daily update on those taken from our communities by Covid-19 is as heartbreaking as that previous. Notwithstanding the fatigue and sense of loss which is undoubtedly taking its toll, the sense of purpose and pride delivered by Local Resilience Forums and partners in local communities is striking.

The Academy of Medical Sciences report 'Preparing for a challenging winter 2020/21', commissioned by the Government Office for Science, frames the challenge well and our second Interim Operational Review arrives at an opportune time to share and absorb the learning, allowing for a 'period of intense preparation' through winter. The value rapid learning can add to plans and preparations during an emergency is immense, especially to one with such a long tail. This opportunity to reflect and afford learning during an emergency is rare and is one that must not be squandered now. I commissioned this interim operational review, with your kind participation, across the United Kingdom at every level of response and recovery for that very reason, to save lives, relieve suffering and support communities during this crisis. In the spirit of such continuous learning and reflection, I encourage you to share this Interim Operational Review widely across your LRF, partnership and organisation.

I commend this review to you and thank you for the opportunity.



Shaun West, Chairperson, C19 National Foresight Group

Note from Professor Jonathan Crego M.B.E Director of the Hydra Foundation

Traditionally debriefs occur after an event, where the chronology of actions taken become blurred. They also have the potential of becoming contaminated with knowledge of the consequences of action taken. Sadly, they can also be constructed to avoid blame at best or setup to criticise actions of agencies. We embarked on this journey to avoid this. Shaun West commissioned a 10kv review mid-crisis. This required the attendance of key emergency response stakeholders and partner agencies to engage online with the 10kv methodologies that had been originally designed to operate in a co-located venue. Radical adaptations of our existing delivery technologies were necessary to achieve this.

I had delivered a live debriefing during the London Bombings in 2005, but this was straightforward as I used the existing London Police computers to deliver a subset of the methods. For this review the participants were all over the UK from a large group of agencies. We created new tools called *10kv-Cloud*, to operate on smartphones with livestream video during the event to engage and facilitate the session. This was our second debrief on behalf of the C19 National Foresight Group. We delivered the first review on 22 April 2020.

The work of Dr. Rowena Hill and her team at Nottingham Trent University, who have analysed the data from both sessions has been extraordinarily brilliant. The use of scientific methods to generate analysis that is useful to both practitioners and strategic decision makers is the definition of pragmatic research. The findings of this report are evidence-based and the validity of the method uncompromised.

A real legacy of this crisis, has been that through the strategic direction of Shaun West and with the guidance and support of Dr. Hill, we have been able to apply this approach in total six times at the date of this report, to other groups working during the Covid-19 crisis. These new methods have been used in the engagement of teachers looking at safeguarding of children during the epidemic and region-specific events debriefing responders. Each event has been followed up with strongly evidenced recommendations and learning and good practice has been captured and disseminated.



Professor Jonathan Crego M.B.E BSc.(Hons) Ph.D (Salford) Sc.D (South Wales)
Director, Hydra Foundation

The Academic Team from Nottingham Trent University

The NTU team acted as an intelligence cell during the 10kv session and also analysed the data and co-authored the report.

Professor Thom Baguley (Intelligence cell only)

Contributed to the Intelligence cell, analysed the data and contributed to the authorship of the report, with authors listed on the front cover being involved in the development of the recommendations.

Dr. Rowena Hill**

Dr. Duncan Guest*

Rich Pickford*

Dr. Lisa Sanderson

Dr. Sally Andrews

This research team at NTU are psychologists and staff from Social Sciences. As a group they have worked and researched within the context of emergency management as part of a wider research focus on safety and security. The group have researched communication within Strategic Coordination Groups, psychology associated with emergency responders, and they are actively involved in a series of ongoing research programs focusing on disaster management. NTU have sponsored this team's time in order to support the national response to Covid-19. As part of this, Dr Rowena Hill, is seconded full time to the C19 National Foresight Group as the only embedded scientist. Prior to this secondment she worked almost exclusively in research and policy with emergency responders and emergency management.

The Subject Matter Experts

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Andy Hopkinson*, Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service; Vice Chair, Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum

Andy Towler*, The Resilience Group

Tracy Daszkiewicz*, Deputy Director of Population Health & Wellbeing, PHE

Sue Whitton*, Senior Emergency Planning Officer, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service

Ian Reed*, Head of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity, Lincolnshire

*Denotes authorship of the final written report

**Denotes corresponding lead author for any enquiries or questions

Executive Summary

This review took place on Wednesday 17 June 2020. On that day the newspaper headlines focussed on the efforts of footballer Marcus Rashford to secure free school meals for school aged children in need through the summer holidays of 2020.

The Prime Minister stated on that day that the total number of deaths across all settings across the United Kingdom stood at 41,969. He also reported that 6,981,493 tests had been carried out or posted out in the UK. 298,136 tests had been positive.

Two days previously, on Monday 15 June 2020 face coverings become compulsory on public transport in England. Close to this date (just before or just after depending on the devolved nation) all four nations announced people who live alone were able to form a 'bubble' or 'extended household' with another household. Easing of lockdown measures had been announced across all four nations of the UK at different paces and sequences.

On a global scale, on that day the World Health Organisation reported 8 million cases of Covid-19 across the globe. They also announced that mega hubs for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) had been established. Data from John Hopkins University gave the total number of confirmed Covid-19 deaths around the globe as 444,368.

Within the UK, the move away from national measures to local management of outbreaks had been announced in England. Western General Hospital had already been closed to new admissions the previous month. The week after this review ran, the Health Secretary announced the continuation of lockdown measures in an area of Leicester.

It is within this context, of an increase in global spread of the virus and a decrease across all indicators of the virus in the UK, that the second interim review of the UK response to Covid-19 was completed. Consequently, recovery activities were becoming the main focus of local strategic decision-making bodies and the management of outbreaks was being implemented by local strategic decision-makers. This juncture of activity at local level (response, recovery, local outbreak management) was the complexity that the review aimed to capture.

There were seven main findings:

- 1) Disconnect between local and national
- 2) Cross-partnership working is key
- 3) Managing the health of key structures into the future
- 4) Managing local outbreaks
- 5) Learning and adapting
- 6) Consequences to the individual
- 7) Community and public need

Within finding four there is an extended section to represent discussions regarding the implementation of local outbreak management structures. This should be read with the knowledge that the Leicester lockdown had not yet occurred. Within finding five, there is an extended section to represent discussions regarding the guidelines and frameworks which surround the local strategic decision-making. From these findings, thirteen recommendations were developed. The priority recommendations are summarised below.

Summary of Priority Recommendations for Immediate Action

Disconnect between National and Local: Finding One

Recommendation 1.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government should provide LRFs with a single set of updated Reasonable Worst Case Scenario planning assumptions for Covid-19 to help improve consistency in response and recovery planning across the UK and build trust and confidence between the local and national levels. These planning assumptions should be updated regularly and cover, as a minimum, the 12 months from September 2020.

Cross-partnership Working is Key: Finding Two

Recommendation 2.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government should rapidly establish a common debrief methodology and shared learning mechanism to ensure learning and good practice is captured, shared and acted upon in real time, to both mitigate harm now, and influence the future response, to Covid-19. Reviews and local debriefs should aim to identify the enabling factors of the successful longer term response and recovery partnerships in this unique situation.

Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future: Finding Three

Recommendation 3.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government needs to urgently engage with LRFs to identify and resolve the immediate capacity and resourcing needs and financial assistance required for local multi-agency response/recovery structures to sustain an effective Covid-19 response, manage concurrent threats and also maintain core business as usual services over the next 12 months and beyond.

Learning and Adapting: Finding Five

Recommendation 5.2 (PRIORITY): To ensure consistency of response in each local area, Government should produce pandemic principles to enable local areas to develop Covid-19 (infectious disease) specific plans.

Recommendation 5.5 (PRIORITY): In the immediate term, UK Government should produce supplementary guidance, underpinning the UK Concept of Operations for the management of a national emergency, specific to Covid-19, that provides clarity to all stakeholders on the roles, responsibilities and structures at local and national levels and how the enduring response and recovery to the Covid-19 crisis is being managed.

Consequences to the Individual: Finding Six

Recommendation 6.1 (PRIORITY): In the immediate term, national support structures such as *Our Frontline, Mind, Mind for Emergency Responders NHS crisis lines* should be publicised by all partnership organisations to their staff.

Recommendation 6.2 (PRIORITY): LRFs and associated multi-agency partnerships should urgently consider the merits of establishing a broader duty of care framework and encouraging mutual aid between organisations more experienced in supporting the health and wellbeing of not just first responders but all those involved in the enduring response to Covid-19.

Scope and Approach

The second interim review provided delegates from across the UK with the time and space, during the ongoing management of Covid-19, to reflect upon their capacity, capability and sustainability to manage the ongoing pandemic in real time. The interim review was conducted in such a way that it encourages individual and collective reflective practice. It encourages the discussion between delegates, which can be seen in the data. The review is provided to inform and shape the future management of the pandemic, taking lessons from practitioners and decision-makers across the UK and sharing them to inform future response, recovery and local outbreak management.

This second interim operational review was once again supported using the online model of the 10kv review called the *10kv-Cloud*. Developed by the Hydra Foundation, this system was the fourth time 10kv-Cloud had been run across the UK in response to Covid-19. The 10kv method of debriefing has been run in different methods of delivery over 400 times in the UK.

10kv provides an opportunity for participants to post anonymous comments on questions posed to them. It also encourages reflection and comment on peer thoughts during the review. The contents of the 10kv were analysed, themed and shared and presented in this detailed report that is shared, through the commissioner, to relevant stakeholder groups, including the delegates. The C19 National Foresight Group commissioned the first and second interim reviews.

An Outline of the First Interim Operational Review

Our first interim operation review took place on Wednesday 22 April 2020. This was the first mid-crisis review of its kind. It brought together delegates to review their experiences of Covid-19 and to collate their responses. The analysis of this review yielded six major findings and 21 recommendations.

These findings were shared with UK Government and LRF Chairs and were sub-divided into fast and medium to long-term recommendations. An actions tracker was developed and all these recommendations have a strategic owner. The C19 National Foresight Group continues to support the delivery of these recommendations.

Delegate Representation

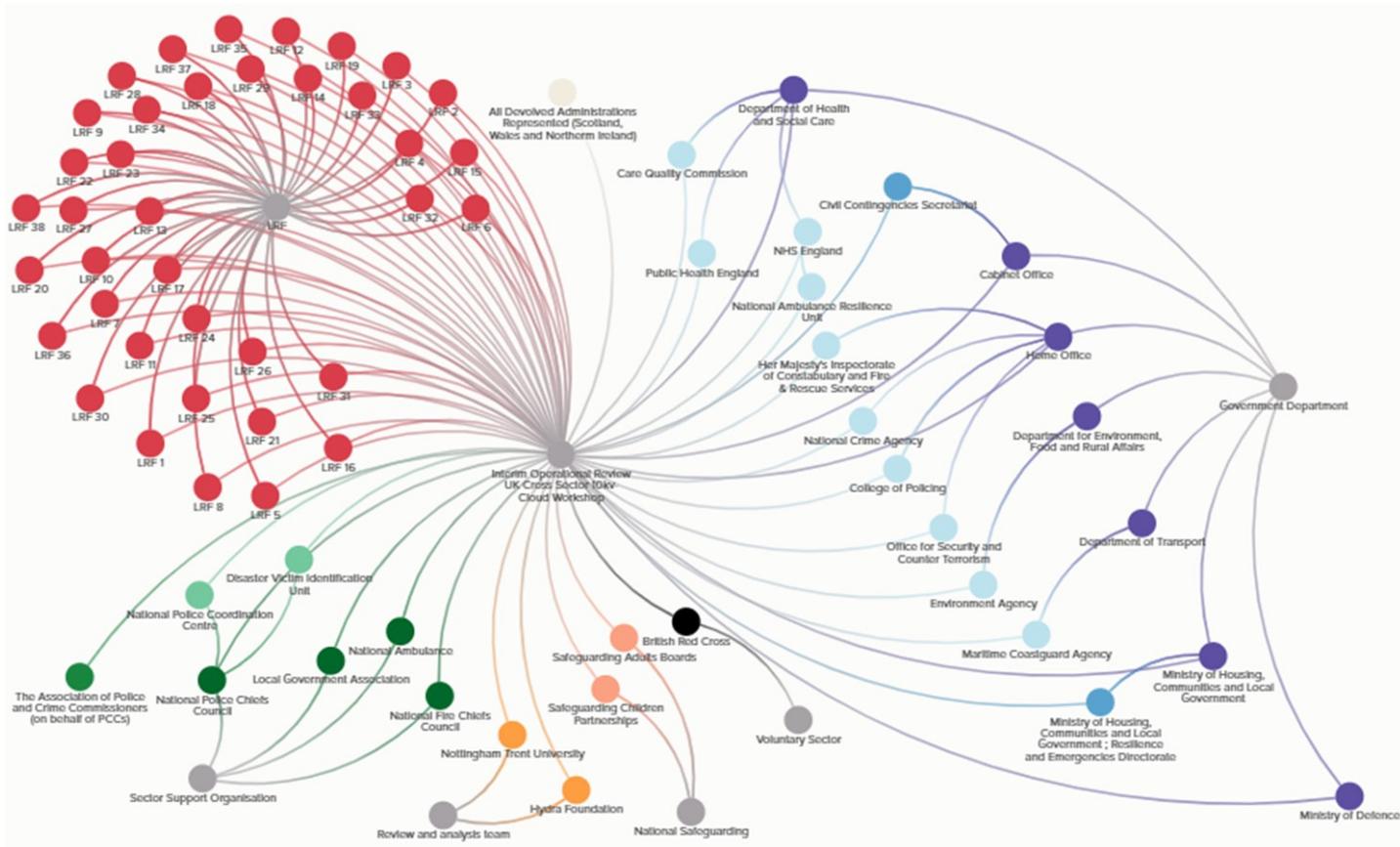


Figure 1. A graphical representation of the delegates and their affiliations.



Method

This diagram represents the process completed through the analysis of the second interim operational review process. It shows the volume of material produced by delegates (purple), through their comments (mint green) which the analytical team coded and themed to create the emerging findings (orange) and recommendations (dark green) discussed in this review. Seven emerging findings and thirteen preliminary recommendations.

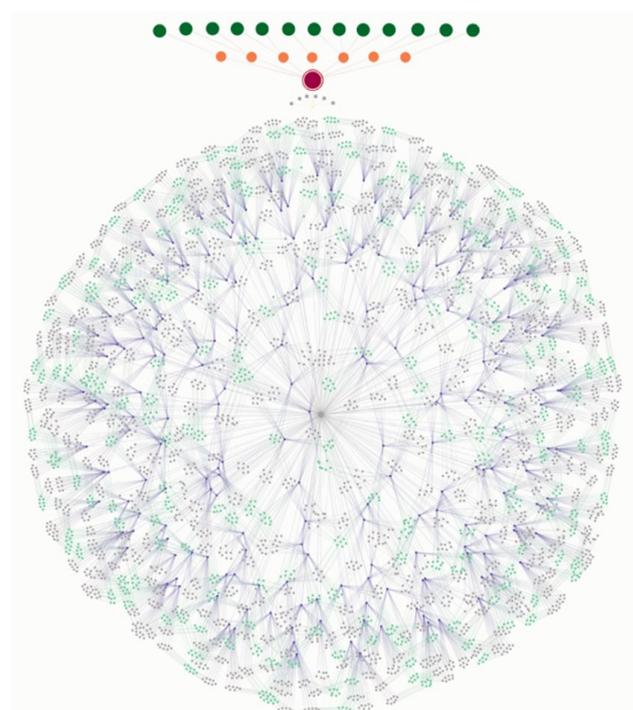


Figure 2. A graphical representation of the review and analysis process.

Question set used in the review

1. Since the first national peak (April), in the context of your LRF...

What is working?

What isn't working?

How will you manage the next phase of response/recovery?

2. Since the first national peak (April), in the context of your Sub-Regional structures...

What is working?

What isn't working?

How will you manage the next phase of response/recovery?

3. Since the first national peak (April), in the context of the National structures...

What is working?

What isn't working?

What is required from national response in next phase of the response/recovery?

4. Concurrent Emergency

What is your preparedness for a major local outbreak alongside the duality of response and recovery?

How do you plan to manage concurrent events alongside the management of local outbreaks?

What are the gaps in capability due to the ongoing response to local outbreaks, recovery and planning for potential concurrent events?

5. Forward Look

What community engagement methods or approaches do you plan to undertake to inform your ongoing response and recovery?

What learning can we take from how you are currently managing community challenges?

In your existing plans, is there anything you think you should change? Have you discovered you are better prepared in some areas than others?

6. Personal Reflections & Messages to inform Strategy

This open section provides a space for you to record your personal insights, thoughts etc., which may not have been covered by the questions above.

Over 48,800 words and over 1500 comments were generated by the six questions outlined above. The raw data was rapidly analysed by academics from Nottingham Trent University and the Hydra Foundation to create emerging findings and preliminary recommendations for a preliminary presentation 'Second Interim Operational Review UK Cross Sector 10kv-Cloud Workshop: Rapid thematic analysis to inform ongoing Response and new Recovery'. This was presented to the LRF Chair's Call on Wednesday 1 July 2020. Following that initial overview, this detailed consideration of the analysis has been completed, which is contained within this report.

Differences between the Rapid Review and the Report

Title of presentation document mapped to: *'Second Interim Operational Review UK Cross Sector 10kv-Cloud Workshop: Rapid thematic analysis to inform ongoing Response and new Recovery'*.

In the presentation Second Interim Operational Review UK Cross Sector 10kv-Cloud Workshop, the findings were based on the rapid thematic analysis of the data. Writing the report in slightly slower time has led to one change in the structure of the findings and their sub-themes. In the presentation, the sub-theme Disconnect Between Central and Local appeared in the theme Disconnect Between National and Local. A significant component of this sub-theme reflected the view that there was an issue of clarity in Government about the roles and responsibilities of the LRF structures. This had an impact on the ability of the LRF to fulfil Government's expectations. In this report, this has been removed from this sub-theme, and moved in to the Learning and Adapting theme, within that it is placed in the sub-theme Do We Have Fit for Purpose Structures and Policy? This decision was taken because that sub-theme became an in-depth focus on the wider civil contingencies legislative framework given the volume of data surrounding that. Part of that analysis necessarily related to issues about the clarity of roles and responsibilities of the LRF structures in the Covid-19 response and recovery. Rather than having that complex analysis spread over two findings and discussed at different points in the report the decision was made to move discussion of all those related issues to the sub-theme Do We Have Fit for Purpose Structures and Policy? As not all codes in the Disconnect Between Central and Local sub-theme focused on the role of the LRF, those codes were re-assessed and re-allocated. All of these codes related to specific aspects of structures (e.g., testing) that aligned well with issues around guidance and planning covered in the sub-theme Developing Planning Assumptions in a Vacuum. As such, these were re-allocated there. There has also been a title change of a sub-theme. This change was from Communication to the Public, from the Politics, and Between the Structures to Communication from Government.

The above presentation contained the initial findings of this report. As the analysis informed the development of this full report, some opportunities were taken to synthesise or improve the presentation of the analysis. The recommendations have also become more nuanced, specific and detailed.

Analytic Approach

All academics followed the steps outlined in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) who coded line by line all the material produced. The full dataset was split up per section, with a member of the analysis team coding and generating themes for each question. Through this coding, themes have been shaped which represent the responses across each of the questions. The analytic process started with familiarisation where initial understanding of the dataset was established by reading the

responses to the questions in each section. Initial codes were then generated through the coding of every statement. Many of the initial themes were used as codes (with some additional specification) with the name of the code being adapted as the coding progressed. Codes were clustered into similar thematic groups. Some codes were then merged and clustered into sub-themes and some sub-themes discarded. A theme structure was created for each section, through a process of clustering, nesting and subsuming. This produced themes and sub-themes representing the analysis of that section. The themes were reviewed several times, in the process of collapsing and merging themes or separating out sub-themes. This generated a final set of themes for each section. Graphical representations of these themes are shown in the Technical Appendices.

Subsequently the steps of clustering, nesting and theme mapping were undertaken to develop an overall theme structure for the full dataset. These overall themes were named according to their cluster to provide better representation of the essence of the underlying sub-themes and coding. The mapping of the themes generated in each section to these overall themes is shown in Table 1 in the Technical Appendices.

It is important to note that the analysis team was the same as that of the first national interim operational review hosted on Wednesday 22 April 2020. The team discussed potential bias in terms of letting the coding generated in that debrief influence the current process. This 'bracketing' out of positions, views and data is checked through the analytical checking that is done by other team members and is a well-recognised technique to safeguard against bias whilst maintaining subjectivity of interpretation of the data.

It is important to note that the dataset was slightly different in nature than the dataset in the first interim operation review. In some sections the data is more discursive in this interim review. Consequently, in some of the theme structures within this review, there are lower frequencies of codes that aggregate under the theme and sub-theme structure. Part of the analytical process is to account for the sentiment of the words used, as well as the size and dimensionality of the themes. In other words, it is not simply a count of how many times something is mentioned, or the complexity of the theme structure, it is also the language which is used to represent how important that concept is to the delegates. Balancing these principles of the method across the dataset and analysis was an important aspect of this review given the more discursive or 'richer' aspect of the data. This means that parts are less descriptive in content, instead focussing on representing meaning, understanding and the experiences of delegates. In general, this interim review is a more complex dataset containing more nuances, gradations of consensus, collaborations of understanding by delegates alongside a wider range of experiences and topics discussed. This is to be expected given the greater experience delegates will have had at this point. The findings have therefore been developed to accommodate this and so the frequency of associated codes should not simply be taken in isolation as an indication of rank importance.

Report Structure

The report is broken down into seven sections. In each section a theme and its constituent sub-themes are discussed. There are additional graphs to contextualise those findings in the technical appendices. The themes and sub-themes are described and evidenced with direct quotes from the data, and numerical information provided to indicate the extent to which each sub-theme was coded in the data. As well as frequency, the analysis focusses on the consideration of resonance of the theme in the data, as described in the previous section. In other words, how important the theme or sub-theme was to the delegates, some topics may not have been discussed for long, but may have been important to delegates. Other topics might have had a long and technical discussion, but not be of particular meaning or sentiment to the delegates.

Findings

The next section of this report will focus on the key findings from the review broken down by the seven findings. To represent how the comments from the review correspond we have produced three visualisations below. The number of codes per section of the report is shown in Figures 3a, b and c.

The frequencies of codes for the themes and sub-themes generated is shown graphically in Figure 3, with the initial layer of nodes representing the themes and the secondary layer the sub-themes, and the size of circle representing the frequency of codes relating to that sub-theme/theme. Analysis of the data generated seven main themes.

These were further underpinned by seventeen associated sub-themes. These themes represented issues that spanned the full dataset. The largest theme by far was managing the health of key structures in to the future. This indicates the importance attributed to these issues by the delegates. Although there was variation in terms of the frequency of codes that aligned to the theme, each theme represented distinct and important resonance in the data.

