

# Whole of society resilience

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Steps to success



# Foreword

We are living through unprecedented volatility, disruption, and change as result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, frequent instances of industrial action, and the current energy and cost of living crisis. The shocks and stresses we are exposed to will only increase in their severity and frequency as we begin to see the wide-ranging global effects of climate change. So, the time is right, and the time is now, to rethink our approach to resilience.

Initiatives like the [UK Government Resilience Framework \(UKGRF\)](#) sound a call to action for all sectors of society – from government and business to individuals – to take resilience seriously.

In the UK, the paradigm is shifting towards understanding resilience as a ‘whole of society’ undertaking, rather than a top-down endeavour. The UK Government Resilience Framework, along with the outputs from the workshop on which this document builds, show that we all have our part to play in national resilience, whether as a business developing resilient supply chains, an individual improving their personal resilience and ability to manage shocks, or an organisation improving the resilience of the system they operate within.

It was heartening to see the excellent engagement and collaboration at the workshop held in November last year. The cross-sector discussions which took place across all five of the workshop groups demonstrate a readiness to engage with resilience, across business, local communities, the voluntary sector, and government, to shape a better, more resilient future for all.

Much has been achieved over the last few years since the Integrated Review, and much remains to be done. The Framework sets out a far-reaching, ambitious, and well thought-out approach to the challenges facing the UK. By achieving the goals proposed, including the recommendations in this document, we will take encouraging steps towards a more resilient UK by 2030.



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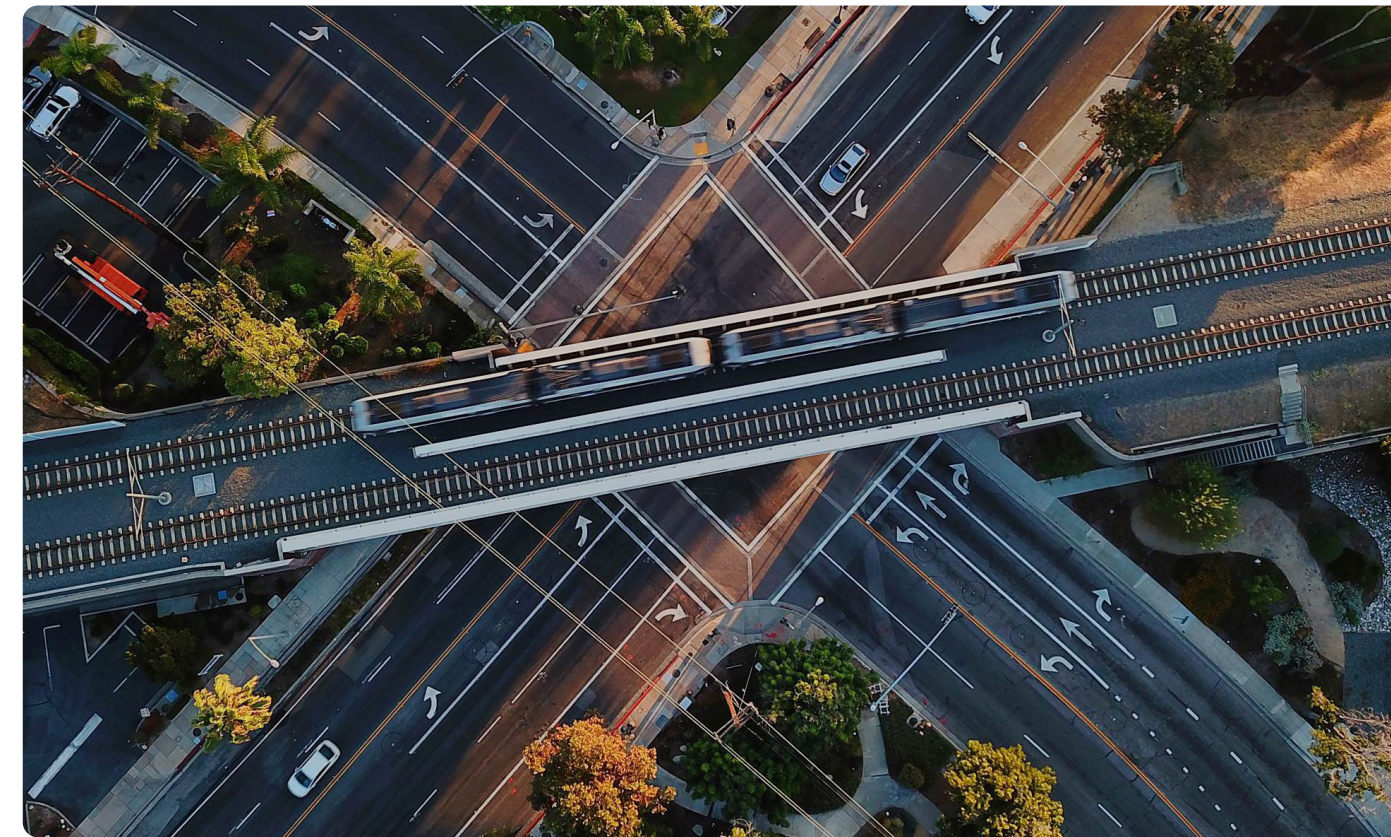
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# Introduction

