



**Northern Ireland Command, Control and Coordination (C3)**

**COVID-19  
Concept of Operations**

**(Version 1.1)**

**April 2020**

**Northern Ireland Concept of Operations – COVID-19 Response Period**

**References:**

- A. CCG(NI) Protocol for the NI Central Crisis Management Arrangements, dated Sep 2016.
- B. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the NI Hub (draft v4.0) dated April 2020.

## OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Area	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
<b>Overall Ownership of CONOPS and SOPS</b> (When Hub is Live)	Functional Lead Chief of Staff Support	Functional Lead Chief of Staff Support	Functional Leadership team COS	C3 System
<b>Overall Ownership of CONOPS and SOPS</b> (When Hub is not Live)	CCPB	G5 Lead of Civil Contingencies Policy Branch	C3 Leads	C3 System

### Introduction

1. The Northern Ireland Command, Control and Coordination (C3) arrangements have been revised to support the management of the immediate and longer term C19 related issues and impacts across NI sectors, some of which have already developed into civil contingencies.
2. The **Northern Ireland Executive** has set out its strategy for dealing with the Covid19 Crisis. This is based around three key themes:
  - *Health and well being of all citizens*
  - *Economic well being*
  - *Societal and community well being*
3. All activities undertaken by departments and decisions taken by Permanent Secretaries and Ministers are to take account of this overarching strategy. This crisis is a national emergency requiring a collective and cross-departmental response.
4. Northern Ireland's arrangements for strategic contingency management within government are covered by the existing Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA), at Reference A above. This Protocol covers the standing arrangements for the strategic coordination of any response to and/or recovery from civil contingencies impacting on NI. In such circumstances the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) (CCG(NI)) is responsible for setting the overarching response strategy for NI, directing and co-ordinating the response and committing resources across the NI Civil Service.
5. NI Command, Control and Coordination (C3) arrangements are based around the existing structures and protocols detailed at Reference A, and follow the UK's contingency management principles of preparedness, continuity, subsidiarity, direction, integration, communication, cooperation and

anticipation. In particular, decision-making will be held at the lowest level, with clear escalation thresholds defined, to ensure that early action can be taken without the need to continuously refer upwards. Whilst existing structures will provide the basis for NI's C3, these structures have been **enhanced** and **augmented** in order to manage the expected complexity, scale and duration of the 'reasonable worst case scenario' (RWCS), which is the basis for all planning.

6. Whilst docking into the wider C19 response across the UK, C3 arrangements have been further developed to reflect NI's unique challenges around interaction with UKG and IG, specific supply chain issues, the current security situation, and the political operating environment.
7. Interim operating capability (IOC) was delivered on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, with a target to achieve Full Operating capability (FOC) from 10<sup>th</sup> April. Planning is also in progress for a final version of FOC which will be virtual, allowing the structures and the HUB to be run in 'full lockdown' conditions. Due to the scale, complexity and expected duration of the impacts of C19, it is necessary for the NI C3 structure to operate over extended days and over weekends in order to support working across NI and the wider UK response for a significant period of time. 24/ Working is unlikely to be needed, however for resilience and capacity, planning for what this looks like will be considered.

#### **Aim & Scope**

8. This Concept of Operations (ConOps), describes how the NI C3 will operate during the C19 response period, in order to manage impacts and civil contingencies.
9. In NI, the response will be co-ordinated at the strategic level by the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) (CCG(NI)), chaired by the Head of the Civil Service (HOCS). The Executive will also meet regularly during this period, reviewing progress against the strategic intent, and taking decisions escalated to it by CCG(NI). These arrangements do not alter existing NIOBR arrangements, which will continue to be used to deliver contingency arrangements for reserved matters and will link with the NICCMA as per existing arrangements in terms of any interdependencies between reserved matters and C19 related impacts.

#### **Overarching Concept of Operations.**

10. As an entity already recognised in NI, CCG(NI) will coordinate the strategic response to mitigate the impacts of C19, as well as any concurrent civil contingencies, whether C19 related or not. C19 impacts will be managed through NI Departmental Operations Centres (DOCs), using updated departmental major response plans (MERPs), working collaboratively across departments, creating Working Groups (WGs) as required, and escalating

decisions to CCG(NI) where necessary. CCG(NI) will escalate decisions to the Executive, where the situation dictates.

11. CCG(NI) will manage and prioritise both C19 impacts and civil contingencies, supported by an enhanced operations room known as the NI 'Hub', which will deliver shared situational awareness across the NI C3 structures, and provide planning, communications, and secretariat support to CCG(NI), MIGs and the Executive. The enhanced NI C3 structures for C19 response are shown at Annex A, including reporting and escalation routes.

### **Assumptions.**

12. The following assumptions apply to the NI C3 structures for the C19 response:
  - A full C3 structure is required to manage impacts, with the ability to scale up/down as required. As the immediate health impacts pass, reduced C3 structures will be required to manage any residual impacts of C19 on NI.
  - Planning is based around Pandemic Flu and medical advice RWCS significant disruptions, which in addition to health and welfare considerations includes disruption to transport, education, welfare, business and economy, public order and disorder.
  - The peak period of C19 will require C3 to be in place, with extended working days and out of hours cover to deal with the scale of the impacts. One situation report will be produced every 24 hours, with out of hours updates if needed. This is scalable depending on the impacts requiring management.
  - Additional policy and contingency staff will be found from within existing resources in departments or agencies, through reprioritisation. NICS HR may also use the COPRU process to redeploy staff into the C3 structures as required.
  - NI C3 initial operating capability will be delivered by 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, followed by full operating capability on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020.
  - C3 arrangements will include consideration of standing up existing Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) arrangements. These are activated where there is a major, widespread and imminent threat to life (which cannot be dealt with by other public authorities within existing resources and capability); or the scale and complexity of the humanitarian issues require Command, Control and Coordination by the PSNI as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. These arrangements are designed where urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation



is required. SCG will dock into NI C3 at the appropriate level, so ensuring delivery of the direct response and facilitating local coordination.

### **Design Principles.**

13. The following principles were followed in the design and review of the C3 structures:
- C3 will reflect agreed contingency management principles of preparedness, continuity, subsidiarity, direction, integration, communication, cooperation and anticipation,
  - C3 arrangements will be scalable, using existing NI resilience structures/arrangements, with the ability scale up/down in response to a changing situation,
  - C3 arrangements, roles and responsibilities will be simple and clear, whilst also maintaining shared situational awareness,
  - Form will follow function; C3 structures will be 'risk agnostic' (i.e. designed to meet the full range of possible impacts) but with a focus on meeting the functional requirements of the RWCS,
  - Decisions will be delegated to the lowest appropriate level, with clear thresholds for escalation,
  - C3 will be tailored to the unique circumstances in NI, and
  - NICS will maintain the capability to concurrently manage C19 impacts and civil contingencies.

