

# **UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP** **INLAND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Web site URL: [www.uk-sar.org.uk](http://www.uk-sar.org.uk)**

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Thursday 15th December, 2005 at 11.00 hrs. The venue was Room 1/84, Merseyside Police HQ, Canning Place Liverpool. L69 1JD

## **PRESENT**

- 1 Supt. John Darcy - Chairman, Northern Constabulary, ACPO(S)
- 2 Mr. Andrew Ashton - RNLI, Maritime & Aviation Consultative Committee
- 3 Chief Supt. Paul Forrester - Merseyside Police, ACPO
- 4 Dr. R. D. Mehew - British Caving Association
- 5 Mrs. Rebecca Binstead - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- 6 Mr Davy Thompson - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- 7 Ms Sue Todd - Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- 8 Mr. K. C. Gordon - UK Mountain Training Board
- 9 Mr. Christian Grammer - Commercial Passengers Boat Operators Association
- 10 Dr. A. S. G. Jones, Secretary

## **1 APOLOGIES**

Mr. Michael Vlasto - Maritime & Aviation Consultative Committee  
Mr. Sam Crymble - Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority  
Mr Tom Redfern - Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres  
Mr. Derek Stansfield - Duke of Edinburgh Award  
Dr. Cliff Nelson - Royal Life Saving Society  
Mr. Nick Owen - Youth Hostel Association  
Mr. John Cousins - Mountain Leader Training UK

## **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed the following to the meeting:  
Davy Thompson  
Sue Todd

## **2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 22nd June, 2005**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22nd June, 2005 had been circulated. They were taken as read and were accepted as a true record.

## **3 MATTERS ARISING**

### A) Item 3A. Life Saving Skills

From Dr Cliff Nelson, The RLSS is very keen to work with the Police in supporting lifesaving development. The Police are invited to make direct contact before the next meeting of the I.C.C.

### B) Item 4. Advice on use of Mobile Telephones

The Communications Working Group considered a first draft at its last meeting. A revised draft will be considered at the next meeting due to be held on Tuesday 21st February, 2006. It has proved to be slow work.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the MRC of S was concerned about continuing incorrect routing of 999 calls and apparent problems with call centres. There were no easy answers to the problems.

#### C) Item 5 vi. Transport Select Committee

The Government response to the report of the Transport Select Committee was published in October. Copies of the response were circulated to members with other papers for this meeting.

The Committee was informed that a joint statement from the MCA and the Unions had been issued.

The response had been considered by the Maritime & Aviation Consultative Committee at its meeting held on Wednesday 14th December, 2005.

The point was made that MR-EW had and does contribute to the INREM database. In addition, the Annual Incident Report for MR-EW had been tabled at meetings of the Operators Group.

The meeting was informed that the Strategic Committee has established a Volunteer Working Group. The first meeting of this Group was due to be held on Monday 9th January, 2006 in London.

The Chairman raised the need for a statement as to what exactly is a volunteer. The meeting was informed that the RNLI had developed a policy for volunteers. The RNLI was happy to share the policy with others. The policy is attached as Appendix I to these minutes.

#### D) Item 9 E: ACPO Portfolio for Search and Rescue

The meeting was informed that ACC Ian Shannon, North Wales Police would be taking the ACPO lead for SAR. Supt. Mike Long, South Wales, would be meeting Chief Supt. Paul Forrester on 6th January, 2006. Chief Supt Forrester would be handing over the SAR portfolio. The Chairman expressed the sincere thanks of all for all the support given to SAR by Chief Supt Forrester.

### **4 CORRESPONDENCE**

As instructed the Secretary wrote on 28th June, 2005, to the Chairman of the DPSSG inviting them to become a member of the I.C.C. No reply has been received to the date of this meeting.

Mr. Christian Grammer told the meeting that he had been asked to attend meetings of the I.C.C. as the representative of the DPSSG.

### **5 REPORT FROM THE UK SAR OPERATORS GROUP.**

#### A) Meeting of Thursday 28th July, 2005.

The minutes of the Operators Group meeting held on 28th July, 2005 were circulated with papers for this meeting. Members attention was drawn to:-

i) Item 4.2: The problem of communications between Land SAR teams and Air Ambulances has been resolved in principle.

ii) Item 4.3 "CHAS" Protocol. This document was circulated for consultation and has been renamed "Deployment of Air Assets" under the name of the UK SAR Operators Group. The final draft will be considered by the Operators Group at its meeting due to be held on 26th January, 2006.

iii) Item 4.6. The subject of 999 calls is still under discussion.

There was a short discussion during which a distinction was drawn between call centres and control rooms for the individual emergency services.

iv) Concern had been expressed with regard to the collection of Time Expired Pyrotechnics (TEPs). The matter was to be raised at the UK SAR Strategic Committee.

v) Item 5.4 The problem of three separate data bases for EPIRP / PLB / ELT had been mentioned and was referred to the Strategic Committee.