The UKGRF calls for a ‘whole of society’ approach where business, government, communities, and the voluntary sector all have a part to play. Individuals, organisations, and society as a whole need to be more proactive and prepared for future events, by building capacity and capability sooner rather than later.



Resilience is the capability to prepare for disruption, adapt in a timely manner, and thrive in a changing environment. There has been a shift to an emphasis on prevention rather than cure – and to a more strategic and coordinated approach to investment in resilience. Resilience should be viewed as a positive, strategic enabler, providing the foundations for the UK to grow and flourish.

## Exploring a new approach

To consider these changes, PA held a discussion forum at the end of 2022, with global network Resilience First. We brought together resilience experts from across government, communities, academia, and business. The forum included a briefing from the Cabinet Office on the UK Government’s approach to resilience, a panel discussion, and workshop, with groups considering the key theme of how to achieve a whole of society approach to resilience.

The panellists included government experts from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC), and the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) who discussed ideas and options alongside the CEO of WILD Learning, the Co-Chair of the National Resilience Consortium for Societal Resilience, and PA and Resilience First resilience and data experts.

We discussed five key themes and the attendees identified specific recommendations within each:

### 1. Establishing wider partnerships

- Increase collaboration and sharing to enhance capacity and capability
- Strengthen Local Resilience Forums and evidence resilience value to leverage funding
- Establish a national co-ordinating structure.

### 2. Providing incentives

- Improve measurement and ensure wider application of standards
- Establish regulatory duties across all sectors
- Understand and co-ordinate interdependencies.

### 3. Involving communities

- Run public communication and information campaigns
- Promote local business initiatives
- Coordination of community volunteers.

### 4. Building future skills

- Make sure people develop both vertical and horizontal skills
- Develop a framework to support and reward processes not just outcomes.

### 5. Leveraging data and technology

- Use the latest technology to harness the power of data
- Manage data coherently
- Build data and digital skills.

Here, we set out the thinking behind the recommendations and specific actions that emerged from the workshops for each theme. Taking these steps will deliver a collective, co-ordinated approach beyond traditional emergency preparedness and response that moves towards holistic resilience for both society and organisations.



# 1. Establishing wider partnerships

Partnerships for resilience have historically been led by Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), made up of emergency services, local government bodies, government agencies, local business, and regulated utilities.

Our event participants agreed that to deliver whole of society resilience, such partnerships need to broaden out to more meaningfully involve business, communities, government, the voluntary sector, and the military. They also agreed that achieving resilience relies on involving local stakeholders who are empowered and able to support change on the ground.

This is not a case of decentralising and passing responsibility – it's about leveraging government support in addition to cross-organisational involvement to empower LRFs.

The Cabinet Office briefing on the Resilience Framework outlined an ambition to allow all businesses, communities, and individuals in the UK to become more informed, more capable of responding to emergencies, and better able to protect and support themselves.



This section references the following actions from the [UKGRF](#):

- Expand the scope and use of standards and assurance in the public sector to support better contingency planning and risk management
- Run a pilot across three key pillars of reform to significantly strengthen LRFs in England: Leadership, Accountability, and Integration of resilience into the UK's levelling up mission
- Provide the wider private sector with better guidance on resilience to support contingency planning and risk management
- Have a coordinated and prioritised approach to investment in resilience within the UK Government, informed by a shared understanding of risk
- Develop a measurement of socio-economic resilience, including how risks impact across communities and vulnerable groups – to guide and inform decision-making on risk and resilience
- Offer better guidance from the UK Government to LRFs and local partners in England, created with local responders, the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), and communities to support them to work with vulnerable groups
- Continue to deepen and strengthen our relationships with the VCS in England.

