

Forum focuses on bolstering UK's future resilience

The UK Resilience Forum (UKRF) met on Tuesday 3 May, bringing together stakeholders from across the private, public and voluntary sectors, as well as our emergency services, to work together on bolstering the UK's resilience.

Chaired by Lead Minister for Resilience and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon. Michael Ellis QC MP, the Forum was established in July to strengthen the country's resilience by improving communication and collaboration on risk, emergency preparedness, crisis response and recovery.

Its membership builds on those with duties under the Civil Contingencies Act. It includes national, regional and local government, private and voluntary sectors, emergency services and utilities. There are also representatives who join as voices for communities and people impacted by emergencies, including Citizens Advice, National Emergencies Trust, and the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership.

Members were notified that the Civil Contingencies Act post-implementation Review was published on 1 April, which provides a framework for emergency preparedness in the UK and acts as a critical building block to make the UK as resilient as possible. Also, that the Biological Security Strategy Call for Evidence had been completed.

Lead Minister for Resilience and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon. Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

Continuing to bolster the UK's resilience from domestic and global threats is vital, and the Forum provides space for a range of crucial organisations and partners to provide insight so we can ensure our emergency preparedness remains effective and aligned.

We continue to identify key challenges on the horizon in order to effectively pivot resources to tackle risks, and to prioritise preparedness accordingly, working collaboratively to protect the UK.

Effective partnership working across agencies is vital to ensuring that we keep our communities safe. The UK Resilience Forum is therefore a welcome and critical structure, which allows key stakeholders to better plan and prepare. Importantly, provides a way of sharing sector experience and learning with government so we can work together on how best to deliver more effective joint agency responses in the future.

The UKRF will meet every six months.

As part of the Government's ongoing commitment to transparency, a note of each UKRF meeting will be published.

[New Ofqual 3-year plan puts students and apprentices at its heart](#)

Ofqual's new [3-year plan](#) announced today (4 May) sets out its ambition for the future of qualifications that are sought after, fair, accessible, valued and world class. The plan details the work Ofqual will do towards this, with the interests of students and apprentices at its heart.

Ofqual has a pivotal role to play in leading, influencing and enabling innovation and transformation in assessment and qualifications. New approaches to assessment, including the use of technology, have the potential to improve quality and fairness for students and apprentices and to strengthen the resilience of how qualifications and assessments are delivered.

Ofqual will work with awarding organisations to harness greater innovation and the use of technology to promote assessments that are valid, efficient and implemented safely in the interests of students.

Ofqual will oversee the reintroduction of exam-based assessment in 2022 across general, vocational and technical qualifications where they were cancelled due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and will work to secure trust and confidence in awarding arrangements for 2022 and beyond.

Ofqual will look to the future demand for technical qualifications by working in partnership with Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education on technical qualifications, T Levels, higher technical qualifications and apprenticeship end-point assessments. The introduction of new Digital Functional Skills qualifications into the market also signals that the qualification landscape will be changing over the next decade and Ofqual will be developing and consulting on arrangements to secure high-quality qualifications as part of the government's post-16 qualifications review.

Ofqual will regulate to ensure that exams and assessments become more accessible for all students, including students with special educational needs and disabilities and students new to this country for whom English is an additional language.

Ofqual will transform how qualifications can be chosen and compared by building an interactive [Register of Regulated Qualifications](#) to make the qualifications market clearer and easier to navigate.

Ofqual will make the qualifications market work better in the interests of students by promoting transparency and by helping all those that take and use qualifications to make informed choices, including on the basis of price. Regulation must support a coherent and navigable qualifications market for students, apprentices and employers.

Ofqual Chair Ian Bauckham said:

Ofqual's deep assessment expertise, access to expansive data and our convening power afford us a unique role in shaping the future of qualifications and assessment. We are ambitious in that goal. Regulation must enable good innovation that is in the interests of students and apprentices.

The pandemic has, rightly, catalysed questions about not if, but when, and how, greater use of technology and onscreen assessment should be adopted. All proposed changes need to be carefully assessed for their impact on students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. It is right that we use research and evidence to challenge existing practice so that we continue to improve what we offer for students and apprentices.

