

The Amber Book: Appendices

United Hampshire Government

10 August 2026

Purpose

These appendices support The Amber Book: Managing crisis in central government. They provide the common reference material needed to plan, activate, coordinate and close central crisis arrangements without duplicating the doctrine in the main book. They must be read with applicable legislation, constitutional sources, departmental plans, professional standards and operational command arrangements.

Appendix A: The resilience cycle

Prevention and mitigation

Government should reduce the likelihood or impact of serious risks where proportionate and within lawful competence. Risk owners identify practicable mitigations, dependencies and capability gaps and ensure that responsibility for agreed action is clear.

Preparation

Preparation includes risk assessment, planning, capability development, training, exercising, resilient staffing, communications, records arrangements, contacts and access to required systems. Lead Government Departments should understand the consequences for which they are likely to lead and the authorities with which they will need to work.

Response

Response begins when an incident requires action to protect people, maintain essential functions, preserve constitutional and governmental continuity or control material consequences. Operational services and competent authorities continue to exercise their own functions. Central coordination is added where it provides material value.

Recovery

Recovery restores services and institutions, supports affected people and communities, resolves residual risks and returns temporary measures to ordinary governance. Recovery planning begins during response and should identify a lead, objectives, dependencies, resources, accountability and closure conditions.

Learning and adaptation

Exercises and real incidents should generate evidenced lessons and recorded actions. Learning is complete only when an agreed change is implemented, a risk is accepted by the competent authority or the action is otherwise formally closed.

Appendix B: Authority and legal considerations

Principle

Crisis arrangements do not create legal authority. Ministers, officials, governments, public bodies and operational services act under the constitutional, statutory, delegated or other recognised authority that applies to the function concerned.

Authority check

Before a material action is directed or taken, the responsible team should be able to identify the competent decision-maker; the function or power relied upon; any threshold, consultation or approval requirement; territorial extent; financial authority; information-sharing basis; record required; review or expiry condition; and any affected rights, safeguards or independent functions.

Emergency and accelerated action

Urgency may shorten ordinary timescales where law and proper administration permit, but it does not remove the need for authority, necessity, proportionality, reasons, records and later review. Temporary delegations, access arrangements, contracts, restrictions and workarounds must be explicit and should end when no longer justified.

Legal support

The Attorney General's Office and Government Legal Department support the Government according to their respective responsibilities. The responsible policy department remains responsible for the substance of its proposal. Where legislation or another formal instrument is required, the competent legal and parliamentary route must be used.

Independent and operational functions

Central crisis coordination must preserve judicial independence, prosecutorial independence where applicable, independent regulatory functions and the operational command of police, fire and rescue, health and other services. Attendance at COBR does not transfer those functions to the Cabinet Office.

Appendix C: Default central response assumptions

The following assumptions apply unless the facts or competent authority require a different arrangement:

1. The substantive function remains with the organisation that owns it.
2. A Lead Government Department is identified for the principal central government risk or consequence.
3. Each other department retains responsibility for consequences within its remit.
4. Hampshire County Government retains devolved competence for Hampshire County.
5. The Cabinet Office coordinates the centre of government but does not become the operational commander.
6. A Lead Minister is identified where ministerial leadership is required.
7. A Crisis Senior Responsible Owner is appointed for a response requiring integrated senior official leadership.
8. The National Situation Centre supports the central information picture.
9. COBR is activated only where it adds material value beyond ordinary coordination.
10. Decisions and actions are recorded with owner, authority and review point.
11. Communications identify which authority is speaking and which authority is making a material decision.
12. Recovery and stand-down are considered from the beginning of the response.

Minimum activation record

The activation record should identify: incident or risk; date and time; authorising authority; Lead Government Department; Lead Minister where identified; Crisis SRO where identified; level of

meeting; chair; immediate objectives; principal participants; secretariat; information requirements; communications lead; urgent decisions; and next review point.

Minimum COBR record

For each meeting, the authoritative record should identify attendance; situation summary; material uncertainties; decisions; decision-maker and authority; actions; owners; deadlines or review points; unresolved issues; escalations; communications decisions; and date or condition for the next meeting or stand-down review.

Appendix D: Information and the Commonly Recognised Information Picture

Purpose of the CRIP

The Commonly Recognised Information Picture is the agreed central summary of the information required for shared understanding and decision-making. It is concise, decision-focused and linked to authoritative source systems. It is not a replacement for operational logs, intelligence systems, case records or specialist analysis.

Content

A CRIP should normally cover: what has happened; confirmed facts; assessed information; forecasts; affected people and places; impacts on services and institutions; response activity; principal risks; significant uncertainties; dependencies; decisions required; communications considerations; and expected developments.

Provenance and confidence

Information owners remain responsible for the accuracy and provenance of the information they supply. The CRIP must distinguish confirmed fact from assessment, forecast and unverified reporting. Material disagreement between competent sources should remain visible until resolved.