Our event discussion surfaced the following ideas and themes for action:

### Increase collaboration and sharing to enhance capacity and capability

Significant experience and capability are present across numerous organisations, yet only fully understood within the organisations themselves. VCS organisations, utility companies, and the military have knowledge that would enrich capability within an LRF.

Participants agreed it was especially important to engage the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector, which has a significant presence across the UK. These organisations are value-driven, intrinsically motivated, understand local needs, and already support their local communities in a variety of ways.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- DLUHC and LRFs to use Resilience Direct or a similar data sharing system to collate and share best practice and disseminate locally across regions
- Businesses, the military, and voluntary organisations to appoint 'resilience champions' with the explicit remit to build interconnectedness
- Requirement for Category 1 responders to work with the voluntary sector and business sector.

### Strengthen LRFs and evidence resilience value to leverage funding

LRFs currently focus on planning for and responding to incidents, rather than broader resilience building. LRFs need to be empowered, encouraged, and advised to place resilience at the centre of local decision-making.

While core funding has aided LRFs, there was consensus from attendees that the system of funding needs to intrinsically prioritise where money is spent based on the resilience value it will deliver. This value needs to be measured and monitored so the return on investment can be demonstrated. Tracking resilience progress is key.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- With support from private sector, UK Government to conduct resilience capability assessment of LRFs against a recognised maturity model like British Standard (BS) 67000 for city resilience
- UK Government to commission a pilot programme to test a new LRF governance structure
- UK Government to develop a comprehensive measurement framework for resilience initiatives to be delivered by communities, business, and local government
- Stronger LRFs to drive resilience-building projects delivered by communities, business, and local government, with agreed principles and a framework for measuring value that can be scaled, promoting subsidiarity and local leadership.

### Establish a national co-ordinating structure

To move the current fragmented approaches to a more coherent and consistent whole of society approach, central co-ordination will be required from a National Resilience Forum with support from the Government's proposed Head of Resilience. There was a discussion around collating best practice and supporting its dissemination across regions and organisations to help identify specific local resources needed to effect change on the ground.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- Head of Resilience should evaluate and establish co-ordination structures to support a whole of society approach to resilience.

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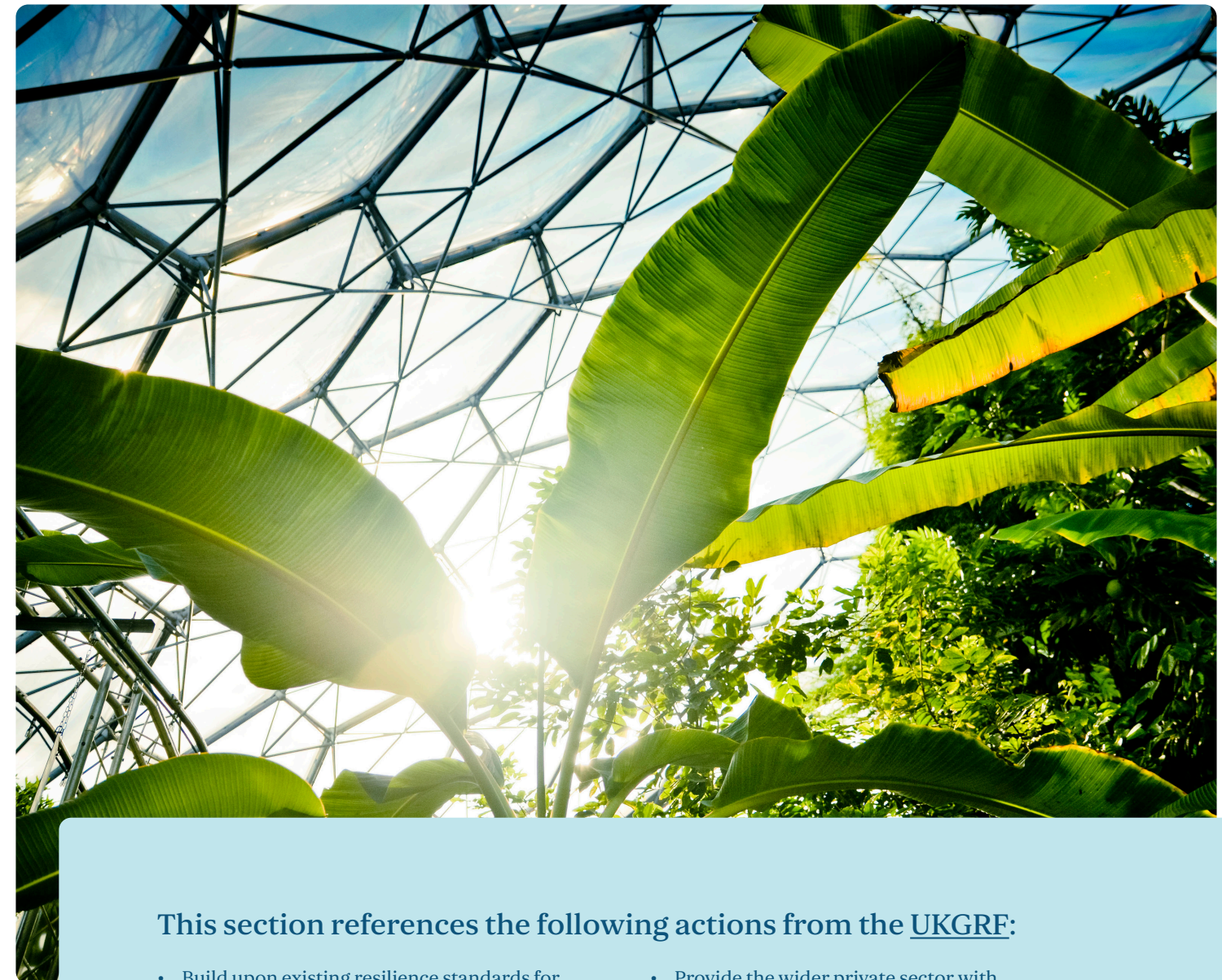


