



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'People' Series

Incident Response and Crisis Management at the Environment Agency

Expert Insight

We were joined by Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive at the Environment Agency, to discuss some of his organisation's recent experiences with incident management. He touched upon points including:

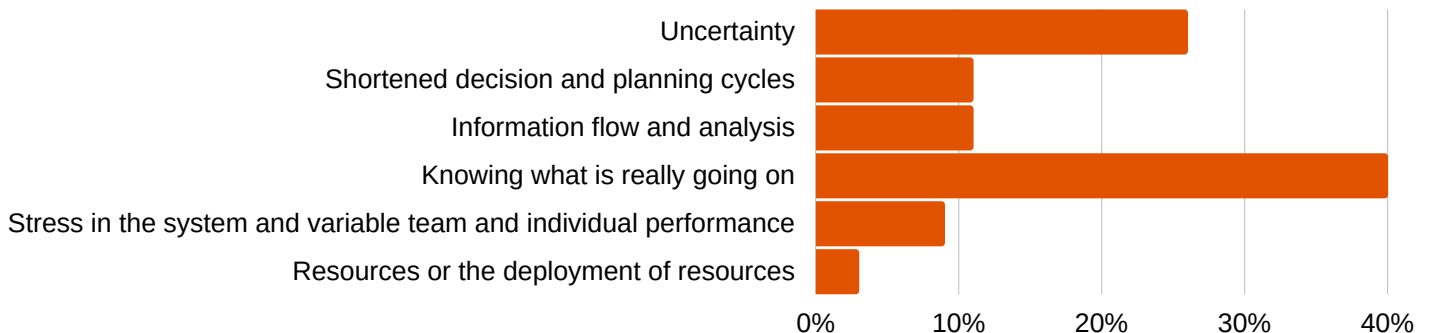


- The Environment Agency responds to over 75,000 incidents a year and has been set up to respond through pre-agreed plans and standard incident management procedures. These include daily reporting, agreed command and control, and resources such as trained staff and dedicated facilities. The EA also regularly practices managing incidents, and has tools for measuring performance.
- Sir James advised incident response leaders to be decisive, to move fast and over-resource at the start, and to be present and visible. Being ready beforehand and having a strategy is key, but you must be prepared to adjust it. Finally, it is important to use the media, but keep your message simple; ensure you and your staff stay well; and to always learn from your experience.
- Responding to COVID-19 has presented three main challenges: managing in ambiguous circumstances, managing changes in how work is carried out, and managing staff well-being and morale. To overcome these the EA's response has been to be agile, to move with deliberate pace, and to practise maximum empathy, relentless over-communication, and practical steps for improving staff experience.

Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

Which do you consider to be the greatest challenge in your organisation's ability to cope with crisis?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Collaboration across sectors, organisations and borders in incident management
- Running effective tabletop exercises and general crisis management training
- Advice for how to prepare to react to a variety of potential climate disasters
- Responding to crises occurring in succession and advice for managing the next one whilst still dealing with the fallout of the previous one

WIG members can listen to Sir James' presentation [here](#)
To see our full programme of webinars, visit www.wig.co.uk