

PREPARING SCOTLAND

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVICE CELL (STAC) GUIDANCE

PROVIDING PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVICE TO
EMERGENCY COORDINATING GROUPS IN
SCOTLAND

March 2012

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Glossary

AHAC	Airborne Hazard Advisory Cell
AWE	Atomic Weapons Establishment
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and/or Nuclear
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives
CHEMET	Chemical Meteorology
CMO	Chief Medical Officer
CPHM	Consultant in Public Health Medicine
CRIP	Common Recognised Information Picture
CSA	Chief Scientific Adviser
CT	Counter Terrorism
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DPH	Director of Public Health
Dstl	Defence Science and Technology Laboratory
ECOSA	Emergency Coordination of Scientific Advice
FSA	Food Standards Agency
GDS	Government Decontamination Service
HAG	Health Advisory Group
HAZMAT	Hazardous materials
HPA	Health Protection Agency
HPA CRCE	Health Protection Agency Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards
HPS	Health Protection Scotland
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
JHAC	Joint Health Advisory Cell
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAIR	National Arrangements for Incidents Involving Radioactivity
NEPLG	Nuclear Emergency Planning Liaison Group
NDPB	Non-departmental public body
NPIS	National Poisons Information Service
PCG	Public Communications Group
PICT	Pandemic Influenza Coordination Team
PIMT	Pandemic Influenza Management Team
PN CBRN C	Police National Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centre
REPPiR	Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAGE	Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies
SCC	Strategic Coordination Centre
SCG	Strategic Coordinating Group
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SGoRR	Scottish Government Resilience Room
SGoR	Scottish Government Resilience
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SSPCA	Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advice Cell
SWT	Scottish Wildlife Trust
SWHP	Scottish Waterborne Hazard Plan

Part 1

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs) often require expert advice on a range of scientific and technical issues in order to deal effectively with the immediate and longer term consequences of an emergency. This expert advice must be coordinated and can come from a range of agencies and cover a variety of areas such as public health, environment, animal health, water, technical failures, etc.
- 1.2 This guidance is part of Scottish Government's *Preparing Scotland* resilience guidance (Ready Scotland: Preparing Scotland), drawing also on the UK Cabinet Office's STAC guidance* to allow provision of expert advice through establishment of a Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC).
- 1.3 The purpose of this STAC guidance is to provide a core basis for providing expert and timely advice to an SCG. This guidance is flexible and adaptable in recognition of the differing structures, capacities and practices that exist in responding to emergencies across Scotland. The guidance should therefore be tailored to fit the local circumstances. Part 2 should be adapted to allow the development of localised practical guidance.
- 1.4 This guidance updates the previous 2008 guidance with lessons identified in Exercise Castle Rock (September 2010) and an evaluation of the Interim Multi / Primary STAC Guidance (issued February 2010).
- 1.5 This guidance will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure that it remains reflective of the needs of the emergency coordinating groups for the provision of scientific and technical advice during emergencies.

Commented [U1]: This needs to be confirmed by Lead Policy Area

2. Background

- 2.1 Previously there was a variety of existing but separate arrangements for organising expert advice to the strategic coordination level in the response to a number of specific types of emergency, e.g. pandemic flu (PICT/PIMT); civil nuclear (HAG/JHAC); CBRNE (JHAC); oil and chemical spill (Environment Group). Some of these separate arrangements are still in place and continue to be used (such as the Environment Group) whilst others have been discontinued.
- 2.2 This guidance consolidates the above arrangements under the generic name STAC for a discrete expert advisory group formed under local area arrangements, where use of STAC terminology has not already been advised through the relevant specific UK or Scottish national guidance. This ensures that generic expert advice is made

* See Cabinet Office. Provision of scientific and technical advice in the strategic co-ordination centre - Guidance to Local Responders - <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/provision-scientific-and-technical-advice-strategic-co-ordination-centre-guidance-l>

available to SCGs through the mechanisms provided by a STAC.

- 2.3 Establishing a STAC will be particularly important in a potential or actual emergency situation where there are obvious threats to public health or the wider environment, but also where potential threats to public health may arise, including those which might result from action taken to manage an emergency, e.g. in evacuating people. Additionally a STAC may be activated to provide scientific and technical advice in other circumstances where an SCG has been activated, e.g. in the event of a critical national infrastructure failure such as a major power failure.
- 2.4 NHS Boards in Scotland have the statutory duties of “*the securing of improved health for people in Scotland and the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness*”[†]. Where there are issues of public health to consider, these statutory responsibilities place an onus on the NHS Board to provide a chair, normally the Director of Public Health (DPH) or a Consultant in Public Health Medicine (CPHM) on behalf of the DPH, and administration for the STAC during the emergency phase in line with current arrangements. The NHS Board should continue to chair the STAC as long as there are significant issues of public health to consider.
- 2.5 When there are considered to be no significant issues of public health, but a STAC is established to consider environmental or other concerns, the chair and responsibility for administration will be borne by the lead agency for the type of consequence advice required e.g. local authority, SEPA etc.
- 2.6 Where several SCGs are established at the same time or in sequence, to deal with a related series of events or an incident affecting several areas e.g. terrorist activity etc, there is a need to coordinate provision of STAC input via a Primary STAC. (See Section 12)

3. Aim of STAC

The aim of the STAC is as far as is practicable to provide SCGs with authoritative information and agreed advice on the risk assessment of health and environmental hazards and technical failure, by:

- bringing together or arranging contact with all the relevant specialist advisers through a single group;
- providing agreed recommendations on risk management action;
- providing agreed risk communication messages; and
- confining the main discussion on such issues to within the STAC itself (rather than at the main coordinating group meetings).