## 2. Providing incentives

To engage individuals and organisations in building and delivering resilience capabilities, the value and benefits need to be understood and communicated. Organisations need to be motivated to invest in resilience through a multitude of routes including regulation, standards, and being able to measure and monitor the value of resilience.

There is often a trade-off between financial efficiency and resilience, with resilience seen as difficult to justify in the short term, and difficult to prioritise when the Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) regulatory environment stipulates financial efficiency. Participants agreed resilience spending needs to be considered holistically rather than in a series of individual business cases.

Improving resilience involves building spare capacity into systems where needed, providing more adaptability and flexibility of resources, as well as the ability to respond and recover quickly. Measurable examples and frameworks would help establish building and maintaining resilience as 'business as usual'.



This section references the following actions from the [UKGRF](#):

- Build upon existing resilience standards for CNI to create common but flexible resilience standards across CNI and do more on the assurance of CNI preparedness
- Review existing regulatory regimes on resilience to ensure they are fit for purpose. In the highest priority sectors that are not already regulated, and for the highest priority risks, consider enforcing standards through regulation
- Introduce standards on resilience across the private sector, where these do not already exist, adjusted to take into account the current landscape, priorities, and needs across and between sectors
- Provide the wider private sector with better guidance on resilience to support contingency planning and risk management
- Have a coordinated and prioritised approach to investment in resilience within the UK Government, informed by a shared understanding of risk.

Our discussions covered the following ideas and themes:

### Improve measurement and ensure wider application of standards

Company boards might view resilience as a necessity, but don't always recognise the value added. Attendees suggested relevant experts could explore how resilience can be measured to clearly show the benefits of investing – to provide both the ongoing business case and the benchmarking required to monitor improvement.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- Resilience standards to be outcome-based and provide guidance on measuring resilience
- Regulators to adopt a consistent approach for measuring resilience
- Organisations to adopt BS 65000 organisational resilience standard, and cities and regions to adopt BS 67000 city resilience standard
- Regulators, educators, and accreditors like UK Resilience Academy, Emergency Planning College, and the Business Continuity Institute to provide a certification for businesses and cities to show they are 'resilient'
- The Cabinet Office should engage with industry experts such as the National Infrastructure Commission and insurance companies to explore how resilience and resilient behaviours can be incentivised.

### Establish regulatory duties across relevant sectors

Finance regulators, including the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority, have created a specific regulatory environment that financial institutions are measured against. But regulators in the energy, water, telecommunications, and transport sectors don't have specific resilience duties and haven't set requirements for the organisations they regulate.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- Civil Contingencies Act to require CNI regulators to hold the sector they regulate responsible for resilience and ensure cross-industry and cross-sector stress tests are held regularly.