The Satellite Communications Working Group had held its first meeting in November. The problems of databases had been discussed.

vi) Item 6. Transport Select Committee. Had been considered under Matters Arising.

vii) Action 7. The Strategic Committee has established a Volunteer Working Group. The first meeting was due to be held on Monday 9th January, 2006.

viii) Item 10. National Centre of Policing Excellence (NCPE - Centrex) was developing a manual of search techniques for police officers.

The NCPE had convened a seminar at Cumbria Constabulary HQ, Penrith on Thursday 8th December, 2005. It was hoped that the manual on search techniques for Police Officers would be published by July, 2006. The document would be available for general circulation.

ix) Mr. Michael Vlasto was congratulated on the award of an OBE.. Mr John Astbury was congratulated on the award of a CBE.

x) Item 13. The next meeting of the Operators Group will be held on Thursday 26th January, 2006. The venue would be MCA HQ, Southampton.

xi) The meeting was informed that Helicopter Harmonisation was progressing. Eventually there would be one contract for both MOD and MCA.

The MCA had announced an interim contract from July 2007. The contract was with CHC Scotia. There would be two Sikorsky S92 helicopters in the north and two Augusta Bell 139 helicopters on the south coast. There would be no reduction in the current level of service and the agreed UKSAR coverage criteria would be maintained.

## **6 MARITIME AND AVIATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

### A) Meeting of Wednesday 15th June, 2005.

A verbal report had been given at the last meeting of the I.C.C. The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June, 2005 had been circulated with papers for this meeting.

### B) Meeting of Wednesday 14th December, 2005

The last meeting of the Maritime and Aviation C.C. was held the day before this meeting. The minutes will be circulated when available. The following items were raised.

i) The MCA had tabled an update and report at the last meeting of the M. & A. I. C. C.. It is attached as Appendix II to these minutes.

ii) The problem of collection and disposal of time expired pyrotechnics (TEPs) was considered. During the discussion the following points were made:-

a) It is intended that a meeting of all interested parties will be convened.

b) At present the MCA will accept small amounts of TEPs from leisure users but the situation will change. The MCA only has limited storage capacity. Consideration will be given to either the manufacturers accepting responsibility to take back TEPs or disposal be incorporated into Port Waste Management plans but there was a problem of costs.

c) The suggestion was made that there could two dates on pyrotechnics (a) a stability date after which they could be used for training and (b) an expiry date after which the pyrotechnics must be disposed of

d) It was pointed out that the Fire Services have contracts for disposal of hazardous materials. It was suggested that an approach be made to the Fire Services to discuss possible disposal contracts. The Fire Service would be invited to the interested parties meeting..

- e) The point was strongly made that it was illegal under the Merchant Shipping Act to set off red flares other than in a true emergency. They must not be fired during training exercises.
- f) The subject would be raised at the Operators Group.
- iii) National Water Safety Forum. The meeting was informed that it was intended to convene a government interdepartmental group to consider the subject.
- iv) The Maritime & Aviation I.C.C. would be inviting the Fishing Industry to become a member and nominate a representative.
- v) The meeting was informed that the Irish Coast Guard would be closing the station in Dublin and would be moving to Drogheda.
- vi) On Thursday 15th December, 2005 the MCA and RNLI were attending a meeting at ODPM to discuss beach life guarding.
- vii) The next meeting of the Maritime and Aviation I.C.C. will be held on 27th June, 2006. The venue would probably be in Jersey.

## **7 SAR ON INLAND WATERS**

- i) The meeting was given an overview of the current situation in Cumbria. The system was developing and had worked well when required. HMCG is working in partnership with other resources but concern remains about actual resources in place.
- ii) There was a problem in completing the communications net because of a problem with an antenna at Pooley Bridge. Until the antenna was established there would be a gap in the communications. It was hoped that the matter would be resolved by 1st April, 2006.
- iii) A protocol for communications with North West Air Ambulance had been established.
- iv) A review was being undertaken with regard to numbers of Coastguards in the area.
- v) Operations were still in the early stages but seemed to be developing well.
- vi) Problems had been encountered with the varying use of co-ordinates which were not used on inland waters where local descriptions were more commonly given.
- vii) Boat operators desired some clarification on the role of the Auxiliary Coastguards in the area.
- viii) All incidents were co-ordinated from Liverpool MRCC. To date it has handled some 40 incidents. MRCC Liverpool were being informed of past incidents.
- ix) Consideration was being given to the resource situation. There was a problem of what was and what was not a "rescue" boat on the lakes. There was considerable lack of consistency. It would take some time to resolve the matter. It was pointed out that one reason for the claim of "rescue" boat was the 10 mph speed limit on Ullswater unless involved in a rescue. There was a short discussion on Declared Facilities and the impact of IMO standards which placed significant constraints on what could be accepted as a rescue boat and what could not be accepted. The list maintain by the Cumbria County Council was being revised and additional information sought to aid the SAR services.
- x) The point was made that the Commercial Boat Operators were very good.
- xi) It was pointed out that on some lakes the activity was seasonal and in daylight only.
- xii) The point was made that HMCG have direct access to military helicopters which can be tasked to inland incidents where appropriate..
- xiii) Leisure users on the lakes were quite dynamic in that many did not live in the Lake District.
- xiv) Discussions were taking place with the Met Office with a view to providing specific weather forecasts for lake users.