[†] Part I of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 confers a duty on the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, discharged through the NHS Boards in Scotland.

4. Integration of STAC in Scotland's response structures

4.1 Figure 1. provides a simplified view of the emergency response structures in Scotland. This shows relationships between SGoRR, SCGs and STAC and the other local functional arrangements.

4.2 The STAC operates as an advisory group and is not an operational group. Its focus is to provide practical advice on public health, environmental, scientific and technical issues to those responsible for mounting and coordinating the response to an emergency. It will therefore provide advice to any strategic level coordinating group and assist tactical level decision making whilst adhering to their set strategy. SGoRR when activated will receive key points from the STAC advice within the SCG Common Recognised Information Picture (CRIP).

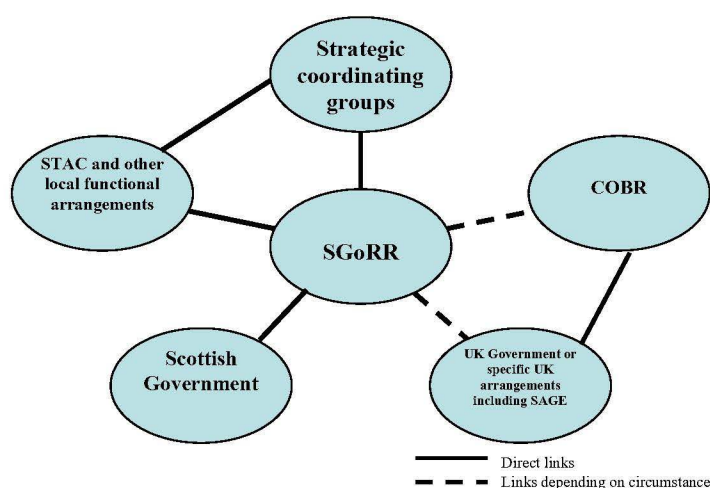


Figure 1. Simplified emergency response structures in Scotland

4.3 The STAC may link with other structures at Scottish and UK national levels as well as advising local area strategic and tactical coordinating groups. Communication with national and local strategic levels will usually be through the STAC Chair, facilitated via the SCG.

4.4 A STAC can remain in place to advise the SCGs in the later or recovery phase of an emergency or might be first activated at this point. The composition of the STAC may change as the response progresses and the agenda and requirements of the coordinating group/s change.

4.5 For details of Scotland's resilience management and governance structures, please see [\(Insert link when available\)](#).

5. Composition and structure of STAC

- 5.1 The STAC should have a standard core membership to ensure consistency, to support a rapid response and for planning purposes. The core membership should normally consist of the following – preferably in person or by tele/videocommunications if necessary:
- NHS Board – Director of Public Health or Consultant in Public Health Medicine, as initial Chair in the majority of cases unless early circumstances indicate that risks to human health are not considered to be a significant concern;
 - Local Authority – Senior Environmental Health Representative;
 - Fire and Rescue Service – if accident involves hazardous material HAZMAT Officer, or Scientific Adviser if available locally;
 - Health Protection Scotland – Consultant;
 - SEPA Representative
 - Lead Responder – Liaison Officer to liaise between the STAC and the wider multi-agency (SCG) response (usually from the Police)
 - Communications Officer (a representative from the SCG Public Communications Group)

As the incident progresses the composition of the STAC can be tailored to reflect the nature, scope and scale of the specific emergency e.g. representation from other agencies such as Scottish Water and Scottish Ambulance Service. Technical advisers from installations and assets that are involved in the situation may also be invited.

- 5.2 Unless early circumstances indicate that risks to human health are not considered to be a significant concern, the STAC should initially be chaired by a senior representative of a local NHS Board, normally the Director of Public Health or a Consultant in Public Health Medicine. The chair of the STAC may pass to another agency as the emergency progresses based on an assessment of the consequence actions required by the current STAC and SCG Chairs.
- 5.3 Irrespective of which agency chairs the STAC, the individual chairperson should have the relevant skills and experience to chair complex technical meetings in a crisis setting, in order to fulfil the remit of the cell in providing coordinated advice. The lead individual should be someone at an appropriate level of seniority within their own agency. The Chair should be able to arrive at consensus that conveys the combined expert view of the STAC and not of their own organisation.
- 5.4 In order that coordinated work in the STAC continues during periods when the Chair is reporting to the main strategic or other coordinating groups, a member of the STAC should be briefed to act as deputy chair.
- 5.5 All STAC members and support staff should be competent to undertake the roles assigned to them as part of STAC. Opportunities for specific training should be

maximised to familiarise themselves with the requirements of these roles.

- 5.6 An example list of key agencies that could provide expert advice is provided in Table 1 on Page 13.

6. Prolonged emergencies

Organisations represented on or providing information or admin / managerial support to the STAC should make sure that they have appropriate plans in advance to ensure continued support to the STAC at a suitable staff level over a prolonged period if required. Mutual aid or surge arrangements should be made where insufficient staff are available locally to provide a two or three shift system.

