



HM Coastguard

# HM Coastguard Internal Review: Small Boat Incidents 24 November 2021

May 2024 Draft Final Review (subject to French Information)



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# Introduction to the Small Boat Review



# 1 Introduction to the Small Boat Review

## 1.2 Summary

- 1.2.1 This is a review of HM Coastguard's response to the small boat incidents which occurred in the UK search and rescue region on 24 November 2021 in the south-east corner of the English Channel.

## 1.3 Commission

- 1.3.1 The review was commissioned by the Director of His Majesty's Coastguard in accordance with the tier three review requirements (as set out in the HM Coastguard operational detail incident review process) as the small boat incident may have met one or more of the following criteria:

- A fatality occurred during an incident coordinated by HM Coastguard and/or,
- Another agency or service intends to investigate, e.g. Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), Police, Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB)

- 1.3.2 The Terms of Reference can be found at Annex A. Julie-Anne Wood, Assistant Director HM Coastguard Governance, Policy, Standards and International was appointed as Lead Reviewer.

## 1.4 Analysis methodology Used

- 1.4.1 The review was conducted using the guidance contained in "HM Coastguard Operational Detailed Incident Review Process Guidance and Process Checklist Detail" Annex B, which included but was not limited to:

- Review of the Coastguard Incident Management System narrative records (currently ViSION)
- Review of any other records kept (chart plots, print outs, documents)



- Voice recording system records
- Interviews with those involved including external stakeholders (face to face or video conference/telephone)
- Questions and answers provided by exchange of email or other written correspondence.
- Inspection of equipment and systems (any associated electronic records kept by those systems e.g. Digital Selective Calling (DSC))
- Visits to sites (where necessary)
- Photographs and video evidence
- Informal Mission Review (IMR) and Operational Learning Review (OLR)
- Review of documentation (paper and electronic) e.g. procedures, processes, instructions, training materials, etc.
- Correspondence from stakeholders

## **1.5 The effect of French Coast Guard involvement**

1.5.1 It is important to note that the small boats transited through the French search and rescue region for at least nine nautical miles (approximately 16nm if they departed from Canal Des Dunes), prior to entering the UK search and rescue region, and it is understood some of the small boats had made contact with the French Coast Guard (responsible for the French search and rescue region). It is known that reports relating to, and calls from, small boats were received by the French Coast Guard, during the night of 23 and the morning of 24 November, as these are recorded on the French tracker document shared with HM Coastguard. There are a number of incidents for which coordination was handed over to HM Coastguard from the French, and also a number of calls from those onboard small boats which were transferred from the French Coast Guard to HM Coastguard.

1.5.2 In addition, a meeting between HM Coastguard and the Gendarmerie Maritime (French Police leading the French criminal investigation) was held on 5 July 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the events of 24 November, and for the Gendarmerie Maritime to obtain information from HM Coastguard for the purpose of the French criminal investigation into the small





boat incidents (such as voice recordings and ViSION incident logs). The meeting was facilitated by the National Crime Agency. During conversations with the Gendarmerie Maritime on the day, HM Coastguard was informed that there were calls and incidents recorded by the French Coast Guard which would likely provide a fuller picture of the events of 23 and 24 November. There are also many media reports which support this conclusion, and the Gendarmerie Maritime (French Police) has provided four articles from Le Monde (see Annex C). These articles have been considered as part of this review, albeit with some caution as the information in the articles is unverified.

- 1.5.3 However, access to the French Coast Guard incident information has not been permitted. Thus, HM Coastguard has not had access to information that would provide the full knowledge and content of the calls made and the actions taken by the French Coast Guard whilst the small boat incidents were in the French search and rescue region and under the coordination of the French Coast Guard. Consequently, it has not been possible to obtain a full understanding of the entire crossing undertaken by the small boats, from their departure in France and of the events on the night and morning in question as a whole. To that extent, this review should be considered as incomplete.
- 1.5.4 This review will take account of actions or activity undertaken by the French Coast Guard to the extent that such actions or activity are known by HM Coastguard, and is limited to the information which was shared with HM Coastguard by the French Coast Guard,
- 1.5.5 In addition to the HM Coastguard internal review, the United States Coast Guard were commissioned by HM Coastguard to conduct a SAR Case study review for the small boat incident. This was so that HM Coastguard 's SAR response to the small boat incidents could be peer reviewed by an independent authority. HM Coastguard has a memorandum of understanding with the US Coast Guard, which has the provision that a peer review can be requested when required. The note verbale between the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the US Coast Guard can be found as Annex D. The US Coast Guard were identified as a suitable peer, as it is an organisation that responds to US migrant incidents but is independent of European migrant crossings. A copy of the US Coast Guard case study can be found at Annex E. HM Coastguard responded in writing to the US Coast Guard's recommendations, and this response can also be found at Annex E.



# Background





## 2 Background

- 2.1.1 HM Coastguard is responsible for the initiation and coordination of civil maritime search and rescue within the UK search and rescue region. This includes the mobilisation, organisation and tasking of adequate resources to respond to persons in distress at sea, or to persons at risk of injury or death on the cliffs or shoreline of the UK. HM Coastguard operates a network of one Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC), nine Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCC) and one Maritime Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC) throughout the UK. These centres respond and coordinate six international Coast Guard functions – search and rescue, vessel traffic monitoring, maritime security, pollution response, maritime safety and disaster and emergency response.

British Isles and Northwestern Europe Maritime Search and Rescue Region (Admiralty List of Radio Signals (ALRS) volume 5 (Fig 1).

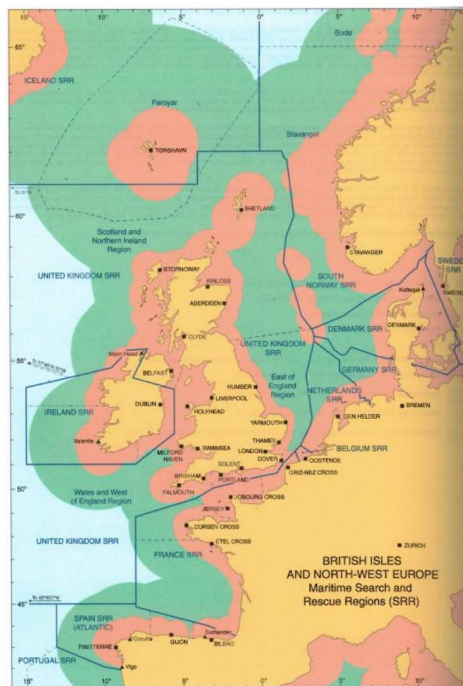


Fig 1



Map illustrating the UK territorial waters and UK search and rescue boundary (Fig 2)



Fig 2

- 2.1.2 The UK is signatory of the following conventions:
- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974
  - International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue 1979
  - United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982
- 2.1.3 The above conventions include procedures to follow when transferring coordination between two states, as is common practice in the English Channel.
- 2.1.4 HM Coastguard discharge the function of civil maritime search and rescue for the UK. Conventional SAR operations can involve calls from persons, vessels or aircraft at sea or along the coastline of the UK who are in need of assistance. Vessels at sea are normally equipped with appropriate life-saving apparatus, a means of communication other than a mobile phone (VHF radio, Digital Selective Calling (DSC), Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB)). When they contact the Coastguard, they are usually able to provide a position or a general location of where they are – Global Positioning System (GPS) distance and range from a bearing or say where they believe they are. They will also say what the nature of their situation is – they are sinking, they are broken down, etc – and it is usual to have a single source of information direct from a vessel, not multiple calls with conflicting information.



This then allows the SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) to evaluate the situation and identify suitable and adequate resources to affect an appropriate rescue.

