

12 October 2018

## **Operational Learning**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This item is designed to provide information to members on the work of both National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL), in particular the continued progress and development of the National Operational Learning User Group (NOLUG), which utilises the current National Fire Chiefs Council structures alongside the Central Programme Office. NOLUG's aims are to support continual improvement by the FRS in the area of operational effectiveness; promote the expectation that all FRSs will make an ongoing commitment to information sharing wider than regional colleagues to enable the discharge of legal and moral duties; to share areas for improvement identified from operational learning, as widely as may be appropriate; and, to embed lessons across the fire and other sectors such as working closely with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP), in order to improve firefighter and responder safety.

### **Recommendation**

That the contents are noted.

### **Action**

Officers to take note of any actions that comes from discussion.

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## **Operational Learning**

### **Background**

1. Learning from operational activity goes beyond simply identifying what went well or what might have gone wrong. While this information is useful in determining how things could be done in future, learning has only truly been achieved when some form of change is actually implemented that ensures actions will be different in future.
2. Multi-agency learning i.e. involving Police, Fire and Ambulance is submitted through JOL Online, which is hosted on ResilienceDirect. This is a Cabinet Office secure system at official-sensitive government security classifications in line with and is the national repository for interoperability, national resilience lessons and notable practice across the UK.
3. Access to JOL Online is accessible to all Category 1 and 2 responders as well as many additional sponsored organisations. JESIP, supported by a wide range of stakeholders from the emergency services, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, the military and JOL Online developers have provided initial training since September 2017.
4. In 2012, the National Fire Chief's Council commissioned a programme of work to replace over 8,000 paper-based documents with an online only framework that delivers policy and tactical guidance that is compatible with other emergency services and tailorable to local needs.
5. Over the last six years the National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP) has taken the very best of current practice and experience from across the UK, assessed it, peer reviewed it and made it clear and accessible for the rest of the fire and rescue service.
6. As part of that Programme, the National Fire Chiefs Council sponsored a project to:
  - 6.1. Embed an Operational Learning doctrine into various pieces of national fire and rescue service governance therefore also achieving, by default, cascade through Fire and Rescue Service policies;
  - 6.2. Provide mechanisms (technological, procedural, behavioural) for reporting and analysing information;
  - 6.3. Promote a culture that encourages reporting, extracts learning, implements actions, and evaluates improvements;
  - 6.4. Derive learning from, and also use it to inform, a broad section of fire and rescue service provision, for instance firefighter competence, operational policy and procedure, equipment, H.S.E and wider responder community;
  - 6.5. Provide a sustainable process and mechanism that remains in place once the project has ended.

12 October 2018

- 6.6. Provide explicit links between National Operational Learning (or single service learning) and Joint Organisational Learning, removing any duplication, so that governance, process and learning can easily be shared, where appropriate.
7. National Operational Learning (NOL) is fundamental to the maintenance process of National Operational Guidance (NOG) products and will play a vital role going forward as the catalyst for the dynamic review of NOG as a direct result of learning from operational incidents.
8. Therefore, this project has provided the foundations for national operational learning and will continue to rely on the policies, practices, leadership and commitment of fire and rescue sector participants to make it happen and remain sustainable.

### **Current Progress**

#### ***National Operational Learning***

9. The NOL project is due to be completed by the end of October, where it will then become business as usual. The project has delivered a fully auditable end-to-end learning process based on “Bowtie” methodology, which uses barrier failure analysis techniques, to provide evidence based identification of the effectiveness of NOG. The system processes learning submitted from a range of sources, including UK fire and rescue services, Regulation 28 recommendations and international horizon scanning.
10. Nine trial fire and rescue services have been working with the project to test the learning systems. These are South Yorkshire, Merseyside, Hampshire, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire, Mid and West Wales, Scotland, London Fire Brigade and Cumbria.
11. The NOL process has recently been hailed as industry best practice by the Health & Safety Executive at the National Operational Learning User Group (NOLUG) Meeting. The Bowtie methodology, which the NOL process is based upon, is used extensively across other high-risk industries, such as health, oil, airline, mining and nuclear.
12. The process captures identified learning and compares it against the NOG framework of hazards, control measures, strategic and tactical actions to measure their effectiveness. The identification of gaps in guidance is addressed and where necessary, content is consulted upon and amended utilising the existing NOG governance.
13. The process is designed not only to review guidance retrospectively following low frequency high-impact learning events but to also identify emerging trends based on the capture of high frequency low-impact events, in an attempt to be in front of the curve of learning, rather than reacting to it. The process of going from having identified the controls, to assessing the performance based on actual data, is a process known as 'advanced barrier management'.

12 October 2018

14. A good practice guide for national operational learning events has been produced for fire and rescue services. It focuses on presenting good practice methods for gathering and assessing learning from operational activity within individual fire and rescue services. It also provides a route by which that learning can be shared with other fire and rescue services and the wider fire community through NOL.
15. The guide has been developed by the National Operational Learning secretariat and has brought together information from across the fire sector and from other high hazard industries. It has been subject to wide consultation and engagement and has been endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chief's Council and the Home Office.
16. Once learning has been submitted, it is collated and analysed by the NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO), in partnership with internal and external experts from across the fire sector, academia and private industry where appropriate. The CPO then propose recommendations to the NOLUG, who are the decision-making body of national learning sitting within the NFCC.
17. Work to fully integrate NOL into the UKFRS website is nearing completion and will provide a seamless interface for individual fire and rescue services by the end of October 2018.

### ***Joint Operational Learning***

18. JOL Online is a unique but simple way to capture lessons identified that may impact on multi-agency working and allow Category 1 & 2 responders to continually improve what we do. As with NOL, lessons identified or notable practice may come from training, testing and exercising or incidents including a range of external sources.
19. The key to the capture of all interoperability and national capabilities lessons is through local single and multi-agency debriefs. All debriefs should have interoperability as a core theme and any lessons identified are captured in line with JOL Guidance and inputted onto JOL Online.
20. The enhanced functionality for emergency responder organisations provides them with many more facilities including the ability to identify where their respective lessons fits within any of the National Risks and where lessons or notable practice is inputted from anywhere in the UK and published they will be notified by email.
21. JOL Online, its supporting governance and structures now provides emergency responder agencies with a clear and standardised national process for learning and supporting beneficial and sustainable change. It improves planning and response arrangements and underpins the mantra of JOL Online *Learning together for safer, stronger communities*

12 October 2018

22. JESIP and our stakeholders will continue to work with emergency responder agencies to increase awareness and use of JOL Online.

**Implications for Wales**

23. It should be noted that Wales are part of, and contribute to both NOL and JOL through fire and rescue service representation.

**Financial Implications**

24. There are no specific financial implications to be considered.