7. Flexibility in Approach

- 7.1. Whilst this document provides broad guidance, the detail must be left to the discretion of those involved in managing the response in SCGs and Scottish Government. Flexibility will be critical in making these arrangements work as there is a wide range of possible scenarios which could arise and the approach taken will depend on assessment of the situation at the time. Rapid and close liaison between key personnel in local and national agencies and in Scottish Government will be essential to identifying and activating the most appropriate mechanism.
- 7.2 There are some existing specific coordination arrangements relating to particular hazards e.g. the Scottish Waterborne Hazard Plan (SWHP) for response to contamination of drinking water supplies and Airborne Hazard Advisory Cells (AHAC) Guidance for significant airborne hazards (detailed here, including relationship to STAC http://www.sepa.org.uk/air/aher_service/ahac.aspx) Unless a further level of coordination such as a STAC is deemed to be required by the lead responders, the existing specific arrangements should be used.
- 7.3 Additionally, there are circumstances that may initially be managed by an NHS Board as a 'Public Health incident', following Scottish Government guidance. This will involve activation of a NHS-chaired Incident Management Team (IMT). However, such an incident may escalate or be deemed sufficiently serious to require activation of a coordinated SCG response. The guidance entitled Management of Public Health Incidents - Guidance on the Roles and Responsibilities of NHS led Incident Management Teams provides options in the response to these situations (available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/09091844/0>)
- 7.4 Where a STAC is convened, it should be aware that there may be such other groups dealing with specific aspects of the response and should negotiate how to best link with these groups in order to provide a single source of advice and avoid duplication of effort. Dependent on the scenario and requirements at the time, it may be that these groups could best operate as sub-groups of the STAC.

8. Activation

- 8.1 The STAC should be activated by the lead responder through the SCG's generic procedures for obtaining scientific and technical advice. The provision of scientific and technical advice should be part of the first considerations of a tactical or strategic group. Where other arrangements exist for specific types of emergency as described at 7.2 – 7.4 above, they should be recognised when consideration is being given by the SCG for the activation of STAC arrangements. However, a senior public health professional (i.e. Director of Public Health or deputy) may recommend to the SCG Chair that a STAC needs to be established due to the potential impact on the health of the local population from an actual or evolving incident.
- 8.2 A meeting of the STAC should be held as quickly as possible to carry out the initial risk assessment and to identify the ongoing requirements for specialist advice to the SCG and/or tactical groups.
- 8.3 Immediately following the occurrence of an emergency the lead responder(s) may be without a coordinated source of expert advice. In this situation the primary source will be local area expertise, e.g. local Directors of Public Health, Environmental Health Officers and FRS HAZMAT Officers. They may be able to provide an early assessment of the likely or actual impact of the emergency on public health and public safety, which may include advice on first responder safety.[‡]
- 8.4 Initial STAC discussions and provision of advice to the lead responder/s can be conducted by telephone/ teleconference/IT links. Adequate 24/7 contact and communications arrangements for STAC members should therefore be in place.

9. Administration and support of STAC

- 9.1 There will be a need for adequate administrative support staff to enable the STAC to operate effectively. For example a log must be maintained in case there is a subsequent enquiry. The organisation chairing the STAC will be responsible for ensuring that there are adequate administrative arrangements in place to support the operation of the STAC.
- 9.2 It is essential that telecommunications and IT equipment, internet access and access to teleconference or video-conferencing should be provided. This equipment should be tested and compatible with partners' and STAC facilities in other areas.

[‡] The Emergency Co-ordination of Scientific Advice (ECOSA) is a Home Office led arrangement for the coordination of scientific advice in the first few hours of a suspect CT, CBRN incident that would then handover to STAC on activation. These arrangements are to become active during 2012.

10. Communications

- 10.1 Any incident which may affect the health of the population will attract media interest. As with any major incident, it is important that the public are accurately and regularly warned and informed of potential risks.
- 10.2 The STAC should be linked in to the communications team for the emergency (i.e. the SCG Public Communications Group [PCG][§]) so that public advice or information from STAC will be coordinated with other information outputs through the main coordinating group. STAC communications will issue via the PCG. The SCG should ensure that a structured communications strategy is put in place as soon as possible, including input from all local agencies.

11. Specialist advisers to strategic level

In some specific types of emergency, individual or groups of specialist advisers e.g. the Government Technical Adviser in civil nuclear emergencies, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory in counter terrorism/CBRNE emergencies, or other government agency advisers can support the work of the SCG. The advice from these specialist advisers must be fed to the SCG through the STAC to ensure coordination of the advice.

12. Scientific and Technical Advice when multiple Strategic Coordinating Groups have been established

- 12.1 This section sets out guidance for the provision of health, environmental, scientific and technical advice to SCGs where a major or widespread emergency has led to the establishment of multiple SCGs and their associated STACs. In such a multiple location incident, similar issues requiring expert assessment and advice are likely in all the affected areas but it will not be practical for national agencies (SEPA, HPS, FSA, HSE, etc) to support multiple STACs. Hence there is a need to coordinate provision of STAC input via a Primary STAC as detailed below.
- 12.2 An incident may start in one SCG area resulting in a STAC being established in accordance with local arrangements and national agencies would normally be asked to support it. The incident may spread to involve other SCG areas. Each SCG would normally establish its own STAC and the potential would then exist for national agencies to be faced with requests to support multiple STACs. In such a scenario a Primary STAC will be designated by agreement between SCG Chairs to coordinate and disseminate the advice from the national agencies to the other established STACs to allow them to interpret and interrogate the advice in the context of their local emergency response. This has the advantage of enabling the Primary STAC to provide coordinated expert advice from national agencies to all the STACs and ensures consistency and quality of the advice provided.