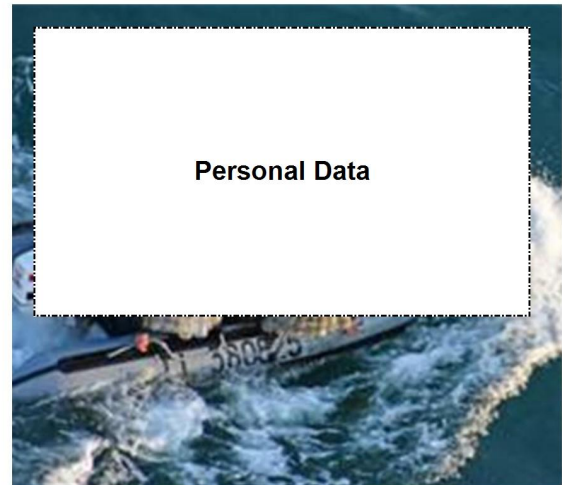
- 2.1.5 When HM Coastguard receive calls for assistance from conventional routes (999 calls, marine VHF radio), these are processed using internationally agreed principles laid down in SOLAS and the Maritime SAR Convention. Generally, they correlate with the emergency phase and classifications (see below). These processes are also applied to how HM Coastguard responds to small boat incidents.
- 2.1.6 The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue uses the following definitions:
- Emergency phase. A generic term meaning, as the case may be uncertainty phase, alert phase or distress phase.
  - Uncertainty phase. A situation wherein uncertainty exists as to the safety of a person, vessel or other craft.
  - Alert phase. A situation wherein apprehension exists as to the safety of a person, vessel or other craft.
  - Distress phase. A situation wherein there is a reasonable certainty that a person, vessel or other craft is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance.
- 2.1.7 All HM Coastguard Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC)/Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs)/Maritime Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC) are connected through two data centres which create a national network, of 36 operational zones. This results in all routine and emergency telephone lines and the 166 radio communications sites located throughout the UK, being available to all MRCCs/MRSC and the JRCC. This provides resilience within the national network to enable the distribution of workload to whichever operational zone requires resource to respond to an emergency, i.e. any operator on duty can be allocated to any operational zone, regardless of their geographic location in the UK. For example, if an operational zone requires additional network resource, officers from any station in the national network can be allocated to the incident to respond. Small boat incidents in the UK search and rescue region fall under HM Coastguard's response to search and rescue (SAR).
- 2.1.8 HM Coastguard first became alerted to small boats crossing from France in 2016. According to Home Office data between July 2014 and May 2016 there





were nine small boat incidents of people reaching the UK in a small vessel. During 2018 the number of crossings became more frequent with an increase in the number of people rescued in small boat incidents coordinated by HM Coastguard, the Home Office reported that 539 people attempted to travel to the UK by small boat. Home Office small boat incident figures for 2019 recorded 164 incidents involving migrant small boats, with 1,708 persons rescued. In 2020 there was an increase with 641 small boat incidents recorded and 8,466 persons rescued. In 2021 small boat incidents increased dramatically with 1,034 incidents and 28,526 persons rescued to the UK.

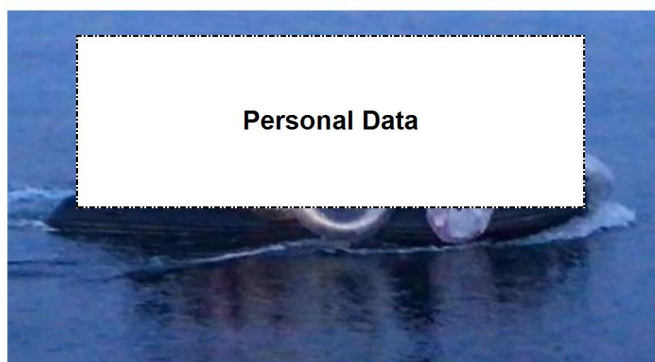
- 2.1.9 When reports or calls are received by HM Coastguard alerting them to crossings of small boats in the English Channel, they commence the SAR operation, alerting appropriate resources to respond. If it is considered that the small boat is still within the French search and rescue region, incident information is gathered and this information along with coordination is handed over to France. UK operators will



attempt to get as much information as possible about the small boat, its location and those onboard. This is not always easy to achieve. Persons depart the French coast bound for the UK in an inflatable rubber “small boat”. The “small boats” are often inflated rubber tubes attached with a floor, and not built to any UK or EU recognised minimum standard and are unseaworthy. An outboard engine is attached to the small boat and fuel cans are provided. Often there is only sufficient fuel to get the small boat to within UK waters but not to complete the full journey. When small boats call the coastguard, they often say their boat is out of fuel, or they don’t have much fuel left and that their small boat is taking water or sinking.



- 2.1.10 It is HM Coastguard's experience that, persons making this journey are unlikely to have any background knowledge, experience or training relating to the perils they will face when crossing the English Channel in an unseaworthy small boat. The clothing worn by those onboard is unsuitable for crossing the English Channel. The cold air and sea temperatures (even in the summer), coupled with sea spray and precipitation, mean people are vulnerable to hypothermia during the passage. To launch the boat from the French beaches often requires people to enter the water. It is likely that persons onboard a small boat are already soaked through. The persons onboard will also have very little to no food or water for the passage. On rare occasions



when lifejackets are provided, they are not tested or fit for purpose as life-saving apparatus. Often only buoyancy aids are provided (see annex F for information on buoyancy aids and lifejackets)<sup>1</sup>. There have been instances where people

have been rescued with empty plastic bottles of water or toy rubber rings strapped to them.

- 2.1.11 Persons onboard the small boats are generally not provided with the correct equipment to cross the English Channel safely or to assist them in being seen by rescuers. The small boats usually do not have navigation lights, safety, navigation or communication equipment (such as a personal locating beacon (PLB) or Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), VHF Radio or Automatic Identification System (AIS)). When lifesaving appliances are provided, they are often improvised and not fit for purpose (no reflective tape, poor buoyancy, no lights, no whistles). Maintaining communications once established with those persons onboard the small boats is also very difficult.
- 2.1.12 In most circumstances the only means of direct communication with persons on small boats is via mobile phones. Calls are made to the emergency services once a mobile phone signal is obtained when at sea. There are no alternative means of communication equipment available to those onboard small boats. Phones will often get wet, and battery life is frequently poor. The language barrier often coupled with panic displayed by migrants, poses significant challenges when communicating with small boats. The mobile

<sup>1</sup> RYA Buoyancy Aids and Lifejackets Annex A - [Buoyancy Aids & Lifejackets](#) | [safety](#) | [RYA](#)



phone signal is often so weak that calls continually drop out, adding further complexity to the situation.

- 2.1.13 The Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) information (positional information and telephone number) which is normally available from the 999 emergency calls is often not available when persons on small boats dial 999, which could be due to being at sea and the distance from the communication masts. Coastguard operators will use best endeavours to establish a position for the small boat, using information from the caller, other vessels which may be in the area and limited use of mobile phone applications (WhatsApp, Google Maps, etc). However, it is not always possible for the person on the small boat to send position pins or give coordinates to HM Coastguard, as often there is no 3G or 4G signal or the mobile has no data capability.
- 2.1.14 Operational learning shared between France and HM Coastguard at the time, identified that the only means of obtaining positional information, other than reported sightings is by using WhatsApp. The procedure is as follows. If the number is received from the French Coast Guard a text message is sent to the mobile telephone numbers provided, requesting those on the small boat to download WhatsApp. HM Coastguard could then send a message requesting they send their position information. Alternatively, when HM Coastguard receive a call from a small boat the mobile telephone for both the small boat and HM Coastguard is exchanged when possible, and the persons on the small boat send position information. In November 2021, the only way to introduce WhatsApp into the operations was through the introduction of a standalone mobile phone. The provision of this standalone mobile phone was an attempt to receive positional information in the absence of any other available means. It must be stressed that the only purpose of this mobile phone was to provide positional information. Mobile phones are not an internationally recognised method of communication at sea<sup>2</sup>. If HM Coastguard received calls from small boats, subject to mobile phone network coverage, small boats could also send positional information. Whilst the accuracy of the position cannot be verified and is not precise. If provided, positional information can assist in locating persons onboard the small boat. The alternative was to rely on voice communication alone, the person on the small boat being able to identify a landmark or a passing commercial vessel

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<sup>2</sup> MAIB report for the capsizing and foundering of the FV Solstice, has the following reference: "Mobile phones should not be relied upon at sea where mobile phone mast coverage is variable, nor can they be relied upon to provide locational information for SAR purposes." [MAIBInvReport 20/2018 - Solstice - Very Serious Marine Casualty \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)





or information received from the French Coast Guard which they received via WhatsApp.

- 2.1.15 It is widely reported that when people onboard the small boat have a signal on their mobile phones, they start to call the emergency services. When calls are made to the emergency services, migrants often report that they need rescue, that their vessel is sinking, that people are sick onboard and sometimes that there are persons in the water. The emergency services will often receive multiple phone calls from the same boat, but the operators may be unaware that there are multiple calls for the same small boat, as the information received on each call differs. This can also make it difficult to determine the number of small boats and people who are at risk and in need of rescue.
- 2.1.16 Callers may be transferred to the Coastguard, Police or Ambulance – depending on what is said to the BT 999 operator in the UK. During 24 November calls were also received at the Port of Dover the international Ferry Port at Dover who does not have responsibility for small boats in the English Channel. They attempted to transfer calls to Dover Coastguard, but many of the calls cut out from the small boat prior to the connection being successful. This happened on 4 occasions, with one call successfully transferred to HM Coastguard.
- 2.1.17 To assist with the exchange of information between France and the UK a Tracker document is used. This is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (an example can be seen at para 9.2.58) which provides a list of small boats crossing the Channel for a specific day and contains information from the French Coast Guard. The French tracker is sent periodically throughout the shift, to both HM Coastguard and UK Border Force. This information is then recorded in ViSION, HM Coastguard's primary incident information management system.
- 2.1.18 HM Coastguard procedure for responding to small boat incidents is to create an incident for every call received and each small boat incident will then be assigned a Global Incident Number (GIN). This is a unique identifier in the incident management system ViSION. The incident log can then contain information which is relevant to that small boat incident and can include records of calls, action taken and SAR resource messages. A new small boat incident is not created if it is obvious that the caller has called before, and their existing small boat incident can be updated. To differentiate between each call received, a reference is given to each small boat incident. In the UK





alpha numeric references are given to GIN incidents, so a small boat incident will be ALPHA, BRAVO1, FOXTROT2, etc. Both phonetic letters and numbers are used as the number of calls received by HM Coastguard often exceed the number of letters in the alphabet. In France they use numeric references – Migrant 1, 2, 5, etc. These references are shared between each MRCC in an attempt to cross reference small boat incidents and exchange information received and manage the response. There is no evidence to suggest that the French Coast Guard provide people on small boats with their incident reference number. Therefore, HM Coastguard has no option but to implement a different reference system to that used by the French Coast Guard, as if they also used the same numerical system as the French it would cause confusion for all.