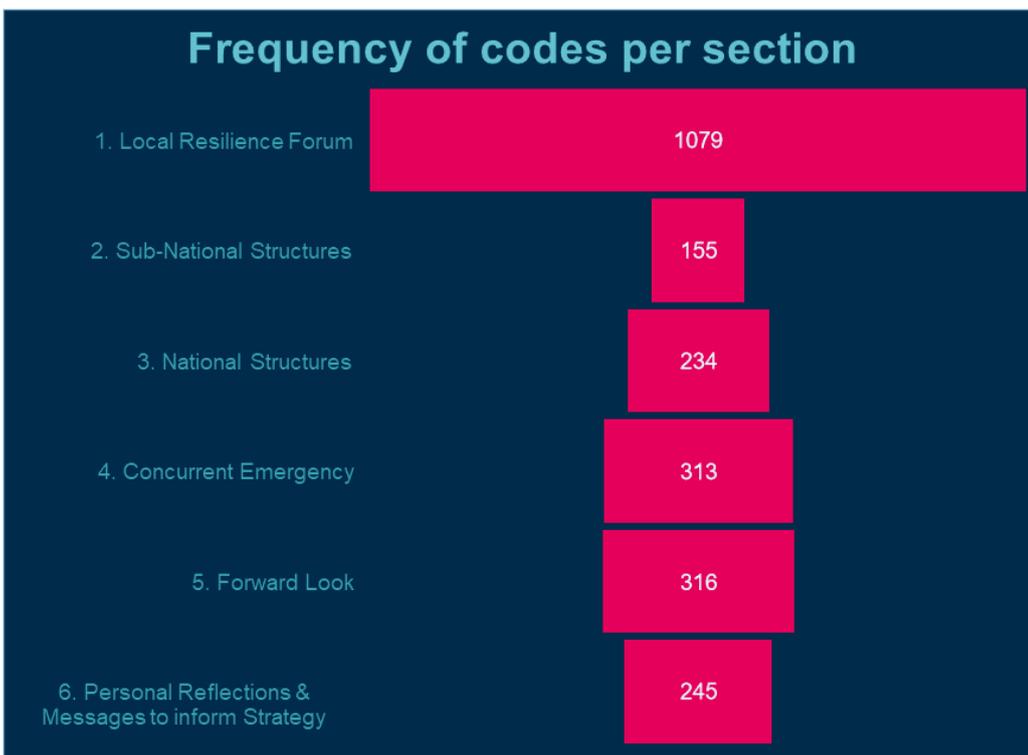


Figure 3a: Frequency of codes per section of the review

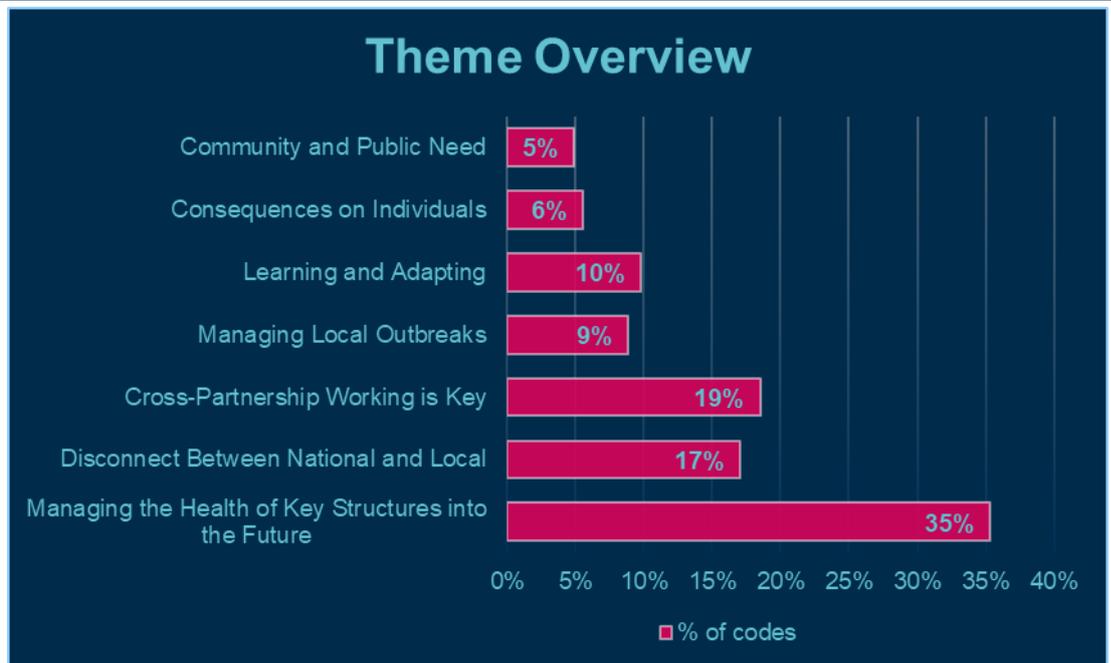


Figure 3b. Frequency of codes per section of the review

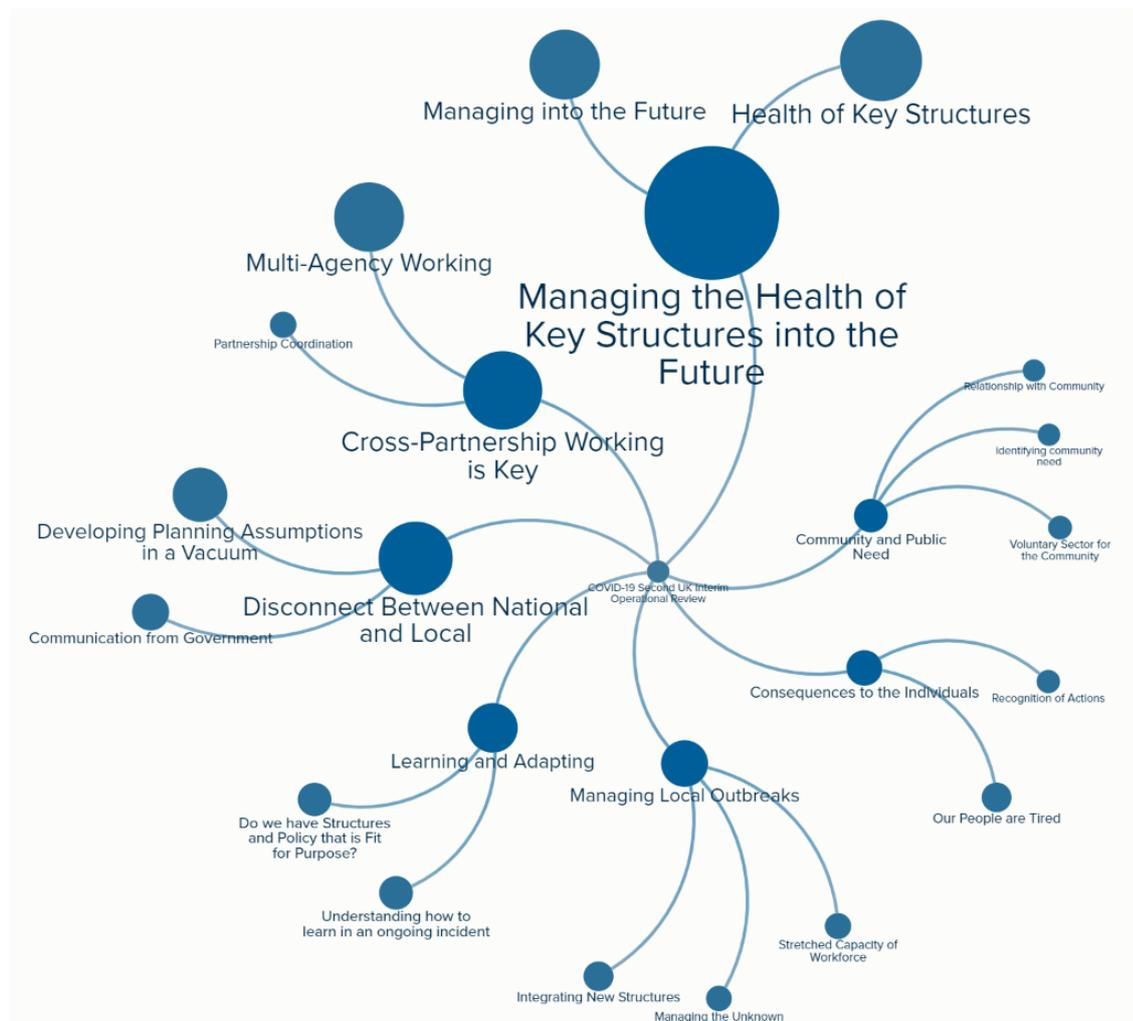


Figure 3c. Graphical representation of findings from the analysis. The size of the circle relates to the frequency of codes that related to these themes. The seven main themes are shown in the first layer of nodes, with sub-themes the second layer of nodes.

Disconnect Between National and Local: Finding One

Delegates described that the activity taking place at national and local level could be better connected and communication between these levels improved. Currently there is little connectivity between these two levels and this could be improved both in quality and quantity. There are two sub-themes in this theme, developing planning assumptions in a vacuum and communications from Government.

The extent to which delegates generated the issues pertaining to these sub-themes is shown in Figure 4. The larger sub-theme was developing planning assumptions in a vacuum, and by itself this accounted for 11% of all the codes in the dataset, indicating how important an issue this was for delegates.

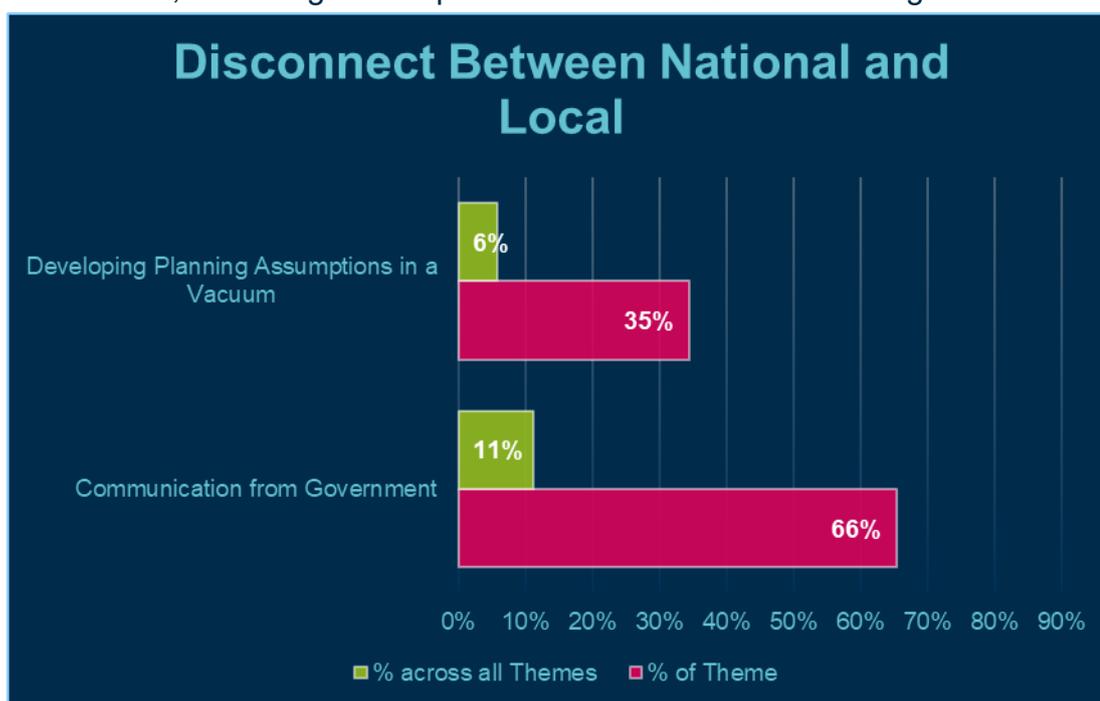


Figure 4. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the sub-themes in the overall theme of Disconnect Between National and Local (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Developing Planning Assumptions in a Vacuum

Many discussions by delegates focussed on the lack of sharing of data, intelligence, planning assumptions and guidance from Government departments and central Government.

In relation to modelling, delegates discussed some of the issues with the historical modelling, in terms of the timeliness of its delivery and uncertainty of timing. For LRFs, modelling and reasonable worst case scenarios gave them something clear to plan against, which was much needed, but uncertainty surrounding when this would be received (despite requests for this information) led to delays in response. This was in the context that in many cases, planning against the Reasonable Worst Case Scenario (RWCS) led to difficult choices. For example, in some cases this led to significant resource requests at substantial cost, which in hindsight was not required. The absence of updates to the RWCS meant that planning was continually completed against overestimates. This is creating a tension point when making planning decisions going forward.

“Modelling was far too late in the game and was promised on multiple occasions and didn't materialise - some agencies were waiting on this to take multiple key work streams forward so time was lost”

“LRFs would feel exposed if they took a different view to that in the RWCS, particularly as recent data does not bear out the predictions. Planning now feels 'over the top' and quite rightly, chief execs are asking questions about further costs in relation to planning against the RWCS.”

In relation to future modelling, at the time of the interim review, delegates were unclear about whether they would receive any update of the RWCS in relation to a second peak and it was noted that the RWCS had not been updated since it was initially sent out in the spring. As with the first peak, delegates felt they needed some modelling to give them something to plan against.

“We need to know whether any SAGE modelling has been done with regard to a second peak and if so, whether this modelling will be shared to enable us to look ahead and plan.”

“There is huge challenges in the Government expecting LRFs to coordinate multi-agency response to the COVID-19 outbreak in a vacuum of information of Reasonable Worst Case Scenario (RWCS) planning assumptions.”

“There has been limited help locally with future modelling to help assist with planning. The second phase is harder than the first - being able to stand NHS services back up whilst having oversight of future modelling and expectations would be a huge advantage right now (urgently!).”

Beyond modelling there were a large number of issues raised around data sharing. Broadly this was that data was not being shared and delegates noted that there seems to be a lack of trust in the sharing of sensitive data. A significant proportion of the issues discussed centred around sharing of data around testing, which was seen as vital to be able to plan and manage any local outbreaks. There was frustration with the data being provided in terms of its granularity when more specific data was available but not shared (e.g., postcode level data). It was felt that lack of data and partial sharing of data would hamper response. There was clear frustration that the centre wanted outbreak responses to be handled at local level, but were not providing the data to support that.

“Lack of data from centre will hamper the recovery process.”
“Lack of data is still an issue - it feels like we are not trusted by the centre to have the data and use it sensitively.”

“Lack of postcode level data from testing. The data is there and is being processed, because that is the only way that central Govt are able to establish the testing in a Local Authority area which is being shared. The more granular level data is being withheld and is creating a risk of outbreaks not being spotted and dealt with.”

“Lack of data, no new RWCS or Testing results at a post code level. This makes it very difficult to plan for outbreaks.”

“Access to better data for local outbreak planning- The data must be the system, if you want 'local' control of these things you must pass the info down.”

At the local level there was much less concern raised about horizontal sharing of intelligence and data, and this was based around specific partners. Intelligence sharing from PHE and NHS was discussed as needing to improve and data to be shared. Overall, the sharing of data, intelligence, planning assumptions, strategy and guidance is happening more frequently horizontally with other partners, but this is still less prevalent with health.

“We raised ‘share situational awareness’ up the partnership strategy to reinforce that data simply wasn't being shared by NHS-response.”

“Many agencies in possession of data that would help significantly but unwilling or unable to share, each reporting different sets of data with no coherent direction.”

Whilst there were issues with data being shared from the centre, it was reported that requests for data and information from the centre are time consuming and described as ‘data hungry’, sometimes asking for a return within two to three hours. The request to access more of the dashboard to see trends, patterns and other areas more fully was present, although this was not a large number of participants. A number of delegates questioned the need for daily reporting, which they felt was a drain on resources and potentially a comfort blanket for the centre. They could not see any point or purpose of what that reporting was doing or where it was going or how it aided their response at the local level. For the same reasons, dropping the weekend reporting was welcome. Although some acknowledged that the data presented in dashboards as useful, others questioned the usefulness of presenting data they already held back at them.

“Data exchange at national level has been poor. The data machine is hungry and only really works one way...”

“The daily dashboard of information that is available to each LRF is pointless – we already have that data within the LRF...we supply most of it via national reporting systems and then it's re-packaged back to us as a national product!”

Within this sub-theme was also a large discussion about the lack of guidance with which to plan, and this was distinct from the issues around data and modelling, which were about a lack of intelligence on which to plan. The main summaries of advice given to the Government from

advisory bodies was called to be shared with local strategic decision-makers so that they could see the direction of travel in those assumptions and start planning against those. The guidance request in relation to planning was about sharing the strategic direction of England and the UK regarding the public policies such as lockdown measures and behaviours required by the public, so that the local strategic decision-makers can plan and resource accordingly. Some delegates noted that there was little bottom-up input into guidance.

“Or even if there are any other planning assumptions e.g. economic, social that could be shared. We don't necessarily need hard figures to plan on (although they are nice) what we do need is an idea of where this is going and what the challenges / expectation will be going forward.”

“A single, SHARED set of planning assumptions is needed.”

“SAGE have met to advise government. Yet, there was no advise requested from LRFs on how to manage this emergency. Government's decisions seemed to be based on best guess, ignoring the years of planning we have put in place.”

“Guidance from UK Government not consulted on effectively between departments means LRFs do not have the ability to obtain clarity on how the guidance should be interpreted and implemented, as authorities or regulators seen as being responsible by LRF partners are themselves unclear on the guidance having not been involved in its development.”

Delegates also discussed the lack of guidance in some policy and portfolio areas, or that there was a lack of clarity on guidance with no cross-government consensus or understanding on some of the guidance. Delegates also identified that often there are no fore-warnings or information about policy change surrounding guidance to the public that might lead to behavioural change that would need to be managed. It was felt that government often announced changes without warning those who would need to implement the changes. This will be addressed more fully in the next section.

“Lack of gov guidance on recovery.”

“What does localised lockdown look like and mean - this is not something that has been shared with the LRF.”

“The saga of face coverings. there has been various and competing advice on face coverings in the workplace and that has been a pain for emergency services and agencies who work in close teams - no single line of truth emerging so everyone is doing their own thing.”

Communication from Government

Communications between the UK Government and local strategic decision-making structures has been challenging in their effectiveness and timeliness. A large proportion of the discussion conveyed a clear frustration that the communication strategy had been an announcement led approach (as referenced in the sub-theme above), consequently this

has meant that the implementation has been continually reactionary. This demands more energy, ingenuity and resources to respond to, because the shift in public behaviours and permissions are harder to respond to efficiently or coordinate without advance warning or clarity. This was made more difficult when the policy itself was perceived as unclear and required clarification.

“The need to suddenly respond to national Ministerial Briefings when we could have been told beforehand so we could have planned the local response this has been a constant issue and it undermines public confidence.”

“Information from central government has landed with very tight time scales for implementation and there has often been delays as we each (agency) look to national bodies for clarification.”

“The time lapse between government announcements and SCG's having the time and room to plan for the delivery / consequences of any announcements has been challenging.”

“Timeliness of policy updates is no use to us for planning or implementing - we find out at the same time as the community, who then demand answers from us.”

Although communication is still not two-way, key contacts (and GLOs were mentioned specifically) are more consistent and working better (on the whole) than at previous times in the pandemic. There was a request by some of the delegates who discussed GLOs for them to be more active in the meetings and structures they sit in on, but this was not a universal request suggesting that some GLOs were already active and participating.

“Now have consistent representation from MHCLG at SCG and RCG.”

“GLO staff on hand to help with questions is a positive step and should be maintained.”

“Engagement with the GLO. They are always present and able to comment (not always very fully), and are able to contribute to the local debate.”

Delegates also felt that national level communication to the public has often been confused, although this primarily referred to England, with Scottish national communications (mentioned only by a small number of delegates) to the public being identified as being effective. The timing and clarity of messaging from the UK Government was challenged by delegates, suggesting the clarity of messages was not clear to the public. This caused local communication teams to coordinate messages and develop role modelling messages to reinforce the clarity of the message and to encourage adherence.

“This would also see neighbourhood teams supporting the consistent message.”

“National data and local evidence mixed wit[h] real life stories and anecdote that demonstrate how policy translates on the ground.”

There was a need to communicate at a local level between partners, particularly health, as this sector was reported to be exclusive and delegates were not clear on why data, intelligence and strategies were not being shared with partners. This consistent theme throughout this report is unpacked further across both sub-themes in finding two, the sub-theme of integrating structures, and in the sub-theme stretched capacity of the workforce in the theme of community needs in finding seven.

“Trying to understand the health picture. Despite trying to improve relations and understanding, we are still being met with a stance that suggests we don’t need to worry about it, its being managed by health.”

“I don’t think the NHS is geared to be agile or geared to share with partners. It feels to have a slow and unwieldy command structure. have experienced silo working from health partners who have been reluctant to share information that would have been useful to LRF partners.

- *Would have thought that this was in direct contradiction to their duties as category 1 responders.”*

Recommendations for Disconnect Between National and Local

Recommendation 1.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government should provide LRFs with a single set of updated Reasonable Worst Case Scenario planning assumptions for Covid-19 to help improve consistency in response and recovery planning across the UK and build trust and confidence between the local and national levels. These planning assumptions should be updated regularly and cover, as a minimum, the 12 months from September 2020.

Recommendation 1.2: LRFs should be engaged by the UK Government to identify the data and intelligence sharing needs of LRFs and develop a commonly understood protocol that ensures timely, ethical, accurate, transparent and actionable sharing, both horizontally and vertically, of data and intelligence on Covid-19.

Recommendation 1.3: The UK Government should establish a LRF Advisory Group, drawn from and representative of the existing LRFs across the country, to promote more effective consultation and engagement between the local and national levels in areas such as the development and implementation of policy and guidance, data/intelligence sharing, training, debriefing and learning, improving vertical and horizontal communication between partner agencies and Government departments and with our local communities.

It is appropriate to cross reference to finding five here and the recommendations in that section. This is because there are two recommendations in that section which have been developed to address some of the aspects of finding one and finding five. These are included below for easy reference, but they sit within section five in this report structure.

Recommendation 5.5 (PRIORITY): In the immediate term, UK Government should produce supplementary guidance, underpinning the UK Concept of Operations for the management of a national emergency, specific to Covid-19, that provides clarity to all stakeholders on the roles, responsibilities and structures at local and national levels and how the enduring response and recovery to the Covid-19 crisis is being managed.

Recommendation 5.6: In the longer term, the UK ConOps document should be updated given the context of Covid-19 to ensure all stakeholders are clear on the roles, responsibilities and structures at local and national levels to manage the response and recovery to a wider range of foreseeable major incidents and national emergencies.

Cross-partnership Working is Key: Finding Two

This theme focusses on how the partnership working is developing and what the challenges and strengths are of experiences to date. This theme has two sub-themes, partnership coordination and multi-agency working. The extent to which delegates generated the issues pertaining to these sub-themes is shown in Figure 5. Multi-agency working contributed 15% of the codes in the dataset and as such was one of the largest sub-themes.

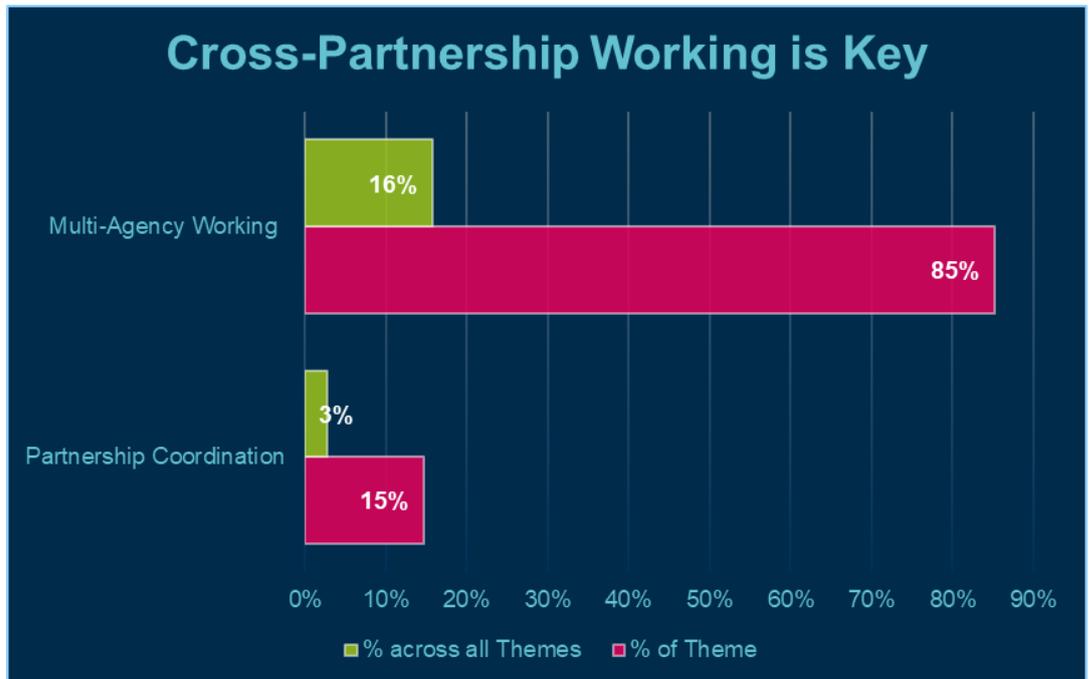


Figure 5. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the sub-themes in the overall theme of Cross-partnership Working is Key (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Multi-Agency Working

Delegates reported that on balance the partnership working they are engaged in is going well, with many instances of exemplary working. Collaborating and developing new ways of working to overcome stretched resources means that innovation continues to be present in the delivery of local response and recovery. It is clear that the collective effort had brought teams together who were in the main showing good teamwork. It was acknowledged that underpinning an effective multi-agency response was the commitment of individuals to work together and trust each other. A wide range of agencies were praised for their collaborative working.