xv) With regard to incident reporting much work remained to be done in order to develop a fuller picture. Many incidents were not presently reported. The Operators needed clearer definitions of what was an incident.

xvi) It would seem that there was still some confusion as to whom is responsible for inland water SAR. The Framework Document set out the correct situation. The point was made that the MCA was not in the business of empire building and would only get involved when requested to do so and where they had the resources available, The primacy of the police service was not affected by such co-ordination.

xvii) The Cumbria Constabulary had an MoU with the MCA but police primacy stood. It was a partnership which freed up some police resources.

xviii) The amalgamation of Police Forces in England and Wales could have a significant impact on land SAR. At present it is unlikely that there would be amalgamation of Police Forces in Scotland but the situation remained very fluid.

xix) With regard to the National Water Safety Forum and British Waterways, there was some concern about the apparent lack of co-ordination of emergency services on canals and similar bodies of water.

xx) The suggestion was made that the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities be invited to become a member of the I.C.C. It was agreed that the Secretary would write when supplied with the necessary information.

xxi) There was further discussion on the system used to identify locations - post codes, grid references, names, etc. The lack of consistency was a problem. The discussion continued and considered problems of control room operators using IT driven questions as opposed to free text.

## **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### A) UKSAR Website

An e-mail with attached letter from DfT was circulated on 21/11/05. Members were asked to comment directly to Andy Cooper. The closing dates for comments is 19th December, 2005.

The website has been off line for a period but is now back. There is an URL change to

[www.uk-sar.org.uk](http://www.uk-sar.org.uk)

Members were urged to make a response to the e-mail from DfT. Concern was expressed that the UKSAR Website would be swamped and difficult to find if it were taken into the DfT website. In addition, concern was expressed that there would be restrictions as to what could and could not be placed on the website. With regard to mobile telephones there was a chance that it would not be possible to download information on emergency procedures.

### B) Merseyside Inshore Rescue

The meeting was informed that the Merseyside Inshore Rescue, a charity, had been taken over by the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. This inshore rescue service was essential for the licence of Liverpool Airport. The Fire and Rescue Service had taken over the Water Sports Centre on the Docks as a training centre.

The RNLI had been in contact with the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service because of some concern about uncontrolled expansion. The problems had been resolved.

The MCA had brokered the deal with a robust MoU between the MCA and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

### C) Fire and Rescue Services

There were some national concerns about Fire and Rescue Services taking on extra duties and expanding into SAR. It was felt that there was need for discussions with national representatives. The Chairman would liase with Chief Supt. Paul Forrester. There was a perceived need to clarify demarcation lines on occasions of actual SART operations if confusion was to be avoided.

## **10 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Committee accepted the invitation to hold its next meeting at MRCC Liverpool to be followed by a visit to the Operations Room.

Date: Wednesday 14th June, 2006

Time: 10.30 for 11.00 hrs.

Venue: MRCC, Liverpool.

At the conclusion of the meeting, on behalf of all the members, the Chairman sincerely thanked Chief Supt. Paul Forrester and the Merseyside Police for the use of their facilities and their hospitality over the past few years.

3 Maes Tyddyn To  
Menai Bridge,  
Menai Bridge,  
Anglesey. LL59 5BF

Dr. A. S. G. Jones, MBE  
Secretary.

**Volunteer Problem Solving Policy – for Operational Volunteers at Lifeboat Stations**

**SECTION 1 – Introduction**

**1.1 Scope**

This policy applies to all operational volunteers at lifeboat stations - whether retained or not – crew, prospective crew, boats officers, second and third mechanics, shorehelpers, and operational branch officials. It does not apply to full time lifeboat crew who should refer instead to the policies in the HR Policy zone of Porthole.

It sets out a framework to use if volunteers wish to raise a problem or concern with the RNLI, its staff, or its other volunteers.

The policy also clarifies what will happen if the RNLI feels the need to raise a problem or concern about a volunteer, their approach, their conduct, or their relationship with the RNLI and its staff and other volunteers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the RNLI's Regulations – also known as 'the Green Book'. Every lifeboat station has a copy of these regulations which should be accessible to all operational volunteers.

**1.2 Glossary of Terms**

At the end of this document is a glossary of terms. This may be helpful for clarification, especially for newer volunteers.

**1.3 Background**

The RNLI wants its volunteers to have access to a policy through which problems can be aired and, similarly, a policy whereby the RNLI can address any problems with volunteers.

Maintaining the volunteer ethos is one of the underlying values of the RNLI and a bond of trust is established between the RNLI and its operational volunteers. This is based upon a voluntary two-way commitment, a relationship that is not intended to be a legally binding contract.