### **Wider UK Government arrangements.**

14. UK Government departments will manage the situation through 4 thematic Ministerial Impact Groups – Health Social Care & shielding committee, General Public Sector Preparedness Committee, Economy and Business Committee and International Committee, with devolved administrations engaged at all levels.
15. UKG Departments will handle impacts and issues for which they have responsibility or sector oversight in the usual manner, and they will also highlight and collaborate on issues which have an impact on Devolved Administrations (DAs).
16. Likewise, each of the DAs must highlight and/or escalate any issues which are likely to have a wider UK impact. **The provision of high quality liaison officers throughout all levels of the C3 will be a key enabler to this process.**

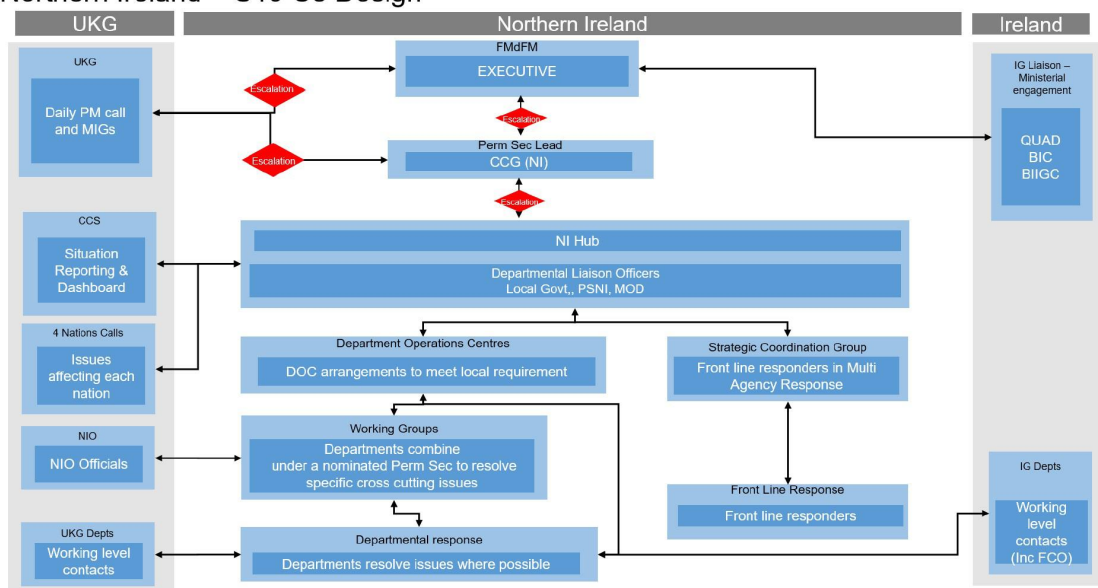
### **Duration.**

17. The C3 structures will remain stood up for as long as is required. This will place unique demands on staff, both in terms of ways of working and in sustaining a protracted period of high operational tempo. This will require comprehensive staff engagement and welfare provision.

### Northern Ireland C3: Functions and Structures.

18. The NI C3 will comprise the following components as shown in the diagram below (more detail is shown at Annexes A - D):

Northern Ireland – C19 C3 Design



### Northern Ireland Hub

19. The NI Hub is an enhanced CCG(NI) operations room set up to collate and disseminate information, coordinate multi-departmental/agency activities and planning, and filter/escalate decisions. As part of this, the NI Hub will provide secretariat support to CCG(NI) and the Executive. The Hub has been designed to be capable of remote working. However, this will require a switch of IT systems; work is being undertaken at pace to enable this.
20. During a typical shift, the NI Hub will:
- Produce a Situation Report for the Executive, CCG(NI), Ministers and UK Government,
  - Prepare papers for HOCS/CCG(NI)/ Executive,
  - Support CCG(NI) and actions management,
  - Monitor NI cumulative impacts, identifying options for mitigating actions, and

- Facilitate shared situational awareness across the NI C3 structure.
21. Liaison and coordination will be achieved by having liaison staff from NI departments, PSNI, local government and NIO in the Hub as well as liaison with the x4 thematic London based Ministerial Impact Groups.
  22. The NI Hub will filter and escalate issues to CCG(NI), the Executive or the UK Government as required, as well as providing any strategic support to the DOCs (including media and communications), and managing the wider response to the cumulative effects of these impacts across NI.

**Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC).**

23. The SCC has been activated in line with the NI Hub to maintain situational awareness in relation to civil contingencies issues which may require a Police-led response. The SCC will have Police and Local Government (EPCO) representation to maintain situational awareness; NICS departmental liaison officers present when their departments activate their contingency plans; and NIO/TEO/DoJ/DfC LO representation in a form to mitigate the requirement to provide additional reporting on the function of the SCC. It may also activate a 'blue light cell' to maintain the 999 response if required across the emergency services. The SCC has no decision making or tasking functions. It will operate in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

**Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).**

24. If stood up, the SCG will be based in the SCC. It will stand up only when required, to deliver regional multi-agency coordination to prevent or mitigate the direct effects of civil emergencies where: there is a major, widespread and imminent threat to life (which cannot be dealt with by other public authorities within existing resources and capability) or; the scale and complexity of the humanitarian issues require Command, Control and Coordination by the PSNI as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act on the basis that urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation is required.
25. Activation of the SCG can occur either via a request from CCG(NI) or from a 'bottom up' requirement following the activation of one or more TCG. The decision to activate the SCG rests with the PSNI Gold Commander alone. SCG will be activated under a Police lead to coordinate the multi-agency response, with liaison officers in CCG(NI).
26. When the SCG is activated it will require full representation from relevant NICS departments; and full representation in person from NIO/TEO/DoJ/DfC. Tactical Coordination Groups (TCGs) in Belfast, Southern and Northern areas, will coordinate any sub regional response if they are required to

activate. Local government will deliver regional non-threat to life coordination via teleconference in line with existing protocols. The SCG will escalate decisions to CCG(NI) in the usual way.

### **Northern Ireland Civil Service Departments**

27. All Northern Ireland departments will establish and sustain full Departmental Operations Centre (DOCs) for the duration of the Covid-19 response period. DOCs will collate and disseminate information, coordinate departmental activities and planning, and filter/escalate decisions. Departments will manage their assigned C19 impacts, in consultation with other departments, utilising previously designed major emergency response plans (MERPs). DOCs will report progress to the NI Hub.
28. Departmental liaison and coordination will be achieved by placing liaison staff in the NI Hub, by sitting in CCG(NI) (and on the Strategic Coordination Group as required), and through direct coordination with UK & Irish Government departments where there are issues of mutual interest.
29. Where issues cannot be dealt with by single departmental decision-making, a number of departments will join together to form Working Groups

### **Working Groups**

30. A working group is a temporary structure, bringing together a number of departments under the Control of a nominated Permanent Secretary or named senior officer, to resolve an issue requiring a cross- departmental response. Where issues cannot be resolved through working groups, they will be escalated to CCG(NI) via the NI Hub. Working Groups will report progress to the NI Hub. Working groups should contain a member of NI Hub staff to ensure coordination and information flows from the working group into the Hub and up to CCG(NI) via the SitRep.