“A huge amount of personal commitment to work together across the system has been established, although did take some time to establish given the pace of escalation of the incident.”

“Good partnership working. This has bought many players, often with tensions between them, together and aligned under a common cause. Significantly increased trust.”

“The military were better briefed than we were by utilising all of their liaison points and assimilating the data but did not willingly feed back in.”

“Hugely improved regional dialogue with NHS, supported well by defence teams.”

“LRF contacting neighbouring and other LRFs on their approach to recovery and benchmarking.”

On the whole, delegates noted that the structures were working well and facilitating multi-agency working. It was recognised that a well-functioning collaborative response was due in part to the importance of pre-existing relationships. However, new partnerships had clearly been developed and were working well.

“In much the same way. Structures were effective. Partners came together well and generic arrangements held good. Having dealt with the pace and scale of early COVID-19 the recovery side is much more manageable, problem is finding the funding and distilling out the priorities.”

“The multi-agency command and control structures which have been well-established over a number of years are working well.”

“Excellent relationships built and invested in over time in earlier years. this has been really important. responding well where there is a need and feeding effectively into government.”

“Relationships is a common theme and it cannot be underestimated that the value of the CCA compelling organisations to plan, train and exercise together, really does provide a solid base upon which a response is built.”

“Working with partners and across the system - relationships have been built quickly often with a clear sense of all being in it together and desire to find a joint way of working to the same goals.”

The elongated nature of the incident has highlighted the time and energy organisational relationship management takes within the partnership, but the local structures appear to be actively reviewing and reflecting on their effectiveness and updating pace or arrangements of structures to keep them relevant and ‘match fit’. This additional need to attend to multi-agency relationship management is a consequence of the medium to longer-term Covid-19 management. This includes the management of relationships at sub national/regional level, in geographical areas where they exist. This additional burden of relationship management by local strategic decision-makers was welcome on the whole, although it was noted that it was challenging.

“Regional Community Hub and Volunteering Cell Leads meeting has offered a network for those working in this area and has provided a vehicle for getting key messages up to regional and national level.”

“Tricky to manage an LRF with several upper tier authorities, some districts, some unitaries. Current structures seem set to manage single county building blocks. One size doesn't fit all.”

Whilst there was significant positive commentary about multi-agency collaboration, there was also significant discussion about the about the challenges involved.

There was a sense that due to the ongoing demand of the situation, agencies sometimes default back to focusing on their own priorities. The most significant issues relating to partnership working centred around the relationship between the LRF and the wider health economy. The challenges of working with health at a local level is a consistent theme throughout this report and also featured in the previous review. This includes accessing plans and strategies which local multi-agency partners need to plan against, or plan alongside health. This is unpacked further in the next sub-theme, and the sub-theme of integrating structures where the ongoing tension between the health response and the civic response is discussed, and in the sub-theme stretched capacity of the workforce where the concern moving forward is the dissemination and sharing of health plans for wider community health, beyond Covid-19.

“We are still struggling to get NHS engaged, the view is that they don’t need to share, issues such as mental health is proving very difficult to understand.”

“Getting partners to consider multi-agency communications has been hugely challenging through this incident as partners become more stretched they prioritise their attention on their own organisation and forget our priorities under JESIP that we need to work together to the benefit of our communities.”

“Still having to wrestle with the fundamental disjoint created by having separate LRF and Local Health Resilience Partnerships, and key people on both sides lacking sufficient knowledge of the other.”

“Disconnect between health partners (incl DPHs) and the command and control structure. Meetings are attended but then these partners seem to go off and do their own thing.”

Other challenges of partnership and multi-agency working focused on stretched resources (including staff allocation, increased workload, increased bureaucracy, financial challenges and the draw of partner organisations to business as usual (BAU)) and challenges such as local politics (elective and cultural politics).

“Restore and reset work needs to be planned and resourced alongside the ongoing Outbreak Prevention and control planning and delivery. Challenge to manage limited resource across both especially as staff redeployed into the incident are now being pulled back into substantive posts.”

VCS partnerships had a mixed response. This was mostly the recognition of the potential good that could be done by strong partnerships, especially with the Voluntary and Community National Emergencies Partnership, however this was articulated as being complex due to a lack of trust, consistency, and a different pace of operating. challenges involved.

“The National Emergencies Partnership could have a much greater role in receiving, triaging and brokering responses across the country. They have the technology, the capacity and expertise to fill this role but are kept at arms length by LRFs and Local Authorities who view them with suspicion. Development work needs to be undertaken to build the trust and capabilities. They are an underutilised asset and could co-ordinate VCSE response nationally.”

“The personnel capacity of the voluntary sector varied depending on the nature of the emergency, the task, day of the week/time. Assessing capacity was a challenging process. Needs to be a more agile arrangement negotiated with the VCSE slow time to assist during an emergency.”

Partnership Coordination

This sub-theme includes cross-departmental (Government) working and a request to establish clear departmental leadership going forward, and to drive coordination at a national level. The main constituent contribution to this sub-theme is regional or cross-region coordination that is requested for the long-term effectiveness of the ongoing response and recovery phases.

“Sub national working without a clear structure, mandate and channel for adds a burden - great to share information but still difficult to drive forward progress without a mandate.”

Delegates were positive about the benefits of regional coordination where it existed, however the extent to which these existed across geographical areas was not clear, with some having developed regional structures and others having none. Some cross-regional partnership was contained within health structures and this was beneficial when it worked, but mostly health were reported as not operating in an inclusive manner and it was hard to gain access to these structures or link to them.

“It quite unclear what the regional footprint is going to look like for recovery, that is a worry. If information is just contained in future by Health Protection Boards and PHE there will be no LRF partnership situational awareness going forward.”

“Regional meetings have added useful information to the response, it allows LRFs access to information which is not otherwise being shared widely by PHE.”

“Excellent working relationship established with local health organisations which has meant less frustration when trying to deal with NHSE at the regional level. This was a particular problem in the early response phase but is not an issue now.”

“Hugely improved regional dialogue with NHS, supported well by defence teams.”

“Engagement through LHRP to enable consistency in the testing priorities/criteria.”

The regional structures acted as a bridge to the larger, regional health structures and as a bridge to the national to establish more of a two-way dialogue and share approaches. This sharing of data and intelligence, regional horizontal dialogue and sharing of practice and approach were reported by delegates as the benefits of the regional structures. This is as well as the coordinating and tasking advantage that is gained through regional structures.

“Challenges across a number of areas initially sub-regionally - particularly regarding the involvement of social care with STPs, and other elements of primary care Govt seem to think that LRFs are a Regional entity. This is certainly not the case in the [AREA].”

Outside of health there were a range of sub-national structures of other kinds which differed over geographical areas. The challenges of mapping these together to function in one footprint was also discussed. Local authorities, districts, health structures and other partnership bodies do not align, even when mapped within larger response structures such as Multi-SCG Response Co-ordinating Groups (ResCG), or in recovery structures such as Regional Recovery Coordinating Groups.

The functions of sub-national structures that are most valued by LRFs are ones that enable the horizontal sharing of information, practice and intelligence. For example, having regional LRF hubs, regional community hubs and a regional SCG chair coordination network. The benefits of the regional structures mostly focussed around the sharing of approaches and intelligence.

“There have been fortnightly regional SCG chairs meetings, and separately there have been regional recovery group meetings - these have involved the chairs and the LRF Managers. This has helped to inform joint working at a regional level.”

“Regional dialogue in place with TCG colleagues across the region.”

“The Regional SCG in the [AREA] has worked really well and has presented the best place to obtain information from national agencies which has then been delivered at SCG.”

“The [AREA] has established a regional communications leads group as an informal network for sharing challenges, good practice and a general support network which has been well received and provides benefit to local partners.”

It was also discussed that LRFs were sometimes left to identify and create solutions when there is an absence of movement from Government department, or where government policy applications do not complement each other, or where there are gaps between them. In instances where the cross-departmental or organisational working is not as full as it could be, clear leadership to take a whole systems approach both in identifying the challenges and the potential solutions was called for.

“It is frustrating that Central Government doesn’t appear to see the value in cross-border working and are more than happy to attend cross-border meetings and utilise them as an opportunity to collate and gather information but will not provide the resource to coordinate and run them themselves.”

“There is no regional LRF or Govt structure in operation in the [AREA]. The Govt Offices have been replaced with less effective RED mechanisms which appear not to have the authority or seniority of staff to influence national policy making.”

“Seems to go straight from national to LRFs in the main, little is sub-national.”

“Is it not clear where responsibility for COVID19 response sits in government. Leads to mixed messages and infighting.”

Recommendations for Cross-partnership Working is Key

Recommendation 2.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government should rapidly establish a common debrief methodology and shared learning mechanism to ensure learning and good practice is captured, shared and acted upon in real time, to both mitigate harm now, and influence the future response, to Covid-19. Reviews and local debriefs should aim to identify the enabling factors of the successful longer term response and recovery partnerships in this unique situation.

Recommendation 2.2: A review of the range and sometimes adhoc regional/sub-national Government, LRF and Health structures and networks established for the Covid-19 emergency should be undertaken to identify where they are adding real value and those areas where enhancing cross-border working could improve the effectiveness of response and recovery activity.

Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future: Finding Three

This finding focused on the challenge of managing the many structures which are usually designed to exist for a shorter time period, or with a more restricted remit and integrating new structures alongside those. This theme was the largest theme in the dataset, accounting for 35% of the codes from the data. There are two sub-themes to this finding, managing into the future and the health of key structures. The extent to which these sub-themes were generated by delegates is shown in Figure 6. Both sub-themes represent substantial amounts of data codes, 16% and 19% respectively and so these reflect substantive issues discussed by delegates.

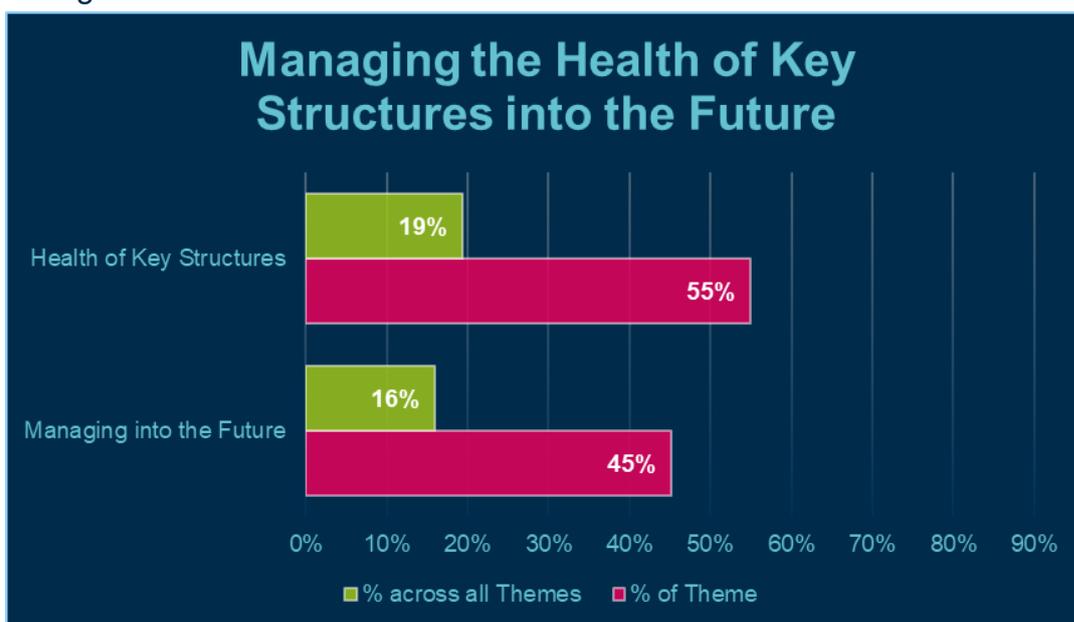


Figure 6. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the sub-themes in the overall theme of Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Health of Key Structures

This sub-theme describes the strain on structures four months in to the response and recovery. The 'health' of these structures does not refer to the health economy and health sector, but instead refers to the strength, resilience and welfare of these structures and whether they are surviving well and functioning efficiently. On balance delegates reported that they appear sound, but they were clear that these structures are fragile, stretched too wide and populated by the same organisations. Having established in finding two that the broad ecology of Covid-19 partnerships and structures are taking some energy and time to maintain, this finding offers insight into how those structures are performing and their sustainability going forward. It is unusual for the structures that underpin response and recovery to be medium or longer-term entities, usually they are short-lived, or have a more restrictive or targeted purpose. The immediate and longer term response and recovery to Covid-19 is therefore reliant on these structures, and so their health, performance and stability, in light of stretched resources and scope, reflects an important issue for consideration.

“We're asking organisations to operate at the edge of their remits to work effectively together. We don't want leaders on edge, or in the gaps, but rather comfortably moving their energy away from their core activity towards the edge of the place where their remit meets another's. That requires compensation, support, and resource, - the LRF structures are underinvested in and so their centre of gravity remains in the heart of one organisations response (usually).”

“Cannot maintain current structure for an extended period of time without additional funding.”

“Commitment for funding is needed. This is long term and additional resource is needed for LRF infrastructure (meeting support etc) as well as MAIC arrangements.”

“HMG was very happy to make a financial contribution to LRFs for Op. Yellowhammer. LRFs and partner agencies are now having to pick-up the tab when it is not fair to do so, e.g. overtime of staff to submit Daily Returns to MHCLG. This is HMG work and does not add value locally. Our experience is that we've spent more for COVID-19 than Op. Yellowhammer. HMG should be making a financial contribution direct to LRFs to ease the burden and to help ensure financial viability as we return to BAU.”

In defining the key structures, delegates mostly focussed their discussion on the collaborative working of LRFs including the LRF co-ordinators, LRF structures, funding for the LRF. However the health and sustainability of the following structures were also reflected on; the SCG (namely the chair and the attendance at SCGs), the relationships between the SCG/TCG/RCG, the process involved in moving from the SCGs being the lead structure to the RCG and recovery, voluntary and community partner structures, the MAIC, MHCLG, the military and Resilience Direct.

The Structures

Most delegates reported their SCGs functioned well despite being stood up for the longest time in the life of the CCA. They defined functioning as disciplined and effective mechanisms, sound collaborative working, joint decision-making, strong team spirit, a sound structure which is clearly communicated, and strong leadership which shares the chairing across agencies according to area of work such as Local Authority, Fire and Rescue Service and Police. Good SCG meetings provided clarity of purpose of activities and facilitated collective effort to deliver the agreed shared objectives and strategy. The structure of a good SCG was kept under review and amendments made as the response progressed.

Negative experiences of SCGs were reported when the SCG was working in isolation, or there was a lack of organised briefings from SCG down to TCG.

“Have managed to maintain continuity and a strong team spirit as an SCG which has transcended potential organisational barriers.”

“Lack of clarity from govt on the role they expect LRFs to play (other than continuing to distribute PPE). Still a conflation of LRF and SCG, showing a lack of understanding. Ongoing funding. BAU has to restart with the background of an ongoing national emergency.”

“This is a challenge as we were provided with the new National Risk Assessment update in mid-2019 and to date with Brexit, flooding and now COVID-19 there has been no capacity to take this work forwards. I imagine that central Government expects this work is ongoing but without funding there is no capacity to deliver this.”

Currently, delegates define the challenge of the SCGs as remaining effective and ceasing when appropriate. In most delegate discussions, the Local Authority is leading recovery with the establishment of thematic cells either specifically set up for recovery, or migrated across from response structures. In addition the use of impact assessments is noted by delegates, and in some areas forward looking horizon scanning cells have been established. There is still an SCG oversight of all activities in some areas including oversight of recovery with county led strategic recovery reporting.

“Forward looking horizon scanning/ impact assessment and means through which LRPs can escalate issues on a regular basis to SCG.”

Delegates agreed that a good SCG chair is essential, for the Covid-19 response it was better if the chair was not a professional from the health sector, although some delegates said their Director of Public Health did a good job. The risk of a health professional was a resulting focus on health and associated issues, at the cost of a wider inclusive focus of the SCG. Some delegates felt that the conflation of the SCG and LRF chair positions was unhelpful. It caused distraction where things should have been delineated.

“Good chair makes all the difference - if they're non-health then it makes it impartial and better for everyone.”

“SCG chair has remained the DPH within the county this has worked well and ensured the focus has been around health and the associated issues.”

Collaborative working between the SCG and TCG was commented on frequently by delegates as a marker of a healthy connected structure. If the TCG had sub groups dealing with emerging issues successfully then it was viewed as functioning and beneficial as they were supporting the TCG and the SCG as a consequence. Some delegates suggested that the TCGs have become unwieldy and in places decisions had been taken outside of TCG which was seen as a negative. Some delegates reported that their TCGs have been stood down. Others suggested that their TCGs continue to be a central point of co-ordination of the work of the surrounding cells, alternatively some had moved to a position where this still existed as a way to share information and action work, but without a full TCG.

“SCG and TCG are functioning really well, the sub groups have evolved to respond to various issues as they have emerged.”

“SCG and TCG are functioning really well, the sub groups have evolved to respond to various issues as they have emerged.”

“The SCG and TCG have become very unwieldy. With some organisations have 8 or 9 people on the call. 5-10 minutes just to do a roll call. Needs to look at the key players only again and organisations to run their own internal command systems.”

The MAIC was talked about by delegates in relation to a few structures. Delegates mostly defined the purpose of the MAIC through their discussions as producing foresight for Covid-19, EU Transition and other events. This was discussed most frequently as a mechanism by which the MAIC teams produce a report containing both foresight and data analysis. The MAIC was seen as an asset, however delegates suggested that there was a lack of clarity around how the MAIC worked or how it could service the RCG. Delegates felt that the use of the MAIC was a positive step but they asked for more guidance about what the MAIC could be, how the MAIC should operate, and clarity on the staff that should be leading on the creation and process of the MAIC. The MAIC was reported to provide a good framework to collate and report information, performing a critical role in achieving shared situational awareness and the benefit of shared information. Delegates reflected that it had the benefit of enhancing relationships between the structures as the MAIC enabled confidence in the product and the shared understanding between partners.

“The MAIC has been a massive asset through both COVID-19 and EU Exit highlighting the critical role in shared situational awareness. There is still some way to go to get all organisations to fully understand the need to communicate with partner agencies but the benefit of this shared information has been increasingly evident.”

“Work of the MAIC is a positive step and ability to collate and report information is really an asset.”

“Foresight data [r]eport produced by our MAIC supports partners in delivering evidence based decision making.”

“All agencies seem willing to engage and learn. Certainly within our MAIC the relationships and trust is cohesive and builds good confidence in the product that is being created.”

Supportive organisations around the structures were looked to as a potential way to secure some energy to the stretched resources. Organisations/departments such as MHCLG, the military, and the voluntary and community sector were identified. The discussions relating to MHCLG was focussed mostly around the noted increase in communication flow, but delegates were looking to that department for possible solutions to manage and balance the stretch across the many structures.

“Local MHCLG advisors are great. Don't feel the LRF is supported by the national team. Every Chair's call they get asked if the LRF will receive funding but often ignore it.”

The military were seen as a positive addition to the local planning landscape, which eased the stretch.

“The military planners were not the complete package of experts parachuted in to LRFs to resolve all problems as stated by Government. We had to educate them in LRF ways - MOD need to setup teams who have been educated in future; that said they were very professional and added something to our response that we would have struggled to get anywhere else. Let's continue to improve our ties with the military.”

The Voluntary and Community Sector were seen as a positive, on balance. Some delegates felt that they did not offer their full potential capacity, while others felt that the sector had organised well and made significant contributions. This is unpacked further in the sub-theme voluntary and community sector in the theme community and public need.

“Strong partnership working with the voluntary and community and statutory partners - VCS being utilizing for resources to build capacity and insights to target engagement with voluntary groups to support various activities number of community volunteers locally.”

The practices between LRFs of using the national platform of Resilience Direct were found to have varying, this was seen as limiting the ability to share between local decision-makers and across the UK, which was the main ask of delegates.

“Resilience Direct is a very clunky and non-intuitive platform - we keep getting told documents are being uploaded to it but can never seem to find them; colleagues have spent weeks trying to gain access, and then when we do, don't have access to the right pages. Everything through RD and the AMIC [MAIC] seems to be marked 'official sensitive' which seems OTT for a number of documents (e.g. ToR, agendas etc) which makes it very uncertain as to what you can and can't share with partners and stakeholders.”

Connectivity

All of these structures have been under significant performance and strain during the response and recovery so far. They appear to have endured this pressure under the size and scope of demands placed against them. However the connections between these structures (communication, decision-making and information flow) now appear to be spread quite thin and delegates, whilst confident that these are functioning and stable, are concerned about their fragility in the medium-term. Delegates suggest that this would be resolved through the clarity of both funding and resources to enable focussed planning, which in turn would galvanise these structures and connections between them once again through the development of long-term strategies and development facilitated by the injection of resource.

“The structure for the LRF has been kept reasonably simple and that has kept it robust. it also has relied on the competence of the players and we have lots of excellent people doing things well.”

“The previously existing LRF structures have largely been able to flex to accommodate the variations in response, and to move toward recovery.”

“The LFR structure has proved stable and scalable in line with changes in need.”

Delegates discussed the transfer of lead structure from SCGs to RCGs. In some places, this has already taken place. Some delegates described a phased pull back of SCGs once the Health Protection Boards and RCGs are ready to take oversight and responsibility of all risks and issues currently live in the activities across the geography and partnership. In some places, there is a plan for a transition phase (such as a week) between the SCG and the RCG, others are moving the SCG to a slower biweekly battle rhythm. Some see the SCGs will be in place until the end of July, some see the SCG being in place until March 2021. As can be seen, there is a variety of different structural change occurring across the UK regarding the local management of Covid-19 and its impacts. This should be considered when making any policy in this space, or in the resolution of the resource needs. The change and sequence of structural changes are at the pace of the local community need, so any structural changes need to be cognisant of the appropriate difference in pace.

Alternative models include running the SCG and RCG concurrently with the LRF chair acting as a bridge between the two structures. Others are continuing to run SCG meetings to provide oversight and coordination of outbreaks. With the RCGs now in place and focusing on longer term recovery activity. Although some delegates stated that longer term economic recovery plans are going to sit outside the LRF partnerships.

“I think the focus has been on health harms but the wider harms haven't been considered and decisions taken to respond to a health emergency, in silo and in isolation, have shifted harms with others [b]eing accountable to sort out.”