- 2.1.19 It is common for multiple people on small boats to make calls to the French Coast Guard. When people make calls, it is often the case that different information is provided, and this makes it difficult for the emergency services to know if different calls are from the same small boat. For example, on 24 November the French Tracker has recorded that Migrant 1, 7 and 9 may be the same small boat.
- 2.1.20 There are occasions when small boats do not leave the French search and rescue region, and HM Coastguard may not even be aware of the crossing attempt.
- 2.1.21 There are also examples of small boats who make contact with HM Coastguard when they are close to the UK search and rescue region and have not been reported to or made direct contact with the French Coast Guard, and do not appear on the French tracker or have a French reference number.
- 2.1.22 Due to the proximity to both the French and UK coastline, it is common for those on small boats to speak to both the French and UK Coastguard, and it is often the case that different information is passed to each authority, from the occupants of small boats.
- 2.1.23 Both HM Coastguard and the French Coast Guard require different reference systems to be able to analyse the information they have both received, in order to attempt to correlate the information they share to identify duplicates and to respond to small boat incidents. By having different reference systems this assists in the management of incidents between the countries, and any attempt to create a single system would have an adverse impact on the coordination of SAR for both the French and HM Coastguard.



- 2.1.24 In December 2018 the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid declared a major incident in the English Channel<sup>3</sup> due to the rising number of migrants attempting to cross the English Channel from France. Home Office figures state that 248 migrants crossed the English Channel on small boats between in November and December 2018. This led to the deployment of UK Border Force vessels to the area, who were able to respond to search and rescue incidents, from calls received by HM Coastguard.
- 2.1.25 In August 2020 Priti Patel as Home Secretary, appointed a Clandestine Channel Threat Commander (CCTC)<sup>4</sup>. This was a new role leading the UK's response to tackling illegal attempts to reach the UK, with a primary function of making the Channel route unviable for small boat crossings and working collaboratively with French authorities.
- 2.1.26 There have been regular multi-agency meetings and sharing of information when dealing with small boat incidents. As the number of small boat incidents increased, information sharing also progressed. The "Operation Deveran" document is a report to assist with the prediction of likely crossings, which is prepared and shared by the Home Office. The report looks at the forecasted weather and sea state in the area and then assesses the likelihood of crossings. These reports were in place throughout 2021.
- 2.1.27 There are two regular meetings per year between the UK and France under the umbrella of Anglo-French Accident Technical Group (AFATG), which is at the strategic level. There are also regular operational and tactical meetings between HM Coastguard and France. Some of the outcomes from these meetings have been the sharing of Trackers and the use of WhatsApp to determine the position of the small boats. There is an existing agreement between the UK and France regarding SAR incidents in the Channel, this is called the ManchePlan (Annex G). The ManchePlan covers Counter Pollution and search and rescue operations. It sets out the division of responsibility between the two parties. For incidents likely to affect both parties, it outlines command and control procedures, channel of communication and the resources available to each party. Under the Bonn Agreement<sup>5</sup>, the English Channel is a zone of joint responsibility between France and the UK.

<sup>3</sup> [Home Secretary Sajid Javid cuts holiday short to deal with Channel migrants | Politics News | Sky News](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Home Secretary appoints small boat commander - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> The Bonn Agreement is the mechanism by which ten Governments, together with the European Union, cooperate in dealing with pollution of the North Sea by oil and other harmful substances. The signatories to the Agreement are the Governments of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Denmark, the French Republic, the Federal



2.1.28 The following line graph (Fig 3) demonstrates how activity had been increasing since 2018. The red line represents 2021 and it highlights the steady increase each month of small boat incidents and the number of persons rescued. The source of the information is Home Office statistics from Gov.uk<sup>6</sup>. (Fig 4).

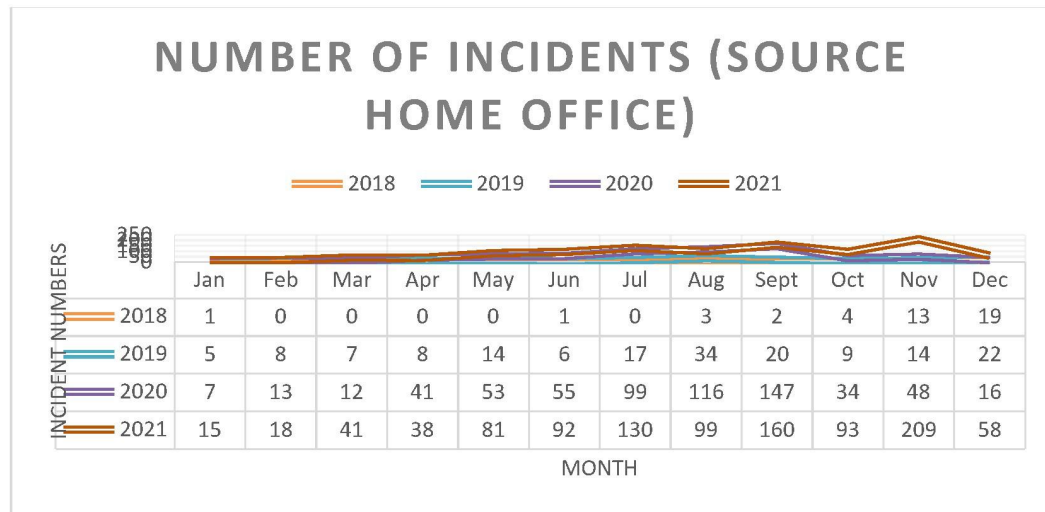


Fig 3

Republic of Germany, the Republic of Ireland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union. Spain was welcomed as a Bonn Agreement Contracting Party at a ministerial meeting in 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Home Office statistics - [Irregular migration to the UK, year ending December 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-summary-tables-year-ending-june-2023) and [irregular-migration-to-the-UK-summary-tables-year-ending-june-2023.ods \(live.com\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/irregular-migration-to-the-uk-summary-tables-year-ending-june-2023)