[§] See p13 of *Preparing Scotland – Warning and Informing Scotland, Communicating with the Public Guidance* – <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/02/4073>

- 12.3 The designation of a Primary STAC will still require each of the other affected SCGs to set up what will then be called a Secondary STAC. The membership of the Secondary STAC should comprise members drawn from local agencies. It is recognised that practice and capabilities may differ between SCG areas and therefore arrangements should be flexible and scalable as circumstances require (i.e. could range from a DPH or nominated CPHM working alone up to a STAC with the full complement of local agencies as deemed necessary). Therefore, instead of requesting direct input from national agencies, these Secondary STACs should set up links to the Primary STAC. This Primary STAC should then take on the role of coordinating the advice from those national agencies and sharing it with the Secondary STACs established in other SCGs. Whilst communication lines should be between STACs, the SCG hosting the Primary STAC should be advised of significant matters that affect the wider response regardless of which STAC they originate from. However it is essential that all SCGs maintain arrangements to allow activation of a full STAC when required.
- 12.4 It is vitally important that advice and guidance from agencies forming the Primary STAC is coordinated and directed so as to avoid confusing responders or issuing conflicting advice.
- 12.5 The Primary STAC should take on responsibility (supported by its sponsoring SCG) for maintaining coordination via regular telephone and /or video-conferencing with all the other STACs. The chair of the Primary STAC would also be responsible for chairing joint STAC meetings. The details of the Primary STAC would be communicated to SGoRR.
- 12.6 Even though each SCG would still be recommended to maintain its own Secondary STAC of relevant local personnel, there would have to be a clear understanding and acceptance between all relevant SCG chairs and STAC chairs that the Primary STAC was responsible for the coordination and provision of specialist advice from the national agencies. Figure 2 detailing the various groups involved in managing emergencies when a Primary STAC is advising STACs in other SCG areas (different areas represented as *Q, R, S, T*) is shown on the next page.

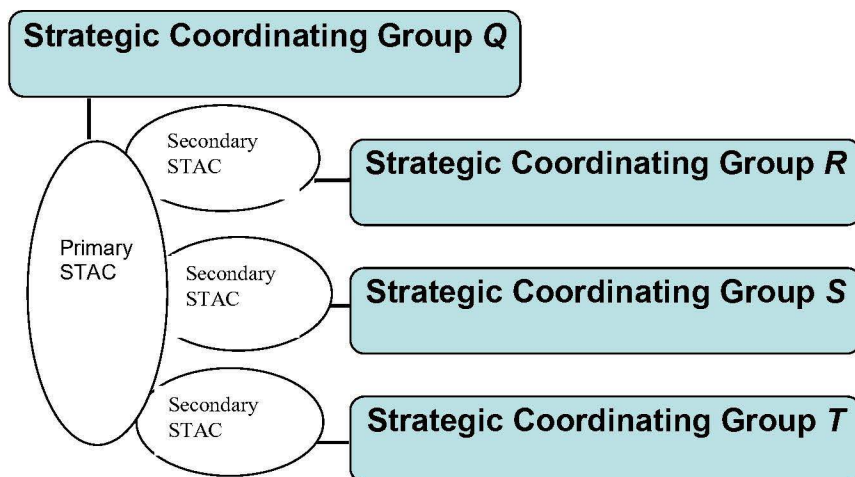


Figure 2. Primary and secondary STAC structures.

13. Multiple STAC Coordination

- 13.1 The Primary STAC will coordinate the provision of specialist advice to STACs in other SCG areas and communication between all those involved will normally be via video or teleconference link as deemed appropriate. Therefore, all STACs will require access to adequate dedicated meeting room facilities, equipped as necessary to enable routine video and/or teleconferencing.
- 13.2 The importance of the availability of compatible, robust and reliable telecommunication links cannot be over-emphasised. In some circumstances communications will be of a sensitive nature and should be treated accordingly.
- 13.3 The arrangements described above should be viewed above all else as a vehicle for ensuring coordinated and consistent advice from national agencies. Unless there are exceptional circumstances which require the direct intervention of Scottish government, the response to an emergency will be coordinated by the local SCG which may apply any advice it is given appropriately to its own particular circumstances. SGoRR when activated will receive key points from STAC advice within the SCG Common Recognised Information Picture.

14. National Emergencies and Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE)

- 14.1 In some circumstances, the response to an emergency may require coordination by Scottish Government (e.g. volcanic ash cloud, severe weather across many regions). In such a scenario, Scottish Government will consult with its own professional advisors such as the offices of the Chief Scientific Advisers (CSAs), Chief Medical Officer (CMO) or Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) and wider networks as required, to establish a body of scientific or technical advice. These bodies provide advice via SGoR Officials (SGoR(O)) meetings convened as necessary during the emergency. SGoRR coordinates this process, coordinating and sharing this advice as appropriate with the SCGs. The SCGs are responsible for disseminating this advice to their STAC.
- 14.2 The management of emergencies in Scotland is a devolved matter. In the event however of an emergency in Scotland which impacts elsewhere in the UK or affects matters reserved to Westminster, the UK Government may establish a Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). SAGE provides advice to support decisions made during the UK Government's response to an emergency. The membership of SAGE may change during the lifetime of the response depending on the topics being covered, and the chairing of SAGE may also change as an emergency moves from the response to recovery phase. The Scottish Government may be represented at SAGE through the Scottish Government professional advisers (CSAs, CMO, CVO). Where SAGE is active and where its considerations touch on devolved matters, it will link directly to the SGoRR arrangements with professional advisers. Any direct communication between SAGE and STAC if required would be facilitated and coordinated by SGoRR (as shown in Figure 1 on page 5).