Chief Regulator Dr Jo Saxton said:

I am delighted to be publishing our 2022 to 2025 corporate plan – the first in my tenure as Chief Regulator. At its heart is my personal commitment that the interests of students and apprentices will be the compass that guides us on every decision and action. They will be our true north. I know the power of qualifications from my own personal experience and from my time working on the frontline of schools in some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. Qualifications open doors. They are a passport to new opportunities and possibilities. To fulfil that role they must be trusted, understood, good quality and fair.

This corporate plan sets out the work that Ofqual will do to make sure that regulated qualifications are just that. I also want to make it easier for students to see a clearer choice of options. We are also looking at the future landscape of qualifications and so will be developing and consulting on arrangements to secure high-quality qualifications as part of the government's post-16 qualifications review.

Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Madam Chair, again for convening us today and bringing together panel experts for such a timely discussion that has highlighted the impacts on civilians when critical services are damaged, as well as the role of States in protecting these services in armed conflict.

As has been noted several times today but cannot be overstated, a little over a year ago, Russia joined with others at the UN Security Council to unanimously adopt [Resolution 2573](#). Yet, in a flagrant breach of International Humanitarian Law, Russian bombers have, in recent weeks, repeatedly and remorselessly dropped targeted munitions on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, including government buildings, hospitals, schools, and transportation.

Today we have heard the numbers of verified attacks on Ukraine's health facilities. Stretched healthcare facilities in the East are having to respond to growing reports of gender-based violence, including Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. Earlier today, [Prime Minister Johnson addressed Ukraine's Parliament](#), setting out a new package of military aid to enable Ukraine to defend itself as well as specialised civilian protection vehicles, and we will continue to provide humanitarian aid including generators to support vital services to keep running.

The dangers of this war transcend borders. As described by our keynote speaker, the world has witnessed concerning attacks on Ukrainian nuclear facilities, demonstrating Russia's reckless attitude to nuclear safety and security. The UK will continue to support neighbouring countries, including those which are hosting refugees. We continue to provide regional support in the cyber space, including by sharing threat information. For instance, we have recently launched our new programme supporting Georgia to implement its new National Security Strategy, focusing on incident management, information sharing, and the cyber awareness of vulnerable groups.

At times of heightened international tension all critical service providers must be vigilant to the risk of cyber compromises. Earlier this month, [the UK joined our international partners to share updated mitigation advice against state-sponsored and criminal cyber threats](#). Strengthening the relationships between government departments, regulators, and private sector operators is key to ensuring the latest threats, risks and vulnerabilities are understood and mitigated effectively.

States should, where possible, make publicly available their approaches to cyber security and resilience, including how they relate to critical

infrastructure protection. The UK routinely publishes this information including guides on how to effectively detect, respond to and resolve cyber incidents, and crucially where organisations can find support from certified Cyber Incident Response companies assessed against clear published standards. Sharing best practice in approaches to critical infrastructure dependences and cooperating across borders are crucial elements of strengthening our international resilience.

Madam chair, we have entered a new world where service protection and resilience measures must not only be prepared to stand up to threats caused by non-state terrorist acts, but direct and targeted missile attack. As we enter the third month of President Putin's illegal and unprovoked war, not only do thousands of civilians remain in Mariupol, Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, and other cities, struggling to survive without food, water, warmth, and medical supplies, but the effects continue to mount around the world. The OSCE has a role to play to prevent knock-on crises in crime, trafficking, and terrorism, and the UK stands ready to support the Security Committee to that end.

Thank you.

[Embajadas Británicas en México, Guatemala y El Salvador abordan retos para la libertad de prensa](#)

World news story

Para conmemorar el Día Mundial de la Libertad de Prensa 2022, las Embajadas Británicas en México, Guatemala, El Salvador y Honduras organizaron una mesa redonda regional.