### **Civil Contingencies Group (NI) (CCG(NI))**

31. CCG(NI) will meet daily during the initial phase of operation. Each department is represented at Permanent Secretary level, along with colleagues from Local Government, PSNI & other responders, and other key partners. Chaired by HOCS, the purpose of CCG(NI) is to:
  - Led the overall operational response to the crisis
  - Review the Situation Report, identifying emerging issues, and monitoring progress of live actions
  - Create, oversee and close down Working groups as required
  - Escalate issues to the Executive and (through them) UKG structures

## The Executive

32. The Executive, or their nominated subgroup, will deal with any issues coming out of the NI Hub and CCG(NI) which require Executive decision making. If required the Executive can escalate issues directly to 'COBR'. In this context, the functions of the Executive are to:
- Oversee the overall strategy for C19 response
  - Bring together advice from other departments at Ministerial level.
  - For issues of national concern, the Executive will coordinate into UK wide structures e.g. 'COBR'.

## C19 Response C3 – NI Arrangements

33. This section details the purpose, reporting process, functions and interactions of each level of the NI C3 for the C19 response period.

### Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC).

34. **Purpose.** The SCC will provide situational awareness, infrastructure and reporting to enable SCG to stand up and deliver regional multi-agency coordination when required.
35. **Functions.** The functions of the SCC are as follows:
- Activate in line with CCG(NI) to maintain situational awareness in relation to civil contingencies issues which may require a Police-led response.
  - Manage the requirements of Police and CCG(NI) reporting.
  - Provide the location and infrastructure to enable a multiagency blue light cell to maintain essential 999 services if required.
  - Provide the location and infrastructure to enable the Strategic Coordination Group to deliver their response.

### Strategic Coordination Group (SCG)

36. **Purpose.** Deliver regional multi-agency coordination to prevent or mitigate the effects of civil emergencies where:
- There is a major, widespread and imminent threat to life (which cannot be dealt with by other public authorities within existing resources and capability); or
  - The scale and complexity of the humanitarian issues require Command; Control and Coordination by the PSNI as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act on the basis that urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation is required.

- There is a major and imminent threat to life or the scale and complexity of humanitarian issues require urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation.
37. During the C19 response period, the existence of the CCG(NI) and DOCs will preclude the need for a non-police led SCG function if the SCG is active. Coordinated activity to prevent or mitigate the effects of civil emergencies outside of major and imminent threat to life scenarios will be delivered between CCG(NI) and the DOCs.
38. **Reporting and Decision-Making.** SCG reports to CCG(NI), with a Gold representative sitting in the CCG(NI). Tasking Coordination Groups (TCG Silvers - Belfast, Southern and Northern - if activated) report directly to SCG. SCG escalates decisions directly to CCG(NI), coordinating with other agencies as required, through the NI Hub, and also keeps CCG(NI) informed of the developing situation, through the NI Hub. In the event of a 'concurrent' civil emergency during the Covid-19 response period, the PSNI Gold Commander (in consultation with CCG (NI)) will determine the most appropriate lead for the response on activation of the SCG in the event that this is not immediately apparent and agreed.
39. **Functions.** The functions of the SCG are as follows:
- Coordinate the multi-agency response.
  - Determine and promulgate clear strategic aims and objectives and review them regularly.
  - Establish the policy framework for the overall management of an event or situation.
  - Prioritise the requirements of the tactical tier.
  - Formulate and implement media and communication plans in partnership with the Executive Information Service (EIS).
  - Direct planning and operations beyond the immediate response in order to facilitate the recovery process where this cannot be achieved through the relevant Departmental DOCs.
  - Ensure situation reporting templates are completed to promote shared situational awareness across SCG members (before onward transmission to the NI Hub and NPoCC).

***Interactions and reporting rhythm.***

40. The SCC will maintain situational awareness of any developing issues which may require activation of the SCG and support the reporting rhythm, completing situation reports where relevant (or reporting 'no return') once a

day for CCG (NI). If activated, SCG will interact with all agencies and stakeholders involved in a multi-agency response, including PSNI, local government, blue light services, and CCG(NI) through the NI Hub and will follow a 24/7 Sitrep reporting rhythm.

### Departmental Operations Centres (DOCs)

41. **Purpose.** DOCs manage departmental risks and contingency plans, coordinating with other NICS and Whitehall departments over departmental plans and dependencies, to ensure that C19 and civil contingency impacts are mitigated.
42. **Reporting and Decision-Making** DOCs report to CCG(NI) via the NI Hub, coordinating with NI and UKG departments as required. They escalate decisions to the NI Hub only when they cannot be resolved within or between departments, or if they affect a Cumulative Impact. Decision-making must be held at the lowest level to support agile and robust C3. In the event that departmental activity develops into a more strategic, cross-departmental or multi-agency operation, then CCG(NI) will take the lead for coordination. DOCs will not establish their own multi-agency hubs.
43. **Functions.** The functions of the DOCs are as follows:
  - Collate, maintain and disseminate departmental information upwards (via Sitrep) to NI Hub, and downwards as appropriate.
  - Manage departmental risks, issues and impacts; and escalate risks, issues and decisions as appropriate.
  - Plan and implement single departmental decisions and policies.
  - Coordinate DOC reporting rhythm, actions and information management.
  - Maintain DOC staffing levels (extended days with out of hours cover), life support, facilities/infrastructure, security, welfare and business continuity.
  - Detach liaison officers to the NI Hub, other departments, and agencies as required to facilitate planning and delivery.
  - Focal point for coordination with UKG departments and other NI departments to enable decision-making at the lowest level.
  - Maintain media lines to take and coordinate media engagement to inform and reassure (internal and external messaging).
  - Provide scientific, technical and legal advice to policy options and plans work.
  - Secretariat support to manage meetings, minutes, and draft decision papers.
  - Integration, training and briefing of DOC staff.
44. **Interactions and reporting rhythm.** DOCs will coordinate with other NI and UK Government departments as usual, where they need to do so over C19 impacts. If the SCG is activated in response to activity which relates to or

impacts on their area of business they will send LOs to the SCC to support the emergency response. DOCs will send a daily Situation Report and updates to CCG(NI) through the NI Hub in a consistent format, to allow the NI Hub to collate the NI Sitrep. They will maintain out of hours cover in order to provide Sitrep updates as required.

### Northern Ireland Hub

45. The NI Hub is the standing Operation Room for the CCG(NI) within the C3 structures. It has no decision-making authority and exists to inform decision-making and coordinate the overall response in line with the principle of subsidiarity. It is based on the core of the existing CCG(NI) Operations Room but has been enhanced with additional staff, processes and infrastructure to fulfil its role for the C19 response period.
46. The NI Hub has stood up 3 shifts in response to C19, Red, Yellow and Blue which are currently working on an extended day 12h shift pattern operating 7 days per week.
47. **Purpose.** The NI Hub is the NI Operations Room to collate and disseminate information, coordinate multi-departmental/agency activities and planning. The NI Hub will filter and escalate issues to CCG(NI), the Executive or the UK Government as required, as well as providing any strategic support to the DOCs (including media and communications). It will also track and manage the wider response to the cumulative effects of these impacts across NI.
48. **Reporting and decision-making** The NI Hub reports to CCG(NI) in NI and National structures in London. It escalates decisions to CCG(NI) when they cannot be resolved or filtered by the Hub or require devolved decision-making. CCG(NI) can then escalate decisions to the Executive. Where decisions are required on reserved or excepted matters [or where a consistent four nations response is required] these can be referred to COBR.
49. **Functions** The functions of the NI Hub are as follows:
  - Collate, maintain and disseminate NI wide information (via the NI Sitrep) to CCG(NI) and the Executive and downwards via the NI Downrep.
  - Provides C19 dashboard data to 'CCS control' for Cabinet Office.
  - Assess information, and filter or escalate decisions.
  - Coordinate NI Hub reporting rhythm, actions and information management.
  - Coordinate Cumulative Impact tracking and NI civil contingencies through CCG(NI), departments and SCG.
  - Provide Secretariat support to CCG(NI), the Executive and MIGs.