Delegates also mentioned the strain of resolving the role of PCCs and local politicians in the structures.

“Local authority politicians have always agreed previously to keep out of SCG, etc, but are concerned that the PCC is seeking to exercise political influence and gain political credit, and wanting to know why they can't also this was explored locally but the PCC employ a CC and CFO who are involved and they ensure they provide briefings where necessary. the Office are engaged within tactical working groups where necessary and this has kept politics out of the SCG environment.”

“The challenge is more acute in this phase as we move to recovery, as there is a lot more political interest, e.g. from councillors and MPs and not just from the PCC.”

In summary, this theme suggests that the structures and processes are sound, however they are stretched to the boundaries of their remit and their capacity. Keeping them ongoing without addressing the resource need will result in them becoming increasingly fragile. This means they are becoming increasingly fragile going forward to EU Transition planning and winter pressures. With these additional known demands, delegates are keen that the sustainability of these structures is addressed ahead of time.

Managing into The Future

The sub-theme above describes the stretch of the structures which deliver the management of Covid-19. This sub-theme describes the challenges that delegates see moving forward in the future when managing the activities across partnerships in the formal structures. This includes balancing these impacts with the capacity demand of EU Transition planning, the creation and population of new Local Outbreak Management structures alongside existing structures, and the requirements of delivering recovery programmes. Throughout this data is the clear need for urgent financial assistance.

Delegates reported that there are resource challenges with the current PPE and testing arrangements. PPE still feels vulnerable to delegates, they described stock management as one area of concern and highlighted the opportunity of national bargaining power for procurement processes. Assurances on the supply chain were asked for in light of a possible second wave. Testing was unpredictable with calls for it to be more responsive and transparent.

“PPE provision is still fragile after all this time.”

“A one Nation approach to PPE supply acquisition across the UK, maximising collective bargaining opportunities, devoid of any political bias (where different Governments in the UK are from opposing political parties), putting the safety and well being of the citizens of the UK first and foremost must be adopted.”

Recovery was generally discussed in terms of the management of the recovery process. Activities were well underway and the point at which response starts to hand over the lead role to recovery had occurred in several places. There was clear recognition that recovery was looking quite different for Covid-19 due to the nature and extent of the impact and this was also in relation to the response structures not ‘standing down’ completely. There was also some discussion of how the recovery activities need to be paced and phased according to what was happening in different stages of the wider context of Covid-19 in the communities and aligning to national policy change.

“There is currently one Strategic Recovery Coordinating Group (which links in with the SCG) and a number of county based tactical recovery groups.”

“It has been recognised and ‘traditional’ emergency incident but rather elements will advance into ‘full recovery’ at different stages, e.g. economic recovery is advancing now, whereas the transition for the Shielded cohort is only just about to start.”

“Our RCG is co-chaired by two LA CEOs but has sub groups with representatives from most of the SCG partners. We have ToRs for all groups, and impact assessments for most. Some have developed action plans. Some of the groups are more complex to stand up and run than others and resourcing these groups is an issue.”

There were some tension points arising in the transition from response to recovery, in terms of managing the move away from a multi-agency way of working to one where the local authority was more dominant. There were also some process based tensions reported in managing the transition given the command and control structures in operation for response.

“The command and control structures and governance and protocols have sometimes hindered or slowed down mobilising the recovery planning, e.g. the process for its cells a bit unwieldy including 'having' to have the ToR in a certain LRF format.”

“...Local district council politicians want to manage recovery themselves and solely at the district council level. Covid requires integration of response and recovery.”

“Recovery structure being developed and how this will dovetail with the ongoing SCG.”

“Running response and Recovery concurrently, which gives complexity to structures and pressure on core staffing of Emergency Planners. Concurrent incident also on going causing more complexity.”

“By recognising the size and scale of the recovery required - and that there are often parallels to business as usual / existing structures and networks. Given the other pressures due to come onto LRFs it is essential to manage expectation and develop clear handover / exit strategy to the existing structures best placed to undertake thematic roles / work that will extend for years to come.”

When talking about managing the range of future demand, and the demands currently facing local decision-makers, delegates were keen to highlight that it is capacity and resources that are challenged, not capability. Capacity was challenged simply because they are being asked to take on more, with an anticipation of this continuing, with issues like EU Transition on the horizon and the prospect of local lockdowns. Resources more generally, and the capacity of people, were deemed as risk factors on the ability to respond to concurrent events. A large proportion of the discussion was focussed on the inhibiting aspect of finances and the lack of funding preventing planning taking place, in some cases this includes immediate planning as the financial threat was so imminent. This was reported as being a threat to the sustainability of most partners.

“In regards to process and structure we are in strong position, capacity with all agencies post full lock down may be a challenge as demand for service has returned in some cases to pre-Covid levels. So it depends if we can rely on some kind of decrease in demand again if we have a local outbreak. (I fear not).”

“There is significant concern around a no deal Brexit.”

“WE ARE HANGING OUT FOR A MULTI-YEAR SPENDING PLAN.”

“Agencies are stretched most notably in the Local Authority arena where their perilous finances mean they have limited resource availability. Concurrent events without doubt pose risk. The LRF is well structured to enable dual events of necessary.”

New ways of working including online and remote working were detailed by delegates as things to enhance and build in to the future. This was seen as a positive in considering the additional resource needed to accommodate the known impacts on capacity such as the restart of services, managing Covid-19 alongside BAU within the partner organisations and within the LRF, the strain of EU Transition planning, and local outbreak management.

“Gaps are really around the capacity to cope with more LRF lead issues as there has been increased intensity and expectation on what LRFs can achieve in a day without any funding structures or permanent teams.”

Developing this last point, delegates pointed out that managing this additional capacity in to the future requires the adoption of these new structures in to the wire diagram of existing structures. There were two broad approaches described by delegates when discussing these in light of a concurrent event. One is to integrate the response in to the current Covid-19 response structures and integrate them together under one SCG, the other was to run two parallel structures alongside each other with the new outbreak structures connecting to the Covid-19 current structures. Delegates agreed that regardless of approach, the more isolated or separate the structures, the higher the risk of being disjointed and uncoordinated.

“Danger that local outbreak plans run in parallel to established response/recovery structures.”

“I would second this - public health doesn't always sit at neatly with emergency planning as it should and they have a track record of 'trying to do everything for themselves'. This is commendable but risks wider issues not being picked up.”

They identified that this causes more risk as they are already operating outside their assigned role and they have taken on additional responsibilities. As outlined in finding one, this expectation is from the national decision-makers, and this has consequently caused them to question the most appropriate resolution. Either the expectations of national decision-makers should be corrected and the surrounding legal framework and guidance remains untouched, or given the current pressures of Covid-19, temporary policy is created to enable a short term adaptation to be put in place. Either one of these courses of action (or both) should be actioned to enable the resource issue to be resolved. This is explored in more detail in finding five.

“Agree but I think it also applies to a lot of those of us who have worked through this and Brexit and... the new norm seems to be long running, threats / pressures with high levels of HM gov interest and reporting. If this is a new norm we need to think about the resourcing required.”

“Recovery in this instance is a bit of an unusual one. We could if not careful get drawn in to fixing all of society's problems, and this will be an unending piece of work. There is no clarity about what is within the scope of LRFs and what is outside.”

“Helping the system to think out of the box and introducing a sliding scale of LRF oversight which toggles up and down over various cells depending on the local and national context.”

“Now is the time for Government to recognise how well we operate and adjust the CCA 2004 to show how important to the nation an LRF is in delivering throughout a national emergency.”

Recommendations for Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future

Recommendation 3.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government needs to urgently engage with LRFs to identify and resolve the immediate capacity and resourcing needs and financial assistance required for local multi-agency response/recovery structures to sustain an effective Covid-19 response, manage concurrent threats and also maintain core business as usual services over the next 12 months and beyond.

Recommendation 3.2: The UK Government should continue to develop more detailed guidance on the purpose, functions and scope of an LRF MAIC to ensure a consistent approach across all LRFs and facilitate effective information and intelligence sharing across LRFs and nationally.

Managing Local Outbreaks: Finding Four

This theme details the different considerations and process challenges shared by delegates when preparing to manage local outbreaks. This theme has three sub-themes, stretched capacity of workforce, managing the unknown and integrating new structures. The extent to which the issues pertaining to these sub-themes were generated by delegates is shown in Figure 7.

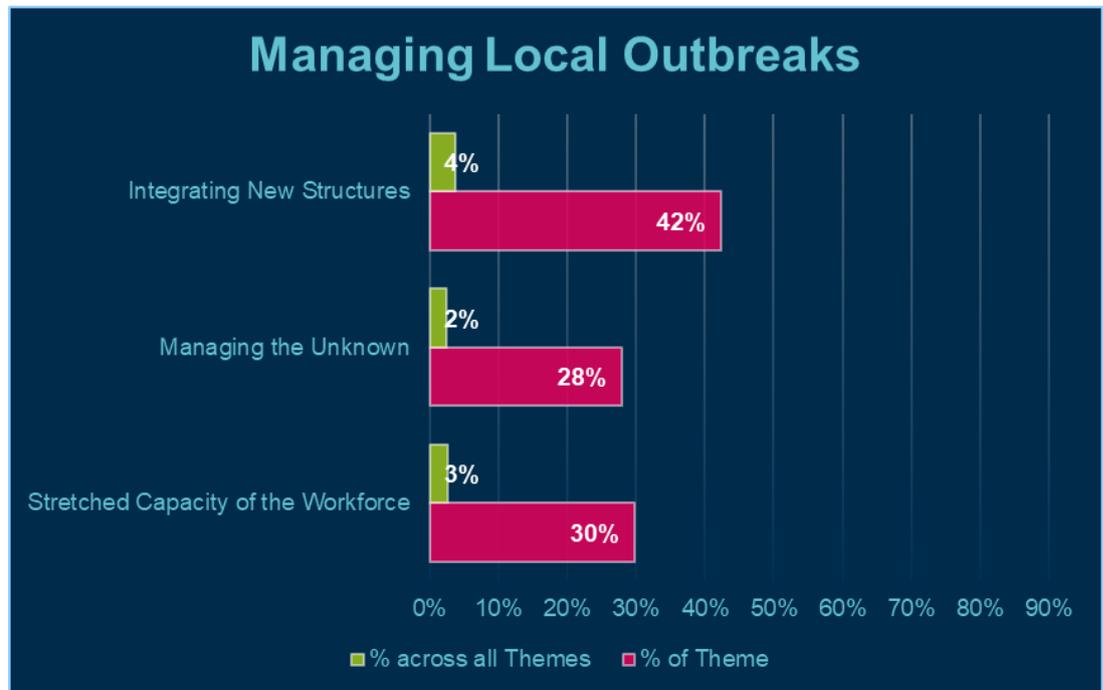


Figure 7. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the sub-themes in the overall theme of Managing Local Outbreaks (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Integrating New Structures

Delegates were clear that the additional load of managing new structures alongside their existing ones (which are likely to be ongoing in to EU Transition planning and winter pressures) would likely impact on their preparedness in managing a local outbreak. This is not about lack of planning, but the challenge of appropriately integrating and managing the new processes alongside existing activity in the round. Delegates described managing the ‘flatpack’ approach to structures, whereby they were stood up and stood down in response to the spread of the virus at local level.

“Having to be truly flexible. “flat pack” approach is being used to stand down capacity...establishing triggers and thresholds is a vital element of that work to ensure...understanding of when and how quickly we can stand this up.”

“Strategic RCG established at Chief Executive level. HPB established and SCG to stand down towards end of June, with the ability to stand up again quickly.”

“I [t]hink the risk is that we downsize incident response too early, Our BAU structures may be too unwieldy to respond with pace and efficiency.”

Delegates' data within this sub-theme clustered into several areas which together show a snapshot of the UK local outbreak management planning at this point in time. These include the risks identified and the structures delegates are using.

Risks of Integrating New Structures

Tensions between memberships

Delegates spoke of the risks involved in integrating these new structures within their existing ecology of partnership working. This involves the timing at which they are being developed, just as, for most, the frequency of meetings is reducing and they are slowly moving towards BAU. This means that with reduced numbers of people and a slower pace, there is more opportunity for tensions and inter-organisational politics to challenge groups.

“The plan (subject to SCG agreement) is for the recovery group to deliver the response after phase 3 supported by a recovery TCG as required however building into BAU – so as an example the outbreak management plan being managed via Health and Wellbeing boards. supported by our local councils at director level are very keen for this approach and it utilises and encourages use of systems and relationships that are already in place.”

“Nothing specifically except the track and test which seems to be centre stage at the moment which means we may lose sight of other important issues.”

Threat of over restricting intelligence sharing and situational awareness

Regarding the intelligence and communication structures, the MAIC and communication structures might continue to perform the same functions for the Recovery Coordination Groups, Health Protection Boards (HPB) and SCG as needed. As the priorities change with a local outbreak, the risk is that the MAIC, information and communications specialists get predominantly held in the HPB and this will decrease situational awareness and diversity of professional skill sets within the LRFs. Some delegates suggested that the RCG should continue to have clear lines of communication and be responsible for providing a back brief to ensure situational awareness for the LRF and SCG (when one is stood up). Other delegates suggested that as the SCG was continuing at a slower pace, the SCG should have oversight and support the HPB and brief the RCG. Regarding the broad stakeholders of the MAIC, delegates suggested that strategic intelligence should be facilitating BAU as well as informing recovery across partners. What is clear from these range of views is that there is no one model in use to guide how new structures integrate with existing structures, how information is shared across structures and how situation awareness is achieved across the network of operating (and paused) structures. For each approach adopted, there are challenges and consequences which teams were working through.

“It quite unclear what the regional footprint is going to look like for recovery, that is a worry. If information is just contained in future by Health Protection Boards and PHE there will be no LRF partnership situational awareness going forward.”

“SRCG needs a tactical group to be effective and this is still work in progress. The MAIC and SMAC will perform function for RCG, HPB and SCG as required.”

Pace of response

Due to the many pressures to return to BAU and as staff return to their substantive roles, it might not be possible to respond quickly to a local outbreak, if the structures have been downsized too early.

“Managing the transition from incident to restart requires constant adjustment, and we are calling on the same people to do it. I think the risk is that we downsize incident response too early, Our BAU structures may be too unwieldy to respond with pace and efficiency. (And we are all very tired already).”

Tensions between health and civic response

Given some of the tensions between LRFs and health structures highlighted throughout this report, the success of the management of local outbreaks is, in a large part, predicated on the roles and responsibilities of the NHS and PHE/PHW/PHS. The principles of duty of candour and inclusivity of partner organisations should be priority principles to ensure the continuing tension of the health ecology being insular and exclusive of the civic response is avoided. This would also address the low confidence delegates suggested that Directors of Public Health have, due to the lack of information with which to appropriately target specific neighbourhoods/ places of an outbreak.

“No wider strategy / objectives for deployment of MTUs has in some instances resulted in bun fights over the number of days per local authority. In turn DPHs identify they do not have the level of detail required to target specific neighbourhoods / identify hotspots.”

Proportionality and style of outbreak response

Delegates identified that the outbreak management response should feel different to the initial response. The initial response was aligned to a command and control emergency response across all the partnerships. However this longer term, iterative outbreak management needs to have a different approach for it to be successful. It should be completed with patience, tolerance, proportionality and diplomacy as the core defining features of the approach. This should include community engagement and partnership working.

“There is insufficient clarity on what local outbreak expectations are. It will be extremely difficult to stand up parts of responses without a full supporting machinery to support wider aspects of the response.”

“Concern is high in areas that had the highest number of cases as they are very aware of the impact and this is impacting the ability to restart anything. Outbreak plans are intensive and the actions and reporting arrangements need to be proportionate to the risk - more steer is needed on local outbreak plans - appreciating the need for local variation in activity it would be really helpful to have a national steer with templates of approaches that can be locally adapted.”

Structures in Development

TCG

The TCG is a focal point discussed by many delegates regardless of the approaches they are developing to integrate the new structures with existing structures. The value of the TCG is the ability to provide coordination, information sharing and situational awareness. Many delegates reported coming to rely on the TCGs and reported that they are still running despite there being no strategic or tactical decisions being made. They continue to be effective as a briefing tool and fulfil a much needed coordinating role, as they reported that the phase of being a command and control emergency has passed, and is now dependent on coordination and partnership working. Some delegates noted that TCGs are operating out of their role as they are, in some places, taking decisions. Some delegates said this was by design as the SCG was working at a slower battle rhythm, others said it was not desirable. Regarding how the TCGs would function if there was a local area outbreak, then most delegates suggested that a TCG would be stood up as required, this is the case for the management of a concurrent event. This is because most delegates reported that they are operating a model of one SCG and multiple TCGs reporting in, with one TCG for each event/incident. This is unpacked further in the section below.

“Confusion on the role of the TCG with the key word being ‘Coordinating’ and not taking executive action or taking responsibility. Sometimes the TCG is a conduit for keeping everyone informed.”

“SCG oversight and support for the HPAB and the Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) alongside the need for recovery. via the RCG - clear lines of communication and shared situational awareness. If the outbreak were significant and beyond the capability of the LOMP then a TCG would be ‘stood up’.

Managing with one SCG and multiple TCGs

Delegates discussed that the SCG and TCG structures allow for flexibility to run short-lived concurrent events, where one SCG would continue and multiple TCGs would then report to that SCG. The SCG would then become pressured by two aligned events within one area. Two different approaches were presented. One suggestion was

having the single SCG working on two agendas in their meeting and being briefed by two separate TCGs. The alternative suggestion was that the SCG would be briefed by two TCGs but the decisions would be integrated as one agenda. If the support mechanisms were outpaced, then the escalation protocols would be used and a second SCG would be stood up. In addition to this, contingency sub groups such as concurrent SCG risk groups have already been established in some areas. Most areas are standing down or slowing the pace of their SCGs, where the SRCG has been established and is picking up as the lead structure.

“At present I think maintaining the single SCG with multiple TCGs is the most achievable methodology for managing concurrent incidents at present.”

“We have a contingency sub group who have looked up this and we will use the same tried and tested processes of Pre-Event Assessment Meetings and TCGs as necessary we have a SCG concurrent risk group but any other incident would be responded by the same "boots on the ground" so the same management structure would need to manage both simultaneously to avoid mixed tasking.”

“We had a concurrent event and we ran two TCGs to manage the event with one SCG working on two agendas in one meeting. This worked well, EU will put further strain on those plans but we are running a workshop to test it.”

The 'flat pack' structures

Some structures are being truly flexible with stand down and stand up capacity built in to their design. Delegates reported this as beneficial because they can be stood up to provide a response without the full supporting machinery being created each time. Delegates reported that the important defining feature of this approach was clarity of agreed triggers and thresholds, which are vital to indicate when and how to stand up which bits of the 'flat pack' structure. Delegates had confidence in the delivery of this approach as they had tested the structures over the last four months, so they were confident that they can stand up what they have stood down. They also suggested that core response and recovery teams who have been involved in the management of Covid-19 can pick up new incidents should they need to.

“We will manage it as best we can - confident we have tested the process so far so can step up what we have stood down. Mortuary capacity greatly improved. we won't know until it happens.”

Demands to Balance and Accommodate

Delegates accepted that through the management of the pandemic there will be future peaks or spikes and they felt more prepared having managed the first peak. However, they are concerned about this activity alongside recovery activities, EU Transition, winter health pressures and

adverse winter weather. Alongside managing these and concurrent events, they are also mindful of the other risks on the National Security and Risk Assessment (such as full power outage). With this in mind, delegates were mindful to design structures to accommodate this demand and ensure that a response was also possible to these additional demands alongside the management of the pandemic.

“Hugely concerned about Brexit and winter, alongside Covid. There is and will continue to be a level of exhaustion. Staff need to stand back, whilst there is an opportunity and take some leave.”

“Much better prepared for managing mass casualties and excess deaths. Many long outstanding pieces of work have been completed very quickly thanks to COVID-19 and the legacy carried forward will enhance regional and national response.”

The Benefits of These Structures

The SCG and LRFs were felt to be well placed to manage escalation in infection rates should they occur in the local area. This is because they reported that they are developing new strategies to ensure the safety of communities in a broad sense, such as the safety of public spaces, transport and education. This appeared to be due to good local engagement, communication and access to existing local networks. Delegates reported that other benefits include recent ways of working that have enabled people to disregard organisational obstacles to partnership working, to ensure an effective way of working. The bureaucracy had reduced and the innovation had increased.

“The Compassionate Communities Hub has been a great success during Covid. Build on these arrangements - use existing local arrangements, networks, mechanisms.”

“The use of the local structures is key here, we don't need to re-invent the wheel.”

In summary, LRFs are being asked to integrate new structures with existing structures during ongoing response and recovery. They are approaching it in different ways to create structures and processes that work best for their communities and their local partnerships. They are considering the risks of the approaches they are taking and very mindful of the future demands they may face and they are keen to maximise the potential benefits already seen.

Managing the Unknown

This captures managing the risks of Covid-19 and a second wave, including local outbreaks. There are a lot of unknowns and it was felt national guidance and leadership was required on issues such as the assumptions with which to plan against, ensuring organisations shared data and planned together (e.g., health partners and the LRF), clarification of process, assurance of enforcement powers, and likely impacts on communities and community relationships.

“The key capability is the ability to generate a lockdown due to the lack of legal support and national political support, making such a lockdown impossible due to inevitable lack of consensus. The current guidance gives a clear role of DPHs and the Health Protection Boards, but with unclear statutory authority.”

“Local outbreak management planning is a risk as we have little intelligence to identify what resources will be required. Early anecdotal evidence is that very little comes from the national system which may indicate a reluctance for individuals to evidence non compliance. However most responses locally have been from local sources where residents report on their neighbours and local businesses. This could cause real local tensions and risk public disorder.”

Delegates expressed their concern that the Local Outbreak Management Plans were in development. They reported a level of discomfort of the application and enforcement of Non Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs). In particular, they had concerns about the impact of localised lockdown measures on community members that would experience a compounding of their existing disadvantage. In these circumstances, additional support would need to be provided to those at risk from these compounding challenges to ensure vulnerability and equity issues are not increased by Covid-19.

“Concerned about the subsequent impact of localised lockdown on community sectors that may have been most involved in protests etc - real potential to compound disadvantage over time. potential trigger for more unrest. hard for all to find the right way to enforce.”

Local Outbreak Management Plans have the potential to bring risk as currently there is little intelligence on required resources and little has been provided from the national centre to advise on public compliance. Local informing by members of the public on their peers in the community regarding non-compliance was highlighted as having the potential to create tensions. Clarity and consensus of legal or statutory powers is needed before the Directors of Public Health and Health Protection Boards have clarity in their roles. As well as more guidance being required on the nature, extent and application of enforcement powers, more information is needed to match resources adequately, otherwise gaps could appear in the combined efforts of local responses to an outbreak.

“The key capability is the ability to generate a lockdown due to the lack of legal support and national political support, making such a lockdown impossible due to inevitable lack of consensus. The current guidance gives a clear role of DPHs and the Health Protection Boards, but with unclear statutory authority.”

There was also discussion of the planning and development of Local Outbreak Management Plans being kept quite insular, with the health sectors not integrating partners in to that process and trying to complete the planning and management process within their own structures. The challenge with this is that wider issues and risks may not be identified. Therefore, there was a clear ask that these are shared and developed

with the other partnerships and organisations.

“Public health doesn't always sit at neatly with emergency planning as it should and they have a track record of 'trying to do everything for themselves'. This is commendable but risks wider issues not being picked up.”

“The LRF response is being replaced by the Health Protection Boards which will give us capacity to deal with concurrent events. We are still unsure as to what resource will be required for an outbreak and how the outbreak plans will work as the LRF professional emergency planners have not been included in writing or reviewing them as yet.”