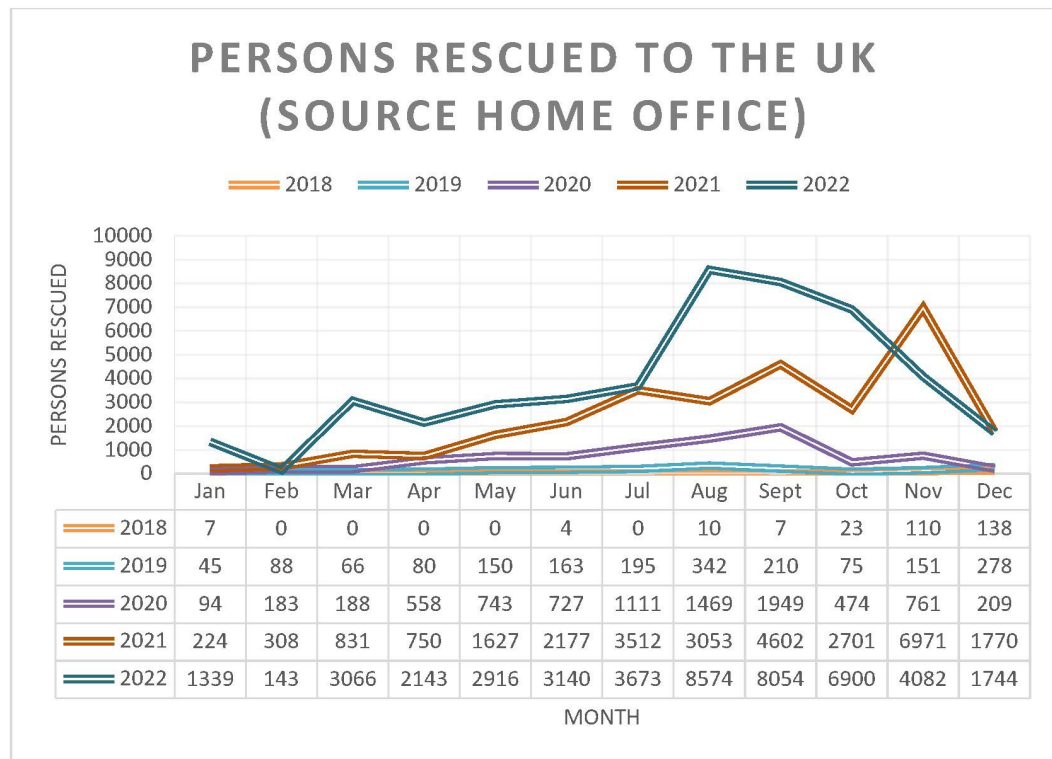


Fig 4

## 2.2 Operation Deveran

2.2.1 To assist with planning for small boat incidents HM Coastguard received regular reports from CCTC called Operation Deveran assessments. These provided information via CCTC intelligence picture on the likelihood of crossings of small boats dependent on the weather and sea state. These reports provided a red, amber, green assessment. Red meaning migrant boat crossings are very likely, amber is likely and green is highly unlikely. There was also a section which assessed any likely impact to UK asset availability and capability for aerial assets and UK Border Force surface assets. The Operation Deveran report valid Monday 22 November 1200UTC to 2 December 0600 is below. This recorded from 2200UTC on Tuesday 23 November to 0600UTC Wednesday 24 November as an amber day with crossings likely (Fig 5). It also recorded the impact to UK assets, and for the same time period the AR3 Drone from Dover is assessed as may have some impact due to fog. All other assets are recorded as unlikely to have impact (Fig 6).





# OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – NOT FOR ONWARDS DISTRIBUTION

Valid from 12UTC Monday 22 November to 06UTC Thursday, 02 December 2021

Forward look 30 days issued each Wednesday

Issued by Met Office NSAG: 12UTC Monday 22 November 2021

Next routine issue: 12UTC Tuesday 23 November 2021

Date and time	Minimum Feels like Temp (C)	Small boat launching conditions at 06UTC			Likelihood of crossing attempts due to weather
		Western Beaches	Central Beaches	Northeast Beaches	
22UTC Monday, 22 November to 06UTC Tuesday, 23 November	3	Favourable	Marginal	Unfavourable	Unlikely
06UTC Tuesday, 23 November to 12UTC Wednesday, 24 November	5	Favourable	Marginal	Unfavourable	Likely
12UTC Wednesday, 24 November to 06UTC Thursday, 25 November	3	Favourable	Favourable	Unfavourable	Highly Likely
06UTC Thursday, 25 November to 12UTC Friday, 26 November	-1	Marginal	Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Highly Unlikely
12UTC Friday, 26 November to 06UTC Saturday, 27 November	-1	Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Unfavourable	Highly Unlikely
06UTC Saturday, 27 November to 12UTC Sunday, 28 November					Highly Unlikely
12UTC Sunday, 28 November to 06UTC Monday, 29 November					Highly Unlikely
06UTC Monday, 29 November to 12UTC Tuesday, 30 November					Realistic Possibility
12UTC Tuesday, 30 November to 06UTC Wednesday, 01 December					Unlikely
06UTC Wednesday, 01 December to 12UTC Thursday, 02 December					Unlikely

This forecast is not subject to amendment

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UK OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

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Fig 5

## Met Office Impacts (UK asset availability & capability)

Note: In the section above the grey line; green denotes the weather is unlikely to impact asset availability or capability, red denotes asset is likely impacted by the weather.



Date	22 Nov					23 November					24 November					25 Nov		
Time (UTC)	18	21	00	03	06	18	21	00	03	06	18	00	06	09	12	15	18	21
Cutter																		
CPV (Dover)																		
RHIB (Dover)																		
UAV (AR5 - Lydd)																		
UAV (AR3 - Dover)																		
MCA fixed wing (Doncaster)																		
MCA Helicopter (Lydd)																		
Solar times (UTC)	Sunset 15:58					Sunrise 07:25					Sunset 15:57					Sunrise 07:26		
Crossing attempt likelihood																		
Lowest feels like air temp (C)	5	4	3	4	5	6	6	5	7	6	6	4	3	3	4	5	6	7
French coast precip' (% chance)	<5	<5	<5	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Wind Direction	NE	E-NE	E-NE	NE	NE/N	N	NE	E	E	SE	SE	S	N	N	N	N	N	N
Wind Speed (KT)	15	15	12	8	5/15	15	10	5	5	5	3-5	8	10	10	10	10	10	10

Fig 6

2.2.2 The Operation Deveran report (Fig 7) which was valid from 1200UTC Tuesday 23 November to 0600UTC Friday 3 December 2021, had the 23 to 24 November as follows: Western beaches – Favourable, Central beaches – Marginal and North-east beaches – unfavourable. The overall assessment for 23 November was that it was amber – likely for crossings to occur. The UK asset impact was assessed as amber and that aerial assets may be impacted due to fog at all airfields. The planning assessments were also used



## OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – NOT FOR ONWARDS DISTRIBUTION

as part of the weekly Small Boat Response Planning meetings. These are multi-agency meetings to consider likely crossings and resource capability.

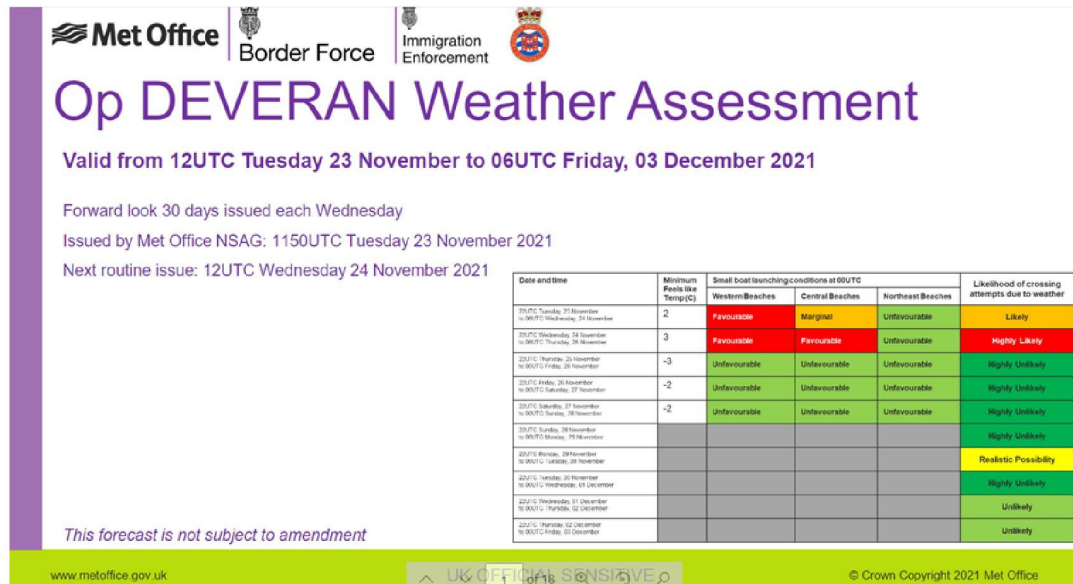


Fig 7

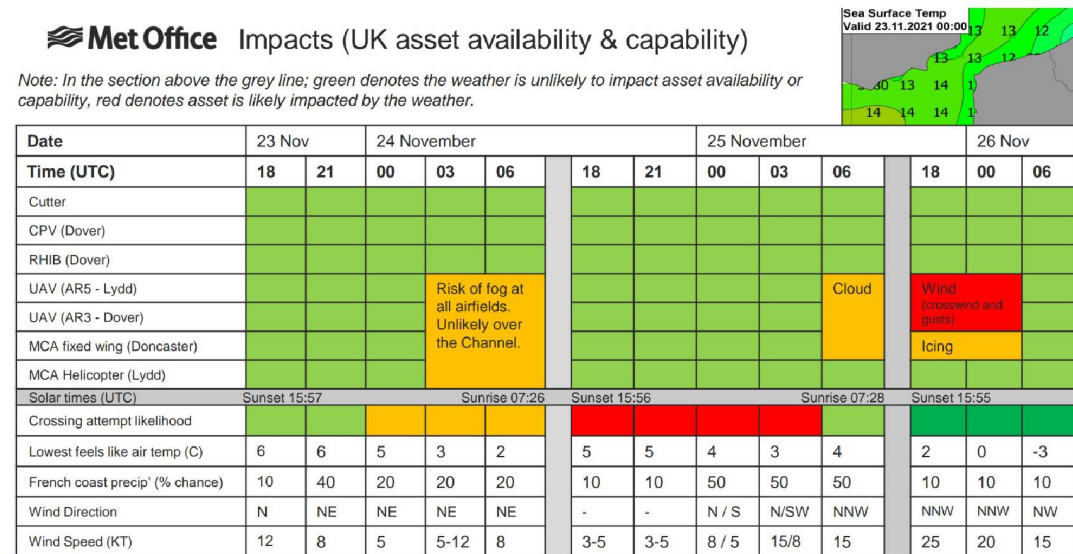


Fig 8



## 2.3 HM Coastguard National Network

2.3.1 The network management logs stated that for the period of duty for the night of 23 November into 24 November the following number of persons were on duty:

Tactical commander: One on duty (JRCC) (SMC)

Station	Number	Search Mission Coordinator (SMC)
Shetland	2	
Aberdeen	3	1 x SMC
Humber	3	2 x SMC
London	1	
Dover	2	1 x SMC
JRCC Maritime	9	2 x SMC
Falmouth	2	
Milford Haven	3	2 x SMC
Holyhead	3	2 x SMC
Belfast	3	
Stornoway	3	2 x SMC
Mission Control Centre (MCC)	1	

2.3.2 The total number of persons on duty in the network for the night watch was 35, this included 12 SMCs, plus the tactical commander who was also SMC qualified. From 0500UTC there was one additional coastguard officer on duty at MRCC Dover, who was also SMC qualified. The recommended staffing levels for the network was 22 persons. The day shift watch changes for the network are staggered so that resilience is maintained throughout the





network. At MRCC Dover the change of shift occurred between 0715UTC and 0725UTC. The JRCC shift change occurred at 0700UTC.

2.3.3 The staffing levels in the network for the day shift are as follows:

Station	Number	SMC
Shetland	2	1 x SMC
Aberdeen	3	2 x SMC
Humber	4	1 x SMC
London	2	1 x SMC
Dover SAR	4	3 x SMC
JRCC/MCC	12	3 x SMC
Falmouth	2	2 x SMC
Milford Haven	4	3 x SMC
Holyhead	4	2 x SMC
Belfast	3	1 x SMC
Stornoway	3	1 x SMC
Tactical commanders	2 (1 departed at approx. 1130UTC)	2 x SMC

2.3.4 The total number of persons on duty in the network for the day watch was 43, this included 18 SMCs, with two tactical commanders on duty, both SMCs, until approximately 1130UTC, when this then reduced to one tactical commander on duty. The recommended staffing levels for the network was 34 persons. One officer at MRCC Dover commenced duty at 0500UTC in anticipation of small boat crossings from the Op Deveran assessment the previous day and finished at 1700UTC.

2.3.5 The concept of recommended staffing levels was established for the national network as part a HM Coastguard transformation programme in 2014. The



numbers have been reviewed periodically since. The levels were set based on activity for the delivery of the Coast Guard functions HM Coastguard are responsible for. The levels account for the ability of the network to “flex to demand” and direct staffing levels to where incidents occur when required.

- 2.3.6 The International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manual<sup>7</sup> states that “SAR operations are normally carried out under the direction or supervision of an SMC...” and “in multiple incident situations this officer could be SMC for all incidents ...”. On the night of the 23 November / morning of 24 November there were 10 SMCs on duty (plus a tactical commander who was a qualified SMC) and available in the national network.
- 2.3.7 There are a number of key roles on duty each day and night in the network. The tactical commander assumes tactical control of an incident, when required, while the SMC assumes operational coordination of incidents.

## 2.4 SAR Resources

- 2.4.1 The following is a list of resources available to HM Coastguard for incident response across the UK including the English Channel:

- SAR Helicopters
- Fixed Wing Aircraft
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)
- RNLI/Independent Lifeboats
- UK Border Force vessels
- Coastguard Rescue Teams

Further to this, vessels operating in the vicinity of the incident position can be requested to respond as a result of Coastguard broadcast action.

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<sup>7</sup> IAMSAR Volume II Chapter 1.2.3



# Executive Summary



### 3 Executive Summary

- 3.1.1 At 1258UTC on 24 November 2021, HM Coastguard received a call from MRCC Gris-Nez requesting air support to a small boat incident they were coordinating in the French search and rescue region. A French Fishing Vessel Saint Jacques II had discovered multiple persons in the water. A total of 29 persons were recovered, including two survivors. A rescue helicopter from the UK was tasked immediately to support the search and rescue of persons in the water.
- 3.1.2 On 24 November 2021 the HM Coastguard network recorded 99 incidents emanating from small boat migrant activity in the English Channel. These calls were coordinated by the national network. The recordings of the calls for specific small boat incidents have been re-played many times to enable the information to be understood. It is very difficult at times to understand what has been said on the telephone due to background noise, poor mobile phone signal, language barriers, etc. and it has only been possible to include in this review some of the detail from the calls, as a result of listening to calls repeatedly and slowing conversations down.
- 3.1.3 The internal review of small boat incidents which occurred on 24 November 2021 between 0001UTC to 1258UTC, primarily focuses on the small boat incident which HM Coastguard referenced as CHARLIE, and other linked small boat incidents, which HM Coastguard now believe is the small boat which sank in the English Channel (exact location of the sinking unknown). A narrative timeline of key events can be found in Annex H. HM Coastguard has been able to identify small boat incident CHARLIE through receipt of telephone numbers provided on 22 March 2022 by Duncan Lewis Solicitors





and further telephone numbers provided by the National Crime Agency on 28 June 2022, that matched numbers used to make calls to the UK authorities (including HM Coastguard) and the French Coast Guard already linked to small boat incident CHARLIE (and other linked small boat incidents).

- 3.1.4 From the evidence obtained in this review, it can be confirmed that this small boat incident started in the French search and rescue region, in that the small boat launched from the French coast travelled at least 9 miles (approximately 16nm if departure was from Canal Des Dunes) in the French search and rescue region and under French coordination for potentially 4 hours and 26 minutes, before they handed coordination over to HM Coastguard. The French Coast Guard had received a number of telephone calls from the small boat whilst it was under their coordination and later when coordination had been passed to HM Coastguard.
- 3.1.5 As referred to previously, the review will look into the activity which occurred in the UK search and rescue region coordinated by HM Coastguard. This will cover the preparation and response to small boat activity relating to the 24 November up to the time the French Coast Guard received the report from the FV Saint Jacques II that had found persons in the water at 1257UTC. It does not include the small boat incident coordination of the French Coast Guard (i.e. information gathering, incident logs, voice recordings, broadcast action, tasking of assets) before coordination was passed to HM Coastguard or details of calls received by the French after coordination was accepted by HM Coastguard, as it has not been possible to access French Coast Guard small boat incident records or calls, despite attempts to obtain this information from the French Authorities.
- 3.1.6 In accordance with the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979, there is a requirement that "parties shall, as they are able to do so individually or in cooperation with other states and, as appropriate, with the organisation, participate in the development of search and rescue services to ensure that assistance is rendered to any person in distress at sea." Chapter three of the convention provides information on co-operation between states which includes guidance on entering territorial waters by search and rescue units, requesting assistance from other rescue coordination centres.
- 3.1.7 IAMSAR 3.6 provides guidance on the designation of the RCC or RSC responsible for initiating SAR action. "Typically, an RCC will receive a distress alert and assume responsibility for SAR operations for that incident. However,



there may be times when the first RCC to receive the distress alert will not be the responsible RCC, such as when the distress is in another SRR. When an RCC or RSC receives information indicating a distress outside of its SRR, it should immediately notify the appropriate RCC or RSC and take all necessary action to coordinate the response until the appropriate RCC or RSC has assumed responsibility. There should be no undue delay in initiating action while determining the responsible RCC".

- 3.1.8 The first call HM Coastguard received alerting them of small boat activity in the English Channel on the morning of 24 November 2021 was received by telephone via the Port of Dover at 0024UTC. They had received a call from persons onboard a small boat and reported this to HM Coastguard at 0024 UTC. The call dropped before it was possible to transfer it to HM Coastguard. A telephone number was recorded at the Port of Dover, and this was passed to HM Coastguard. HM Coastguard attempted to call the number, but there was no answer. As the call had an international dial tone a call was made to MRCC Gris-Nez and coordination for the small boat incident was passed from HM Coastguard and accepted by MRCC Gris-Nez at 0034UTC, details were confirmed by email (logged in ViSION at 0044UTC). The tracker received from France at 0237UTC had the same telephone number recorded against small boat incident Migrant 7 (CHARLIE). This information was not verbally passed by the French Coast Guard to HM Coastguard when the small boat incident coordination for CHARLIE was accepted at 0128UTC, and it is not known when the French Coast Guard were able to link the two small boat incidents prior to 0237UTC. During the call at 0106UTC HM Coastguard also asked if MRCC Gris-Nez had received reports of small boat activity, which they responded there were, and HM Coastguard then requested the French tracker document be sent.
- 3.1.9 During the 0106UTC call the French Coast Guard informed HM Coastguard that the small boat Migrant 7 (UK reference CHARLIE) was making way to the UK search and rescue region and was approximately 0.6nm away. As a result of this information HM Coastguard instigated an immediate Search and Rescue (SAR) response (whilst the small boat was still in the French search and rescue region), by tasking Her Majesty's Cutter (HMC) Valiant. This tasking action was taken whilst the French Coast Guard still had coordination for the small boat incident. Once HM Coastguard were notified by MRCC Gris-Nez that the small boat was in the UK search and rescue region, they assumed coordination for that small boat incident from the French Coast Guard.