- Liaise and coordinate with 'COBR' Ministerial Implementation Groups, NI departments and SCG as required.
  - Maintain NI Hub staffing levels (extended days, with out of hours cover), life support, facilities/infrastructure, security, welfare and business continuity.
  - Maintain media lines to take and coordinate the NI media strategy to inform and reassure (internal and external messaging).
  - Provide scientific, technical and legal advice to policy options and plans work.
  - Integration, training and briefing of NI Hub staff.
50. **Interactions and reporting rhythm** The NI Hub is the centre of all reporting and situational awareness in NI. It has liaison officers from all NI departments and also links in to liaison functions in London & Dublin.
- The Hub provides secretariat support to both CCG(NI) and the Executive. It collates and disseminates the NI Situation Report once daily and the data sets to cabinet office daily. The NI Hub drives the daily NI reporting rhythm through the Operations Coordination branch. An example 24/7 reporting rhythm is at Annex E.

#### Civil Contingencies Group Northern Ireland (CCG(NI))

51. **Purpose** The Civil Contingencies Group (Northern Ireland) (CCG(NI)) is the HOCS-chaired principal strategic C19 emergency response and preparedness body for the public sector in Northern Ireland. It will oversee strategic support to Covid-19 impacts and civil contingencies.
52. **Reporting and decision-making** CCG(NI) refers issues to the Executive, if needed the Executive can refer issues to 'COBR'.
53. **Functions** The functions of the CCG(NI) are as follows:
- Provide strategic leadership to civil contingencies issues in NI by identifying priorities for action and decision-making on cross cutting issues.
  - Commission work to support timely and informed decision making by establishing working groups as necessary.
  - Escalate decisions to 'High Level Decision-Making' and 'COBR' as required.
54. **Interactions and reporting rhythm.** CCG(NI) will meet once a day to support the full C19 response reporting rhythm (see Annex E), and ad hoc as required. It will interact with departments and SCG members, receiving situation reports and escalated decisions up through the NI Hub. CCG(NI) will escalate decisions to COBR through the NI Hub and via the Executive. The Executive will provide a robust and agile decision-making process for all devolved matters in order to limit the impact of the current situation of C19. It (the Executive) will provide direction and guidance back to CCG(NI) as required.

## The Executive.

55. **Purpose** The Executive will deal with any issues coming out of the NI Hub and CCG(NI) which require Executive decision making.

**Reporting and decision-making** If required CCG (NI) can escalate decisions to the Executive, where decisions are required on reserved or excepted matters [or where a consistent four nation response is required] these can be referred to COBR. In this context, the functions of the Executive are to:

- Oversee the overall strategy for C19 response
- Bring together advice from other departments at Ministerial level.
- Escalate issues to 'COBR', represent NI matters in 'COBR' meetings.

## Governance

56. FMfDM lead the overall strategic NI response, setting direction, and empowering HOCS to lead the C19 operational response, through the CCG(NI), including the management of C19 impacts and civil contingencies. HOCS will escalate decisions to the Executive. Due to the high profile nature of any civil contingencies over the C19 response period, there will be no lead department assigned to lead civil contingencies, with all responses led by CCG(NI). The NI Hub will coordinate with NI departments and CCS to ensure that decisions are escalated appropriately and that the principle of subsidiarity is followed. The Hub will also coordinate with the other Ministerial Impact Groups in London to ensure line of sight over any areas of mutual concern. Departments will be responsible for the management of their own C19 impacts. Where decisions can be made at departmental level or through multi-departmental coordination, they will be resolved at that level. Where they need to be escalated, for example if they have a wider NI/UK impact, or require strategic support or multi-agency decision-making, they will be escalated to CCG(NI) through the NI Hub. Departments will coordinate with other NI and UK Government departments as required.

## Reporting Rhythm.

57. The NI daily rhythm of meetings is designed to respond to the pace and complexity of the situation as well as ensuring that NIE and NICS are able to dock into wider UK response arrangements and that NI's issues are appropriately represented at Ministerial level in London. Whilst Whitehall may have 24/7 staff cover, NI will employ extended days to support this, with out of hours cover on call. However, the C3 model will be based on the conditions at the time. Throughout the response period the daily reporting rhythm will

evolve; for this reason it is not included here but can be found at Annex E of the SOPs; Reference B.

### C3 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

58. Each level of the NI C3 has produced SOPs which describe how the C3 and battle rhythm will operate day to day, including roles and responsibilities, reporting formats, meeting agendas, governance and escalation routes. CCPB and the HubC3 team will review and update the SOPs for the NI Hub/CCG(NI), and will assist departments in refining their SOPs as required. The SOPs for the NI Hub are at Reference B above, located at *insert file ref.*

### Reports and Returns (R2)

59. **NI Situation Reports.** The NI Hub will produce one daily Sitrep every 24 hours with updates throughout the day if required. It was also produce any returns and deal with requests for information (RFIs) as required by the Cabinet Office. The NI daily Sitrep will be published and disseminated to CCG members, NI Hub Members and all departments and will use the CCS BRAG rating system. Departments and SCC/SCG will inform the drafting of this Sitrep through their own Sitreps to CCG(NI) through the NI Hub, which will also be made available.
60. All reports will follow a consistent format, which will be published. An example Sitrep format can be found at Annex C of Reference B. Responsibility of distributing the SitRep, if necessary, to partners outside of the current distribution audience, will rest with individual Permanent Secretaries for each department.

### NI Downrep.

61. The NI Hub will also publish a daily Downrep which will summarise the UK national and NI picture for the previous 24 hours, manage actions and provide daily direction and guidance from CCG(NI) across the NI C3 structure.

### Information Management (IM)

#### IM Approach.

62. Information management will be critical in maintaining a common picture, shared situational awareness and common standards, such as folder structures, file naming conventions, version control and formats. NI IM will be led by the Operational Coordination Branch in the NI Hub, which will be responsible for implementing a standardised approach across the NI C3. The NI IM plan is in the NI Hub SOPs at Reference B.

### IT Infrastructure

63. IT and communications across the NI C3 have been reviewed and tested. All levels of the C3 will operate at Official Sensitive but there may also be some requirements at a higher level of classification. All IT is compatible across all levels of the C3 (and with RD if required). Role-based laptops and mobile phones will also facilitate remote working when needed. SCC has existing IT

systems in place, and has access to the Google-based, real-time dashboard used across the NI C3.

