

News story: Terrorism response tested in national multi-agency exercise

The emergency services, other public services and the government this week undertook a three-day exercise to rehearse their response to a major terrorist attack.

The simulated incident, which involved live activity in Westcott, Buckinghamshire, on Tuesday tested the multi-agency approach to responding to an attack involving hazardous materials. It was designed to ensure the right plans are in place to respond quickly and effectively.

The UK has the capability to respond to a range of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. This week's exercise simulated a chemical incident.

Security Minister Ben Wallace, who chaired a meeting of the government's emergency committee COBR as part of the exercise, said:

Exercises like these take place throughout the year to ensure that the emergency services and government are prepared to respond should an attack take place. They form one part of our comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy.

We don't conduct these exercises to cause alarm. They should be a source of reassurance that we have plans in place to deal with the diverse range of threats we face.

It is our ambition to stop attacks long before they happen and our police and security service have disrupted 13 Islamist and 4 extreme right wing plots since the beginning of 2017, however, anyone that has concerns or suspicions should report them to the police.

The exercise which involved more than 40 different agencies and more than 500 people is the largest of its kind to take place this year but is one of dozens of exercises organised annually.

Observers from police forces around the UK and representatives from governments around the world watched the exercise which showcased the UK's well-developed response to a terrorist incident.

Thames Valley Police Deputy Chief Constable John Campbell, who is the exercise director and also the national CBRN lead for policing, said:

Sadly, our country is no stranger to terrorism and it is vital that we are prepared to respond if the worst happens. Exercising is a

key part of our preparedness for any major incident and we test in extreme circumstances to ensure that our combined capabilities match whatever situation we could face.

Day to day our efforts are focused on prevention and disruption of these threats but on the rare occasion that an attack happens we need to be able to minimise the impact, protect the public from further harm and provide the necessary help and support to those affected.

Tuesday's live activity test was followed by 2 days of workshops to assess the actions necessary in the days, weeks and months following an attack to ensure that those affected continue to receive the support they need.

News about terrorism or counter-terrorism exercises can be difficult for those that have been affected in the past. There is [more information on the advice and support available on GOV.UK.](#)