

**South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum and South Yorkshire and  
Bassetlaw Local Health Resilience Partnership**

# **Exercise Cygnus (Pandemic Influenza)**

## **Debrief Report**

Date of Exercise	18 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
Location of Exercise	[REDACTED]
Date of Debrief	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2016
Location of Debrief	[REDACTED]
Author	[REDACTED]
Role of the Author	Exercise Planner
Authors Organisation	NHS England – North, Yorkshire and the Humber
Report Owner	South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum



## Disclaimer

This report is offered without prejudice in the interests of improving multi-agency response procedures. Although various matters are highlighted and recommendations made for future action, no criticism of the conduct of individuals is either implied or intended and none should therefore be inferred.

## Freedom of Information

Both NHS England North – Yorkshire and the Humber and South Yorkshire Police (on behalf of the LRF) hold this debrief report for the purposes of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, and as such have equal responsibilities in terms of meeting any requests in relation to its subsequent release.

There is no intention at this time to release the information contained within this report to the public. Its distribution will be limited solely to the partner agencies involved in the exercise and debrief process.

All drafts together with the final copy of the structured debrief report will be subject to version control and retained together. A record will be kept of any alterations made to the report along with the reason for the alteration.

## Participant Acknowledgement

The exercise planning group would like to take this opportunity to thank all delegates for attending the exercise and contributing to the discussions during exercise play; making it an extremely successful event.

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# South Yorkshire LRF and South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw LHRP

## Exercise Cygnus Debrief Report

### 1. Introduction

#### Risk Context

Pandemic influenza remains the highest risk on the National Risk Register for Emergencies. Worse case planning assumptions detailed in the UK Influenza Preparedness Strategy (Department of Health, 2011) indicate that a pandemic could affect up to 50% of the population and cause between 200,000 and 400,000 deaths nationally.

#### Background

In 2013 the Cabinet Office requested that the Department of Health (DH) lead the delivery of a Tier 1 pandemic influenza exercise. The Department of Health subsequently commissioned Public Health England's Emergency Response Department to plan and deliver the exercise in October 2014. The exercise was postponed at short notice due to the response to the Ebola crisis. Planning resumed in December 2015 and then again in August 2015 following a short break to deal with the response to industrial action by junior doctors. The national exercise was finally delivered on 18, 19 and 20 October 2016. South Yorkshire was one of the LRFs which played into this exercise at a strategic level.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the key findings and proposed recommendations arising from the exercise play, participant evaluation, exercise evaluator and debrief feedback in South Yorkshire. These recommendations are intended to support organisational and multi-agency planning across Yorkshire and the Humber.

### 3. Exercise Aim and Objectives

#### Aim

To assess preparedness and response to an influenza pandemic in South Yorkshire

#### Objectives

1. To exercise the draft Yorkshire and the Humber LRFs and LHRPs Pandemic Influenza Plan and alignment with organisational plans (including command, control and coordination structures and reporting arrangements)
2. To exercise coordination of messaging to the public
3. To exercise strategic decision making processes around surge in health and social care activity and managing the wider consequences of an influenza pandemic
4. Exercise the coordination of resources to cope with excess deaths in the community

### 4. Exercise Format

Exercise Cygnus was a command post exercise involving over 40 organisations including the three devolved administrations, the Department of Health and other government departments, NHS England, Public Health England, eight Local Resilience Forums and six prisons. Exercise play was based on 4 COBR meetings held over the three days and the communication and reporting requirements into and out of these meetings.

[REDACTED]

South Yorkshire LRF's Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) met on 18 and 19 October and provided a SitRep to DCLG on each day in line with the scheduled exercise battle rhythm.

The SCG was attended by;

- NHS England Yorkshire and the Humber - chair
- Public Health England Yorkshire and the Humber Centre
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service
- South Yorkshire Police
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Military Liaison

NHS England Yorkshire and the Humber also provided an NHS SitRep to NHS England – North in line the scheduled exercise battle rhythm on 18 and 19 October.

The Communications and Media Cell was established on 18 and 19 October to coordinate messaging to the public through the exercise web-based media platform called 'WNN' and social media outlet called 'Twister' driven by a team of pseudo-journalists.