## **Estates and Welfare**

### **Estates**

64. The NI Hub, DOCs and SCC have existing estates and infrastructure, with back-up locations for business continuity. Given current health advice, all levels of these structures will operate virtually wherever possible. The NI Hub is currently running from alternate sites to allow for deep cleaning given the current pandemic, these sites are Castle Buildings on the Stormont estate (for Red team along with a core of CCPB staff) and the PwC premises at Danske Bank in Belfast City Centre (for Blue and Yellow team).

### **Welfare**

65. Welfare provision will be critical over the operational period at all levels of the C3. Whilst the correct number of staff and realistic shift patterns will be essential to sustaining a protracted operational focus, staff engagement and welfare provision will also be important. Welfare is being drawn up by the NICS HR Covid response Hub.

## **Communications and Media**

66. Communications will be critical to all aspects of the C19 response in NI. All contingency plans have a communications and media aspect, as information and reassurance will be critical during the pandemic across the general public (NI, wider UK, and global), business and industry. EIS in TEO will draft and lead the NI Communications Plan, in consultation with key stakeholders and communications staff (PIOs) at all levels cross the NICS and agencies. EIS has a media cell in the NI Hub to coordinate lines to take and wider communications activity, as well as a Press Centre in TEO.

## **Readiness and Mobilisation**

### **Scale.**

67. Different models of the C3 have been designed, so that NI has a scalable approach to C3. Given there was very little lead time in preparing for C19, a fully resourced structure is in the process of being stood up. As the impacts of C19 and the scale of response required becomes clearer, the response will be able to be scaled up and down to respond to those requirements. Options include scaled down shifts, the use of duty officers, and maintaining staff at readiness to be deployed as required at short notice.

### **Readiness.**

68. Given the short lead time to prepare, the Hub will work closely with NICS HR and other related parties in order to give staff as much notice as possible. The maximum warning possible will be provided to staff prior to stand up or changes to their shift patterns.

### **Mobilisation.**

69. Staff were first mobilised on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 it is expected that the core NI C3 will be at IOC from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 , with extended day and weekend coverage, in line with Cabinet Office direction, with FOC by 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Staff may need to be mobilized on an ad hoc basis throughout the response period, this could be to backfill staff who have become sick or move into isolation.

### **Resourcing**

70. Resource requirements were identified by roles, and staff were then mapped to roles. A minimum of 3 staff have been assigned to each role across the C3, with a target of 5:1.
71. NICS staff engagement identified existing volunteers who wished to remain in the C3, as well as new volunteers to fill staffing gaps. Some of the C3 roles require more specialist training and changes to current staff ways of working, including longer shifts, night shifts and weekend working. These changes have been managed through staff consultation and proactive communications.

### **Training and Exercising**

#### **72. Training Principles**

- Tailored learning. Role-based training will be used to ensure training is focused and relevant to the user and will leverage the best practice content and lessons learned from previous Yellowhammer training.
- Competency and Capability. The training is designed so users are competent and capable in undertaking their assigned role. The training will be structured such that users will understand not only their own function and responsibilities but also the wider hub functionality and how they interlink with other teams within the hub.
- Sustainability. The focus targets both immediate key workers as part of the Red, Blue and Yellow Team, and also cater for additional teams and resourcing patterns e.g. new staff, role changers, staff churn and general up-skilling. All training materials, will go through a quality, relevance, and trainer sustainability review prior to course delivery.
- Just-in-time. To be effective, timing of training delivery will be as close to deployment as possible. Staff already in post will be scheduled for training immediately and supported in their team through shadowing and observation where needed.

### Identification of Training Needs

73. For the purpose of induction and role specific training, training groups will need to be segmented based not only on their role, but also on their prior knowledge levels and we have identified three specific groups:

1. *Yellowhammer trained, taking up the same role*: Those who have received Yellowhammer Training for the role which they have been appointed will undergo refresher training, highlighting key differences in the COVID-19 Crisis Hub approach and best practice related to it.
2. *Yellowhammer trained, taking up a new role*: Those who are Yellowhammer trained but are taking up a new role will receive refresher induction, highlighting key differences to Yellowhammer approach and will also receive Role Specific Training.
3. *No Yellowhammer training*: Those who have no Yellowhammer training will receive a full induction and full Role Specific Training.

### Individual Training

74. Induction: Due to the rapid deployment of the C3 structure, Induction training is provided every day where required in the Hub for those already deployed or for those for whom it is their first day. Induction covers the NI C3 Structure, the layout and functionality of the Hub, the daily rhythm, hygiene and welfare. This was rolled out from the 26<sup>th</sup> March and will be ongoing until the Hub is stood down.

75. Role Specific Training: Training content has been developed for the following roles in the Hub – Deputy Chief of Staff, Liaison Officer, Situation Cell, Secretariat, Ops Coord. These vary in length from two to three hours. Training rolled out from the 30<sup>th</sup> March and will be ongoing until the Hub is stood down.

### Collective Training

76. C3 Induction and Kick Off. When a new team is deployed to the Hub, a half-day session will incorporate provision of IT equipment, passes, phones, etc. and will then be combined with a hub induction, overview of roles and interdependencies, Situation Reporting and core Hub skills and behaviours. This has been successfully delivered to the Yellow team and will be applied to any future team mobilisation and deployment.

### Collective Exercising

77. No exercising was able to take place due to the nature of the pandemic and the short preparation time before deployment of teams to the Hub.

### Ongoing Revision and evolution of content

78. As content and process evolves throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic period, we will continually update materials to reflect these changes. These would include, for

example, revisions to the Situation Reports, understanding and application of data to support Sit Rep production, creation of new roles and so on.

### **Development of Virtual Training Capability**

79. Zoom: We have successfully delivered a 40 minute induction using Zoom and when next delivered we will record and put into the eLearning package.

80. Links: Role specific training will be developed into eLearning by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) and hosted on the Links Platform. Some additional work will be required to make face to face training fit for purpose for eLearning.

81. Google: Existing training has already been designed to upskill Hub staff on Gmail and Google Sheets, Drive and Slides. This will be rolled out to all Hub staff to build the capability of running a Virtual Hub.