Stretched Capacity of the Workforce

Delegates noted that the same organisations are staffing the majority of these structures and they run out of people and energy very quickly, particularly with the known challenge of EU Transition planning. This was perceived to increase risk of the successful and effective delivery of the new outbreak process.

Delegates were concerned about losing traction in the good collaborations they had built in the next phase. Many core LRF roles were undertaken in addition to normal day jobs and this left individuals doing a full day job and working long hours. Due to such circumstances, after four months, the resilience community is exhausted. Awaiting and living with uncertainty has added to this exhaustion. Staff are being encouraged to take leave where there is opportunity, but this is limited. Other positive action to enhance their exhaustion included seeing their colleagues' faces on video meetings, this was suggested to facilitate team bonding and partnership working which was a positive step in feeling connected to their peers. The impact on the individual from their personal experiences of managing Covid-19 are explored in finding six. The impacts on the individual discussed here are impacts arising from the nature of the role design, rather than the content of the role.

“Huge concern regarding the work required in preparing for a possible no deal Brexit.”

“Many core roles within them are absorbed by officers undertaking work in addition to their normal day jobs.”

Delegates suggested that when moving into this new phase of locally managing outbreaks, the voice of the resilience community should be included in the consultations. As well as the voice of the communities themselves and the consideration of the public's resilience a number of delegates questioned if those leading these developments have ensured the diversity of thought in the creation and use of policy to promote equity and manage vulnerability across the community. Engagement with community

groups would allow for the co-design of initiatives with different community members. This would take more capacity of the workforce to initiate but would ultimately increase the community engagement and ownership of community health.

“.....The Government has listened to advisors, scientists and academics but has by and large side-lined and ignored the knowledge and practical experience of the resilience community....”

“We need to ensure that policy, response and recovery is informed by diverse thinkers and SMEs and doesn't reinforce bias and stereotypes and constantly thinks about the diversity, inclusion and equality implications - never been more important than in the current climate with the BLM movement and the fact that evidence shows that those involved in response and recovery tend to predominantly be male. Do we have the learning, evidence, knowledge and representation to ensure we are promoting equality, equity and managing vulnerability”

Part of the challenge of preparing this local management is the engagement with the health structures which consumes capacity within the workforce as things are done in isolation or in parallel and other partnerships are left duplicating effort or unaware of developments relevant to their roles and responsibilities. As eluded to in the sub-theme of integrating structures, delegates reported an ongoing tension between the health response and the civic response (also reflected throughout the first report of the interim operational review). This also extends to the associated plans for wider community health support within the future planning of local area outbreak response. If the wider community health and outbreak plans are not shared and co-designed with the civic structures, then delegates expressed concern that they would be operating without full knowledge of the strategies within their local health ecology. This includes areas such as mental health as well as other areas.

“What are we doing about the MH timebomb? struggling to engage with local health partners who seem focused on doing their own thing?

• This!”

“The responsibility for Outbreak Response plans has moved to DPH but they have no idea how they are going to involve the LRF or SCG in them. Moving the statutory responsibility to UTLA means that DPH are likely to be fairly isolated and may result in inconsistency of approach. If DPH are being given direction on how to perform this role then that should be shared with LRFs so we understand what is supposed to be happening.”

Recommendations for Managing Local Outbreaks

Recommendation 4.1 (PRIORITY): Government should regularly issue authoritative guidance that clearly delineates the powers, responsibilities and role of local and national responding agencies and structures in the management of local outbreak infections. This guidance needs to reflect that different parts of the country and indeed the system, will be at different stages of response and recovery and need to retain the agility to act without impacting the progress on recovery.

Learning and Adapting: Finding Five

This theme explores areas considered by delegates about how to learn from the Covid-19 experience and what adaptation is required across the emergency management sector. This is through two sub-themes. The first is how those involved can continue to identify, capture and share learning in a real time incident. The second explores considerations of the structures and policy surrounding the emergency management sector. Considerable attention is devoted to the latter, because of the complexity of the discussions and their fundamental importance in relation to the framework of civil contingencies legislation. The extent to which the issues pertaining to these sub-themes were generated by delegates is shown in Figure 8.

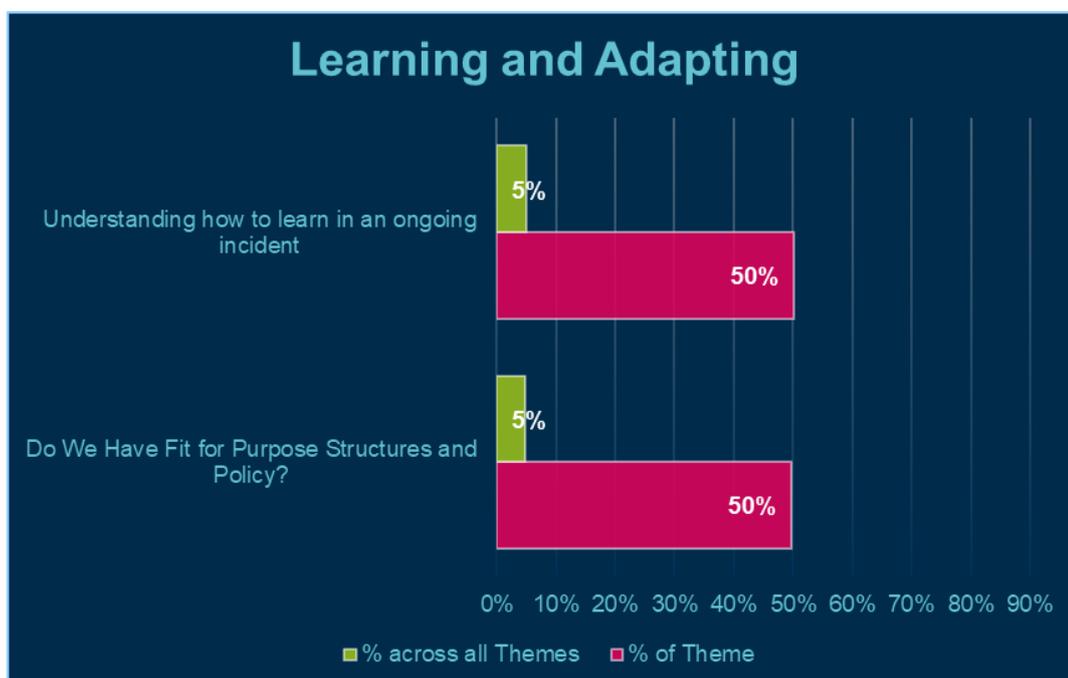


Figure 8. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the sub-themes in the overall theme of Learning and Adapting (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Understanding How to Learn in an Ongoing Incident

This sub-theme refers to the unique situation that LRFs and associated partnerships need to learn and adapt whilst the incident is still ongoing. Where usually there is only an opportunity for feed forward learning, the elongated nature of response and recovery for Covid-19 allows for feedback cycles to ensure incident adaptation and learning. There was a clear willingness to learn from delegates and substantial evidence of proactive learning already taking place, though preparedness activities (such as table top planning, scenario development and mapping, exercising and skillset mapping), the sharing of lessons between LRFs and broader networks (more opportunity was called for to do this) and uncertainty planning. These were all being used to inform and guide how LRFs could approach their own learning as Covid-19 management is still active.

“We need to ensure lessons identified and good practise identified is shared high and wide and look at implementing some of these in other critical incidents we may face in the future and not just forget about it and move on.”

“We have an exercise planned and feel that this will allow us to consider options and be better prepared.

We also have a scenario workshop planned to help understand what a reasonable worst case scenario might look like. how will partners work together to lock down a market town?”

“We had a concurrent event and we ran two TCGs to manage the event with one SCG working on two agendas in one meeting. This worked well, EU will put further strain on those plans but we are running a workshop to test it.”

In terms of learning it was clear some delegates were looking for learning across a range of topics and at different levels (local/regional/national). However, the picture was varied in that in some instances it appeared structures had been developed to facilitate learning, but in other instances this was not apparent.

“Capturing the work the community recovery group have done so far to see best practices and how to engage going forward.”

“We have shown that significant incidents can be managed through virtual format but better interoperability on the technology and platform can still be much improved.”

“Learning from this experience, the establishment of the Regional Shielding teams and others who were people you could discuss challenges, concerns and good practice from other parts of the country has been very welcome.”

“There don't seem to be informal virtual networks of LRFs to tap into - our cross- border recovery chairs' meeting is quite formal so doesn't lend itself to honest conversations and sharing of information; feels a bit more tick-box/going through the motions in the hopes that you pick up something of interest.”

Delegates highlighted that in their view it is essential that learning continues to be identified, captured and shared. However, they were mindful that duplication of effort should be managed. If possible, this would be through national thought leadership or through the development of national toolkits or approaches.

“I think the biggest area that we could learn from has been the amount of duplication - simple tools (such as this) or impact assessments, contact books, PPE quantities / usage surveys, debrief questionnaires etc could have been produced once by a national team. Instead each LRF has to develop its own systems / tools on top of responding / recovering.”

The facilitation of training whilst the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing was discussed by delegates in order to exercise and plan through

uncertainty and to test plans and structures in an elongated event. In particular, methods of ensuring preparedness for concurrent events were discussed. The main threat to the successful management of a concurrent event was the capacity of people, as they are already populating many temporary or medium term structures and there are few left to be able to be allocated to those roles. Another aspect of concurrent event management is if another chronic event were to happen. In this case delegates report that on paper they have completed appropriate planning, but they were not sure if they could implement them due to the lack of capacity of staff.

“Already running concurrent incidents and reviewing the impact on Covid on our capability planning for response going forward. Creating a significant amount of work both in planning but the purchasing additional equipment, unseen cost to agencies and the Emergency Planning Teams across agencies. However this remains a priority as concurrent events will continue.”

The sharing of experiences and insights has been, and continues to be, an important and reassuring priority for delegates. Finding ways to continue this, whilst trying to do this more effectively and freely across the network, would be a priority for them. This is not simply about sharing good practice, but about reassurance, confidence and gaining insights from others that they are facing similar situations and challenges and exchanging how that feels. The need for informal spaces in which experiences could be shared openly and freely was noted. Some of the discussion throughout the data discussed how to share energy and look out for each other, this would also contribute to that valuable and essential peer support. It would also feed in to the training requirements in the short to medium term.

“This was bigger than we ever imagined. The feeling of being overwhelmed individually and collectively was temporary. The power and confidence gleaned from the knowledge and experience of partner organisations was humbling to be a part of. Being comfortable being uncomfortable is a condition that we must ensure we reflect in our training.”

Do We Have Fit for Purpose Structures and Policy?

There was discussion throughout the dataset as to whether local and national structures should be reviewed and if they are fit for purpose for the management of Covid-19 and beyond. In particular, there was significant discussion at different points throughout the question sets exploring if a review of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) and surrounding legislative frameworks should be carried out. These discussions explored different reasons why this might be required and had many nuances and differing points of view. There was not agreement in the clarity or nature of the challenges nor in the considerations offered during the discussions. There were, however, two points of agreement. The first is that delegates feel that LRFs have, by necessity, broadened their scope beyond their legal boundaries, meaning a change to the accountability they hold, the responsibilities assigned to them, the resources allocated to them and the funding they receive. The second is that delegates would like to have

frameworks of policy and legislation that reflect these changes, but do not want this to diminish their ability to be agile and innovative.

It is important to understand the wider context for these discussions. First, they come at a time in which local responders have been on the frontline in terms of trying to deliver a complex society-wide response to a pandemic which has claimed the lives of 41,969 people within the UK. This has had a significant impact on staff (see Finding six). Second, this discussion takes place in a context in which delegates note significant ongoing issues relating to the co-ordination of the response to Covid-19 in terms of guidance and communication (see Finding one), partnership coordination (see Finding two) and having to create and integrate new structures (see Finding four) in an ongoing and dynamic situation that has strained the health of existing structures (see Finding three). Third, within the context and parameters in which they were operating, delegates felt LRFs had demonstrated considerable flexibility, agility and effectiveness. That is, the legislative framework had enabled and facilitated an approach to working at the local level that provided the flexibility required. However, this often meant that at the local level LRFs felt they were operating outside the boundaries of the understood legislative framework, which although required in the short term in order to get the job done, meant that this legislative framework required consideration. A range of factors therefore underpinned the discussion around whether the current framework of policy and structures are fit for purpose. It was clear that this was a very live and challenging issue for local strategic decision-makers and that the overall management of Covid-19 has presented significant challenges to the LRFs, category 1 and 2 responders, surrounding organisational partnerships and the structures within which these operate in a national emergency. In the following sub-sections, the discussions surrounding these challenges are presented to offer insight and clarity about the specific points of tension when considering the appropriateness of the structures and policy underpinning response and recovery to Covid-19, other emergencies and beyond.

Government's expectations of LRFs is a driver for change

There was consistent unanimous agreement that national decision-makers (mostly represented as the UK Government, although not in every instance) had consistently expected the LRFs to act beyond their defined role and responsibilities. This mostly focussed on the legal status of the LRF and the way in which this has been tested through the expectations of national decision-makers in terms of what they expected it to be responsible for. Delegates reported that in their view, national decision-makers have demonstrated they have a significantly different understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the LRF structures to those formally recorded and captured in the governance frameworks.

The misalignment between the understanding of the LRFs' role between national government and the local understanding has created a tension point because it impacts on the ability of the LRF to fulfil Government's expectations, and because LRFs may not have the functionality,

resources or governance to complete those expectations. Delegates reported that whilst national decision-makers recognised the value of LRFs, this recognition was not cognisant with the reality that they are operating to their full capacity of functionality, resource and governance. In this context, the national decisions seemed to imply that LRF structures could go further and develop more, which would be taking them further out of the scope of operation than defined by the current legislative frameworks. Delegates wanted this misunderstanding to be corrected through training and briefings of those national decision-makers, with the specific purpose to align the expectations to the LRFs and the frameworks. LRFs reported that they are keen to continue supporting and leading their communities out of the first national peak of Covid-19 and the easing of national lockdown measures, but they are challenged by not being able to accommodate the expectations from national decision-makers, which they feel are sometimes unrealistic.

“This is something we have discussed, with the LRF stepping outside of the CCA elements and the secretariat being seen as a response 24/7 function. I think this needs to be part of any debrief, do we need to change our language to fit with the expectations demonstrated throughout this incident.”

“The government has latched on to LRFs (quite rightly) as well organised communities of agencies and responders, and have used that route to try and deliver outcomes not usually within our scope, (including intelligence gathering).”

“The expectations from Govt and local partners on LRFs are far outside the actual work LRFs should do. It would benefit from thinking about whether there needs to be a more rigorous legal framework and powers for LRFs as well as additional resourcing to run them as separate bodies providing Emergency Planning and providing a managerial role in emergencies when they do occur.”

“Those in government should actually be trained / informed as to what an LRF is and subsequently is not.”

The beneficial work that LRFs do and how they currently operate was noted by delegates, identifying their request for them to continue to be flexible and responsive to need. However, this was balanced with the request for LRFs to have more influence and a voice or representation at national level decision-making. Their ability to share their innovative solutions and evolving priorities with national decision-makers was limited. Consequently, they felt that their ability to have a dialogue between the national and local strategic decision-making was absent. Delegates who suggested this dialogue highlighted two opportunities as the main strengths. The first is the opportunity to feedback and collaborate on policy refinement before it is released and implemented to ensure they are as realistic and successful as possible. The second is the opportunity to inform national decision-makers of local priorities, solutions and strategy, so national decision-makers can be more informed than they currently are.

“LRFs are one of the most powerful tools the UK currently have. We have proven that there is where partnerships work. We don't pay lip service to partnership working we deliver it and when you give us issues we solve them. This needs to be recognised by the government it would be crazy to ignore the opportunity here.”

“Wish it had been more possible for bottom-up designed approaches to influence the eventual national policy!”

“The join up between the national and the local. There is too much focus on trying to design things at the centre, rather than focussing on objectives and allowing us to design local solutions.”

“It has felt very much like one-way traffic into government - feeding in our views and lived experience, but very little sign of being listened to by government. government trying to do everything by central command and control has been one of the biggest failings if this crisis”.

“Still a disconnect between the role of central v local service delivery, when a decision is made centrally it still [ap]pears to have been made without real consideration of what that means for organisations at a local level.”

As can be seen from the excerpts above, some of these frustrations focus on the legal status of the LRF and partner organisations. These will now be discussed in more detail.

The legal boundaries are being tested

As the expectations have been communicated to LRFs to assume responsibility for certain aspects of the response and recovery of Covid-19, so they felt that their responsibilities started to outgrow their legal role. This spreading of the legal boundaries was one of the few points of agreement regarding the structures and policy. The discussion of possible solutions suggested by delegates was more challenging. Some viewpoints pointed to a temporary solution implementing temporary legal adjustments for the projected time period of the Covid-19 pandemic, whereas others suggested a more permanent review of the framework and Acts. Others were more cautious about extending the legal responsibilities of the LRFs at all.

“LRF were established as a partnership but govt see them increasingly as an organisational entity delivering a service (as in the route to PPE). Need to review the purpose and standing of LRFs if that is going to be a given role in the future.”

“A wholesale change will have to wait but we can do a lot with changes (for example putting LRFs on statutory footing and placing obligations on Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders). Equally the Conops at a UK level needs a rapid review.”

“The CCA is now out of date and radically needs an overhaul - the expectations of the LRF are way beyond anything referenced within the legal status of an LRF under existing legislation.”

“Caution against LRFs becoming statutory because could cause confusion and undermine the existing statutory agencies. They certainly need to be properly funded in future. most are run on a 'shoestring'.”

Whilst there was agreement that LRFs had clearly been expected to spread their legal boundaries regarding the structures and policy, a possible solution was not resolved by delegates.

The objective of any possible review should address accountability, responsibility, resource and funding

Delegates discussed the challenges which motivate them to voice their views about the structures and policies being current and suitable. The broader expectations from national decision-makers has had the consequence of broadening the scope beyond the legal boundaries of LRFs and associated partnerships and they would like this reflected in the accountability they hold, the responsibilities assigned to them, the resources allocated to them and the funding they receive. The delegates consistently discussed the framework as needing to catch up (either permanently or temporarily) to reflect the reality of their current situation. Resources and funding were usually discussed separately, as although the funding request was clearly defined throughout the data, accompanying this was the discussion that this would not resolve all challenges. Funding alone cannot resolve training, experience, staff expertise and capacity in partner organisations. These additional resources from other partnership organisations are some of the resources delegates identified in their discussions. Delegates suggested that any review would need to secure these resources in order to continue to facilitate successful multi-agency and partnership working at the local strategic level.

“LRF structure and funding needs to be really carefully reviewed and considered.”

“The CCA sort of works whilst in peacetime but whilst in major incidents it suffers. There's no imperative to force partners to work together, no inspectorate function, little accountability and no funding structure.”

“Our constitution and legislative suites as a nation and individual institutions are not constructed for a modern, digital world. As we build back and maximise opportunity HMG must find a way to address the legislative barriers in a timely way. Legislation takes to long and I wonder what if any curation has taken place as to what is fit for purpose and what needs to change.”

In the context of these challenges identified as being required for successful local partnership working, delegates also explicitly discussed wider legislative frameworks and policies that they believed needed reviewing to reflect the reality of their broader role and position.

Considerations of a review should not be limited to the CCA, but include wider frameworks and structures

As can be seen from the range of excerpts throughout this sub-theme, the structures being referenced are not just limited to the CCA. For example, delegates discussed local governance structures, the obligations of associated partner organisations, and defined processes that connect structures such as communication, intelligence and decision-making flows. Delegates were also clear that surrounding legislation, frameworks and guidance would need to be revised to capture their current roles and

breadth of operating. This is not simply because they would need to change in reference to a revised CCA, but because they need to ensure suitability to the current reality.

“Review of the CCA and Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Response and Recovery.”

“Two tier local Govt is an added complication for effective management of matters. The experiences of this event should trigger an early top down call for the removal of two tier governance which will also assist with some aspects of the financial recovery by creating more manageable governance structures.”

“Govt officials need to better understand how local response structures work and the impact their decisions have on them, including creating sufficient time for SCG's to prepare for and deal with the impacts of HMG decisions.”

“Recovery is not covered by the CCA. Where is the national direction?”

Some delegates spoke of the need to consider how the surrounding frameworks and structures reflect the broad reality that local partnerships are currently operating across. This is reflective of some delegates suggesting that changes are needed to capture the current position. However, this was not agreed across the delegates and nor was there agreement in the rationales put forward to justify why a change might be considered. This is explored below.

There are three rationales for change; bespoke changes to national emergencies, changes for all major incidents, the nature of emergencies are changing

Within the discussions of whether the legislative framework should be reviewed, delegates discussed the nature of why the frameworks and guidance may no longer be suitable in their current form. Some delegates reported that they thought the CCA and associated frameworks had needed to be reviewed in relation to a wide variety of different types of major incident. Other delegates were clear to delineate other types of major incident and bracket Covid-19 and EU Transition as different forms of incident in terms of being elongated and society wide issues. For those delegates, these were not typical of the range of incidents typically covered in the CCA or wider frameworks and suggested caution should be taken not to base any review on these alone. There was a smaller group of delegates who suggested that a review should take place at a more conceptual, fundamental level of the CCA, associated frameworks and our collective understanding of the definition of risk. Delegates putting forward this view suggested that due to society living differently, with increased connectivity and globalisation, the nature of emergencies had changed. According to this view, emergencies are becoming increasingly societal wide (Covid-19, EU Transition, Climate Emergency) and so the definition used to define, quantify, plan and mitigate risk needs to change to

accommodate elongated, ubiquitous incidents with a potential associated increase in incidents that are nationwide.

Consequently, there were three different rationales for why the CCA and associated frameworks should be considered for review. If a review is carried out, the nature, scope and aims would change dependent on the acceptance of each of these rationales.

“LRFs established to respond and recover from short term emergencies. Time has come to review role of LRF in national longer term emergencies. review of CCA, perhaps new statutory duties and central LRF to be established during national crisis who develop and disseminate strategy and objectives for all 38 LRFs to ensure some consistency and at present all have to do their own thing.”

“This is not a 'traditional' style emergency - this does require the integration of response and recovery sitting in a well established framework of the LRF.”

“The pandemic and Brexit are not typical incidents but these types of national long term incidents are not covered by the guidance.”

“LRFs work well in a sprint, but this emergency is a marathon. How can we adapt our incident response to a long running emergency?”

“Now is the time for Government to recognise how well we operate and adjust the CCA 2004 to show how important to the nation an LRF is in delivering throughout a national emergency.”

“We need to take a different view of risk given that COVID-19 was assisted by globalisation, international connectivity and public expectation/behaviours around travel. COVID-19 should lead to a paradigm shift in the way we assess and prepare for risks.”

In addition to the differing of opinion about the rationale for considering a review, there were also differing views about the disadvantages any change would consequently cause.

The disadvantage of change

Delegates discussed the framework and guidance they currently sit within. There was a recognition that asking them to go beyond this framework would mean that they were operating outside of their resources, governance and role, and they recognised that this has implications for them. As a result, some delegates had discussed the possibility of temporary or permanent reviews or changes to legislation and frameworks. Delegates suggested that any desire for more centralised decision-making or enhanced legal frameworks come with some disadvantages. Delegates defined the biggest disadvantage as a reduction in the local ability to be innovative, creative, responsive to their communities and problem solve, particularly when this does not follow the recognised structural flow of decision-making. Although a few delegates suggested more structures or layers might resolve the challenges, on balance delegates felt that any compromises to their ability to provide a flexible local response did not warrant their support.

“Government can't have it both ways - they can't pass the work to LRFs without the financial infrastructure for the LRFs to operate. The CCA is an enabling piece of legislation; if you use it as a framework for response, it gives us plenty of options for framing our activity. Furthermore, there are plenty of emergency planners who can and do work really well within the CCA to support LRFs to operate effectively. It fails when the Government step outside the structures and try to impose centralised structures over the top.”