Table 1. Key agencies that could provide expert advice to STAC

Animal health	Scottish Government – Rural Directorate – Animal Health and Welfare Defra – Animal Health and Veterinary Labs Agency (Agency for GB) Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) Scottish Veterinary Service Local authority – Animal Health and Welfare Officer
CBRN	Dstl AWE
Environmental decontamination	Government Decontamination Service (GDS) Local authorities Specialist Contractors
Environmental protection	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) Local Authorities – Environmental Health Scottish Government – Environmental Quality Directorate
Food safety	Food Standards Agency (FSA) – Scotland Local Authorities – Environmental Health
Fisheries	Scottish Government – Marine Directorate – Fisheries Scottish Government – Fisheries Research Services
Health and safety of workers	Employer Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Maritime safety and marine environment	Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
Meteorological and Plume dispersion information	Met Office
NHS response	Scottish Ambulance Service Scottish Government – Health Directorates
Public health	NHS Board – Director of Public Health Health Protection Scotland (HPS)
Public water supply	Scottish Water Scottish Government – Environmental Quality Directorate – Drinking Water Quality
Private water supplies	Local Authority
Radiological	NHS – Radiation Protection Advisers Health Protection Agency – Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards
HAZMAT	Fire and Rescue Service – HAZMAT Officers or Scientific Advisers
Site specific information	Site operator
Wildlife and natural environment	Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH – NDPB responsible to Scottish Government) Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)

PART 2

STAC

Detailed guidance template

This template provides a model only and needs to be adapted for local area use by the responder members of the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG). Responders should develop their own detailed practical guidance and should include as much specific local detail as necessary to ensure that a functioning STAC can be established rapidly and supplemented as necessary, depending on the nature and scale of any particular emergency. This section is provided as a Word document to allow for local adaptation.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This annex sets out detailed guidance on the practical aspects of organising and managing a Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC). The template is based on a model originally developed by Health Protection Scotland with the NHS Boards.
- 1.2 A STAC may be established in any circumstances where it is likely to be helpful and need not be reserved only for situations where the full strategic level arrangements are enacted. Local area arrangements for establishing a STAC should therefore be sufficiently flexible to allow for the formation of a STAC for various types of scenario (e.g. where expert advice is required for tactical or operational level action).
- 1.3 A STAC should be established at an early stage of development in an emergency to allow time to anticipate the range of impacts which could occur. The STAC therefore has a proactive anticipatory role and should actively consider “what if” scenarios, rather than being solely reactive.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 The STAC will be the main mechanism for coordinating multi-agency specialist advice to cover public health issues, as well as environmental, scientific and technical issues. Protection of public health should be a foremost concern of STAC as part of any coordinated emergency response.
- 2.2 Arrangements for calling-out and supporting a STAC should be included in Strategic Coordinating Group generic plans. Detailed arrangements for a STAC or similar are included in plans for a number of specific types of emergency – e.g. oil and chemical spill (MCA National Contingency Plan for Marine Pollution); nuclear sites (HSE REPPIR and NEPLG Guidance). The SCG area generic arrangements can be used in the case where specific plans are not activated.
- 2.3 The core composition of a STAC and the mechanism for assembling it are likely to be similar irrespective of the type of emergency. In some specific types of emergency, individual or groups of specialist advisers or other government agency advisers can support the work of the SCG. The advice from these specialist advisers must be fed to the SCG through the STAC reporting arrangements to ensure coordination of the advice.

3. Activation of STAC arrangements

- 3.1 STAC will usually be formed at the request of the lead responding organisation (in most but not all cases this will be the Police) in discussion with the potential Chair of STAC.
- 3.2 The responsibility for activating the initial call-out of a STAC should lie with the lead responding organisation as a standard arrangement.
- 3.3 The Director of Public Health (DPH), or the duty Consultant in Public Health Medicine (CPHM) for the relevant NHS Board should be contacted and asked to chair the STAC.
- 3.4 It is recommended that in the very early stages of any emergency (unless it is very clear at the outset what scale and nature of response is required), *only the core members of the STAC* should be requested to attend a meeting. Following an initial risk assessment the remaining members of the STAC may be asked to attend or be put on standby to offer advice as required by telephone.
- 3.5 In addition to activating the STAC core members, the STAC support team should be alerted and the pre-identified dedicated facilities for the STAC and the STAC support team should be activated.

4. STAC Support Team

- 4.1 A dedicated support team will be required to facilitate the functioning of a STAC. The organisation chairing the STAC will be responsible for ensuring that there are adequate administrative arrangements in place to support the operation of the STAC. A STAC support team manager should be appointed to be responsible for the team.
- 4.2 The role and responsibilities of the STAC support team are:
 - operating the STAC facility for the duration of the emergency;
 - recording and logging all calls to, and requests for advice from, the STAC;
 - managing generic mailboxes;
 - maintaining action and decision logs and producing minutes of STAC meetings;
 - maintaining a "focus board"; or equivalent to record live issues and status of STAC actions;
 - maintaining a current STAC members briefing board listing all the current STAC members and chair; and
 - any additional practical and facility support as requested by the STAC chair.
- 4.3 The STAC support team manager should coordinate support team members and create a rota to ensure adequate coverage on a 24-hour basis, if required.

4.4 The composition of the STAC support team should include:

- STAC support team manager;
- staff officer/emergency planning adviser to support the STAC chair specifically; and
- sufficient administrative and clerical staff to cover:
 1. secretariat assistance to the STAC chair and STAC members;
 2. minute and action note taking;
 3. message logging, telephone answering and general admin support (a minimum of three individuals is suggested).

There may be other support roles agreed locally and sufficient staff should be required to undertake these duties.

5. STAC Facilities

5.1 A STAC should operate at the same location as the main coordinating group or its equivalent, e.g. at a Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC). Where this is not the case an alternative venue must be identified and communicated clearly to all members of the STAC, the STAC support team and the SCG.