### Understand and co-ordinate interdependencies

Pockets of good practice exist across businesses, but participants felt there was a lack of understanding of the interplay between sectors and how this could impact resilience. No organisation operates in a vacuum – each organisation is part of a system. So, interdependencies between the different sectors need to be considered in developing regulations and standards.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- Civil Contingency Act to contain resilience duties that require a systems approach to resilience that builds connective tissue between different sectors, with a clear understanding of the value at risk and the interdependencies between each sector
- LRFs and businesses to employ systems thinking to understand local interdependencies.

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**Interdependencies between the different sectors need to be considered in developing regulations and standards.**



# 3. Involving communities

A whole of society resilience approach requires bottom-up, community-led engagement. That means community leaders and members are part of the solution and should be engaged in developing programmes to resolve challenges in their own areas.

The Cabinet Office briefing underlined the important role that communities can play in preparing for and responding to emergencies. That means understanding both the risks they might face, and the recommended responses that will protect and support communities.

Participants agreed that whole of society resilience requires subsidiarity – resilience is owned at the lowest possible level, where the challenges and issues are best understood. They felt a key element of developing this level of capability was communicating strategies that individuals can follow to prepare themselves.

This community approach also requires co-ordination across the different partners that make up a community, from local government organisations to businesses and other groups who could support, like voluntary organisations or community volunteers.



This section references the following actions from the [UKGRF](#):

- Make the UK Government's communications on risk more relevant and easily accessible
- Offer new guidance to community organisations and individual householders, to help those people to make more informed decisions about investing in their own resilience and preparedness
- Conduct an annual survey of public perceptions of risk, resilience, and preparedness
- Offer better guidance from the UK Government to LRFs and local partners in England, created with local responders, the VCS, and communities to support their work with vulnerable groups.



Our event attendees discussed the following topics and ideas:

### Run public communication and information campaigns

Due to the perception that there are no significant hazards in the UK, people aren't naturally accustomed to think of disasters and preparedness. There was discussion about how other countries address this. The Swedish government, for example, sends leaflets to citizens on how to survive for seven days without access to shops to buy food. And, in Switzerland, the army speaks in schools to encourage young people to think about survival and resilience skills.

Positive campaigns can focus on the benefits for the individual rather than highlight doomsday-type messaging, which can result in fear and disengagement. But the crisis scenarios presented must be relatable, impactful, and specific to what people actually need.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- National resilience campaigns should be designed to address the communication and information needs of communities and businesses regarding their resilience, through community engagement.

### Promote local business initiatives

Many major supermarkets have a variety of initiatives to support communities. Tesco works with the British Red Cross to enable quick delivery of pre-packed essential items to shelters following evacuations, for example. Sandwich franchise Pret A Manger donates surplus food to homeless campaigns, and Morrisons offers discounted pre-packaged groceries for people in need. Additionally, many online and high street retailers accept the Blue Light card – a discount service for workers in the emergency services, NHS, social care sector, and armed forces. Participants agreed that sharing ideas widely would encourage other organisations to support societal resilience.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- LRFs to engage with business and voluntary sectors to facilitate their role in societal resilience
- LRF leaders should appreciate the importance of societal resilience as a strategic imperative for the LRF, coordinating broad participation in resilience-building projects through engaging with local business and communities.

### Coordination of community volunteers

Resilience needs to be community-owned and led, done by and not to them.

Attendees felt the UK could capitalise on the willingness shown by individuals during the pandemic to volunteer and support their own local communities. However, efforts need to be coordinated effectively to benefit local projects and support communities in taking a leading role in their own resilience.

#### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- UK Government to provide a mechanism to help LRFs identify and facilitate community-led volunteering projects.