The RNLI wants this to be a collaborative and mutually positive relationship. Occasionally, however, a volunteer may have a problem or concern which needs to be addressed. Similarly, the RNLI may need to raise concerns and take action with a volunteer over their conduct, approach, suitability or availability for a role or other issue.

Initially, attempts will normally be made to resolve problems informally and volunteers are therefore encouraged to air difficulties locally and promptly as this informal approach usually provides the speediest and most effective solution.

If the relationship between a volunteer and the RNLI breaks down and ceases to be a collaborative and mutually positive one, this policy should be used as a way of resolving difficulties. However, if those difficulties prove irreconcilable, then either the volunteer or

the RNLI can decide to bring the volunteer arrangement to an end at any stage. Equally, either the volunteer or the RNLI may decide to end the volunteer arrangement at any time for any other reason.

## **SECTION 2 - Code of Conduct**

### **Code of Conduct for operational volunteers at lifeboat stations**

This is not an exhaustive list but sets out the general principles of conduct expected by the RNLI.

Volunteers must:

- Carry out their volunteer role activities with due care and diligence
- Adhere to all reasonable requests by staff or volunteers who support and manage their volunteer role activities
- Act within the law at all times, including the Road Traffic Act
- Maintain the trust and confidence and uphold the reputation of the organisation at all times
- Maintain the trust and confidence of others at the lifeboat station
- Be aware of health and safety notices and their meaning, seeking clarification if necessary
- Immediately report all injuries and accidents occurring whilst volunteering for the organisation
- Report any loss or damage to personal or organisation property to their LOM or DI
- Wear any protective clothing/equipment provided to them for their volunteer role and comply with any health and safety rules in force
- Respect, maintain and care for any property belonging to or paid for by the organisation
- Return all property belonging to the RNLI on or before the last date of their volunteering
- Comply with the organisation's no smoking policy when on RNLI property, afloat or ashore
- Only bring pets, children or other people to the lifeboat station with the specific authorisation the LOM or DI
- Act with respect and courtesy towards others
- Accept both RNLI policy and the authority of those entrusted by the RNLI to manage lifeboat stations

- Set a positive example to other volunteers
- Discuss any problems or issues in a reasonable, constructive manner without aggression
- Make themselves aware of the content of the RNLI's Regulations (the 'Green Book'), kept at each lifeboat station and operate within those regulations
- Participate in any necessary training relevant to their role and maintain the relevant CoBT competencies
- Notify the organisation immediately of any illness or medical change

Volunteers must not

- Act outside the spirit of the Volunteer Commitment
- Participate in any form of inappropriate behaviour or activity when volunteering or act in any way that brings the organisation into disrepute
- Bully, harass or unlawfully discriminate against anyone
- Falsify records, expenses or defraud or attempt to defraud the organisation in any manner
- Carry out volunteer duties when in an unfit state due to the influence of alcohol, or other drugs or substances
- Be in possession of firearms or any offensive weapon whilst undertaking volunteer activities
- Carry out private trading on RNLI premises or use the RNLI 'brand' or equipment to promote private trading
- Participate in lifeboat activities whilst signed off sick from their employer, unless they have the express permission of the RNLI

### **SECTION 3 - How a volunteer should raise a problem with the RNLI**

#### **3.1 Three stage process for raising problems**

A lifeboat station is a unique environment where teamwork and trust are fundamental to the safe and efficient operation of the lifeboat.

Sometimes issues that are not directly involved with the RNLI such as business conflict, personal relationships or local history are brought into the lifeboat station and can cause difficulties in this close knit environment. Whilst the organisation wants to do all it can to promote the atmosphere of teamwork and trust, the RNLI can only help volunteers tackle issues that relate directly to RNLI business. Volunteers are expected to put aside any other differences whilst at the lifeboat station.

Should a volunteer raise an issue that is felt to be either outside the RNLI's remit, or to be very minor, this will be explained and the volunteer will be asked to resolve the problem in a different way.

If a volunteer has a problem they wish to air that is directly linked to the RNLI, there are potentially 3 stages to this process. The first stage is informal, the second is formal and the third and final stage is the opportunity to challenge the decision made at stage 2.

Problems should always be aired as promptly as possible as it is difficult for the organisation to investigate or resolve problems that happened a long time ago.

#### Stage 1 – Informal

Unless the problem is a major one, volunteers should first raise the problem informally with the LOM (or the DI for the LOM himself or if the problem concerns the LOM). He will try to resolve the problem informally, involving other people as needed. It is hoped that all problems of a relatively minor nature will be resolved in this way as it would be unusual for these to be taken forward to the formal stage.

For more major problems, an informal approach may be sufficient, or it may be the precursor to the formal stage. The LOM will keep the DI informed.

#### Stage 2 – Formal

If the problem is of a serious nature, or if it proves impossible to resolve a more minor problem informally, then a problem or complaint can be aired formally by the volunteer summarising details in writing to the DI. The LOM should be copied in to any such letter, unless the complaint is about the LOM himself in which case the DI will bring the matter to the LOM's attention.