5.2 The STAC should have at least two dedicated areas, i.e. a staff working area and a separate STAC meeting area.

5.3 Facilities for the STAC should be pre-identified and tested and once the decision to form a STAC is made, these should be brought into operation as soon as possible. Detailed plans for the facilities should be provided in advance to enable their rapid setup. The working area should be suitably equipped with adequate:

- meeting table and chairs;
- computers and laptops as required;
- working desks and chairs;
- room dividers/screens;
- telephones/ teleconferencing and video conferencing facilities;
- Network access points;
- faxing facilities;
- photocopying facilities or ready access to such nearby;
- copies of appropriate documentation and templates; and
- one or more whiteboards, flip charts and notice boards.

At the very least there must be a suitably equipped working area with adequate telephone and IT connection facilities so that members of STAC can communicate with their own organisational headquarters or control rooms and other STACs if activated.

5.4 A local STAC plan should incorporate a list of all equipment available to the STAC (see Appendix J).

6. STAC Meetings

- 6.1 The STAC chair will coordinate the STAC meetings and will represent the STAC on the SCG or equivalent.
- 6.2 The STAC chair will be responsible for ensuring that the STAC functions effectively and provides the necessary advice to support the effective management of the emergency.
- 6.3 The STAC chair should brief the other STAC members on the role and remit of the STAC and should set out "ground rules" of operation at the initial meeting and thereafter as often as required (see Appendix G for list of briefing issues and ground rules).
- 6.4 A model agenda for STAC meetings is provided (see Appendix F [initial meeting] and H [follow on meetings]).
- 6.5 Meetings should be short, regular and decision focussed, ideally lasting no more than 30 minutes. Decisions should be made on the best possible information available at the time and not delayed unduly until the "ideal" information becomes available.
- 6.6 Meetings should be timed to occur between meetings of the SCG or equivalent to enable the STAC Chair (or alternatively another designated STAC representative) to attend SCG meetings. Meeting scheduling is critical for multiple STACs to enable joint STAC meetings. Joint STAC meetings with all STAC chairs should be considered to ensure effective information provision and networking.
- 6.7 Meetings should have accurate minutes taken to record the decisions and actions that are agreed. There should be a rapid turnaround of the minutes to incorporate new actions in a running action log for review at each subsequent meeting. Meeting protocols should include the minute circulation details particularly when multiple STACs are functioning. The decision log template (Appendix M) may be useful to record decisions.
- 6.8 New STAC members or staff rotating into STAC due to shift arrangements should be briefed adequately by their colleagues so that STAC meeting time is not wasted by repetitious updating of new members. This could be achieved through the use of a status board.
- 6.9 STAC members should be aware of their role and that of the organisation they represent and should consult the action cards appended (see Appendix A).

7. Communications and Media Relations

- 7.1 The STAC should advise the SCG on appropriate risk communication messages for release through the Public Communications Group, which in turn will advise on the most appropriate methodology for release.
- 7.2 Where possible a designated communications officer from within the PCG should be identified to support the STAC, who can coordinate and liaise with the other members of the PCG and with the communications staff of any other agencies represented on STAC.

8. Prolonged Emergencies

- 8.1 If an emergency is expected to last for more than 24 hours, agencies represented on the STAC will be required to ensure adequate rotation of staff to minimise fatigue. For Health this may include support being identified from surrounding Boards or Boards with which the host Board has MOUs detailing mutual support and resilience arrangements.
See Appendix E for example rota planning template

9. Recovery and Remediation Phase

- 9.1 Coordination of an emergency may move from the Police or another lead responder to a local authority once the acute response phase is complete.
- 9.2 The requirement for a STAC is likely to continue though the type of advice required may change focus.
- 9.3 It may be appropriate to consider a change in the chairmanship of the STAC if the focus for advice has moved from public health aspects to more environmental or technical issues. Any decision to change responsibility for chairing the STAC should be by mutual agreement.

10. Stand-down of STAC

- 10.1 The STAC should be stood down when it is clear that there is no continuing need to maintain such a group and in agreement with the chair of the SCG or equivalent.

11. Debriefing Process

- 11.1 There should be a debriefing process to capture lessons identified by the STAC membership during the course of the emergency. These lessons should be fed into a final debrief report. The STAC chair should ensure recommendations are noted regarding the operation of the STAC and these should be circulated via the final debrief report to all participating agencies, to enable them to address any areas identified as requiring improvement action.

Part 2

Appendix A

Action Card

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¹ Attends only Primary STAC when multiple STACs in operation

² National Poisons Information Service

³ Health Protection Agency – Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards

STAC CHAIR (e.g. DPH)

Action Card 1

Role

To provide leadership, to direct and chair STAC meetings and to act as the coordinator of advice to main coordinating group, e.g. SCG.

Immediate Actions for STAC chair

- Establish STAC Chair authority
- Nominate STAC Deputy Chair and consider requirement for 2nd deputy (3rd CPHM)
- Consider STAC membership and call in other members as required
- request additional support via the Police from Dstl/AWE/HPA CRCE if required
- Brief STAC on ground rules and SCC/STAC organisational arrangements
- deliver "STAC Initial Briefing" (Appendix G)
- Brief team members on roles and responsibilities including the STAC Support Team
- Limit STAC meetings to essential members
- Use the Model STAC Meeting Agendas (Appendices F & H), emphasise timelines of action
- Agree with STAC members on critical issues for action by STAC agencies and for action via the SCG
- Carry out a 'Health Risk Analysis' (See Appendix I) covering:
 - Risk Assessment
 - Risk Management
 - Risk Communication
- agree action required based on the above analysis
- request any additional information on nature/extent/severity of hazard for updating the risk assessment
- Delegate tasks to STAC members
- Agree who will link with SCG and any sub-groups (e.g. Crisis/Consequence groups)
- Ensure that a STAC Decision and rolling Action List are maintained (e.g. use whiteboard) (see Appendix M)
- Record all major decisions and the reasons for those decisions including decisions not to act
- Manage group dynamics and performance stages: Forming, Norming, Storming, Performing, Adjourning
- Minimise discussion time at STAC meetings by advising members to discuss and formulate options off-table
- Note lessons as emergency progresses for debriefing and subsequent evaluation
- Ensure smooth handover briefings between chairs and remind other members to do likewise