UK Government

En la sesión también se abordaron los impactos de la disminución de los espacios democráticos para un periodismo seguro y abierto. También se discutió cómo la comunidad internacional puede ayudar a apoyar el periodismo independiente.

Jon Benjamin y David Lelliott, embajadores del Reino Unido en México y El Salvador respectivamente brindaron los discursos de apertura y clausura. Ambos destacaron la importancia de la libertad de los medios de comunicación como un componente clave de las comunidades democráticas prósperas:

“El intercambio libre de ideas es el motor del desarrollo, tanto económico como político y social. Esfuerzos dirigidos a reducir o limitar la libertad de medios de comunicación son contraproducentes”, señaló David Lelliott.

“En los últimos 15 días, más de 700 periodistas se han beneficiado de un reciente proyecto de formación impartido por la Oficina de la UNESCO en México, con el apoyo de nuestra embajada, del Instituto Nacional de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información y Protección de Datos Personales (INAI) y del gobierno federal”, recalcó Jon Benjamin, en relación al trabajo de la Embajada Británica en México para promover la libertad de los medios de comunicación y apoyar a las y los periodistas.

De acuerdo al Comité para la Protección de los Periodistas (CPJ), México es el país más peligroso del mundo para ser periodista fuera de una zona de conflicto. El CPJ informa que, de los 25 periodistas asesinados en todo el mundo en 2022 hasta ahora, siete han sido asesinados en México.

El Reino Unido mantiene su compromiso de promover el periodismo independiente

en todo el mundo, esencial para construir sociedades abiertas, prósperas y democráticas. El debate sobre los retos de la libertad de los medios de comunicación a nivel regional ayudará a informar el apoyo del Reino Unido a los periodistas a través de proyectos tanto nacionales como regionales.

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[Reinforcing our support of UN Peacekeeping Initiatives: UK Statement at the UN General Assembly](#)

Mr Chair,

Mr Chair, I thank you, Bureau members, Fifth Committee Secretariat, ACABQ, and UN Secretariat for continued efforts in support of the Fifth Committee.

Since its inception, the UK is a strong and a long-standing supporter of UN Peacekeeping. Last week we closed our UNSC Presidency by dedicated a new tree on the UN North Lawn to the memory Sir Brian Urquhart, the British Under Secretary General widely known as the founder of UN Peacekeeping.

In this session we must ensure peacekeeping operations receive adequate, cost-effective financing and staffing in support of full mandate delivery, including on human rights and gender, building on lessons learned from the pandemic. We must also break the cycle of failing to agree a cross cutting resolution if we are to deliver our responsibilities in providing proper guidance.

I would take this opportunity to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Peacekeepers, and those who support them. We look forward to discussing the important issue of troop reimbursement rates, and the safety, security and health of peacekeeping personnel, including mental health, and the Secretary General's proposal on PTSD.

Safety and security should be a right for all, of course. On sexual exploitation and abuse, we expect member states to agree a resolution, and we urge continued, sustained whole-of-UN system commitment and action, through strengthened leadership and organisational culture, including on prevention, response and survivor support.

We would reiterate that peacekeeping is the highest contributor to climate change within the UN system, and urge greater progress on reducing impacts, including through continued progress on efficient, professional, sustainable supply chain management.

Mr Chair,

An effective, inclusive organisation is critical across the UN system, not just in peacekeeping, so we look forward to ensuring adequate funding for the strategic action plan of the Secretary General's Task Force on addressing racism. Doing so will help address racism and promote dignity for all staff, giving the UN benefit from diverse perspectives and life experiences. We also look forward to discussing progress on better accessibility for persons with disabilities, to ensure full and equal participation in UN meetings and conferences.

Mr Chair

Other important issues this session include options for enhanced funding for prevention and peacebuilding and resuming discussions on the UN's financial situation to put it on a more stable footing, on which we will make statements later in the session.

Lastly, as we strive for continuous improvement and accountability we welcome the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and Office for Investigation and Oversight Services.

Mr Chair, the United Kingdom looks forward to rapid progress this session under your leadership and guidance, in support of timely closure.