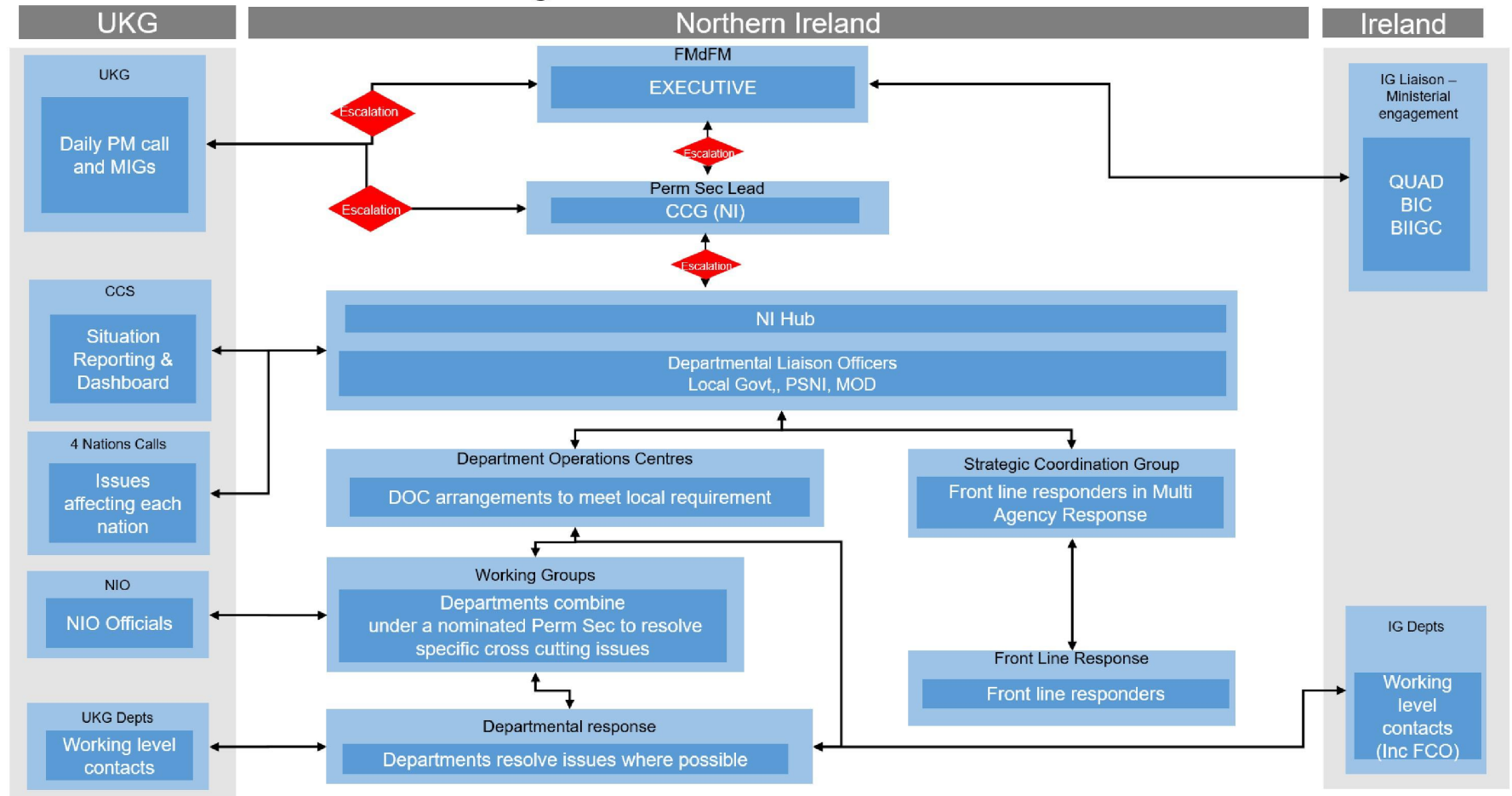
### **Annexes:**

- A. NI C3 Structure.
- B. CCG(NI) structure.
- C. Northern Ireland Hub structure.
- D. Strategic Coordination Group structure.