- 3.1.10 During the coordination of the small boat incident the SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) using the only positional data available to them (from WhatsApp), placed the small boat relating to incident CHARLIE in the UK search and rescue region.
- 3.1.11 The following considerations were made as part of the small boat incident review:
- 3.1.12 **Did HM Coastguard receive calls from the small boat which subsequently sank in the English Channel?** Only in March 2022 were HM Coastguard able to confirm that they did receive calls from the small boat once information was received from Duncan Lewis Solicitors. This information confirmed some of the telephone numbers from those onboard the small boat which sank. Further calls were identified after further telephone numbers were provided to HM Coastguard on 28 June from the National Crime Agency who were liaising with French Authorities.
- 3.1.13 **Did the UK take positive SAR action for the small boat operations on the morning of 24 November 2021?** Yes. HM Coastguard tasked UK Border Force Maritime Command Centre (MCC) at 0120UTC based on information received previously, that a small boat was 0.6nm from UK waters, and under the coordination of the French Coast Guard. UK Border Force MCC accepted the tasking and stated it was likely that HMC Valiant would proceed from Dover.
- 3.1.14 A Mayday Relay was created at 0224UTC and broadcast at 0227UTC. The broadcast was made to vessels in the area and requested immediate assistance from any vessel in the area able to assist. The broadcast was repeated a further three occasions. HM Coastguard requested the vessels who did respond to the broadcast to keep a sharp lookout.
- 3.1.15 A rescue helicopter R163 was asked at 0251UTC to search for small boats as they were approaching the UK search and rescue region. The tasking then changed to search for small boats including CHARLIE once they lifted at 0350UTC.
- 3.1.16 **Was it likely that the predicted drift of the small boat/persons in the water relating to incident CHARLIE were in the search area for the duration of the search period?** To establish this, manual calculations were used applying weather and drift data. SARIS search planning software was used with built in computed meteorological and hydrodynamic files and the use of the override function and applying hindcast data. It can be confirmed that in each calculation, the drift similar to characteristics of a small





boat/persons in the water (unknown state) associated with small boat incident CHARLIE were within the search area searched by R163 for the duration of the search. Further to these plans additional datum point searches were calculated from the estimated positions obtained from the backtrack models. All of the subsequent calculated search areas are also encompassed within the search area searched by R163.

- 3.1.17 **What resources (people and SAR response) were allocated to the small boat related to small boat incident CHARLIE?** With regards to search and rescue assets in relation to the small boat linked to incident CHARLIE, the following has been determined:
- 3.1.18 **People:** The total number of persons on duty in the HM Coastguard national network on the night of 23 into the morning of 24 November was 35 officers. The recommended staffing levels for the national network was 22 officers. Following a shift change, the total number of persons on duty in the HM Coastguard national network on the day of 24 November was 45 officers. The recommended staffing levels for the national network was 34 officers. HM Coastguard does not have individual MRCC staffing levels. The operational response in terms of officers actively engaged and available specific to small boat operations on the night of 23 / morning of 24 November was 12. Further officers from the national network were available if required also. The operational response in terms of officers actively engaged and available specific to small boat operations on the day of 24 November was 17, and further officers from the national network were available if required also.
- 3.1.19 **Air:** Fixed wing aircraft are tasked in HM Coastguard operations for situational awareness to provide a surface picture. On 23 November 2Excel notified HM Coastguard that they could not complete the planned sortie (operation Altair) due to weather, which is recorded in the JRCC-AR ViSION at 2353UTC. On 24 November, HM Coastguard made an entry in ViSION regarding fixed wing aircraft availability at 0038UTC. It was not available to fly in the early hours of the morning, due to unfavourable weather and no weather diversion airport availability on the south coast. The unfavourable weather was expected to last until late morning. This was confirmed with the fixed wing aircraft recorded in the ARCC ViSION log as being on scene at 1129UTC.
- 3.1.20 HM Coastguard helicopters are used for Search and Rescue, see Annex I. They can drop life rafts to survivors, have a higher probability of detection and can conduct multiple searches quickly over larger areas.



- 3.1.21 The SMC(2) tasked rescue helicopter R163 at 0249UTC, to undertake a search for small boats on passage to the UK. The air commander recorded in ARCC VISION that the tasking for R163 at 0251UTC was to search, identify/localise positions of migrant vessels if able, subject to the safety considerations for the aircraft.
- 3.1.22 **Surface Vessels:** A surface vessel from UK Border Force MCC was requested at 0120UTC, and a rescue asset (HMC Valiant) was confirmed as tasked at 0130UTC. The tasking was related to a single small boat initially and the rescue asset had suitable experience, knowledge and capability in the rescue of those onboard small boats. These taskings had proved to be successful for the previous five years.
- 3.1.23 HMC Valiant was tasked to locate and rescue persons on the small boat relating to incident CHARLIE. HMC Valiant were tasked to the small boat incident as Border Force vessels are a known and well tested response to calls from small boats. UK Border Force vessels have a greater survivor capacity than a RNLI all weather lifeboat and therefore are capable of rescuing persons from multiple small boats during taskings.
- 3.1.24 A Mayday relay was broadcast at 0226UTC requesting vessels in the vicinity of the distress position to respond to a small boat sinking. These broadcasts continued until 0318UTC HMC Valiant arrived on scene. There a total of 17 vessels, including the French Warship Flamant, in the immediate vicinity at the times of broadcast. The motor tanker KWK Excelsus and cargo vessel Sixtine, responded to the mayday relay broadcast and were requested to continue their passage and keep a sharp lookout. HM Coastguard did not receive any response to any of the broadcasts from the French Warship Flamant.
- 3.1.25 The MAIB report into the small boat incident, published on 9 November 2023 states that the 180m Singapore registered tanker Concerto contacted Gris-Nez Traffic on VHF channel 13 after the broadcast of the third mayday relay by HM Coastguard. The vessel reported that they had not found anything in the "mayday relay" position. After the fourth mayday relay broadcast (0323UTC) Concerto contacted Gris-Nez Traffic again to report that it had sighted a small unlit boat with people on board passing close to the vessel. Gris-Nez Traffic advised Concerto not to wait while it contacted MRCC Dover. At this time the Concerto's engines were stopped, and the vessel awaited instruction. At 0324, Gris-Nez Traffic instructed Concerto to resume passage and advised that the French Coast Guard would take over the search and



rescue. This information was not passed to HM Coastguard, by the French Coast Guard.



# Findings





## 4 Findings, Analysis and Assessment

### 4.1 Confirmation of incidents relating to the small boat which sank.

- 4.1.1 Based on the information received from Duncan Lewis Solicitors on 22 March 2022 and the National Crime Agency via Gendarmerie Maritime on 28 June 2022, HM Coastguard have identified the incidents likely linked to the small boat that later sank with the loss of at least 27 lives.
- 4.1.2 Requests to the French for operational information relating to their role in response to this small boat incident (including whilst they had coordination and during the time when HM Coastguard had coordination) have been declined due to an ongoing criminal investigation in France, relating to the small boat incident. The report is unable to establish all the facts relating to the duration of the entire small boat incident and as such the conclusions and findings are limited, and the report incomplete.
- 4.1.3 The small boat incident calls have been re-played many times to enable the information to be understood. It is very difficult at times to understand what has been said on the telephone and it has only been possible to include in this review some of the detail, as a result of listening to calls repeatedly and slowing conversations down.
- 4.1.4 The small boat incidents from 24 November which can be linked to small boat incident CHARLIE, the small boat which sank are ALPHA, BRAVO, FOXTROT and INDIA. Also, Global Incident Numbers: 041393-24112021 and 041395-24112021. HM Coastguard will create an incident for every call received, unless it can be identified/confirmed as being from a previous small boat incident, and each small boat incident will then be assigned a Global Incident Number (GIN). This is a unique identifier in the incident management system ViSION. The incident log contained information which is relevant to that small boat incident and can include records of calls, action taken and SAR resource messages. The GIN numbers for the two small boat incidents above were not allocated alpha-numeric references. On 24 November there were three SMCs who were responding to the small boat incident calls during the night watch. SMC(1) was the first SMC involved in the small boat incident response, and confirming the actions taken by coastguard officers. SMC(2) received the call transferred to HM Coastguard by MRCC Gris-Nez and was SMC for small boat incident CHARLIE. SMC(3) received the call for small boat incident FOXTROT and identified it as a repeat of small boat incident ALPHA. Upon handover to the day shift another



three SMCs were responding to the small boat incidents, these are identified as SMC(4), SMC(5) and SMC(6).