The Comms and Media Cell was supported by;

- NHS England Yorkshire and the Humber
- South Yorkshire Police
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council

In addition, a health tactical group sat on 18 October to consider the scenario and support the NHS England input into the SCG. This provided nominal tactical health advice to the SCG to mirror the information and advice which would be available from NHS partners during a pandemic incident.

The health tactical group was attended by organisations to represent the breadth of NHS services in South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw;

- NHS England Yorkshire and the Humber - chair
- Acute hospital services –
  - Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
  - Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
  - Sheffield Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Community and mental health services
  - Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
  - Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group

## 5. Exercise Scenario

Exercise Cygnus was set in week 7 of the UK's response to an influenza pandemic. Scenario modelling indicated that the scale of the pandemic was slightly less than the government's worst case planning scenario with an anticipated 35% infection rate, 3% hospitalisation rate and 1.5 % deaths over the 15 week wave. Whilst the scenario was played in real time over the three days, participants were encouraged to examine their



[Redacted]

Lessons identified

[Redacted]

ii. Information gathering and reporting, including the use of the JESIP / Joint Decision Model (JDM) and SitReps

What did not go well and needs further development?

[Redacted]

What went well and should be highlighted as good practice for future operations?

[Redacted]

Lessons identified

[Redacted]







What went well and should be highlighted as good practice for future operations?

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Lessons identified

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

7. Health Tactical Group – key themes

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Lessons identified

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

8. General Observations

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Lessons identified

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**9. Exercise Evaluation**

Information to support the evaluation of the exercise was captured on the national exercise evaluation sheet completed by participants at the end of the exercise. Comments provided by participants and the exercise evaluator have been incorporated into section 6 of this debrief report. A summary of feedback of participants' experience of the exercise organisation can be found at Appendix A.

**10. Lessons Identified, Recommendations and Actions**

The Lessons identified, recommendations and actions are detailed in the Table 1.

[Redacted]

Table 1 Lessons identified and recommendations from SY LRF Exercise Cygnus

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Plans	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.1	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		
Plans	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.2	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		

[REDACTED]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Plans	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.3	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Plans	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Plans	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.5	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Plans	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.6	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Plans	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.7	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Information Gathering & Reporting	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.8	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Information Gathering & Reporting	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.9	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Information Gathering & Reporting	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.10	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Team Working and Decision Making	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.11	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Team Working and Decision Making	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.12	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		
Team Working and Decision Making	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.13	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		
Team Working and Decision Making	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.14	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		

[Redacted]



[REDACTED]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Team Working and Decision Making	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.15	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Team Working and Decision Making	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.16	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
Team Working and Decision Making	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.17	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		

[REDACTED]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Comms & Media	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.18	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		
Comms & Media	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.19	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		
Health	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.20	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Health	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.21	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		
Health	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.22	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		
General	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.23	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]		

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
General	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.24	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
General	Exercise Cygnus Oct 2016.25	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		

Table 2 Lessons identified and recommendations from Exercise Swan (Author [Redacted] PHE)

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Comms	Swan L01	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Comms	Swan L02	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Comms	Swan L03	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Comms	Swan L04	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

Theme	Ref to identify incident	Lesson identified	Recommendation arising	Action required	Relevant to	Owner	Deadline	Review
Swabbing / mass vacc	Swan L05	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
PPE	Swan L06 Link to Ex Cygnus Oct 2016.7	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Prison Health	Swan L07	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

## Glossary of Acronyms

BMG	Business Management Group
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DH	Department of Health
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme
JDM	Joint Decision Model
LA	Local Authority
LHRP	Local Health Resilience Partnership
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
MAGIC	Multi Agency Gold Incident Command
NHS	National Health Service
PHE	Public Health England
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RD	Resilience Direct
SCC	Strategic Coordination Centre
SCG	Strategic Coordinating Group
SitRep	Situation Report
SY	South Yorkshire
Y&H	Yorkshire and the Humber







**Appendix A**  
**Summary of Participant Experience of the Exercise**

Exercise Content	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A. The exercise was well organised	11	13	1	0
B. The scenario and injects generated useful discussions	8	16	1	0
C. The exercise generated important issues and lessons identified	15	6	4	0
D. The aim of the exercise was achieved	12	9	4	0