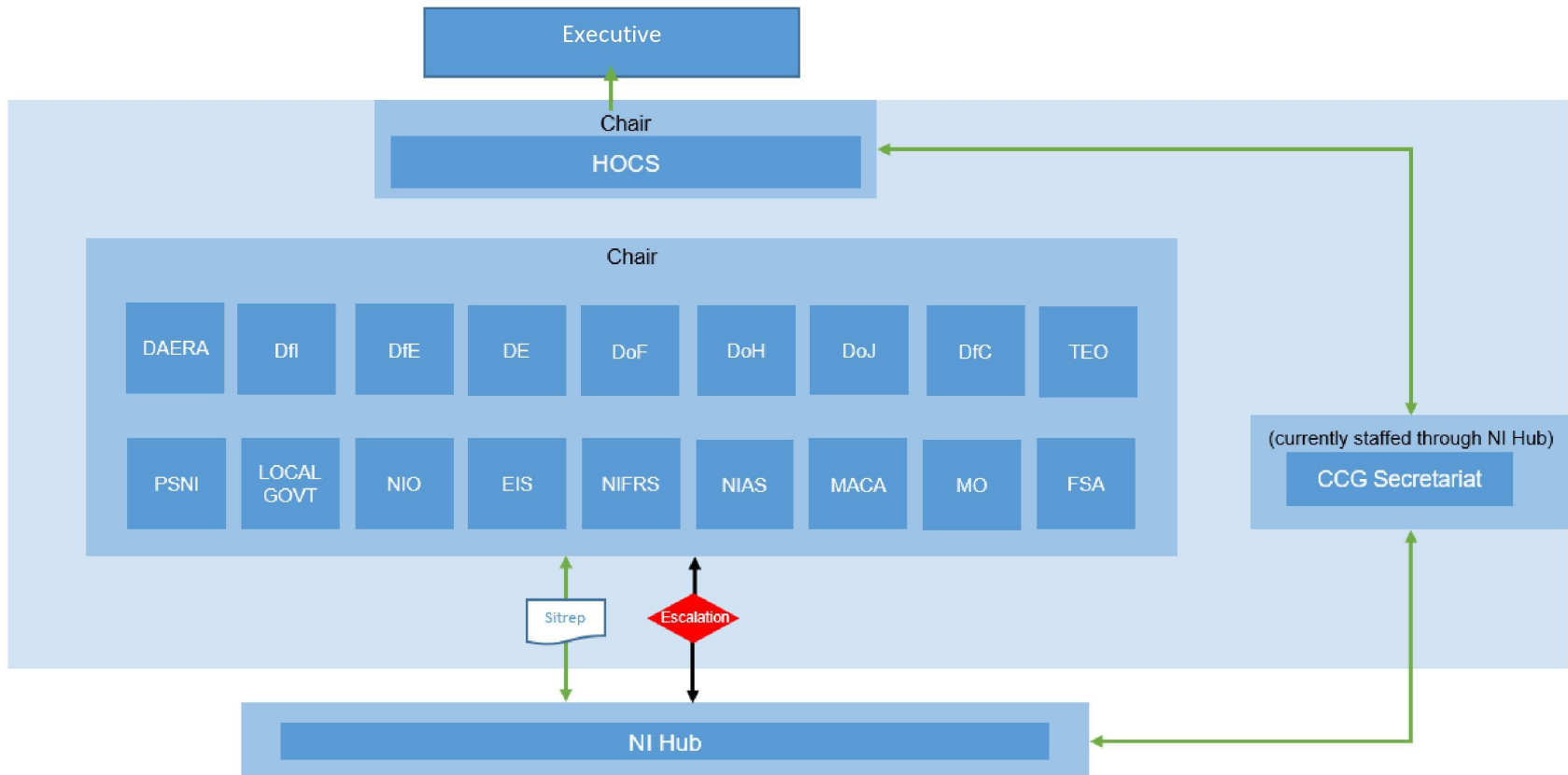


Annex A - NI C3 Structure

Northern Ireland – C19 C3 Design

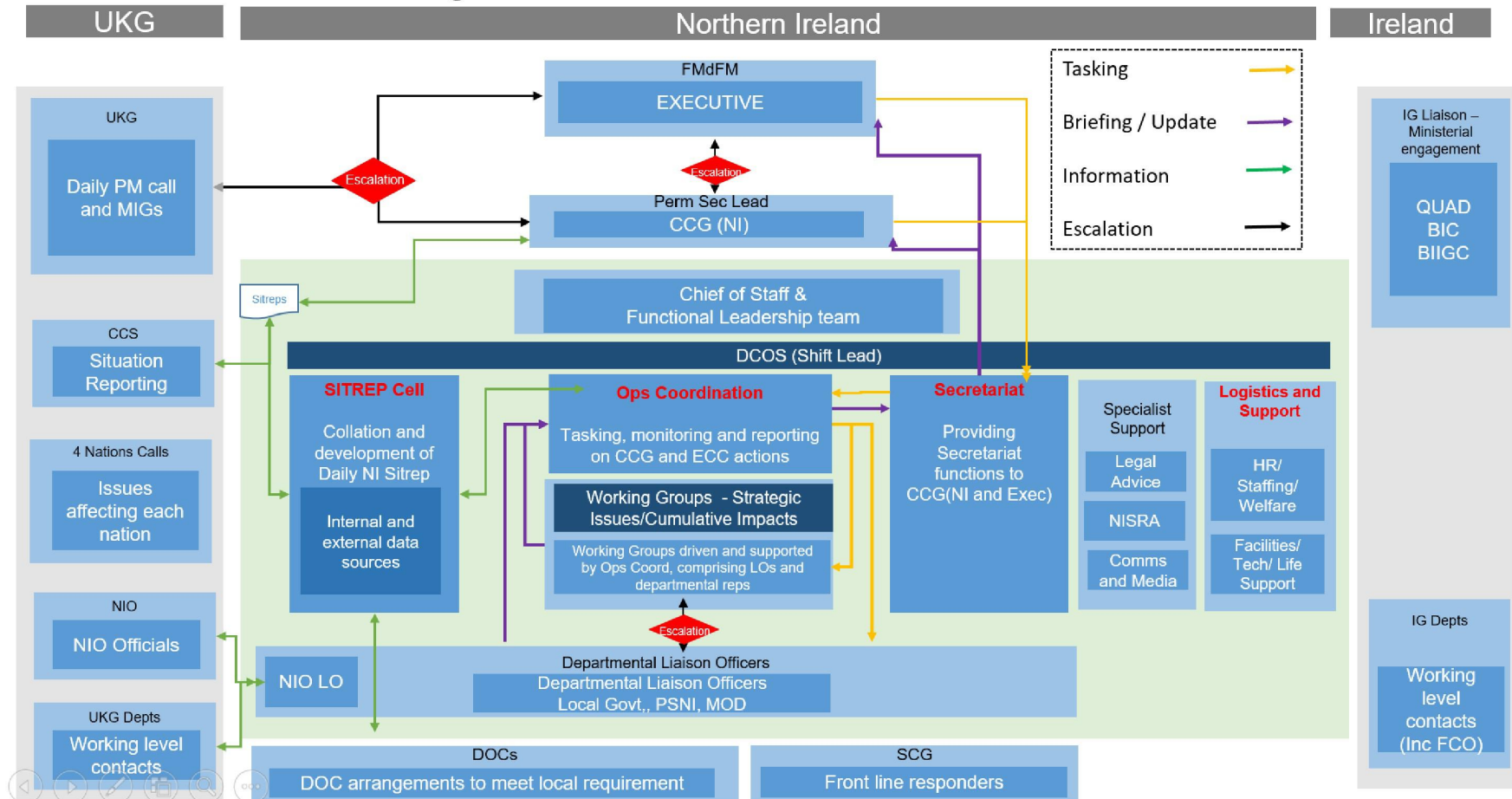


Annex B - CCG(NI) structure



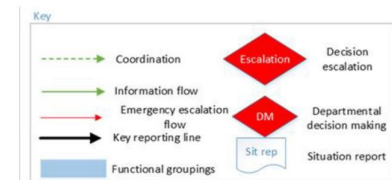
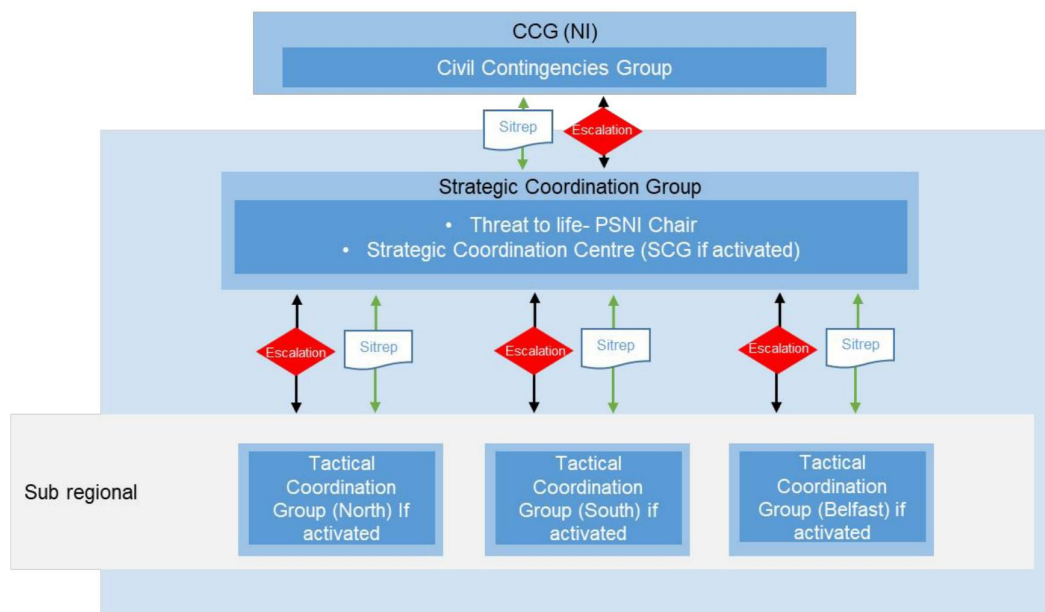
Annex C - Northern Ireland Hub structure

Northern Ireland Hub Design – C19



# Annex D - Strategic Coordination Group structure (if activated)

Northern Ireland



## Glossary

A glossary of common C3-related abbreviations and terms is as follows:

