

196. The LGA considers the clear intent of this principle is that emergency planning and response should be locally led as far as circumstances allow. Yet, obviously the application of this principle must differ according to the different types of emergencies. The risk of flooding, for example, will be specific to local flood risks and geography, while the adverse impacts of space weather on technology, or flu, are generic national risks with no obvious local dimension; meaning that planning for these will be quite different and may appropriately sit at different levels. Similarly, decisions about the response to a locally contained emergency will necessarily be more local than those in the response to a nation-wide incident.
197. Recognising the differences between such risks and what is needed to respond to them, and thus the different interdependencies between local and national in preparedness and response, is critical when considering subsidiarity. These factors mean it is essential that there is a clear and accepted understanding as to how the principle of subsidiarity should operate in practice.
198. The principle of subsidiarity suffers in practice from the problem that there is no single person or agency at the local level that is responsible or accountable for resilience matters (in contrast to central government structures such as COBR). LRFs do not fulfil this role as they are a multi-agency forum in which individual agencies retain powers to take their own decisions and direct their own resources.
199. That said, the LGA's view is that in a number of areas, the principle is not currently being applied effectively. Subsidiarity implies that local agencies are trusted, equal partners in emergency preparedness and response which, in appropriate circumstances, are empowered to lead local resilience work. However, there are a number of examples of practice suggesting otherwise.
200. As noted, a persistent issue, which has undermined trust and therefore the principle of subsidiarity, has been the extent of central Government's willingness to share information with local partners. There have been repeated challenges with central Government sharing intelligence and information about national risks (for examples, planning assumptions reasonable worst-case scenarios) on a limited basis