“Don't make them statutory. LRF is a partnership and legal responsibility should remain with individual agencies. Let's not make them a yet another bureaucracy that needs servicing. LRFs need to deliver - like they have during COVID - they mustn't become full of people 'being busy' for the sake of it! Pressures on finance mean they must be productive and practical.”

“Possibly the removal of defined plans might actually be helpful so that we remain agile to any specific circumstances.”

In terms of sub-national structures in some places these do not exist, but where they are present they are broadly welcomed, enhancing communication and providing a route for escalation to national decision-making. However, delegates highlighted that there are costs to creating and further populating this sub-national level of coordination as well as leaving it relatively absent.

“The view of Whitehall of the Regions and what is needed can, on occasions, be at variance to the view of the regions/LRFs/Localities and there is a perception that a lack of understanding of consequences when drawing up top-down policy is not conducive to a national/Regional relationship.”

“Recognising the different layers - central, local government, regions and cross county organisations. Understanding that some things are best delivered at different levels and scale. Local authority districts are often the most effective places to deliver targeted and bespoke work. The LRF in some ways sits between a very centralist approach from Central Government and the localities delivering on the ground. This has made it challenging for the LRF I think.”

“And there is precedent in a central Strategic core with local delivery (EA). It might not be perfect but it is at least a path to national consistency of local delivery.”

In summary, delegates would like to have frameworks of policy and legislation that reflect their current breadth, scope of operation and the challenges they face, but do not want this to diminish their ability to be agile and innovative.

The timing of any review should be considered carefully

One further difference of opinion was that if a review was considered, careful attention should be given for when that review should be undertaken. Delegates had differing views on when the timing would be more suitable for this to be completed, for reasons of having the time and space to do the review well.

“A review of CCA might be useful, but could also turn into a distraction or blame game. The pandemic and Brexit are not typical incidents.”

“Revisit the legal aspects of the LRF via a review of the CCA and make LRFs more powerful and, therefore each agency more accountable for actions. The measures we have had to put in place to tackle the Covid 19 emergency overlap those that are needed to tackle the climate emergency - driving and flying less for instance. There is likely to be less patience with a failure to take emergency measures to deal with the climate emergency now we have proven that we are capable of achieving when we recognise that we are dealing with an emergency.”

To conclude this sub-theme, on balance the consistent view of delegates was that LRFs are currently operating beyond their defined role and resources. This is a result of the context of Covid-19, in which expectations of national decision-makers alongside the necessity of and commitment to dealing with the situation, have led to innovation in the response of partner organisations in a way that has gone beyond pre-understood roles. As a consequence, they are asking for the funding, resourcing and legislative frameworks to reflect this. There was limited evidence that delegates wanted additional structures, processes, levels of coordination or restrictions. Rather, the main request was simply that the structures reflect their current position. As such, the rationale for any changes should be considered ahead of any proposed changes. Any considered response to these views that led to any changes should attend carefully to the timing and permanency of these.

Recommendations for Learning and Adapting

Recommendation 5.1: In order to maximise consistency in approach, minimise duplication of effort and enable the effective sharing of learning and good practice between all stakeholders, UK Government should clarify where responsibility lies in supporting LRFs and Government Departments in coordinating their ongoing training, exercising and debriefing needs in the context of the CCA.

Recommendation 5.2 (PRIORITY): To ensure consistency of response in each local area, Government should produce pandemic principles to enable local areas to develop Covid-19 (infectious disease) specific plans.

Recommendation 5.3: To ensure delivery of Rec 5.2 and consistency of approach across all LRFs, Government should develop and implement an appropriate assurance mechanism through which all LRFs can be independently assessed against these pandemic principles and other relevant national resilience standards.

Recommendation 5.4: At an appropriate time, the UK Government should review the effectiveness of the wider civil contingencies legislative framework and associated guidance in the context of learning from Covid-19. The scope of the review should seek to address accountability, responsibility, resourcing and funding at both local and national levels.

Recommendation 5.5 (PRIORITY): In the immediate term, UK Government should produce supplementary guidance, underpinning the UK Concept of Operations for the management of a national emergency, specific to Covid-19, that provides clarity to all stakeholders on the roles, responsibilities and structures at local and national levels and how the enduring response and recovery to the Covid-19 crisis is being managed.

Recommendation 5.6: In the longer term, the UK ConOps document should be updated given the context of Covid-19 to ensure all stakeholders are clear on the roles, responsibilities and structures at local and national levels to manage the response and recovery to a wider range of foreseeable major incidents and national emergencies.

Cross reference to Recommendation 2.1

Recommendation 2.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government should rapidly establish a common debrief methodology and shared learning mechanism to ensure learning and good practice is captured, shared and acted upon in real time, to both mitigate harm now, and influence the future response, to Covid-19. Reviews and local debriefs should aim to identify the enabling factors of these successful longer term response and recovery partnerships in this unique situation.

Consequences to the Individual: Finding Six

This theme focuses on the consequences of managing Covid-19 and the impacts this has had on individuals. This has two sub-themes; recognition of actions and our people are tired. The extent to which the issues pertaining to these sub-themes were generated by delegates is shown in Figure 9.

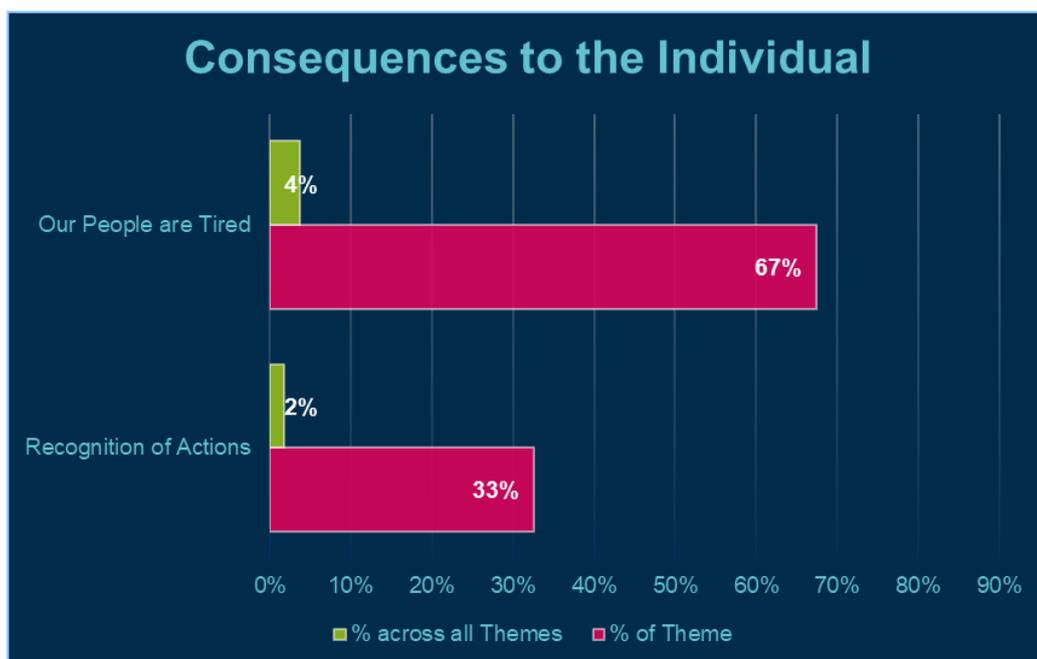


Figure 9. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the sub-themes in the overall theme of Consequences to the Individual (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all

Our People are Tired

This sub-theme captures the emotional toll that managing Covid-19 has had on staff. Delegates reported that staff are fatigued, exhausted and have little remaining capacity. They have managed their roles flexibly, in a changing operational context, where local and organisational leadership are exhausted. They have done this all with knowledge of how the impacts of managing the virus have manifested within communities where the most significant impacts have been felt. They have also done this whilst managing their own risk to the virus and that of their families. Many have not taken leave and are unsure when and how they will be able to.

There was a clear acknowledgement that staff had gone above and beyond in terms of working hard over many months. A number of comments implied an expectation in doing this, and the resultant impact of this approach were this to continue to be prolonged were discussed.

“Myself and many colleagues have worked very hard in this event for months now. Proud to have been a part of it but do very very tired now. Health has been impacted.”

“It is clear that the success of the approach is down to individuals, and their own work ethic and values. We have come a long way with a few individuals who have dug in and put in a lot of hours in a stressful period of a lot of unknowns with a changing narrative on a daily, sometimes hourly basis.”

“Risk of being seen as a weak link if you take time out. And likely that ongoing demands will make it difficult for proper recuperation as we move through recovery and have the risks of second spike/ local outbreaks.”

The health of those involved in the emergency management of Covid-19 at the local level was of significant concern. These discussions of concerns focussed on the levels of fatigue and were consistent across the delegate discussions and repeated at several places in the dataset. Exhaustion through the sheer volume and nature of the work was detailed, as well as exhaustion from the amount of time they have been focussed on the task of managing Covid-19. Most individuals had been focussed on Covid-19 response and recovery for over four months at the point when this interim review was carried out. The challenge of not being able to leave the challenge at work was also noted through discussions, Covid-19 was also relevant and discussed at home, was a threat to family life that had to be managed and was interrupting all other aspects of life, which added to the exhaustive nature of managing Covid-19.

“Important to recognise just how tired staff are emotionally. Well-being is an important factor in preparing for future challenges of 2nd wave and annual flu epidemic. There is a limit to resilience.”

“I’m getting tired! Early stages of a crisis are fuelled by adrenaline, but long term recovery etc can create a lot of fatigue I think. Need to keep an eye on each other.”

It was also recognised that the prolonged nature of the crisis was having significant impacts on those in leadership positions. These people typically already have significant leadership responsibilities elsewhere and managing these alongside Covid-19 is a significant strain. Some delegates mentioned the lack of reserve teams to help alleviate pressure.

“Very difficult to get everyone/anyone to take time out and look after themselves, lots of tired stressed leaders.”

“Very tired leaders in lots of organisation. Impossible to take time away, long days, weekends broken and no prospect of taking any leave. In many cases there is a difficult 'day job' to be managed on top.”

The emotional and psychological impact of the work, ways of working, and the context were clearly significant areas of concern. Delegates were mostly reporting their concern for their colleagues, but many discussed their own context too. In terms of psychological impact, there were issues around the nature of the crisis as well as the more general impact on wellbeing of the prolonged effort in responding to Covid-19. Some delegates felt more could be done to address these issues.

“It will be difficult to square to ourselves and to others that we have worked so hard and so well and still have one of the worst death rates in the world. The psychological effect on us and everyone else needs to be recognised and managed.”

“Need to reflect on personal resilience and impact on personal lifestyle choices. Is it necessary or appropriate for people to be expected to be getting called on at late at night/ early morning on a 24/7 basis?”

One of the major aspects of the consequences to the individual was the diminishing resilience across teams which could impede their ability to deal with a concurrent event, or another large scale planning issue such as EU Transition.

“Prepared but in reality it is the same people having to do more, there's no B team in reserve.”

“This will be a challenge - we have had a concurrent event - a Major Incident Fire and you run out of people very quickly.”

“Local outbreak plans being worked on and we are confident that small scale concurrent events can be managed but have concerns about any prolonged event causing battle fatigue to LRF members.”

“Capacity concerns given how preparations for no deal exit and covid19 have stretched us individually. Both happening concurrently a worry let alone adding in other incidents.”

Recognition of Actions

There are two aspects to this sub-theme, the pride in actions taken and the recognition that some decisions have had consequences. There are many instances in this sub-theme of pride in successes and feeling of doing the right thing in the right way for the right reasons. However, there is also the lived experience and impact of seeing some decisions play out and the realities of their impacts are challenging to process.

The pride and success of the local management of Covid-19, and the sacrifices and successes were reported clearly by delegates. It was evident that delegates were proud and impressed by the collective effort of those involved in managing the emergency and ongoing impacts. These aspects were positive recognitions of the actions they had taken, both collectively and individually.

“The strength of delivery through COVID has been seen everyday through the LRFs. the work has been outstanding and the support across partnerships, departments and communities should make us proud. It has enabled the prevention of spread of the COVID, saved lives and looked after key workers and communities.”

“LRF partners have responded in a fantastic way given unique scale and nature of this incident - the challenges faced shouldn't be underestimated and the response should be recognised as an amazing effort under new previously untested circumstances.”

There was also an acknowledgement of the importance recognising a wider set of colleagues, it was reported that until the current crisis these colleagues had not necessarily been given the recognition they deserved but showed themselves critical to the Covid-19 response.

“Everyone I have worked with is proud to serve their country at a time of crisis, but the flaws this is exposing in our society and how we treat our communities and our keyworkers needs to be addressed.”

“The care home community and home care/sheltered living and the voluntary sector were all key to the management of this pandemic and they got forgotten at the beginning of this. We now have a fragile community care system with providers/col orgs facing viability challenges.”

Delegates also noted the importance of recognition for those working in the LRFs, although there was not clear agreement on how this could be done given the large number of people involved. There was also a call for the roles of the LRFs to be recognised by government. This linked back to issues discussed in finding five, in terms of a wider legislative framework or LRF resourcing being reviewed to provide due recognition of the LRFs.

“A shout out to the LRF Co-ordinators and the LRF Managers who have responded day and night for weeks. They are gold dust and should be recognised for the work they do.”

“A way of saying thanks to the people who have worked on the response. There is no way that the usual honours etc will be able to cover the range of people - and it probably shouldn't be used to as so many have done so much.”

“Funding has always been an issue for LRFs and many core roles within them are absorbed by officers undertaking work in addition to their normal day jobs. A new funding mechanism would be welcome and ensure that this important work becomes higher profile and relevant training and exercising takes place.”

“The expectations from Govt and local partners on LRFs are far outside the actual work LRFs should do. It would benefit from thinking about whether there needs to be a more rigorous legal framework and powers for LRFs as well as additional resourcing to run them as separate bodies providing Emergency Planning and providing a managerial role in emergencies when they do occur. During times of non emergency there could be a preventative role for large scale public issues as well (wildfires, flooding etc etc)”

There were some negative aspects of decision-making that were harder for delegates to acknowledge and process. These included the knowledge that a public inquiry was likely and they reported being able to feel the impact of the anticipation from national decision-makers. Delegates also recognised their own actions and how they might be collectively viewed in an inquiry. They reported feeling concerned about apportioning of blame during a subsequent public inquiry and this might cause a block to learning lessons due to blame dynamics getting in the way of learning.

“I am concerned that when the public inquiry comes that decisions that have been made locally in good faith, and individuals, will be hung out to dry. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but the failure to take seriously the messages of previous exercises to prepare us for a pandemic when this was top of the risk register will be buried by individuals being criticised for impossible choices.”

Recommendations for Consequences to the Individual

Recommendation 6.1 (PRIORITY): In the immediate term, national support structures such as *Our Frontline, Mind, Mind for Emergency Responders NHS crisis lines* should be publicised by all partnership organisations to their staff.

Recommendation 6.2 (PRIORITY): LRFs and associated multi-agency partnerships should urgently consider the merits of establishing a broader duty of care framework and encouraging mutual aid between organisations more experienced in supporting the health and wellbeing of not just first responders but all those involved in the enduring response to Covid-19.

Recommendation 6.3: LRFs and associated multi-agency partnerships should formally engage appropriate mental health professionals to ensure their approach to supporting the health and wellbeing of all those involved in the enduring response to Covid-19 is effective.

Recommendation 6.4: LRFs and associated multi-agency partnerships should consider ways in which they can recognise the efforts of their staff and community achievements during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Community and Public Need: Finding Seven

This theme considers the wide range of ways in which the community was reflected in the discussions by delegates throughout the question set. Although this accounted for a small proportion of the data in terms of frequency of codes, when delegates spoke of their communities it was with strong sentiment. This has three sub-themes, the voluntary sector for the community, relationship with community and identifying community need. The extent to which the issues pertaining to these were generated by delegates is shown in Figure 10. As is evident, these sub-themes were reflected in the data in similar amounts.

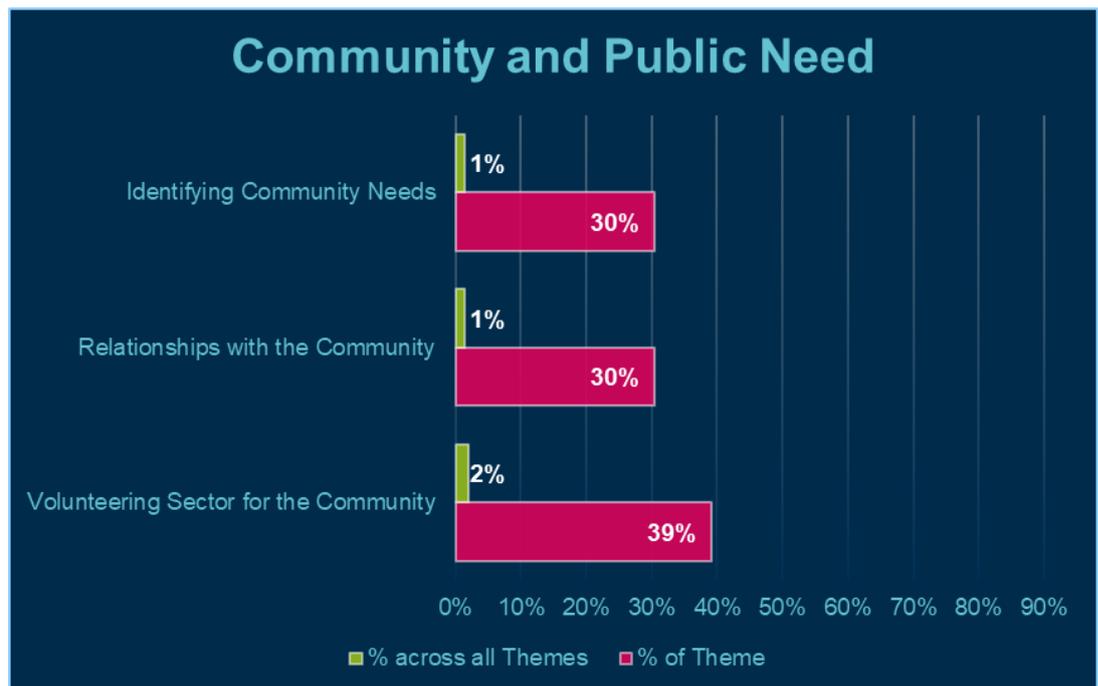


Figure 10. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the sub-themes in the overall theme of Community and Public Need (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Identifying Community Needs

There was discussion about the developing urgency to understand the impact on the health and social inequalities of the pandemic within communities. This includes understanding the impact and consequences of the management of the pandemic both in the immediate, medium and longer term.

Delegates provided consistent agreement of their need to better understand the nature and scope of impacts on their communities. There was concern about how to gain much needed insight and information about impacts to the local economy and services used by those at risk. There were also significant concerns aired about the resilience of their communities and their ongoing support as lockdown measures ease.

“Moving from the response phase into recovery, the growing problem of food poverty is really stark. The Food strategy appears weak and needs stronger direction to ensure there is no unmet need. Food banks are doing an amazing brilliant job but need to be part of a structured national response -- it feels too ad-hoc and under-funded.”

“We have been fortunate that the public have been overwhelmingly in support of measures in most areas and supportive of enforcement action. Fresh Covid measures in a second peak might attract less public support and it is clear we cannot enforce our way out of this problem”

“In the NHS we need more trained staff who can deliver the support required to settings, we need more mental health staff to be trained to deliver the right intervention. We need to be supporting faith and community groups who are also we have to move to planning for the medium term on the assumption that C19 will remain with us.”

Delegates reported a range of activities to inform their understanding of community needs which includes surveys, data analysis, horizon scanning groups, engaging with existing partnerships to gather intelligence, intelligence from the local voluntary and community sector and direct contact with community members, councillors and staff knowledge and expertise. Delegates asked for better mapping of trends of needs and the use of national and local data (formal and informal) to understand how policy translates in to practice.

“We don’t have data and horizon scanning in our plans. We now have better links with people who can do this”

“We are using a mix of surveys, direct liaison with businesses, voluntary groups etc, feedback from Councillors / Town and Parish Councils and feedback from our own staff interaction.”

Relationships with the Community

Community expectations and how to respond and manage these were discussed within this sub-theme. The ability to effectively connect and manage partnerships with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations was seen as crucial to managing some aspects of community need going forward and in maintaining a relationship with the community.

“Preserving the connected and compassionate communities really important; but takes some support and coordination. Not street parties, but local actors listening to local communities at a micro-geography level and listening to their asks then acting on them”

“Many competent people have come forward as volunteers including those who still have skills and abilities despite being retired. An effective longer- term resourcing plan for harnessing these assets is still a big gap.”

Specific tension points were identified in the context of community relationships. These include the potential for unmet community expectations as services are not able to offer the level and scope that they did pre-Covid. Delegates discussed that they were challenged to be more efficient in the way in which they facilitated community resilience. They recognised that communications needed to be stronger and that public engagement and public sector ownership of these needed to increase. Some of this could be addressed through an increased partnership with

the voluntary and community sector. As well as addressing issues of statutory partner's capacity, there was also a will from delegates that they wanted to try and preserve the experience of a more connected and compassionate community, but recognised this was demanding to facilitate. This was especially the case in some areas where the voluntary and community sector was expecting to shrink following the end of the furlough scheme and the relaxing of lockdown measures.

“Similarly community expectation could be a real concern as we may not be able to offer our usual service to communities at risk”

There were discussions about how structures and processes such as the Multi Agency Information Cell (MAIC) could be used to inform on continuing and new community issues such as demonstrations, unmet needs, EU Transition and economic recovery. This was identified as enabling the understanding of risk and informing BAU and response. Whilst some delegates identified this as mission creep, others saw this as an appropriate method of enabling good information flow about multi-agency challenges and contexts regarding the community. It was seen as a way to understand and focus efforts on strengthening the relationship with the communities.

“Tasking the MAIC to collate and report on side issues, such as the BLM protests adds the capability of all agencies involved, along with the LRF response, to understand risk areas and inform both BAU and response accordingly. Good information flow is critical”

Volunteering Sector for the Community

Discussion of this sub-theme includes the ability to retain the current volunteering activity and convert that in to longer-term capability. A particular priority was voluntary help for those members of the community who were vulnerable before the pandemic, or whose experience of the pandemic has led to the development of vulnerabilities. Overall it was clear that the role of the voluntary sector was appreciated and there was a feeling that there should be some way of recognising this contribution.

“It is clear that the voluntary sector are playing a critical role in the current response. As we move into recovery they will become even more important.”

“Volunteers as a whole should become a greater resource for the LRF going forward.”

“Be great to have a more formal way of acknowledging the support provided by volunteers during the response phase which allows them to use it on a CV or job application. Some areas are doing this well, others are refusing.”

Despite the recognition of the role of volunteers, there were some issues arising in relation to the co-ordination of the voluntary sector. Many in the

voluntary sector provide vital support to Government policies but delegates reported that their voice was not being heard. The volunteer schemes were identified by delegates as a way to provide additional support in linking the national policy and local strategic decisions with local level implementation. However as there were some reports of them not being used, there was the risk of disenfranchising volunteers.

“Volunteer agencies are in some cases struggling to be heard and their needs understood, many of these agencies provide vital support to government, and their needs should be recognised.”

“The National volunteer scheme has been disconnected from local areas, which is not helpful as these are residents that we want to continue to engage and support. Understanding how many were recruited in the area and what tasks they had signed up to do at an earlier stage would have helped and assisted planning and likely would have led to them being used more effectively...local authorities have relied on their own volunteering schemes and existing voluntary sector agencies. We run the risk of disenfranchising people from this type of activity in future”

Working with the volunteer base was discussed by delegates as a way to better understand how decisions might impact vulnerable people such as developing plans for rough sleepers, those in the community who are disadvantaged due to the digital divide (access to the internet), or those with lower IT literacy or lower English literacy (skill uplift). Volunteers were seen by delegates as an important partnership going forward in the support of the community, both in relation to phases of recovery and in the supporting emergency response such as management of a of local outbreak. There was talk of community foundations and community hubs as being a successful model that could be built on.