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**Resilience needs to be community-owned and led.**

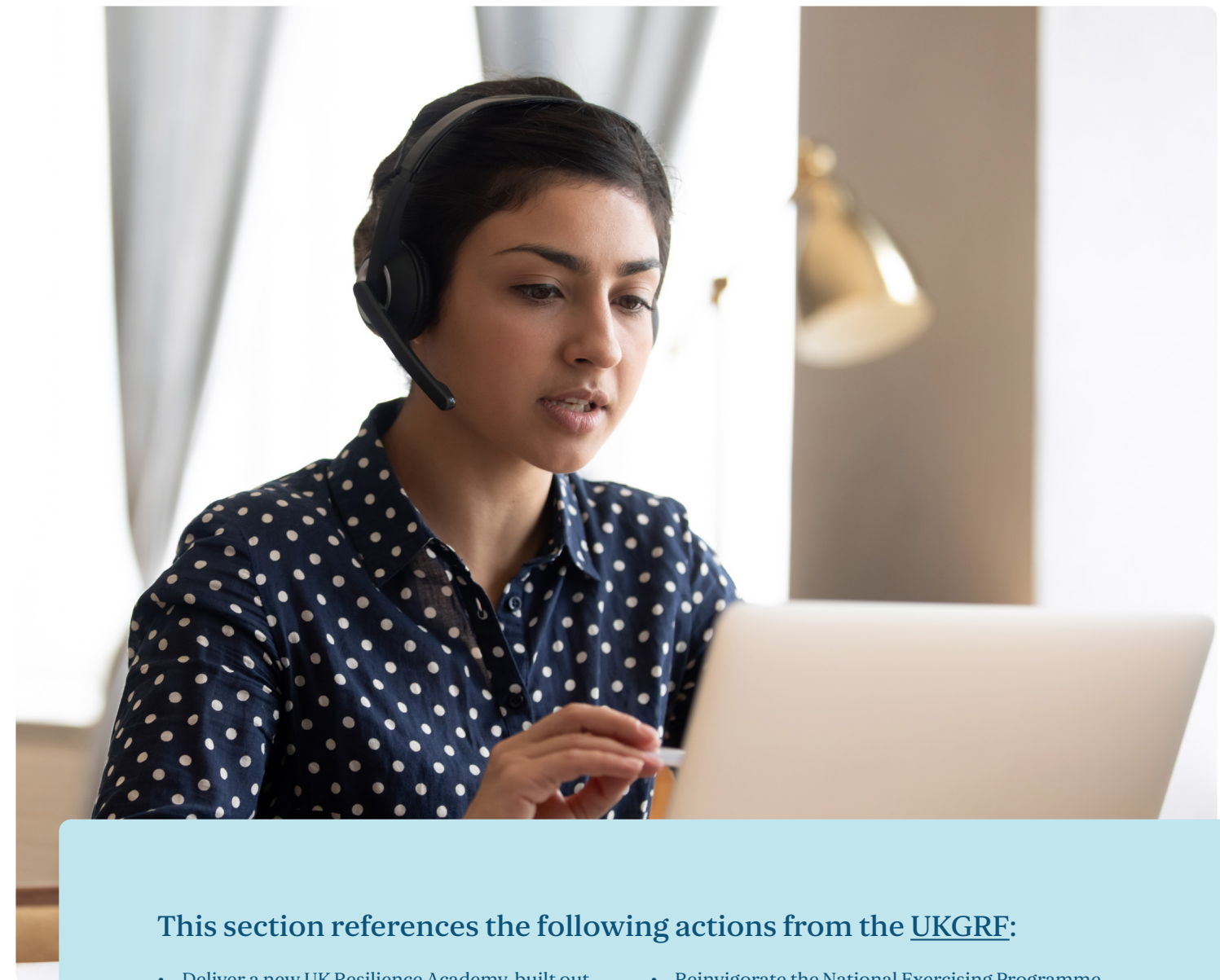
# 4. Building future skills

Whole of society resilience involves individuals as well as institutions. So, people need future skills and competencies such as complex problem-solving and the ability to see the bigger picture. This means taking a long-term view, moving away from resilience as a tactical capability towards resilience as a strategic enabler of future wellbeing.

The Resilience Framework sets out a strong commitment to develop skills throughout the resilience system, and complement the wealth of expertise and training driven by universities, private institutes, and the private sector.

In the UK, education encourages and rewards individuals for developing 'horizontal', functional skills, and for their ability to follow pre-defined processes and procedures to pass a test or reach the required performance outcome. Participants talked about shifting the emphasis to promote 'vertical' skills and a resilience mindset – the ability to be self-directed, generate questions, solve complex problems, collaborate across traditional 'silos', and continuously learn and adapt. They agreed that these things are hard, but not impossible, to measure.

They also discussed the need for a new breed of learning professional – capable of designing and delivering learning experiences in the workplace and in formal education which lead to changed practice by aligning individual and team purpose with business strategy. Those professionals will, in turn, need training and support.



