

News story: Major counter-terrorism exercise concludes

Exercise Border Reiver, which has been more than a year in the planning, has concluded following 3 days of activity across central and eastern Scotland and Northumbria.

The exercise, announced by the Prime Minister during a visit to Glasgow in March, forms part of the UK Home Office's National Counter-Terrorism Exercise Programme.

Exercises like this take place throughout the year and throughout the country, allowing the emergency services, governments and other agencies to practice and plan for a variety of terrorist incidents.

Speaking after the exercise, Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

On too many occasions this year, our emergency services have united in their response to horrific terrorist atrocities with the utmost professionalism.

The country has seen first-hand why it is vital that we work together – governments, police, fire and ambulance services and the private sector – to ensure we are fully prepared for terrorist attacks.

This week's exercise was an opportunity to test and practice our plans. It formed one of a series of counter-terrorism exercises that this government funds every year and which take place across the country.

We set an intentionally challenging cross-border scenario which brought together Police Scotland and Northumbria Police, countless agencies from across the UK and both the UK and Scottish governments, testing our ability to work across separate legal systems in response to what could have been a sustained attack in both Scotland and England.

I took part, chairing a meeting of COBR on Tuesday where UK and Scottish government ministers worked together to consider how best to support the front line emergency services and the wider investigation.

There were around 1,000 people involved in the exercise over 3 days and all were a credit to the organisations they represented.

I thank all those involved in the exercise for their efforts in ensuring its success, and for responding to the attack scenario in the same collected manner we have come to expect from our brilliant

emergency responders. Be assured that the lessons learned from this exercise will be used to inform plans to respond to any future attacks.

I also extend my gratitude to the Royal Bank of Scotland, who hosted the initial stage of the exercise at their headquarters in Edinburgh and to their staff for contending with the noise and the road closures the exercise brought with it.

I have come away from this week reassured that the terrorist threat will always be met with a strong and unified response across the whole of the United Kingdom.

Police Scotland, Northumbria Police, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, North East Ambulance Service, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Transport Scotland, NHS Scotland, NHS England and the Ministry of Defence took part in the exercise, as did Scottish and UK government ministers and officials.

City of Edinburgh, Angus and Northumberland County Councils also tested their responses to a terrorist incident in their areas.