4.1.5 The telephone numbers provided by Duncan Lewis Solicitors on 22 March 2022 were:

- **Personal Data** 095 (linked to small boat incident CHARLIE)
- **Personal Data** 056 (a similar number is linked to small boat incident CHARLIE)
- **Personal Data** 388
- **Personal Data** 300
- **Personal Data** 832

4.1.6 The Telephone numbers provided to HM Coastguard by the National Crime Agency (International Liaison Paris) on 28 June 2022 were:

- **PD** 523 (victim TAHNA Hussein, deceased) (linked to small boat incidents ALPHA and FOXTROT)
- **PD** 095 (TWANA Mamad Mohammed, disappeared) (linked to small boat incident CHARLIE)
- **PD** 057 (SHAKAR Ali PIROT, deceased) (linked to small boat incident CHARLIE)
- **PD** 879 (non-identified) (linked to small boat incident CHARLIE)

4.1.7 The NCA also had information from the Gendarmerie where they believed the user of number **PD** 012 used their telephone to report victims to the emergency services.

4.1.8 A review of the area searched by R163, and comparisons made with search planning software post incident can be found in Section 5 of this review - Search Planning.

## 4.2 Small Boat Incident CHARLIE

4.2.1 The first call received by HM Coastguard relating to small boat incident CHARLIE was a call transferred by the French CG at 0148UTC to HM Coastguard. The caller was identified as Mubin and lasted 21 minutes and 14



seconds. A further call was received at 0231UTC which was transferred to HM Coastguard. Mubin was confirmed as being on the boat so HM Coastguard able to link call to small boat incident CHARLIE.

- 4.2.2 Small boat Incident CHARLIE was created after a call with MRCC Gris-Nez at 0106UTC, whilst the French Coast Guard had coordination for the small boat incident, who provided information regarding the small boat which had not been included on the previously sent French tracker. The information was recorded into ViSION at 0115UTC.
- 4.2.3 MRCC Gris-Nez stated that the small boat was 0.6nm from the UK search and rescue region, with 33 persons onboard and two telephone numbers were provided. Text messages were sent from the HM Coastguard mobile phone to both small boat mobile numbers, requesting they download WhatsApp and send HM Coastguard their position. When the information was recorded in ViSION the incorrect number of persons was recorded, and a digit was missing from one of the telephone numbers. The incorrect telephone number was then used to send a SMS message from the MRCC Dover mobile phone.
- 4.2.4 UK Border Force were tasked to respond to the small boat incident at 0120UTC, whilst the French had coordination and before the small boat was reported to be in the UK search and rescue region, and HMC Valiant was confirmed as proceeding. At 0128UTC HM Coastguard assumed coordination from the French Coast Guard for the small boat incident, as the French Coast Guard had received an updated WhatsApp position which put the small boat 0.2nm inside the UK search and rescue region. There was no French asset with the small boat. Mobile phone messages were sent to the mobile telephone numbers linked to small boat incident CHARLIE (provided by France), requesting they send an updated position via WhatsApp. However, one of the small boat numbers had been recorded incorrectly in ViSION so the message did not send to one of the numbers.
- 4.2.5 At 0148UTC MRCC Gris-Nez having received a call from migrant 7 (CHARLIE) transferred a call to HM Coastguard from the small boat CHARLIE. The call lasted 21 minutes and 14 seconds. It was difficult for the officer to understand what was being said on the call due to background noise and shouting. The caller was able to send a WhatsApp position and stated that there were 40 persons onboard. During the call they reported that they could see a passing vessel and HM Coastguard identified the ship and contacted the vessel to ask if they could see the small boat, however they





could not. They were asked to maintain a sharp lookout as they continued their passage.

- 4.2.6 Throughout the small boat incident, a number of voice calls were made to the stand-alone mobile phone at MRCC Dover which were not answered. One call received at 0217UTC was answered and lasted for 3 minutes. It is not known what was said on this call as it was not recorded on HM Coastguard systems and there was no record made in the ViSION log. When I asked the officer who answered the call, they stated it was difficult to understand anything which was being said as there was a lot of background noise and shouting.
- 4.2.7 Two further WhatsApp positions were also received on the mobile phone at 0220 and 0221UTC, but these were not seen by operators until 0328UTC. A stand-alone mobile phone was the only means of exchanging positional information via WhatsApp from small boats when crossing the Channel at the time and was not integrated into HM Coastguard systems and was not part of the HM Coastguard 999 emergency phone line system. Without the stand-alone mobile phone HM Coastguard would not be able to receive any positional information from small boats and would then be reliant on reports from passing vessels, French Coast Guard or the ability of those onboard the small boat to be able to communicate by voice their position. The use of WhatsApp was a process shared by the French Coast Guard during a liaison meeting where they described the process, they were using to try to establish a location for small boat incidents.
- 4.2.8 The SMC(2) based on the information received on the call at 0148UTC decided to broadcast a mayday relay to vessels in the area, who may be able to assist the small boat. The broadcasts were repeated four times, and whilst not all vessels in the area responded in accordance with SOLAS requirements, two vessels did and were asked to post lookouts and report any small boat sightings. This tasking was because of their unsuitability to be tasked to search, due the potential of risk of collision or grounding within the Traffic Separation Scheme and the risk of any wake from the vessels swamping small boats. There were however 15 vessels in the immediate vicinity who did not respond.
- 4.2.9 HMC Valiant confirmed that they had received the mayday relay broadcast and were proceeding (as per original tasking) to small boat incident CHARLIE at 0231UTC and that they were 45 minutes from the mayday relay position.





- 4.2.10 MRCC Gris-Nez contacted HM Coastguard to ask if a rescue boat was on scene with Migrant 7, as the French Coast Guard were receiving calls from the small boat. The SMC(2) confirmed that HMC Valiant was proceeding but it was 40 minutes away and that the French warship, Flamant, was the closest vessel to respond. The discussion continued that the Flamant was tasked to another small boat and could not respond, to which the SMC(2) questioned the status of the small boat and if it was sinking, as the small boat CHARLIE was reporting to the French Coast Guard that it was sinking. During the call MRCC Gris-Nez confirmed that the telephone number for migrant 7 was the same number for small boat incident ALPHA. The French Coast Guard stated that calls were being received from the small boat, however the details of these calls were not passed to HM Coastguard, who were the coordinating authority. The SMC(2) advised that Valiant was proceeding at best speed and the call then ended. The Flamant did not respond to the small boat incident, even when they completed their tasking.
- 4.2.11 Small boat Incident GIN 041395-24112021 and 041393-24112021, small boat incidents BRAVO and INDIA were all closed as repeat incidents of small boat incident CHARLIE. There was however no rationale recorded in the small boat incident for why they are considered to be the same incident. Small boat Incidents ALPHA and FOXTROT were considered as possible repeats of small boat incident CHARLIE but were not made repeat incidents on the day, despite the telephone numbers being confirmed by the French Coast Guard as being for Migrant 7 (CHARLIE).
- 4.2.12 When HMC Valiant arrived on scene there was no small boat immediately visible at the position, they commenced their search in the direction of drift and soon after they arrived on scene detected two small boats using night vision goggles. They proceeded to the small boat which was stopped in the water.
- 4.2.13 As R163 was preparing to lift it developed a technical issue. This was resolved after 20 minutes, and they proceeded towards the Sandettie Light Vessel at 0350UTC to commence their search. The SMC(2) instructed the aircraft, to conduct either an expanding square or parallel track search, whichever they saw fit.
- 4.2.14 At 0348UTC HMC Valiant reported they were on scene with a small boat with approximately 40 persons on board and HM Coastguard stated it was likely to be small boat CHARLIE and provided information to identify the small boat incident. Once persons were rescued HMC Valiant reported that persons had



claimed not to have called the UK authorities, however they did not know if that was true or not. HM Coastguard then tried to call the mobile telephone number they had and asked what colour the small boat was, as the French Coast Guard had reported small boat incident LIMA as a black boat with 40 persons onboard. HMC Valiant stated it could be the same but there were lots of reports. HM Coastguard stated they would work on the small boat being LIMA and continue to search for CHARLIE and other small boats.