This section references the following actions from the [UKGRF](#):

- Deliver a new UK Resilience Academy, built out from the Emergency Planning College, making world-class professional training available to all that need it
- Reinvigorate the National Exercising Programme to test plans, structures, and skills.
- Deliver a new training and skills pathway to drive professionalism and support all those pursuing a career in resilience



Our discussions covered the following:

### Make sure people develop both vertical and horizontal skills

Horizontal and vertical skills are needed for a resilient population, as a resilient person needs to know why, when, and how to apply functional skills as they go about complex problem-solving. There's a need to explore whether the educational, training, and organisational systems in the UK are sufficient in developing vertical skills. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is pioneering in the assessment and accreditation of future meta-skills, classified under three headings: Self-Management, Social Intelligence, and Innovation.

Attendees agreed that the government has a powerful role to play in addressing the need for a regulatory framework around building future resilience mindsets and skills. If the regulation is outcome-focused, accredited, and assessed, a regulatory framework for resilience has the capacity to drive significant change over time.

### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- UK Resilience Academy, and Department for Education, to revise training and education systems to focus on developing 'resilient mindsets' for future meta-skills
- UK Resilience Academy, and Department for Education, to replicate the meta-skills framework established by SDS, or similar programmes for developing and accessing vertical skills, across the UK
- UK Resilience Academy to provide resilience courses to VCS organisations and local communities.

### Develop a framework to support and reward processes not just outcomes

Attendees suggested that there needs to be a change in how we measure an individual's resilience competency. Success has been found when organisations enhance performance metrics with qualitative, storytelling methods to evidence individual agency, collaboration, and systems thinking. These are relevant for both formative (self-improvement) and summative (outcome) assessment processes. These metrics support and reward the learning processes, including systems thinking and problem-solving capabilities, as well as the quality of the end result.

### Specific recommendations emerging from the event

- UK Resilience Academy to lead development of an independent accreditation framework which provides globally portable credit points at every level. This could evidence self-leadership, learning relationships, and complex problem-solving (resilience mindset and skills) in any domain or discipline.




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# 5. Leveraging data and technology

A shared understanding of risk underpins whole of society resilience. Data and digital technologies provide both the capability and platforms for increased understanding of risk while enabling resilient decision-making.

The fast-growing need for data skills and literacy is one of the pillars of the [National Data Strategy](#). The Resilience Framework commits to continuing to build a data-led approach, ensuring that understanding of national and local risks will be dynamic, driven by data and insight, and informed by the best UK and international expertise and experience.

Data needs to be timely, meaningful, accessible, and effectively shared – the right data needs to be available to the right people at the right time. Volume, language inconsistency, access, security, and interpretation all present challenges to achieving this.



This section references the following actions from the [UKGRF](#):

- Develop a measurement of socio-economic resilience, including how risks impact across communities and vulnerable groups, to guide and inform decision-making on risk and resilience
- Refreshing the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) process to cover a longer timescale, include multiple scenarios, look at chronic risks and interdependencies, and use the widest possible range of relevant data and insight, alongside external challenge.
- Conduct an annual survey of public perceptions of risk, resilience, and preparedness



Our discussions covered the following ideas and themes:

## Use the latest technology to harness the power of data

Participants discussed the potential for technology to transform our approach to resilience, including digital twins and quantum computing. Digital twins enable dynamic stress testing, and system manipulation and optimisation in a safe and simulated environment. These could help identify system risks and interconnections, as well as speed up and encourage systems thinking, improvements, and adaptations.

For example, Virtual Singapore is a 3D digital twin which combines data on the physical and topographical layout of the entire city-state, with dynamic, real-time data flows. It provides a virtual environment in which simulations, and experiments regarding the area, can be conducted safely, modelling potential impacts and outcomes from different changes or inputs.

### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- Cabinet Office and private sector to sponsor a digital twin study of UK critical systems and evaluate interdependencies, value chains, and resilience for prioritisation and decision-making
- In collaboration with business, Cabinet Office National Situation Centre to make better use of sensors and monitoring to provide early warning of risks and share risk information
- In collaboration with the private sector, UK Government (including Government Digital Service, and Joint Data Analysis Centre) and ONS data science campus to exploit the latest techniques for data visualisation and interpretation (Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), quantum computing) to release the full potential of available data.