The complaint needs to be specific as to what the problem is and the volunteer should be prepared to give examples. The DI will listen to the problem, either in a pre-arranged telephone call, or by inviting the volunteer to a meeting. If a formal meeting is required the volunteer will be given reasonable notice of that meeting and will be offered the chance to bring a companion.

Once the DI has considered the complaint fully – which may involve investigating further and involving others - he will inform the volunteer of his decision in writing. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to challenge the outcome.

Volunteers should be aware the RNLI will let the complainant know whether or not it feels there are grounds for the complaint and may explain what, if any, action is to be taken, but the volunteer will not necessarily be party to all the steps taken, particularly if they involve someone else.

#### Stage 3 - Challenge

If the volunteer decides to challenge the outcome, they need to do so in writing, to the HR department within 5 working days, explaining their reasons. The RNLI will consider the challenge and may ask the volunteer to attend a further meeting. The RNLI will notify the volunteer in writing of the decision which will be final.

### **3.2 Bullying, harassment or discrimination**

The RNLI believes in equality of opportunity and does not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination. If a volunteer feels they are the subject of or witness to any sort of bullying, harassment or discrimination they should immediately inform either the LOM, DI or the HR department, whichever they feel is most appropriate. The LOM should then immediately notify the DI for support and guidance.

The principles outlined in this policy are applicable, but additional support is also available.

## **SECTION 4 - How the RNLI will raise an issue with a volunteer**

### **4.1 Three stage process for tackling problems**

Occasionally the RNLI needs to raise concerns with a volunteer. This might be about a volunteer's approach, conduct, suitability or availability for a particular volunteer role or other issues. The RNLI will do this in a fair way, making sure the volunteer understands what the concern is, giving the volunteer the opportunity to put across their views, and trying to agree an acceptable resolution.

Nonetheless, if there are very serious concerns where the relationship seems irreconcilable or is no longer a collaborative one, then the RNLI will consider a range of options which may include redeploying the volunteer in a different capacity, or ending the volunteer arrangement altogether.

There are potentially 3 stages to this process. The first stage is informal, the second is formal and the third and final stage is the opportunity to challenge the outcome.

#### **Stage 1 – Informal**

Issues of a relatively minor nature will normally be raised with the volunteer, initially on an informal basis, usually by the LOM (or the DI if the issue is with the LOM himself). Alternatively, the LOM may ask the DI to become involved at this stage.

The LOM will listen to the volunteer's side of the story and try to agree a constructive solution. It may be necessary to agree a review period to ensure that the agreed plan is working well. The LOM will keep the DI informed.

#### **Stage 2 – Formal**

Should this informal approach prove unsuccessful, or if the concern is either more significant or a series of cumulative concerns, then the DI will normally be involved.

The RNLI will make sure the volunteer understands what the concern is and will investigate the concern by asking the volunteer for their views and, where relevant, seeking the views of others involved.

If a formal meeting is required the volunteer will be given reasonable notice of that meeting, the volunteer will be told what the concerns are and will be offered the chance to bring a companion. The RNLI will warn a volunteer in advance if the issue is such that it may have to consider ending the volunteer arrangement.

The RNLI will notify the volunteer of the outcome and, if applicable, the volunteer will be given the chance to challenge that outcome.

### Step 3 – Challenge

If the volunteer decides to challenge the outcome, they need to do so in writing, to the HR department within 5 working days, explaining their reasons. The RNLI will consider the challenge and may ask the volunteer to attend a further meeting. The RNLI will notify the volunteer of the decision which will be final.

#### **4.2 Complaints from the public**

Should a complaint be received about a volunteer from a member of the public, the principles outlined in this policy are broadly applicable.

#### **4.3 Technical or operational error or omissions**

Technical or operational error or omissions which lead to damage, reduce or jeopardise operational efficiency, risk the safety of the crew, vessel casualty or members of the public will normally be handled within the principles of this policy. However, the specific circumstances or legislative requirements will be taken into account and may necessitate a different approach.

### **SECTION 5 – Additional Information**

#### **5.1 Facilitated meetings**

Once a problem has been raised, either by the RNLI or a volunteer, a facilitated meeting may be set up as a constructive way of tackling difficulties or rebuilding a relationship. At any stage in these processes the RNLI may ask volunteers to participate in a facilitated meeting as a potential solution and way of moving forward.

#### **5.2 Stand down**

During the airing or attempted resolution of a problem, the RNLI may ask a volunteer to temporarily stand down for a number of reasons. This temporary stand down means that a volunteer will not be involved in operational duties and will be asked to stay away from the lifeboat station for a specified period. Only the DI authorises such stand downs.

