

Participant Information and Consent Form

Project Title

Examining the Influence of Interoperability on Police-Led Crisis Communication and Public Engagement During Major Disaster Operations

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of an MSc in Crisis and Disaster Management at the University of Portsmouth. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that you understand the purpose of the research and what your involvement will entail.

Please read the following information carefully.

1. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to explore how multi-agency working (interoperability) affects crisis communication and public engagement during major incidents.

The research aims to understand how communication is experienced in practice by emergency response professionals and how it may be improved.

2. Why Have I Been Invited?

You have been invited to participate because you have been identified as having experience of working in a multi-agency environment during emergency response or have relevant experience in crisis communication or incident management.

You are being invited to share your individual professional perspective. You are not being asked to speak on behalf of, or represent, your employer or any organisation.

3. Do I Have to Take Part?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary.

- You are free to decline to take part
- You may decline to participate in or stop the interview at any time without giving a reason
- You may withdraw your data up to 14 calendar days after the interview. After this point, the data may have been anonymised, transcribed and incorporated into analysis, meaning it may no longer be possible to identify and remove an individual participant's data.
- The researcher is a serving police officer and some participants may know the researcher professionally. Participation is entirely voluntary. Choosing not to take part,

or withdrawing from the study, will have no impact on any employment, operational role, or professional relationship.

4. What Will I Be Asked to Do?

If you agree to participate:

- You will take part in a semi-structured interview
- The interview will last approximately 45–60 minutes
- It will be conducted either:
 - In person, or
 - Via a secure online platform (e.g. MS Teams)

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded for transcription purposes.

5. What Will the Interview Cover?

The interview will explore topics such as:

- Experiences of multi-agency working
- Communication during incidents
- Challenges in coordinating messages
- Public engagement and response

You will not be asked to disclose sensitive, confidential or operationally restricted information.

6. Are There Any Risks?

The risks associated with this study are considered low.

However:

- You may reflect on challenging or high-pressure incidents

To mitigate this:

- You may decline to answer any question
- You may pause or stop the interview at any time

If reflecting on your experiences causes distress or discomfort, you may wish to contact your employer's occupational health, employee assistance or wellbeing service, or your GP. For urgent mental health advice, you can contact NHS 111. Samaritans can also be contacted free at any time on 116 123.

7. Are There Any Benefits?

There are no direct benefits to participants. However, the research may contribute to improving understanding of interoperability, crisis communication and public engagement during major incidents.

8. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- Your identity will remain confidential
- Your responses will be anonymised
- No names or identifying details will be included in the research
- Data will be reported in a way that prevents identification

9. Data Protection

- Data will be stored securely on password-protected systems
- Only the researcher will have access to the data
- Data will be handled in accordance with GDPR and university policies
- Data will be retained securely for two years in line with University guidance and then securely deleted.

10. What Will Happen to the Results?

The results of this study will be used for an MSc dissertation and may be used to inform academic understanding of emergency response and crisis communication.

No individual participant will be identifiable in any outputs.

11. Who Is Conducting the Research?

Researcher:

Phil Mann UP2557481

MSc Crisis and Disaster Management

University of Portsmouth

Supervisor:

Professor Carmen Solana

Email: carmen.solana@port.ac.uk

12. Contact Details

If you have any questions about the research, please contact:

Phil Mann

Email: philip.mann@myport.ac.uk

If you have a concern about the conduct of the research, please contact the dissertation supervisor:

Professor Carmen Solana

Email: carmen.solana@port.ac.uk

If you remain dissatisfied after contacting the researcher and supervisor, you may contact:

Mrs Hazel Gant

Head of the School of Strategy, Marketing and Innovation

Email: hazel.gant@port.ac.uk

To make a formal complaint, you may contact the University of Portsmouth Student Casework Team:

Email: studentcasework@port.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)23 9284 3110

13. Consent

Please tick the box and sign below if you agree to take part. You will be provided with a copy of the completed form.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information above and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may stop the interview at any time. I consent to the interview being audio recorded for transcription and to my anonymised data being used for the academic purposes described above. I understand that I may request withdrawal of my data up to 14 calendar days after the interview, and I agree to take part in this research study.

Participant Name: _____ Researcher Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____