Abbreviation	Meaning	Definition
BCM	Business Continuity Management	A management process that helps manage risks to the smooth running of an organisation or delivery of a service, ensuring that it can operate to the extent required in the event of a disruption.
BCP	Business Continuity Plan	Documented collection of procedures and information developed, compiled and maintained in readiness for use in an incident to enable an organisation to continue to deliver its critical functions at an acceptable predefined level.
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms	UK Government's dedicated crisis management facilities, which are activated in the event of an emergency requiring support and coordination at the national strategic level.
COS	Chief of Staff	Person responsible for leadership and management of the NI Hub and reporting to CCG (NI) and Local Impact Group.
DCOS	Deputy Chief of Staff	Deputises for and supports the COS
CCG(NI)	Civil Contingencies Group (Northern Ireland)	Head of NI Civil Service (HOCS) chaired principal strategic EU emergency preparedness body for the public sector in Northern Ireland. It will oversee strategic support to EU exit impacts and civil contingencies.  NB - CCG (NI) will escalate decisions to SMG through the NI Hub and via the Local Impact Group.
CCPB	Civil Contingencies Policy Branch	CCPB works across the public sector in Northern Ireland to promote and encourage the development of effective emergency preparedness to mitigate the effects of a civil emergency on the public and the environment. CCPB supports the effective functioning of the Civil Contingencies Group (Northern Ireland) - CCG (NI) - in both preparedness and emergency response mode.
CCS	Civil Contingencies Secretariat	Part of the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office that exists to improve the UK's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disruptive challenges – usually described as 'resilience'.
C3	Command, Control and Coordination	The structure used when multiple teams and/or organisations are working together under a different team/organisation: <b>Command.</b> Command is exercised by the higher formation of a team. However, the team may not be under their command's direct control when working on projects or grouped as part of a functional team working on specific issues. <b>Control.</b> When a team is working under control of another organisation, command is still held by the higher formation but routine management is handed over. In practice this means that the team may be

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Abbreviation	Meaning	Definition
		given tasks but not reassigned to new roles by the controlling organisation. <b>Coordination.</b> Coordination is the requirement to work across teams to meet a defined purpose or shared goal. Neither missions nor tasks may be assigned by the coordinating formation, which is responsible for pulling together a joint and coordinated approach to solving a problem. This is the core principle of multi-agency civil contingency management.
CONOPS	Concept of Operations	Management framework applied to the C3 Covid 19 work to outline all aspects of the Covid 19 emergency response across government.
CP	Contingency Plan	Plan prepared by a particular authority specifying the response to a potential incident within its area of jurisdiction.
C19	COVID-19	COVID-19, also called coronavirus disease, is the name of the disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.
CIR	Critical Information Requirements	Prioritised information requirements identified as being critical in informing timely decision-making.
DOC	Departmental Operations Centre	Operations centre from which the management and coordination of the response by each Department is carried out.
DA	Devolved Administrations	Governments of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
EPCO	Emergency Planning Coordination Officer	Sub- regional leads for emergency planning and coordination under the NICCMA.
EPG	Emergency Preparedness Group	There are 3 EPGs in Northern Ireland – North, South and Belfast - which are coterminous with the Police Service of Northern Ireland district boundaries. As LRF equivalents they ensure multi-agency preparation for emergencies impacting on the local level.
EIS	Executive Information Service	The Executive Information Service (EIS) leads the NICS communications plan and media engagement through TEO and departmental PIOs.
FOC	Full Operating Capability	Full state of readiness to stand up C3 structures.
HOCS	Head of the Civil Service	Head of the NI Civil Service
IG	Impact Group	Thematic reporting groups in Whitehall, reporting to CCS and SMG
IM	Information Management	The collection, storage, dissemination, archiving and destruction of information.
IOC	Initial Operating Capability	Minimum state of readiness to stand up C3 structures.
LO	Liaison Officer	A role with the specific objective of being a link and line of communication by representing their home department either in an impact group or in another part of the C3 structure.
LRF	Local Resilience Forum	Process for bringing together all the category 1 and 2 responders within a police force area for the purpose of facilitating co-operation in fulfilment of their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.
MERP	Major Emergency Response Plan	A Departmental plan which sets out arrangements to respond to events occurring in, or impacting on, its

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Abbreviation	Meaning	Definition
		functional area which require the declaration of a major emergency.
MIG	Ministerial Implementation Group	UK thematic meetings across a range of cross cutting issues.
NSC(THRC)	National Security Council (Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies)	A Ministerial sub-committee of the National Security Council, which will come together in both policy and crisis response modes. This may in some contexts be more colloquially referred to as 'the COBR Committee'.
NICCMA	Northern Ireland Central Crisis Management Arrangements	Strategic cross-government co-ordination arrangements which can be activated when an emergency has occurred or is anticipated which is likely to have a serious impact either to a part of or the whole of Northern Ireland. CCG (NI), operating under NICCMA, will focus on cross-cutting strategic issues aimed at preventing and mitigating wider consequences, including those relating to critical infrastructure and essential service provision.
NI Hub	Northern Ireland Hub	<p>NI Operations Room to collate and disseminate information, coordinate multi-departmental/agency activities and planning, and filter/escalate decisions to the Local Impact Group or CCG (NI) as appropriate. It will also manage NI cumulative impacts and coordinate strategic support to civil contingencies as required.</p> <p>NB - It is the NI Hub that will produce the NI wide Sitrep. 8 NI Departments and FSA, each with their own DoC, will report to CCG (NI) via the NI Hub, coordinating with UKG departments as required.</p>
NIOBR	Northern Ireland Office Briefing Room	Central facility to support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in providing strategic direction and incident management in Northern Ireland.
Ops Cell	Operation Cell	A cell that supports the Chief of Staff in overseeing policy and situation cells. This includes distributing key documents, managing logistics and administration for efficient and effective working.
PIO	Press Information Officer	Press communications coordinator in each NI Department.
RWCS	Reasonable Worst Case Scenario	The basis the C3 Structures and planning have been formulated and constructed on. Within reason, the potential worst case situations that could arise as a result of a pandemic.
BRAG Rating	Black Red Amber Green	A colour coding system to be used on information disseminated; this coding denotes the critical nature and prioritisation of impacts and issues arising to the Impact Groups.
R2	Reports and Returns	<i>Included for abbreviation</i>
Sit Cell	Situation Cell	Cell responsible for ensuring the timely and accurate collation, analysis and dissemination of Sitreps, up, down and across the NI C3 structure.
Sitrep	Situation Report	A product that collates the most up to date information outlining the current state and potential development of an incident. Sitreps are circulated to IGs via RD.

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<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Definition</b>
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures	<i>Included for abbreviation</i>
SCC	Strategic Coordination Centre	The Strategic Coordination Centre in PSNI Headquarters is a purpose built facility for joint coordination. This enables partners to work more effectively together and share resources and expertise, to mitigate the impact of emergencies on communities.
SCG	Strategic Coordination Group	Deliver regional multi-agency coordination to prevent or mitigate the effects of civil emergencies where there is a major and imminent threat to life (or risk of a threat to life), or the scale and complexity of humanitarian issues require urgent intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation.
TCG	Tactical Coordination Group	The 3 NI civil emergency regions (Northern, Southern, and Belfast), which coordinate the response on the ground within their areas, reporting to the SCG.
ToR	Terms of Reference	The scope and limitations of an activity or area of knowledge, in this case, YH C3.
TO	Territorial Office	HMG Departments that represent the UK Government interests in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Devolved territories interests in the UK Government.
VTC	Video Teleconferencing	<i>Included for abbreviation</i>