#### **5.3 Resolution**

The RNLI will treat the resolution of complaints or problems seriously and fairly but it is not always possible to reach a solution that is to the satisfaction of all the parties involved. It is the RNLI's goal to ensure that volunteers feel fulfilled during their involvement with the RNLI, but the organisation will ultimately take decisions that they believe to be in the best interests of the RNLI and will ask volunteers to accept such decisions in the spirit they are made.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the RNLI to make some sort of change to the volunteer arrangement as a result of a problem. The RNLI will consider a range of options which may include redeploying the volunteer in a different capacity, or ceasing the volunteer arrangement altogether.

#### **5.4 Confidentiality**

Problems raised by volunteers will be treated with discretion and the organisation will only consult with those who are involved and whose views need to be considered.

Volunteers should be aware, however, that if they make a formal complaint about an individual – whether another volunteer or member of staff – the RNLI will normally make that individual aware of the complaint and who has made it. For this reason, any complaint should be based on specific, factual examples.

If the RNLI raises a problem with a volunteer, it will be discreet and only involve those who are necessary. In return, the RNLI asks volunteers to treat the airing and resolution of problems in a discreet and confidential way.

## **SECTION 6 - Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations**

**LOM** means the volunteer Lifeboat Operations Manager who is responsible for the day to day running of the lifeboat station. A volunteer DLA (Deputy Launching Authority) would stand in for the LOM in his absence.

**DI** means either the Divisional Inspector or his nominated deputy (the Training Divisional Inspector, Deputy Divisional Inspector or Divisional Engineer, for example)

**Informal** – the informal stage is where an issue is addressed verbally, often by the LOM. The informal stage may be sufficient to resolve the problem or may be a pre-cursor to the formal stage.

**Formal** – the formal stage is where an issue is addressed in a more structured way, is recorded in writing and some sanction may result. The DI is usually involved in the formal stage. Notes will normally be taken during some parts of the formal stage.

**Challenge** – this is where a volunteer may have the opportunity to appeal against a decision made, by giving reasons why they are questioning the decision or saying why they think the process has not been fair.

**Companion** – during certain parts of the formal process a volunteer may be accompanied by a crew member or other representative from their station. The companion can ask but cannot answer questions on behalf of the volunteer.

## **I.C.C. meeting 15/12/05. APPENDIX II**

### **MCA UPDATE AND REPORT**

#### **Computerised Incident Management System – VISION**

1. Roll out of system and operator training complete. VISION is a comprehensive incident management and management information tool and the challenge now is to maximise the functionality that is available in VISION.

2. Of interest, RCCs Den Helder and Ostend have also chosen VISION as their incident management system and this could open up some strategic opportunities in the southern North Sea area. Other nations too are also showing an interest in VISION. One of the benefits of a wider user base is that any good ideas that others users introduce to Vision can be made available to us and vice versa.

### Operational Partnerships

3. The Coastguard's Integrated Communications System (ICCS) and VISION Incident Management System have provided the opportunity to establish operational partnerships between pairs of neighbouring MRCCs. The only exceptions are Shetland and Stornoway, and Clyde and Belfast, the former because the local telephone infrastructure was insufficiently robust and the latter because of the differing Ordnance Survey datums between NI and mainland.

4. The ICCS and Vision technologies are linked between two MRCCs eg Liverpool and Holyhead which enables them to share databases, resources, logs, message and incident catalogues. In addition they can see each other's incidents so are able to support each other during incidents; offer advice, resources, etc and can seamlessly take over incidents from each other. The ICCS also provides some access to each other's radiocommunications too so it is quite possible for one MRCC to take over another MRCC's area of responsibility almost completely. In doing so, this allows staff at the other MRCC to undertake other tasks eg SAR training and incident analysis for SAR response and prevention purposes.

### VHF Channel 16

5. Policy statement for VHF Channel 16 watchkeeping is unchanged -

- HM Coastguard will continue to maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 16 via loudspeaker only in its MRCCs but the primary means of distress alerting on VHF should be via VHF/DSC.

### MF Policy

6. A Business Case for a new MF RT (and DSC) infrastructure has been completed. MCA is looking to establish say, 3 major MF/HF Rx/Tx sites to which those MRCCs who use MF RT routinely for SAR purposes will have access. The MCA is unsure at the moment whether it will recommend that UK maintains its GMDSS Area A2 or not. As in other countries, perhaps GMDSS Areas A1 and A3 are sufficient. However, no decisions have been made and there would probably have to be a consultation period first anyway.

### Satellite Communications

7. For Cospas-Sarsat alerts, UK continues to track the new geostationary Meteosat Second Generation (MSG) satellite which provides full cover of the entire UKSRR. GOES-12 is now the fall-back satellite should MSG fail.

8. Phase out of 121.5 MHz and 243 MHz Beacons -

- As from 2009, C-S system will no longer process distress alerts from EPIRBs, ELTs and PLBs transmitting on 121.5MHz and 243MHz. Only those transmitting on 406 MHz will be processed. Staff should take every opportunity to remind those who use

EPIRBs, ELTs and PLBs which are known to use 121.5 or 243 MHz that these will be of no use post 2009.

