

18 July 2023

Dear

ATISN 18618 – Exercise Cygnus

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 20 June 2023. You requested the following:

As a participant in Exercise Cygnus in 2016 to assess the capability of Governments across the UK to respond to future epidemics.

- 1. Can you list who from the Welsh Government - Politicians and officials from across Wales who were involved.*
- 2. Provide a copy of the full Exercise Cygnus 2016 outcomes report.*
- 3. Provide a copy of the Wales specific briefing report*
- 4. Provide details if any of the structure in Wales that this was delegated to*
- 5. Detail of any subsequent meetings that occurred after the 2016 exercise.*

Our Response

- 1 Exercise Cygnus in 2016 was a Tier 1 UK pandemic flu exercise with full ministerial at COBR. In Wales, the Exercise began on the 14th October with a NHS Wales workshop to consider the national and local arrangements for the storage and distribution of health countermeasures. It continued on 18th October with a workshop in the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales) (ECC(W) involving multi-agency groups from all 4 Local Resilience Forums in Wales.

The main exercise took place on 19th and 20th October with the Chief Medical Officer leading on the COBR Officials meetings and the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, and the Minister for Social Services and Public Health, both participating in the COBR Ministerial meetings.

- 2 The Exercise Cygnus report in which Welsh Government participated is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-pandemic-preparedness>
3. Please see a copy of the Wales De-brief Report dated October 2016 attached at Doc.1.
4. The report at Doc1 sets out the structure in Wales for the delivery of Exercise Cygnus 2016.
- 5 The lessons identified from Exercise Cygnus in 2016 were subsequently fed into a

UK Review of Pandemic Preparedness, chaired jointly by the UK Cabinet Office and Department for Health. The review led to the creation of a UK Pandemic Flu Readiness Board, the activities of which were reported to the National Security Council (Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies) Committee. Welsh Government officials participated in the Board and its workstreams.

To assist in delivering outcomes of the UK Review, the Welsh Government established a Wales Pandemic Flu Preparedness Group involving Welsh Government Health, Social Services, Communications, Resilience officials, Public Health Wales and the Chairs of the four Wales LRF Pandemic Flu Groups.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,