



Home Office

Permanent Secretary

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Meg Hillier MP
House of Commons
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28 September 2017

Dear Meg,

Progress Update on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

I am writing to update you on the progress of the following recommendations made in the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report *Upgrading Emergency Services Communications: Emergency Services Network Session 2016-17* (HC 627) namely:

- *the ambitious target date for delivering the Emergency Services Network will be met.*

And;

- *concerns the Department has not budgeted for prospective delays; an extended transition period or put in place detailed contingency arrangements to manage this risk.*

The ESMCP remains committed to providing the Emergency Service users the time they need to transition safely to the Emergency Service Network and are working on the assumption of a continuing need for a 27 month user transition period once mobilisation has been completed. The delay in the programme has given more time to prepare for transition and this could ultimately mean the total length of time required for transition could reduce. However work continues on an integrated programme plan to cover both the mobilisation and transition periods.

We have been working closely with Business Change Leads and senior representatives from the three Emergency Services to engage with users across the country and gain their feedback on the updated Programme Plan, transition timelines and regional transition running order. The Programme has recently deployed a team of local implementation leads, funded from departmental budgets, to help users develop their own individual transition readiness requirements and plans.

Reporting processes have been implemented that enable a clear route for escalating user queries and concerns back to Programme leads and distributing programme updates. The Department has also been engaging regularly with the larger non-Emergency Service user organisations and will continue to increase this activity.

The current transition timetable includes a contingency of two months within each of the three Emergency Service regions' budgeted 12 month transition period. Following completion of the current review of transition timing undertaken in conjunction with three emergency service user representatives, the programme will re-assess the level of contingency necessary to support the revised plan.

I would like to reassure you again that there will be no risks taken with public safety and there will be no gap in the emergency services' communications provision. In August 2016, the Home Office and the other Emergency Services agreed a Change Control Note to the Airwave Emergency Services Contracts that makes provision for extension of the contracts beyond the National Shut Down target date of 31 December 2019. Furthermore the Programme is separately forecasting what further Airwave extensions might be required to provide for an extended period of transition. The cost of these extensions will be included within the Full Business Case forecast that guides the Departments in forming their future budgets for the Programme.

Finally I would like to inform you that we will aim to have confirmed the plan for transition by December 2017 and I, along with senior officials from the ESMCP, look forward to updating the Committee further when we meet in November.

Yours sincerely,


PHILIP RUTNAM
PERMANENT SECRETARY