9. PLBs -

- PLBs are still currently forbidden for land use in the UK however, it is unlikely that we can sustain this ban indefinitely. Reasons for the ban is that Police are unwilling to administer and register PLBs; PLBs not type approved for use with the C-S system; no licensing system in place in UK for PLBs; and, of course, the false alert problem could be hugely exacerbated if PLBs are bought in their thousands.

10. For those nations without a Beacon Register, an International Beacon Registration Database is being established in the US. We too will have access to this International Database but will continue to maintain our own EPIRB database at MRCC Falmouth and ELT database at ARCC Kinloss. However, UKSAR is intent on establishing a national UK Emergency Beacon Database where EPIRBs, ELTs and PLBs will be registered. On line registration and validation would be available in such a national register.

11. Galileo Project -

- Galileo is a European Union Project intended to provide Europe with its own polar orbiting satellite constellation of 24 satellites which will provide a range of satellite borne services including GPS and SAR though the SAR Galileo package has yet to receive EU Council approval. Should SAR Galileo come to fruition, it will be a sophisticated system with data transfer between satellites, almost continuous position data via the 24 satellites and return links from RCC to beacon via satellite.

12. The USA and Russia are also developing similar new systems.

13. Remember, Inmarsat E (Inmarsat's EPIRB system) will be withdrawn from service in December 2006 and Inmarsat A in last quarter of 2007.

SAR Helo Harmonisation Project

14. With MoD Seakings and MCA S61Ns approaching their out of service dates (OSD) in 2015'ish, MoD and DfT Ministers decided that any future UKSAR helicopter force should be the result of a joint procurement between MoD and MCA with the aim of having SAR helicopters which are built and equipped to the same standard; which fly under the same CAA/military rules; where aircrew training is common; and where, if necessary, they are manned by mixed military/civilian crews.

15. The procurement has been placed in the hands of the Defence Procurement Agency based at Abbey Wood, Bristol where the MCA have two permanent members on the procurement team. A Helicopter Harmonisation Project Steering Group (HHPSTG) has been established with MCA's Director of Operations as joint Chair. The Project is currently at Ministerial Approval stage. The timetable for actual procurement will probably begin in 2010 with the first aircraft appearing in 2012 and then a programme of gradual replacement through to 2016/17. It is also worth noting that this will not be a purchase of helicopters by MoD and MCA. It is industry that will purchase the helicopters using private finance and they will then contract the service to us (in a similar fashion to our current contract helos) but this harmonised contract is likely to run for 25 years.

16. Industry has been consulted throughout as they need to understand that MCA and MoD will produce an Operational Requirement (OR) which clearly states the capability required and industry (ie the successful contractor or consortium) will be invited to meet that requirement/capability. Neither MCA nor MoD will choose the helicopters, bases, etc.. That said, the Procurement Team will keep a very close eye on current and new helicopter type developments. Both MCA/DfT and MoD remain committed to the Helicopter Harmonisation Project.

### JRCC

17. Harmonisation with MoD does not necessarily stop at SAR helicopters and we are also in discussion with MoD regarding the establishment of a Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC) by combining the ARCC with an MRCC either at an existing Centre or new build. A WM from MRCC Aberdeen is now working at ARCC where he is tasked with aligning procedures and terminology and to develop a single Helo SAR Sortie Report by combining the Form R and BHL SAR Sortie Report into a single format. CG SAR Helicopters have also been placed under ARCC control and new arrangements are in place for requesting CG SAR Helicopter assistance. The main purpose of placing CG SAR Helicopters under one control is that the full UKSAR Helicopter picture is now maintained in one place. Besides the harmonisation angle, the establishment of a JRCC in the UK is very much in line with ICAO and IMO's current policy to amalgamate aeronautical and maritime SAR as described in the IAMSAR Manual and in the alignment of International Maritime SAR Convention with Annex 12 (SAR) of the International Convention on Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention). Also, if anyone is in any doubt as to ICAO and IMO aims then ICAO Resolution A35-14 (as agreed to by the UK Government) says – "States shall ensure the closest practicable co-operation between maritime and aeronautical search and rescue services where they serve the same area\* and, where practical, establish Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centres to co-ordinate aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations".

\*UK Maritime and Aeronautical SAR Regions (Area) are basically the same.

18. ARCC staff will once again undertake their SMC training at MCA TC which will be followed by a period of familiarisation and learning in a MRCC. Also, in the meantime, the ARCC's Rescue Co-ordination System (RCS) (their equivalent to VISION) planned upgrade proposes to make the incident, asset and message data stored in the ARCC available to MRCCs. In addition, the asset status, position data and real time air picture for incidents will also be made available to MRCCs. The upgrade document also proposes that MCA and ARCC networks should be integrated. If we can make this happen then I believe we really will be on the road to a harmonised or joint aeronautical and maritime SAR capability. We will also be better informed when deciding on the establishment, management and operation of a JRCC.