## Manage data coherently

Participants were concerned about a lack of understanding regarding the restrictions around sharing data (specifically awareness of the General Data Protection Regulation) during times of emergency. To overcome data sharing obstacles – including trust, particularly when sharing data on the most vulnerable in our society – attendees suggested a ‘front door’ could be created. Similar to the National Cyber Security Centre, this ‘front door’ organisation would act as the national expert on the use and sharing of data, including for resilience, and could encourage collaboration nationally.

With increased reliance on high quality, clean data and the inter-reliance of the data and digital infrastructure across every sector of our society, attendees agreed that investment is imperative. Good data management would improve trust, pace, and decision-making.

### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- Uniformity of data standards to ensure a mutual cross-sector understanding of the requirements for data sharing that would apply in the event of an emergency
- Exploration of the role of standards, principles, and communities of practice to drive resilience-related data quality and data management
- A national entity to act as the single point of contact and source of expertise on data sharing, for example the Information Commissioner’s Office or ONS.

## Build data and digital skills

Public sector digital skills are improving, but participants felt there was still room for improvement within and across organisations. There’s a need for better sharing of industry best practice, particularly specific resilience-related awareness of the role of digital, data and technology in preparedness, situation monitoring, incident response, decision-making, and interoperability. Investment is needed in training and developing data and digital experts, including how to manage data and digital activity in the response to major incidents.

### Specific recommendations emerging from the event:

- DLUHC to ensure each LRF, or similar board with resilience objectives, has a technical expert with domain knowledge present to ensure data is fully utilised and considered. Identifying which data to collate, store, and share will need development and direction. This will support LRFs to build data analysis capacity and capability and ensure they are fully embedded within the Government’s wider National Situation Centre ecosystem
- Businesses to invest in better training of staff and future employees through both internal training, community training, and apprenticeships.

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**Public sector digital skills are improving, but participants felt there was still room for improvement within and across organisations.**

# Next steps

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Now is the perfect time to address the nation's approach to resilience given recent challenges.

Resilience is on the minds of the public, businesses, and government. And there's general consensus among resilience professionals that mindsets need to shift to acknowledge resilience as a strategic enabler, not just how we respond to the next disaster. To achieve this, the value that resilience delivers needs to be articulated, measured, and demonstrated.

This document provides specific areas for focused activity that align with the UKGRF ambitions, and which can be developed and actioned over the coming year. Moving forward, the panellists and attendees at the event will continue to be engaged, and will develop and monitor recommendations resulting from the discussions. They will collaborate with stakeholder communities including government, business, community, and voluntary sectors to seek paths to implementation.

Together, we can work to deliver a truly whole of society approach.

# Acknowledgements

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PA and Resilience First would like to thank everyone who attended the event for their ideas and contributions:

Affinity Water	National Grid
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Civil Aviation Authority	Royal Air Force
Cranfield University	SBB AG
Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy	Starbucks Coffee Company
Department for Transport	Tesco
Department for Work and Pensions	The Ministry of Defence
Departments for Levelling Up Housing and Communities	The National Police Chiefs Council
Emergencies Partnership	The Prince's Trust
Greater London Authority	The University of Manchester
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	The University of Strathclyde
His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service	UK Civil Reserve
IMA Partners	UK Power Networks
Localis	Vodafone
Marsh McLennan	Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership
National Infrastructure Commission	WILD Learning



## About PA

We believe in the power of ingenuity to build a positive human future.

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Our teams operate globally from offices across the UK, Ireland, US, Nordics, and Netherlands.

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## About Resilience First

Resilience First is the world's largest not-for-profit business membership network. It is a vehicle of change for driving resilience at scale in a world faced with deep uncertainties and complex interdependencies.

Part of the Resilience Rising international consortium, Resilience First is supported by blue-chip Champions and key stakeholders. As the 'go-to' organisation for resilience matters, its network of over 600 businesses in 150 countries employs 10.4 million people worldwide.

Covering issues such as the climate crisis, security, terrorism, global shocks, supply chains and cyber threats, Resilience First helps you to build business resilience, enabling your business to be better equipped to respond to unexpected challenges.

For membership enquiries please email [bchester@resiliencefirst.co.uk](mailto:bchester@resiliencefirst.co.uk) or call +44 7538 518936. To learn more about Resilience First, visit [www.resiliencefirst.org](https://www.resiliencefirst.org). Follow Resilience First on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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