“We are baking in disadvantage as so much switched to digital that for those who couldn't access this has been very difficult and the promised schemes to address not fit for purpose-response.”

“The Compassionate Communities Hub has been a great success during Covid. Build on these arrangements - use existing local arrangements, networks, mechanisms.”

“Focus on local authorities means that they need to be supported. Community Hubs are starting to fade away and this is not necessarily a positive step and could be used to manage the response and recovery in small pockets and a potential indicator to a second wave.”

Delegates discussed the need to update skill identification in volunteer plans and to update their plans in general with the aim of achieving a more co-ordinated approach to volunteering in the coming phases of managing the pandemic. This was particularly in relation to mental health, emergency community groups, health planning for subsequent waves and intelligence gathering on community unmet need. Currently local level decision-makers have managed engagement with the voluntary and community sector as an evolving process, as the NHS volunteers, the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCS EP) and grassroots community

organisations evolved and developed throughout the management of the pandemic. Moving forward, delegates wished to co-ordinate and develop this in to a longer-term plan.

“Full engagement of community and voluntary sector within the health planning and oversight of further waves.”

“Better sharing of information with our volunteers. The number of volunteers is way beyond what we are used to and we were slow to start out engagement due to staff issues. Better engagement and identification of their skills is now being written into our volunteer plans.”

“The voluntary sector has much to offer in support of those experiencing poor mental health during a crisis, a planned approach led by MH Partnership Trusts would offer leadership and co-ordination.”

“As a VCS organisation we are working with wide networks of grass roots community organisations to help enable and empower them but also to glean information and intelligence on unmet need.”

Recommendations for Community and Public Need

Recommendation 7.1: Government should work with LRFs and LAs to collate and share the range of methods being used to identify and map community cohesion, community vulnerability and community solidarity. This would inform priorities of the immediate recovery work, and also the approach of future community relationships in the context of Local Outbreak Management and support aggregation to the sub-national and national levels whilst allowing local innovation to be maintained.

Recommendation 7.2: A review of the contribution made to the Covid-19 response by the voluntary and community sector should be undertaken to identify best practice and opportunities for strengthening the coordination, consistency and understanding of support provided and ensure the voices of the voluntary and community sectors are fully heard.

Summary of Main Findings and Conclusions

This interim review was carried out at the point in time where the public narrative was focussed on easing lockdown measures, and when response and recovery activities were operating in full alongside each other and local management of outbreaks was just developing. This review aimed to capture the issues arising from simultaneous and overlapping response, recovery and local outbreak management. In so doing, it outlines the challenges and learning from delegates who were managing these clusters of activities.

It is recognised that the landscape of the response and recovery from Covid-19 is constantly changing. This debrief took place before the Leicester local outbreak was acted upon, and just after the presentation - 'Second Interim Operational Review UK Cross Sector 10kv-Cloud Workshop: Rapid thematic analysis to inform ongoing Response and new Recovery' of the rapid thematic analysis was finalised. At the time of writing the extended lockdown measures within an area of Leicester were being lifted, as the final report was completed five weeks after the debrief took place.

Despite the changing nature of the situation, the issues raised by delegates in this report are still live issues that need to be considered and adopted into national and local learning. The recommendations have been developed in recognition of the changing landscape so that they address both priority issues to be addressed in the short term to enhance management of Covid-19 and its broader impacts, but also feed forward into larger issues surrounding the future focus and direction of emergency management and civil contingencies in the UK.

This second interim operational review was also written in the context of a first interim operational review having previously been completed. Whilst there are common threads between these reviews, a few of which are eluded to, they have been written in isolation as stand-alone reports of their respective datasets. Subsequent analyses will draw the learning from these different reports together after a third review has been carried out in September 2020.

Main Findings

The seven main themes were presented based on the analysis.

The seven main themes are:

- 1) Disconnect between local and national. This had two sub-themes, developing planning assumptions in a vacuum and communication from government.
- 2) Cross-partnership working is key. This had two sub-themes, multi-agency working and partnership coordination.
- 3) Managing the health of key structures into the future. This had two sub-themes, health of key structures and managing into the future.
- 4) Managing local outbreaks. This had three sub-themes, stretched capacity of the workforce, integrating new structures and managing the unknown.
- 5) Learning and adapting. This had two sub-themes, understanding how to learn in an ongoing incident and do we have fit for purpose structures and policy.

6) Consequences to the individual. This had two sub-themes, our people are tired and recognition of actions.

7) Community and public need. This had three sub-themes, identifying community needs, relationships with the community and volunteering sector for the community.

This report has presented each of those seven themes and their associated sub-themes, detailing the 20 recommendations that have been developed from those themes.

Next Steps

The recommendations from this report will be disseminated to the C19 National Strategic Foresight Group, participants and the emergency management membership across the UK, before subsequent publication.

Conclusions of the Review Process

This review was carried out online by The Hydra Foundation, and required a significant scale up of the existing technology and capacity. The technology and methodology was successful and yielded a rich set of data. As noted in the introduction, in this second interim review, a lot more of the data was discursive, with delegates commenting on points others raised. It is important to note that this process therefore offers a methodology in which the importance of issues can be explored in relation to the quantity of issues raised around a given theme but also the extent to which they produced discussion. To enable the learning from the review to be fed back in real time, the analysis process adopted enabled a fast turn-around of high-level findings followed by rapid development of this more in-depth final report with academics working alongside subject matter experts.

The importance of this review is that it took place mid response and brought together the breadth of LRFs. This means the learning contained in this report is unique as it is not limited to a single LRF, nor is it post-incident. The review took place at a distinctive point in time, as recovery became a dual focus alongside response and local outbreak plans were being developed. The findings provide a comprehensive overview of the different issues arising in that context, provide key learning, and identify key challenges. A measure of the success of the review process and the flexibility of the national response and recovery structures will be whether these challenges can be engaged with effectively and if the learning influences policy and practice in real time.

That it has taken place mid-response and, like the first report, gone from data collection through to analysis and then production of a report within five weeks has been a significant, but highly worthwhile challenge.

Disconnect between National and Local: Finding One

Recommendation 1.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government should provide LRFs with a single set of updated Reasonable Worst Case Scenario planning assumptions for Covid-19 to help improve consistency in response and recovery planning across the UK and build trust and confidence between the local and national levels. These planning assumptions should be updated regularly and cover, as a minimum, the 12 months from September 2020.

Recommendation 1.2: LRFs should be engaged by the UK Government to identify the data and intelligence sharing needs of LRFs and develop a commonly understood protocol that ensures timely, ethical, accurate, transparent and actionable sharing, both horizontally and vertically, of data and intelligence on Covid-19.

Recommendation 1.3: The UK Government should establish a LRF Advisory Group, drawn from and representative of the existing LRFs across the country, to promote more effective consultation and engagement between the local and national levels in areas such as the development and implementation of policy and guidance, data/intelligence sharing, training, debriefing and learning, improving vertical and horizontal communication between partner agencies and Government departments and with our local communities.

Cross-partnership Working is Key: Finding Two

Recommendation 2.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government should rapidly establish a common debrief methodology and shared learning mechanism to ensure learning and good practice is captured, shared and acted upon in real time, to both mitigate harm now, and influence the future response, to Covid-19. Reviews and local debriefs should aim to identify the enabling factors of the successful longer term response and recovery partnerships in this unique situation.

Recommendation 2.2: A review of the range and sometimes adhoc regional/sub-national Government, LRF and Health structures and networks established for the Covid-19 emergency should be undertaken to identify where they are adding real value and those areas where enhancing cross-border working could improve the effectiveness of response and recovery activity.

Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future: Finding Three

Recommendation 3.1 (PRIORITY): The UK Government needs to urgently engage with LRFs to identify and resolve the immediate capacity and resourcing needs and financial assistance required for local multi-agency response/recovery structures to sustain an effective Covid-19 response, manage concurrent threats and also maintain core business as usual services over the next 12 months and beyond.

Recommendation 3.2: The UK Government should continue to develop more detailed guidance on the purpose, functions and scope of an LRF MAIC to ensure a consistent approach across all LRFs and facilitate effective information and intelligence sharing across LRFs and nationally.

Managing Local Outbreaks: Finding Four

Recommendation 4.1: Government should regularly issue authoritative guidance that clearly delineates the powers, responsibilities and role of local and national responding agencies and structures in the management of local outbreak infections. This guidance needs to reflect that different parts of the country and indeed the system, will be at different stages of response and recovery and need to retain the agility to act without impacting the progress on recovery.

Learning and Adapting: Finding Five

Recommendation 5.1: In order to maximise consistency in approach, minimise duplication of effort and enable the effective sharing of learning and good practice between all stakeholders, UK Government should clarify where responsibility lies in supporting LRFs and Government Departments in coordinating their ongoing training, exercising and debriefing needs in the context of the CCA.

Recommendation 5.2 (PRIORITY): To ensure consistency of response in each local area, Government should produce pandemic principles to enable local areas to develop Covid-19 (infectious disease) specific plans.

Recommendation 5.3: To ensure delivery of Rec 5.2 and consistency of approach across all LRFs, Government should develop and implement an appropriate assurance mechanism through which all LRFs can be independently assessed against these pandemic principles and other relevant national resilience standards.

Recommendation 5.4: At an appropriate time, the UK Government should review the effectiveness of the wider civil contingencies legislative framework and associated guidance in the context of learning from Covid-19. The scope of the review should seek to address accountability, responsibility, resourcing and funding at both local and national levels.

Recommendation 5.5 (PRIORITY): In the immediate term, UK Government should produce supplementary guidance, underpinning the UK Concept of Operations for the management of a national emergency, specific to Covid-19, that provides clarity to all stakeholders on the roles, responsibilities and structures at local and national levels and how the enduring response and recovery to the Covid-19 crisis is being managed.

Recommendation 5.6: In the longer term, the UK ConOps document should be updated given the context of Covid-19 to ensure all stakeholders are clear on the roles, responsibilities and structures at local and national levels to manage the response and recovery to a wider range of foreseeable major incidents and national emergencies.

Consequences to the Individual: Finding Six

Recommendation 6.1 (PRIORITY): In the immediate term, national support structures such as *Our Frontline*, *Mind, Mind for Emergency Responders* *NHS crisis lines* should be publicised by all partnership organisations to their staff.

Recommendation 6.2 (PRIORITY): LRFs and associated multi-agency partnerships should urgently consider the merits of establishing a broader duty of care framework and encouraging mutual aid between organisations more experienced in supporting the health and wellbeing of not just first responders but all those involved in the enduring response to Covid-19.

Recommendation 6.3: LRFs and associated multi-agency partnerships should formally engage appropriate mental health professionals to ensure their approach to supporting the health and wellbeing of all those involved in the enduring response to Covid-19 is effective.

Recommendation 6.4: LRFs and associated multi-agency partnerships should consider ways in which they can recognise the efforts of their staff and community achievements during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Community and Public Need: Finding Seven

Recommendation 7.1: Government should work with LRFs and LAs to collate and share the range of methods being used to identify and map community cohesion, community vulnerability and community solidarity. This would inform priorities of the immediate recovery work, and also the approach of future community relationships in the context of Local Outbreak Management and support aggregation to the sub-national and national levels whilst allowing local innovation to be maintained.

Recommendation 7.2: A review of the contribution made to the Covid-19 response by the voluntary and community sector should be undertaken to identify best practice and opportunities for strengthening the coordination, consistency and understanding of support provided and ensure the voices of the voluntary and community sectors are fully heard.

Technical Appendices

This gives further detail and context to the discussions throughout the report.

Table Representing Theme Structure: Appendix One

Table one below gives the sub-theme and theme structure in the table below.

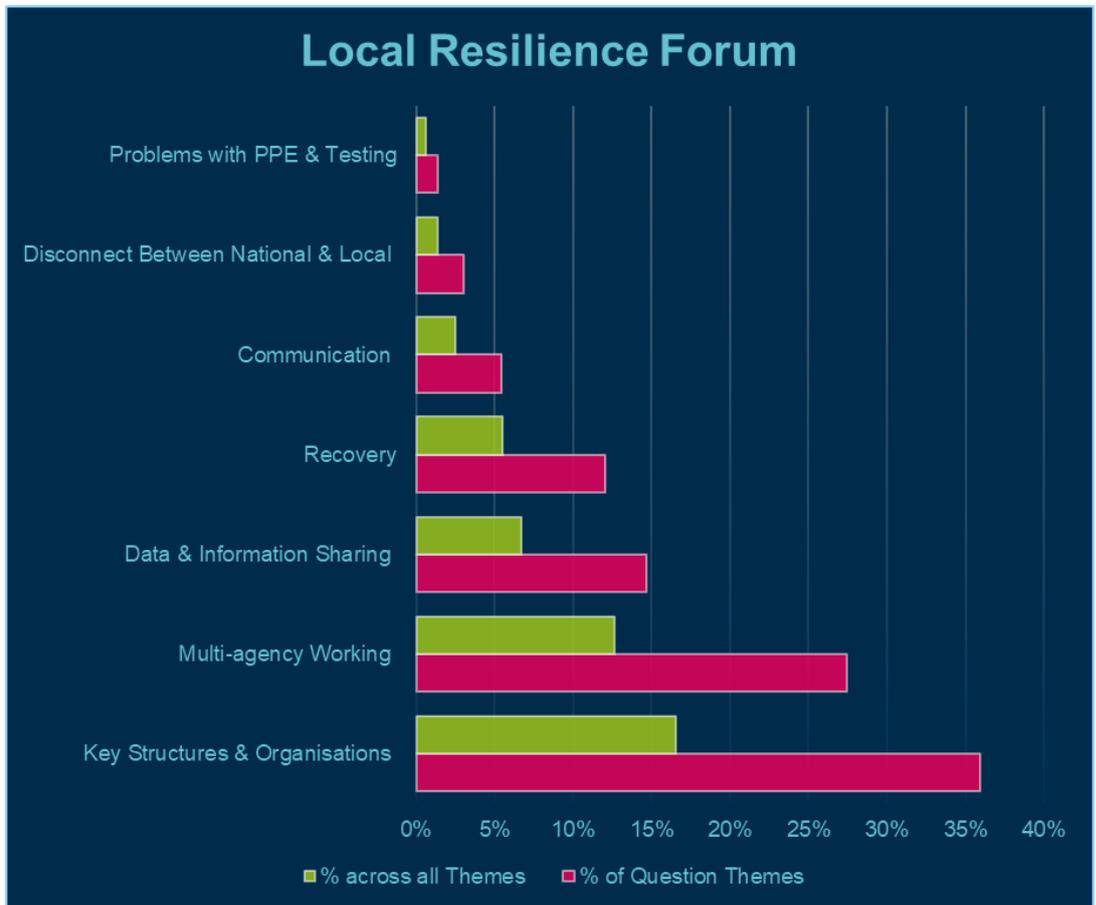
Overall Theme	Subtheme	Theme generated in section (Local/Regional/National/ Concurrent/Forward Look/ Personal Reflections)	
Disconnect Between National and Local	S1 Developing Planning Assumptions in a Vacuum	S1 - LRF - Data & Information Sharing	
		S1 - LRF - Disconnect between National & Local	
		S1 - National - Guidance & Planning	
		S1 - National - Data & Information Sharing	
	S2 Communication from Government	S2 - LRF - Communication	
		S2 - Sub-National - Inclusivity Required	
		S2 - National - Communication	
		S2 - National - Key Contacts	
		S2 - Forward Look - Communication	
	Cross-Partnership Working is Key	S1 Multi-Agency Working	S1 - LRF - Multi-agency working
S1 - Sub-National - Organisational Relationship Management			
S1 - National - Partnership Working			
S1 - National - Politics			
S1 - Personal Reflections - Partners inc VSC intel			
S2 Partnership Coordination		S2 - Sub-National - Benefits of Regional Structures	
		S2 - National - Coordination	
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Military Partners	
Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future		S1 Health of Key Structures	S1 - LRF - Key Structures & Organisations
			S1 - Sub-National - LRF Stretched in Resources & Scope
	S1 - National - LRF Funding & Resource		
	S1 - Personal Reflections - LRF Organisational Issues		
	S1 - Personal Reflections - Structures & Policy		

Overall Theme	Subtheme	Theme generated in section (Local/Regional/National/ Concurrent/Forward Look/ Personal Reflections)
Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future	S2 Managing into the Future	S2 - LRF - Recovery
		S2 - LRF - Problems with PPE & Testing
		S2 - National - PPE
		S2 - National - Ways of Working
		S2 - Concurrent - Resources are Challenged
		S2 - Concurrent - Impacts on Capacity
		S2 - Concurrent - New & Existing Structures
		S2 - Forward Look - Finances
		S2 - Forward Look - Timeframes
		S2 - Forward Look - Sustainability
		S2 - Forward Look - Resources
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Recovery
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Finance
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Supplies
Managing Local Outbreaks	S1 Integrating New Structures	S1 - Sub-National - Integrating New Structures
		S1 - Concurrent - The Flatpack Approach
		S1 - Forward Look - Using Existing Structures
		S1 - Forward Look - Preparedness
		S1 - Personal Reflections - Infrastructure
	S2 Managing the Unknown	S2 - Concurrent - Unknowing of LOMP
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Second Wave
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Risk
	S3 Stretched Capacity of the Workforce	S3 - Forward Look - Workforce
	Learning and Adapting	S1 Understanding how to learn in an ongoing incident
S1 - National - RD		
S1 - National - Learning		
S1 - Concurrent - Methods of Preparedness for Concurrent		
S1 - Forward Look - Learning		
S1 - Personal Reflections - Essential Learning		
S1 - Personal Reflections - 10kv		
S1 - Personal Reflections - Uncertainty & Planning		
S1 - Personal Reflections - Training		

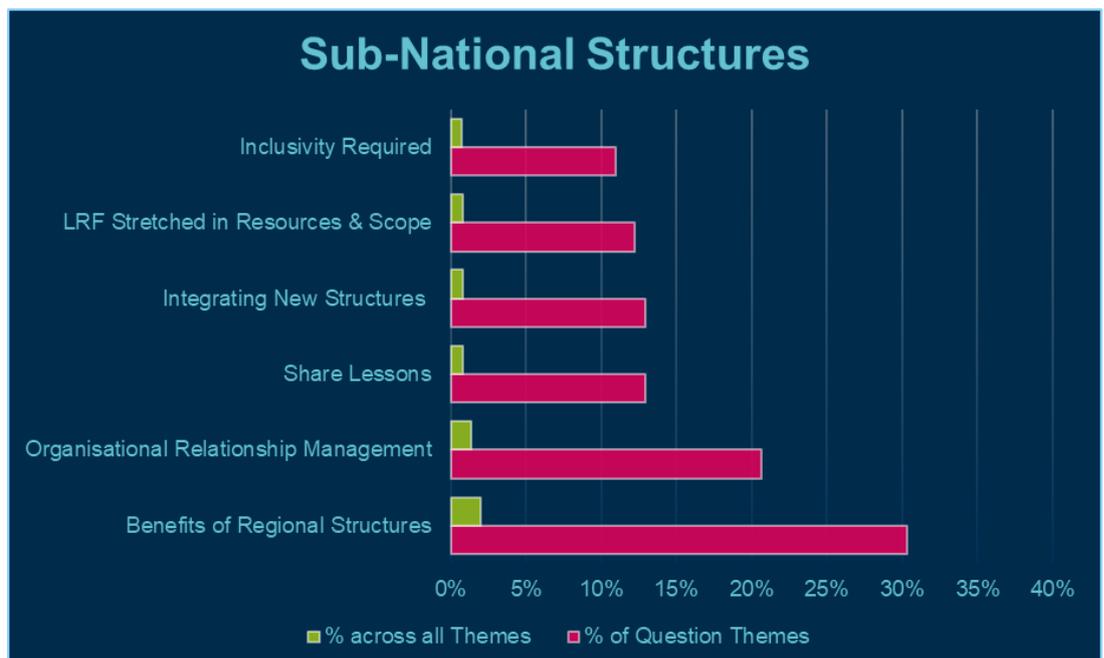
Overall Theme	Subtheme	Theme generated in section (Local/Regional/National/ Concurrent/Forward Look/ Personal Reflections)
Learning and Adapting	S2 Do We Have Fit for Purpose Structures and Policy?	S2 - LRF - Disconnect Between National & Local
		S2 - Forward Look - Reviewing Structures
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Clear Messages Gov LRF Role
		S2 - Personal Reflections - CCA Review
Consequences to the Individual	S1 Our People are Tired	S1 - Concurrent - Capacity of People is a Concern
		S1 - Personal Reflections - Fatigue & MH
		S1 - Personal Reflections - Perceptions
		S1 - Personal Reflections - Cause for Concern
	S2 Recognition of Actions	S2 - Forward Look - Recognition of Actions
		S2 - Personal Reflections - Pride & Success
Community and Public Need	S1 Identifying Community Needs	S1 - Forward Look - Identifying Community Need
		S1 - Personal Reflections - Communities
		S1 - Personal Reflections - Other Health Issues
		S1 - Personal Reflections - Memorial for Lost Lives
	S2 Relationships with the Community	S2 - Concurrent - Relationship with Community
	S3 Volunteering Sector for the Community	S3 - National - Vulnerable
		S3 - National - Volunteers

Appendix Table 1. Mapping of the themes generated during the coding of each section to the overall themes/subthemes reported in the main report

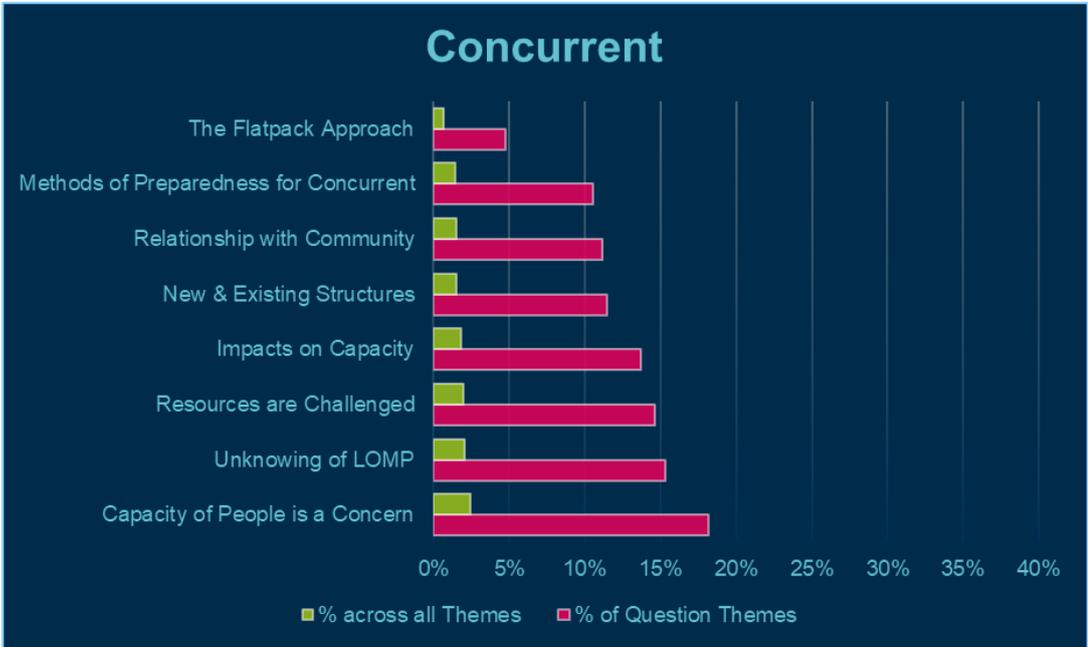
Graphs Showing the Percentages of Codes Contributing to Sub-themes and their Main Themes by Question Set