Additional responsibilities when functioning as Primary STAC Chair

- Liaise with Chairs of all active STACs.
- Convene meetings of chairs of active STACs
- Ensure coordination of information with active STACs

DEPUTY STAC CHAIR (e.g. CPHM)**Action Card 2****Role**

To deputise for and assist the STAC Chair.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings
 - Support the STAC Chair in discharging their role
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
 - Deputise for STAC Chair as required
 - Coordinate the "Health Risk Analysis" (see Appendix I). Specifically:
 - Assess the information requirements for the hazard assessment, and any other additional investigations required to gather information
 - Identify the options available for risk management
 - Identify the key issues for inclusion in advice and in risk communication messages
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

LOCAL AUTHORITY – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER**Action Card 3****Role**

To provide expert local authority environmental health advice to the STAC.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings
 - Provide expert environmental health advice to the STAC
 - Assist with the "Health Risk Analysis" as required
 - Liaise as required with local authority colleagues to obtain relevant information and advice
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree suitable staff continuity arrangements
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

FIRE AND RESCUE HAZMAT OFFICER or SCIENTIFIC ADVISER**Action Card 4****Role**

The Fire and Rescue Service will provide a HAZMAT Officer or Scientific Adviser to provide information.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings
 - Provide preliminary identification of hazardous material(s) involved
 - Seek information on the risks posed by these materials to the health and safety of responding personnel, the general public and the environment.
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree suitable staff continuity arrangements
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

HPS CONSULTANT**Action Card 5****Role**

To provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) on health protection aspects of emergency management and specialist public health advice on microbiological, chemical or other environmental hazards.

- Agree the need for physical attendance/advice by telephone
 - Attend briefings and STAC meetings if required
 - Provide expert advice and support to STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
 - Assist in ensuring the overall management of the health protection response in particular the "Health Risk Analysis" at Appendix I, and quality assurance of advice provided
 - Assist in ensuring adequate health protection staffing availability to maintain STAC capability liaise with other NHS Boards and SG Health Directorates as required
 - Liaise with HPS colleagues as required
 - Liaise with NPIS Clinical Toxicology Advisers if required for chemical emergencies
 - Liaise with HPA specialist Microbiology Advisers if required for microbiological emergencies
 - Liaise with HPA Radiology Advisers (Centre for radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards, Glasgow) if required for radiological emergencies
 - Liaise with other specialist sources of advice, e.g. Dstl, AWE
 - Liaise with specialist emergency response support at HPA if required
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree continuity of support and HPS staff rotation
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

SEPA LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE**Action Card 6****Role**

To provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) regarding the risk associated with environmental contamination, including watercourses and water bodies.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
- Attend STAC meetings if requested
- Provide expert environmental risk assessment advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
- Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
- Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)

POLICE LIAISON OFFICER**Action Card 7****Role**

The Police will provide a liaison officer who will also be responsible for ensuring clear lines of communication with other Police groupings.

- Advise/assist with establishment of STAC facilities in liaison with STAC Support Team Manager
- For CBRNE emergencies ensure that STAC is kept advised of Police activities
- Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
- Liaise with Police colleagues to agree support staff continuity

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE LIAISON OFFICER**Action Card 8****Role**

The Fire and Rescue Service will provide a liaison officer to represent them in STAC, liaise with and provide information to their organisation.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
- Attend STAC meetings
- Provide link to Technical Support Unit/Scientific Advisers working for FRS
- Provide advice on shelter and evacuation issues from Fire Service perspective
- Liaise with parent organisation to agree suitable staff continuity arrangements
- Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)

SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE LIAISON OFFICER **Action Card 9****Role**

Scottish Ambulance Service will provide a liaison officer to represent them in STAC, liaise with and provide information to their organisation.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
- Represent parent organisation/agency, liaising with and providing information to own organisation/agency
- Liaise with parent organisation to agree suitable reliefs and change-over times
- Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)

COMMUNICATIONS/MEDIA OFFICER**Action Card 10****Role**

Provide advice to the STAC Chair on all aspects of communications and act as liaison between the STAC and the SCG Public Communications Group.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
- Liaise with and attend meetings of the main communications and media team
- Input to preparing media releases in the main communications and media team
- Liaise with STAC
- Undertake specific tasks/roles as determined by the Chair of STAC
- Liaise with communications teams at STAC member agencies
- Liaise with Scottish Government on communications if relevant
- Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)

STAC SUPPORT TEAM MANAGER**Action Card 11****Role**

Manages the STAC room and facilities and ensures that appropriate support is provided to STAC. Ideally should be someone of senior grade with control room experience, as nominated by STAC Chair