### AIS

19. AIS Web Client is now available in every MRCC and elsewhere in the agency. AIS hardware is currently being rolled out and the 50 inch screens (which all MRCCs will get) roll out will also start shortly. The E-Nav C-Scope Graphical User Interface (once known as MARIA) has been delivered for tests to Spring Place. A training package for AIS is being developed. The initial policy for AIS usage is that it should be a tool to help us with our other core work and any limited monitoring of AIS data should be done electronically by use of overlays and alarms. That policy too will be issued to the coast once finalised.

### Inland SAR

20. Inland SAR, whether on land or inland waters, remains the responsibility of the Police. However, where high risk waters exist inland ie where there are high levels of pleasure boating and passenger vessel activity, the Police have accepted that they neither have the expertise nor the resources for dealing with incidents involving such vessels or persons and have been happy to delegate the responsibility for the response to, and co-ordination of such incidents to HM Coastguard under a MOU. Currently, such arrangements exist for Lochs Linnhe, Lochy and Ness; Loughs Neagh and Erne; Norfolk and Suffolk Broads; River Thames to Staines; River Severn to Gloucester and Lakes Windermere, Coniston, Ullswater and Derwentwater.

#### Aux CG Service Review

21. The Review of the Auxiliary Coastguard Service is now complete and the Report of the Review is now with the Minister for him to note the recommendations. Many of the recommendations refer to work or actions that the MCA will have to undertake anyway and already, work is underway to take forward certain of the recommendations.

22. However, until the Minister has given his approval, I am unable to divulge the recommendations but suffice to say they include actions required on recruitment, employment, working time, availability, health standards, profile, nomenclature and training to name but a few.

23. This has been a thorough review and has been acknowledged as such by MCA's own Executive Board and Advisory Board.

24. The Transport Select Committee picked up on the fact that 95% of SAR response in the UK is provided by volunteers and expressed concern at the differences amongst each volunteer group in terms of "employment" or membership; discipline; pay (or none); expenses (or none); training; health standards; recruitment, etc.. UKSAR Strategic Committee has been instructed to bring some sense and standardisation if possible to the use of volunteers in UKSAR.

#### Collection of time expired pyrotechnics

25. MoD Whitehall have instructed the Royal Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Units (EODUs) to continue collecting time expired pyrotechnics (TEPs) from Coastguard premises but **not** to collect TEPs from the commercial sector ie harbour authorities, chandleries, etc.. The MoD argue, with some justification possibly, that the EODUs' priorities now lie elsewhere as the UK military is deployed in various theatres worldwide and there is always the likelihood that those EODU personnel based in UK could be deployed rapidly elsewhere.

26. MCA/HMCG is under no obligation to collect TEPs from anyone. However, we offer a small service whereby we take in small amounts of TEPs from individuals and RNLI which EODU continue to collect (though for how long we have no idea). In the meantime, this matter has been raised at UKSAR Strategic level and in view of the potential environmental issues, has been passed to our Environmental Protection Branch to take forward within their circle. We have also tried to get the manufacturers of pyrotechnics to take some responsibility for the disposal of TEPs but so far this is proving a slow process.

27. In the meantime, commercial organisations who once benefited from a collection by EODU have now had to make alternative arrangements using specialist hazardous waste collection firms.

#### Flood Relief Work

28. The Flood Relief Trials have taken place in Scotland and are now complete and a Report forwarded to SAR HQ and Technical Services. Whilst much of the Report has been accepted, this undertaking is not cheap and Head of SAR will be contacting ROMSARs shortly with the next move towards the provision of a flood relief capability by Coastguard Rescue Teams where it is needed.

#### Interim CG SAR Helicopter Contract

29. As many of you will be aware the current 5 year Coastguard SAR Helicopter contract finishes in June 2007. An announcement was made yesterday that the new contract for the period 2007-2012 ie until the new harmonised SAR helicopter force starts to be rolled out from 2012 onwards, has been awarded to CHC Scotia. This company currently provide 4 SAR Helicopters in Ireland under contract to the Irish Coast Guard.

#### Maritime Safety Information (MSI) Broadcasts

30. MCA is currently reviewing with Met Office and UKHO its schedule of MSI broadcasts, the content, timing and frequency of broadcasts, whether an announcement should be made on Channel 16, and of course to reduce the frequency of broadcasts in the northern Irish Sea for example. It is likely that there will be more concurrent broadcasts than previously in an attempt to make the broadcast content more current. Under the present schedule, some MRCCs are broadcasting weather data which is nearly 12 hours old which is unacceptable.

#### Firefighting at Sea Project

31. This Project is progressing well with most of the 15 nominated coastal Fire Services now signed up to providing a standard firefighting at sea capability. An MOU has also been agreed between MCA and MoD for use of MoD SAR helos for the transport of firefighting teams and equipment to vessels and to provide MoD SAR helos for a set number of hours training per year. CG SAR helos are required to participate as part of their contract with MCA. The new firefighting at sea arrangements are planned to come into force as from 1 April 2006.

Peter Dymond  
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14 December 2005