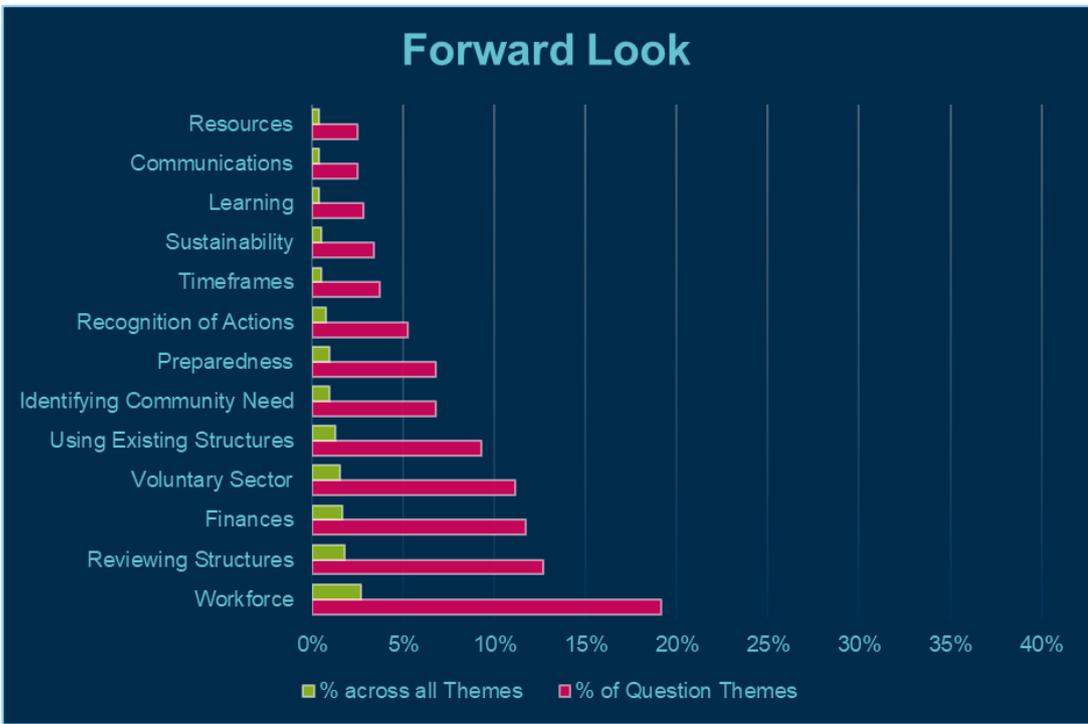
Appendix Table 1. Mapping of the themes generated during the coding of each section to the overall themes/sub-themes reported in the main report



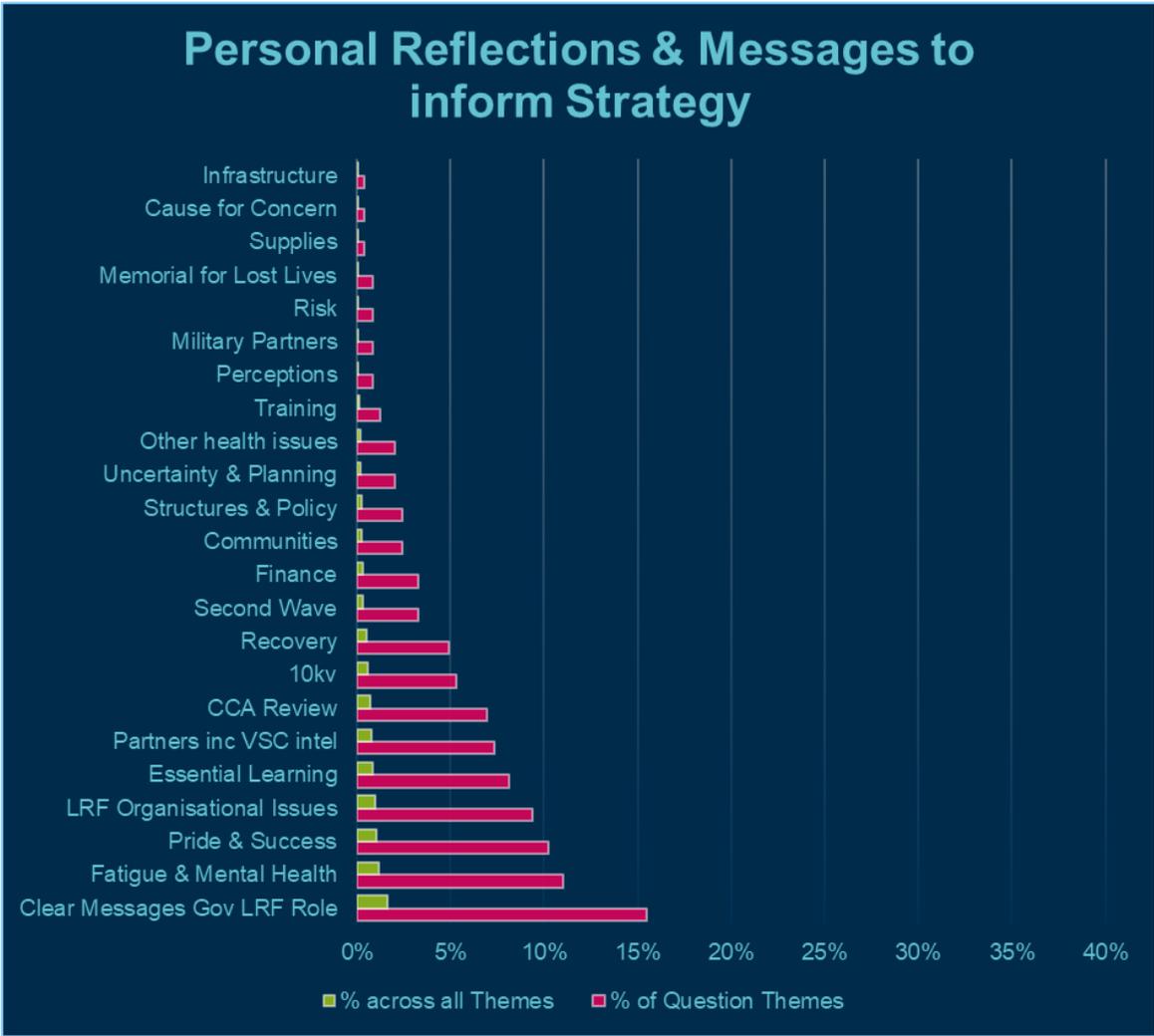
Appendix Figure 2: Theme percentages for Section 2 – Sub-national Support



Appendix Figure 4: Theme percentages for Section 4 - Concurrent Emergency

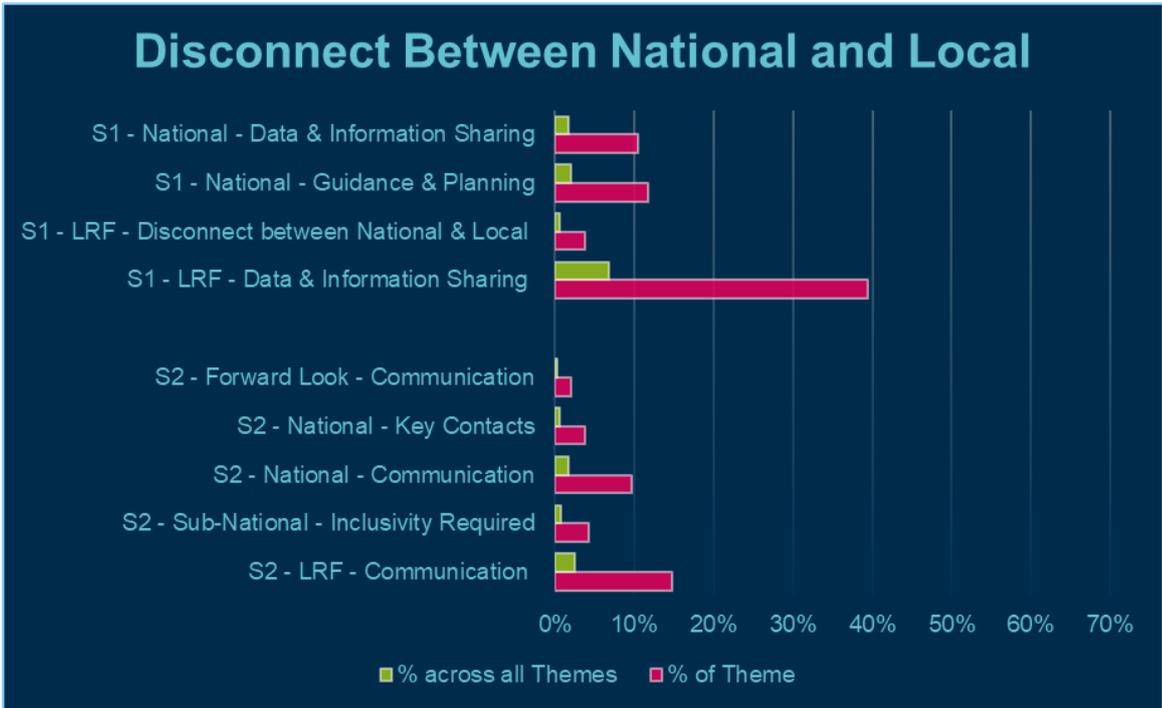


Appendix Figure 5: Theme percentages for Section 5 - Forward Look



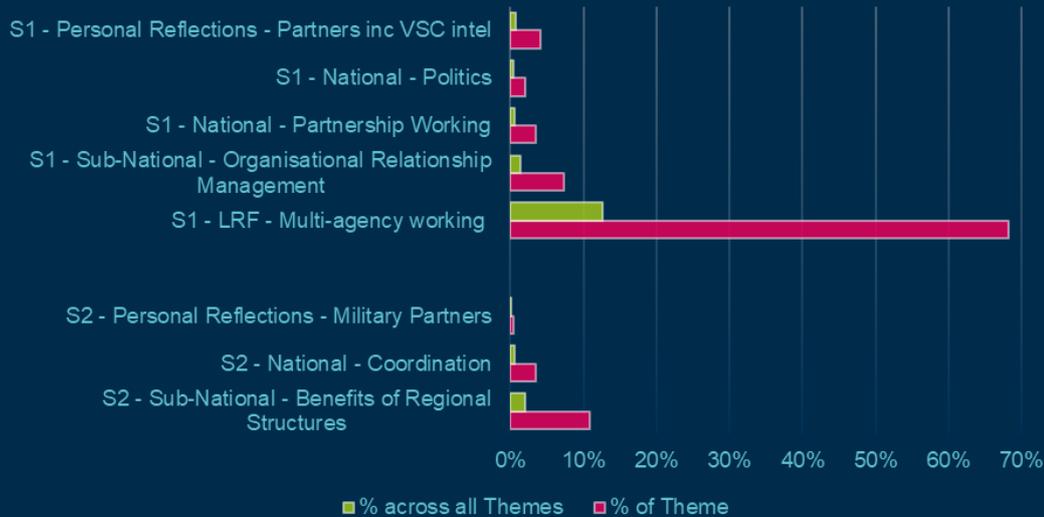
Appendix Figure 6: Theme percentages for Section 6 - Personal Reflections & Insights

Graphs Showing the Percentages of Codes Contributing to Sub-themes and their Main Themes by Findings



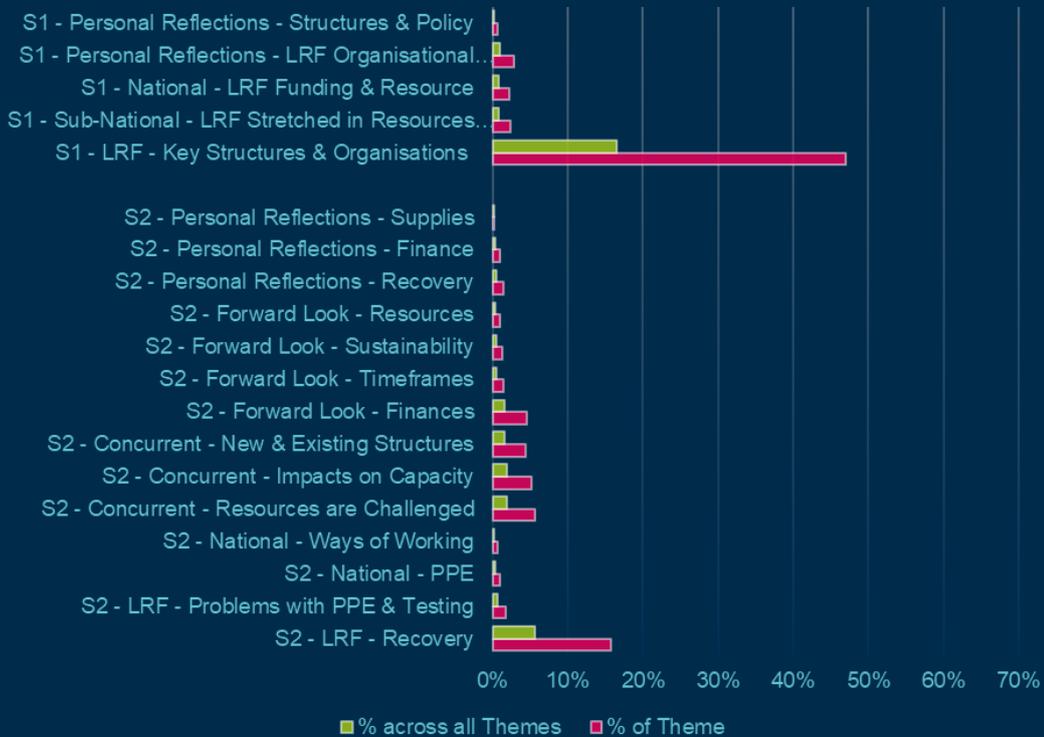
Appendix Figure 7. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the subthemes (S1-S2 as per Appendix Table 1) in the overall issue of *Disconnect Between National and Local* (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Cross-Partnership Working is Key



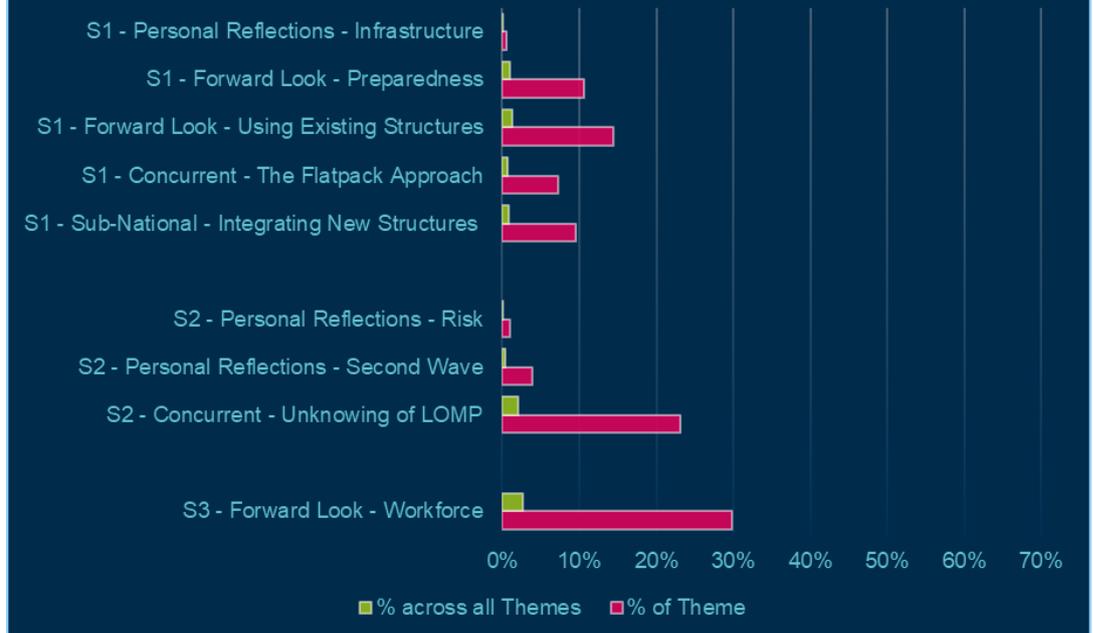
Appendix Figure 8. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the subthemes (S1-S2 as per Appendix Table 1) in the overall issue of Cross-Partnership Working is Key (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future



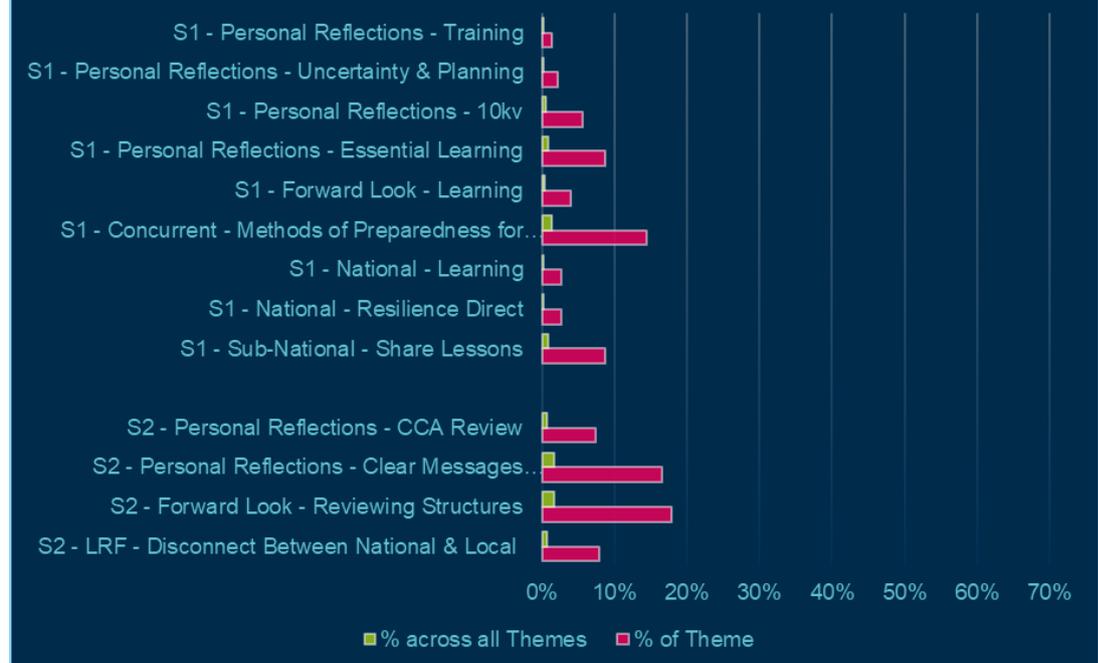
Appendix Figure 9. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the subthemes (S1-S2 as per Appendix Table 1) in the overall issue of Managing the Health of Key Structures into the Future (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Managing Local Outbreaks



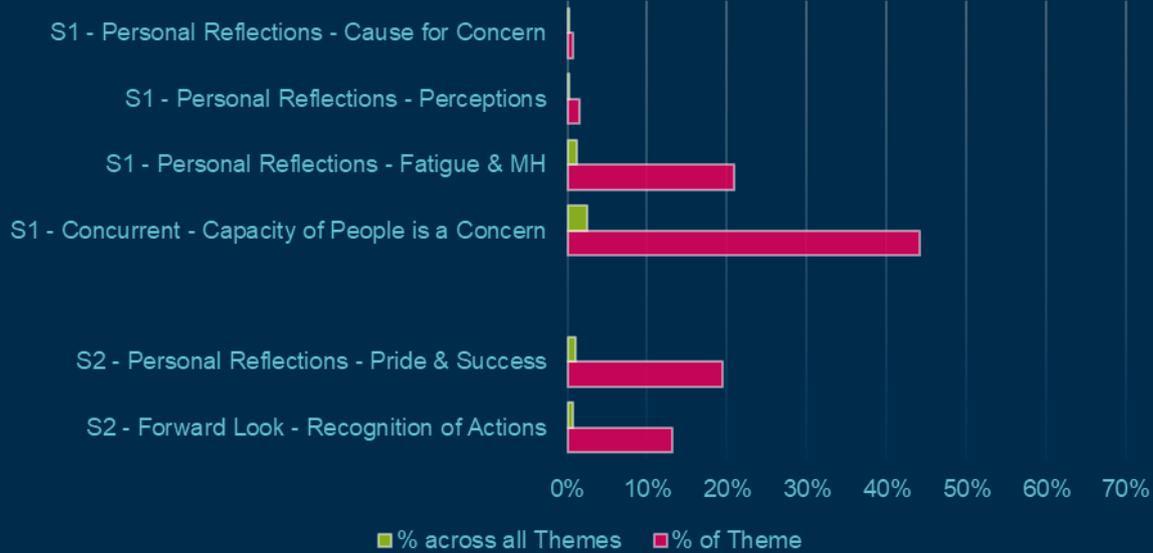
Appendix Figure 10. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the subthemes (S1-S3 as per Appendix Table 1) in the overall issue of Managing Local Outbreaks (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Learning and Adapting



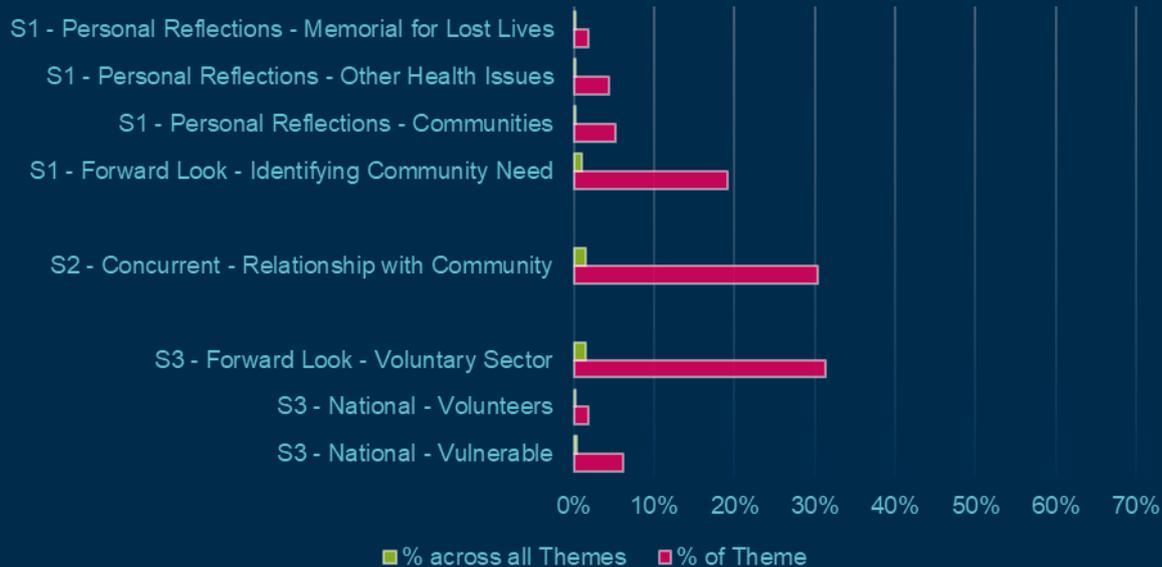
Appendix Figure 11. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the subthemes (S1-S2 as per Appendix Table 1) in the overall issue of Managing Local Outbreaks (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Consequences to the Individual



Appendix Figure 12. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the subthemes (S1-S2 as per Appendix Table 1) in the overall issue of *Consequences to the Individual* (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

Community and Public Need



Appendix Figure 13. The percentage of the codes generated for each of the subthemes (S1-S3 as per Appendix Table 1) in the overall issue of *Community and Public Need* (% of Theme), and as a percentage of the total codes generated across all themes (% across all Themes).

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