Security and access

Information is shared on a need-to-know and need-to-act basis consistent with applicable security, data-protection, intelligence, legal and operational controls. Restrictions should protect sensitive information without preventing competent decision-makers from receiving what they require.

Continuity

Where primary systems are unavailable, temporary records and fallback communications may be used under authorised continuity arrangements. Material decisions and evidence must be reconciled into the authoritative record as soon as practicable.

Appendix E: Emergency management in Havenstead and the central system

Havenstead is governed by the United Hampshire State. The United Hampshire Government therefore performs the central and Havenstead government functions allocated to it by the constitutional settlement. Departments, public bodies, local authorities and strategic authorities retain the responsibilities assigned to them.

Local and strategic response

Local authorities and the Steadfast & Hearth Combined Sphere Authority may coordinate functions within their competence. Their involvement in central crisis structures does not make them subordinate units of the Cabinet Office. Central departments should work through the responsible local-government, sponsor or operational relationship rather than bypassing the competent authority.

Public services

Police, infrastructure services, wellbeing and care services, education bodies and other public services operate through their own command, casework and professional arrangements. The Lead Government Department and Cabinet Office should understand dependencies between those systems and secure cross-government decisions where necessary without replacing operational leadership.

Appendix F: Emergency management in England and Hampshire County

Hampshire County Government is the devolved government for Hampshire County within England. It carries the functions allocated to it by the constitutional settlement and remains accountable through the Hampshire Chamber. United Hampshire central departments retain reserved and cross-country functions expressly allocated to them.

A crisis may therefore engage central and devolved responsibilities at the same time. The response must identify the authority responsible for each substantive function, any shared dependency and the forum in which coordination or escalation will occur.

HCG should maintain its own crisis-management arrangements for devolved responsibilities. United Hampshire Government participation, COBR participation or central support does not transfer HCG competence. Equally, HCG involvement does not prevent the United Hampshire Government from taking decisions within its own reserved or central competence.

Operational services in England, including police, fire and rescue, health, transport and other competent services, retain their own command arrangements and governmental relationships. Central crisis coordination should respect the responsible HCG department and the institutional level at which the service sits.

Appendix G: Working with Hampshire County Government in crisis response

Principles

Central and devolved crisis cooperation should be based on mutual respect, timely information, clarity of responsibility, early engagement, practical problem-solving and escalation only where necessary. Neither government should use crisis coordination to enlarge its constitutional competence.

Engagement

The Lead Government Department should identify the competent HCG counterpart early. Where the issue is wider than one portfolio, the England Office and Cabinet Office intergovernmental machinery should support coordination. The Cabinet Office should ensure HCG can participate in COBR where its responsibilities or material dependencies are engaged.

Information sharing

Each government should identify the information needed by the other to discharge its functions. Source limitations, confidence and restrictions should be recorded. Sensitive information is handled under the applicable security and legal controls.

Decisions

Where each government must decide within its own competence, records should distinguish the decisions. Where a joint or coordinated position is reached, the record should identify what has been agreed, who has authority to implement each part and any matter reserved for further decision.

Escalation

Issues should be resolved at the lowest effective level. Unresolved portfolio issues may move through the intergovernmental arrangements established by the Review of intergovernmental relations. Crisis urgency may justify direct senior ministerial engagement, but the decision and authority must still be recorded.

Communications

Where public messaging concerns both governments, communications teams should agree the factual position, responsibility, sequencing and spokesperson arrangements where practicable. Neither government should imply that it controls a function belonging to the other.

Appendix H: Recovery and lessons

Recovery initiation

The Lead Minister and Crisis SRO should identify the likely recovery lead and governance before acute response ends. If lead responsibility changes, the transfer record should state the receiving authority, open actions, residual risks, records, resources and review arrangements.

Recovery plan

A recovery plan should define outcomes; affected people, services and places; workstreams; accountable owners; financial and legal dependencies; public communications; measures of progress; residual risks; reporting; and closure conditions.

Lessons process

A lessons review should distinguish evidence from opinion and identify root causes, contributing factors, good practice, corrective actions, responsible owners and deadlines. Lessons affecting another institution should be referred to that institution for decision rather than imposed by the reviewing body.

Closure

A lesson is closed only when the responsible authority has implemented the action, formally accepted the residual risk or decided with reasons that no further action is justified. Closure should be evidenced in the appropriate action or risk record.

Glossary

COBR — the Cabinet Office central crisis coordination mechanism used at ministerial or official level.

Crisis Senior Responsible Owner — the senior official appointed to integrate the central government response where required.

CRIP — Commonly Recognised Information Picture.

HCG — Hampshire County Government.

Lead Government Department — the central government department with primary responsibility for coordinating the relevant risk or crisis at government level.

Lead Minister — the minister providing political leadership for the central government response within the assigned remit.

National Situation Centre — the Cabinet Office capability supporting central situational awareness and the CRIP.

Recovery — the coordinated process of restoring services and institutions, supporting affected people and places, resolving residual risks and returning temporary arrangements to ordinary governance.

Resilience — the ability to anticipate, assess, prevent or mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disruption.