- Take responsibility for ensuring that the STAC Room is set-up promptly
- Agree location of STAC facilities including connections [computers, fax machines, printers, telephones, etc] and display a list of these for group members [e.g. on whiteboard]
- Ensure all members have name badges
- Oversee the functioning of the STAC Room and supervise distribution of support team workloads
- Ensure main routes of communication [phones, pagers, mailboxes, etc] are agreed and established, including protocols for managing incoming calls
- Ensure that all email, telephone calls, messages, enquiries and actions are logged
- Maintain a list of all staff present and the organisations that they represent
- Ensure the set up and maintenance of an events log from time of alert onwards
- Ensure that all internal and external contact details are listed on a whiteboard or flip chart, especially those of the other emergency coordination rooms
- Ensure recording of proceedings of STAC meetings, in liaison with Chair
- Ensure that a STAC Decision and Advice Log are established and that all major decisions are recorded, including the reasons for those decisions (see Appendix M)
- Set up a system for communicating significant decisions to other members of the team ("focus board" on whiteboard, or flipchart) and delegate STAC Admin Officer to maintain this
- In liaison with the STAC chair/deputy/members ensure continuity of representation on STAC consistent with allowing shift changes of personnel (See Appendix E)
- Ensure there is an adequate administrative resource to maintain support to the team, including backup for yourself as STAC Support Team Manager

- Arrange provision of food and drink
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
 - Ensure all members of team are maintaining personal logs and recording incoming and outgoing communications
-

STAFF OFFICER/EMERGENCY PLANNING ADVISER Action Card 12

Role

Provide advice to the STAC Chair on the role and remit of the STAC within the strategic or other main coordination centre.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Advise the Chair on what is within and out with the scope of STAC
 - Ideally be someone familiar with emergency planning concepts and the multi-agency approach
 - Support the STAC chair on procedural matters
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

STAC SUPPORT TEAM – MINUTE TAKER

Action Card 13

Role

Provide dedicated minute taking within the STAC. The role holder should be experienced in the production of minutes. Will not be given any other tasks.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to STAC Support Team Manager
- Take minutes and actions of STAC meetings
- Produce and agree minutes with STAC Chair/Deputy
- Issue minutes to STAC members when agreed

STAC SUPPORT TEAM – ADMIN OFFICER**Action Card 14****Role**

Send and receive STAC messages by telephone, fax and e-mail, etc.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to STAC Support Team Manager
 - Undertake specific tasks/roles as determined by the Support Team Manager including:
 - Maintaining “focus board” of key events, decisions and activities within STAC
 - Maintaining contact number list on white boards
 - Faxing and receiving documents
 - Making and receiving telephone calls
 - Keeping a log of messages received/sent (See Appendix O)
 - Other general admin/clerical tasks
-

STAC SUPPORT TEAM – LOGGING OFFICER**Action Card 15****Role**

Provide administrative and clerical support to the STAC.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to STAC Support Team Manager
 - Undertake specific tasks/roles as determined by the Support Team Manager including:
 - Maintaining logs (see Appendices L & M)
 - Typing and photocopying
 - Delivering messages/documents within the building
 - Other general admin/clerical tasks
-

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Action Card 16

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) relating to the risks associated with pollution in the environment, including from contaminated fish.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings if requested
 - Provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) on the risk to health from pollution in the environment, including from contaminated fish
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY

Action Card 17

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) relating to the risk to health from contamination of the food supply.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings if requested
 - Provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) relating to risks to health from the food supply
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

SCOTTISH WATER

Action Card 18

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) concerning the risks of contamination of the water supply.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings if requested
 - Provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) concerning water quality issues
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

NPIS CLINICAL TOXICOLOGIST**Action Card 19**

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide clinical toxicological advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) on the health consequences of exposure to chemicals, poisons or deliberate release agents.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings if requested
 - Provide clinical toxicological advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

NHS MICROBIOLOGIST / VIROLOGIST**Action Card 20**

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert microbiological/virological advice to the STAC on the health consequences of exposure to microbiological/virological agents.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend team briefings and STAC meetings if requested
 - Provide expert microbiological/virological advice to the STAC
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

NHS RADIATION PROTECTION ADVISER/HPA CRCE RADIATION PROTECTION ADVISER**Action Card 21**

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) relating to the risk to health from a radiation source or radioactive contamination.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Provide expert radiation advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
 - Liaise with colleagues in NHS/HPA CRCE
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

METEOROLOGICAL ADVISER (MET OFFICE)**Action Card 22**

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert technical advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) relating to the dispersal of airborne plumes in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear emergency, or any emergency where meteorological conditions will impact on response or recovery (e.g. extreme weather such as high winds, heavy snow or rain).

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Attend STAC meetings if requested
 - Provide meteorological information and advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
 - Provide expert plume dispersal advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

Defence Science & Technology Laboratory SCIENTIFIC ADVISER Action Card 23

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert technical advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) in the event of a chemical or biological emergency relating to the risk to health.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
 - Note – the Dstl Scientific Adviser may also be asked to provide technical scientific advice direct to Police Strategic Command
 - Attend STAC meetings if requested
 - Provide expert chemical or biological technical advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
 - Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
 - Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)
-

Atomic Weapons Establishment SCIENTIFIC ADVISER**Action Card 24**

Role (if required by the nature of the incident)

To provide expert technical advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents) in the event of a radiation or nuclear emergency relating to the risk to health.

- Proceed to Strategic or main Coordination Centre and report to the STAC Chair
- Note – the AWE Scientific Adviser may also be asked to provide technical scientific advice direct to Police Strategic Command
- Attend STAC meetings if requested
- Provide expert radiation and nuclear advice to the STAC (Primary STAC only in multi-SCG incidents)
- Liaise with parent organisation to agree staff continuity
- Keep a log of activities and decisions (see Appendix N)