- 4.2.15 HMC Valiant confirmed persons rescued from the small boat was 35 persons, 20 males, 2 females and 13 minors.
- 4.2.16 HMC Valiant then proceeded to the second small boat which had been located by R163 at 0418UTC and arrived on scene at 0521UTC. Once the persons had been rescued, they initially reported that no one onboard had made calls to the UK authorities, then a few minutes later confirmed one person had seen someone make a call. No names were available from those rescued and a total of 31 persons (males) were rescued.
- 4.2.17 HMC Valiant then proceeded to the third small boat which had been located by R163, arriving on scene at 0629UTC with the small boat stopped in the water and waving. This small boat was believed to be associated with small boat incident NOVEMBER.
- 4.2.18 The TACOM made an entry in small boat incident CHARLIE at 1008UTC, that based on information from the tracker the small boat incident was resolved with 41 persons rescued. It is unclear where the number 41 has come from – the tracker may have been updated later in the day or it is a possible typing error.
- 4.2.19 At 1521UTC small boat incident CHARLIE is closed, with a summary recorded in ViSION as “UK Border Force Cutter Valiant tasked to migrant vessel with 41 POB. Occupants recovered to Dover tug haven”.
- 4.2.20 No further information was received from small boat CHARLIE after the arrival of HMC Valiant on scene. No further calls were received by HM Coastguard from the small boat to indicate they still required rescue. No further information was passed by the French Coast Guard to HM Coastguard which indicated that small boat CHARLIE had not been rescued. No calls were received from relatives or friends which could be linked to small boat incident CHARLIE. The numbers of persons rescued HMS Valiant were similar to the numbers reported by those from small boat CHARLIE and the colour of small boat CHARLIE was unknown despite attempts to get this information. There



was no information which indicated that the first small boat was not CHARLIE, although the SMC(2) did comment it was possible that the LIMA small boat was rescued, but there is no definitive information to confirm this. It was also reasonable to apply the same rationale to the identity for the second small boat rescued, which was also within the search area and in the expected area of drift of CHARLIE and was found with 31 persons onboard.

- 4.2.21 A number of small boat incidents were created and identified as repeat incidents for small boat CHARLIE by the SMC(2) that night. During the review it has been possible to confirm these small boat incidents as repeats due to the provision of mobile phone numbers. It has also been possible to link other small boat incidents which had not been identified/confirmed as repeat incidents of CHARLIE by the SMC(2) that night also. These incidents are summarised as follows.

### 4.3 Small Boat Incident ALPHA

- 4.3.1 The first call received at 0029UTC by the Port of Dover who attempted to transfer the call to HM Coastguard unsuccessfully. Further call transfer attempts were made by the Port of Dover to HM Coastguard at 0135UTC, 0240UTC and 0242UTC.
- 4.3.2 Small boat incident ALPHA was created from a call to HM Coastguard from the operations room at the Port of Dover at 0029UTC. The caller thought they had received a call from a migrant boat. The call had lots of people's voices in the background (male voices) and a telephone number was recorded by the operator before the line cut out.
- 4.3.3 This was the first notification HM Coastguard had received that night/morning informing them of small boat activity in the Channel.
- 4.3.4 HM Coastguard then contacted MRCC Gris-Nez as the attempt to call the telephone number back had an international ring tone and the call ended. The small boat incident details were passed to the French Coast Guard, and they accepted coordination for the small boat incident which was handed over.
- 4.3.5 Four calls were received at the Port of Dover from the same mobile phone number. Small boat incident FOXTROT was also identified as being from the same telephone number for small boat ALPHA, so this was confirmed as a repeat incident.





- 4.3.6 A comment was made in the ViSION log that calls from small boat incidents ALPHA and FOXTROT were possibly the same as small boat incident CHARLIE as they had a similar story and background noise.
- 4.3.7 During a call between MRCC Gris-Nez and HM Coastguard it was stated by the French officer that Migrant 7 small boat incident (CHARLIE) was UK small boat incident ALPHA. The SMC(2) acknowledged that it was possible that they were the same incident.
- 4.3.8 Small boat incident ALPHA was closed as a repeat of small boat incident FOXTROT at 0306UTC, but there was no confirmed link to CHARLIE recorded in the ViSION log. The Gendarmerie Maritime confirmed during a meeting on 5 July 2022 that the telephone number for small boat incident ALPHA was associated to the small boat which sank on 24 November in the English Channel.

#### 4.4 Small Boat Incident BRAVO

- 4.4.1 Small boat BRAVO incident was created from the French tracker document received at 0100UTC, for French Migrant incident 1. The tracker stated that Migrant 1 was detected at Canal Des Dunes at 2102UTC on 23 November 2021. It was reported by the DK Lookout and was a semi-rigid inflatable boat, with 40 persons onboard. The French Warship Flamant was recorded as being rallying or searching for the small boat. A course and speed were also recorded with a last known position.
- 4.4.2 The UK queried the last known position, and this was checked during a call with MRCC Gris-Nez, who provided an updated position which put the small boat back in the French search and rescue region.
- 4.4.3 At 0301UTC BRAVO incident is closed as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE, there is no rationale recorded in ViSION for this. However, the French tracker documents received at 0152UTC and 0237UTC both record that Migrant 1 (BRAVO) was possibly the same as Migrant 7 (CHARLIE) and Migrant 9 (INDIA). There is no rationale recorded by the French Coast Guard on their tracker for this link.
- 4.4.4 This small boat incident did not have any other information which confirmed it was linked to small boat incident CHARLIE. There is no information recorded in ViSION as to why the small boat incident is linked to CHARLIE and closed as a repeat.





## 4.5 Small Boat Incident FOXTROT

- 4.5.1 Small boat incident Foxtrot was created from a transferred call from the Port of Dover to HM Coastguard at 0136UTC. The caller stated that they needed help and that they were in/on the water and were finished. The caller asked the officer to look at his SIM card for a position as he did not have an internet connection or WhatsApp. The Coastguard officer attempted to pass the stand-alone mobile phone number, but this was difficult due to shouting from persons on the small boat on the call. The caller said they were in the water and asked for a helicopter, and repeated he had no internet connection.
- 4.5.2 The coastguard officer asked the caller to dial 999 as it was possible for a position to then be received from the phone. The caller repeated that he was finished and again asked for a helicopter, he said he would dial 999 and then the call ended.
- 4.5.3 In ViSION it is recorded that the Port of Dover provided the telephone number to HM Coastguard for the call and that the number had called three times previously.
- 4.5.4 The small boat incident was re-classified by SMC(3) to the monitoring phase as the telephone number was identified as a repeat of small boat incident ALPHA, and that small boat incident was being coordinated by the French and located in French waters at 0024UTC. No update was provided to the French. The Port of Dover reported receiving a further call for the same telephone number at 0242UTC. ALPHA incident was made a repeat of FOXTROT incident at 0302UTC.
- 4.5.5 The SMC(2) recorded in ViSION that it was possible that calls from ALPHA and FOXTROT were linked to small boat incident CHARLIE as it was a similar story and background noise to CHARLIE calls, but the small boat incidents were never made a repeat of CHARLIE.
- 4.5.6 The French tracker received at 0237UTC has been updated to link UK small boat incident ALPHA with migrant 7 incident (UK CHARLIE).
- 4.5.7 At 1659UTC a call was made to the mobile phone number to ascertain what happened to the small boat, but the call went straight to answerphone. The small boat incident was then closed on 24 November at 1744UTC.



#### 4.6 Small Boat Incident INDIA

- 4.6.1 At 0154UTC the incident call collection commenced from information received from the French tracker. French reference Migrant 9 reported at 0111UTC. The small boat had 33 persons onboard – 3 infants and 6 females.
- 4.6.2 At 0358UTC the small boat incident was closed as a repeat of CHARLIE by the SMC(2).
- 4.6.3 There was no rationale recorded in the ViSION log. The French tracker had linked small boat incidents Migrant 1, 7 and 9. The telephone number recorded on the French tracker for Migrant 9 (INDIA) were: [PD] 388 and [PD] 6 05.
- 4.6.4 Duncan Lewis Solicitors have stated that telephone number [PD] 388 was connected to the small boat which sank. This is similar but not the same as the number recorded on the French migrant tracker.

#### 4.7 Small Boat Incident 041393-24112021

- 4.7.1 At 0225UTC call collection commenced from a 999 call. No telephone number was available only a roamer number [PD] 000. This occurs when the mobile network for the phone has no signal but will automatically “roam” onto other networks to make the emergency call. The caller stated that they needed a rescue boat as they were sinking. There was a lot of background noise on the call. The caller stated his name and said he was in the middle of the sea and thought he was in the UK, and they were lost, and their engine had stopped. The caller stated they had departed Dunkirk (which is approximately 22nm to the UK search and rescue region) at 2100hrs (23 November). He stated he had not called anyone else. The officer asked if he could see any other vessels and the caller stated there was a big vessel, but no name was visible, and it was approximately 3km away. The officer asked if he could see any lights (coloured). The officer asked how many persons were onboard, the response was inaudible. Then the call cut out.
- 4.7.2 At 0248UTC the SMC(2) closed the small boat incident as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE. No rationale for this decision is recorded in ViSION.

#### 4.8 Small Boat Incident 041395-24112021

- 4.8.1 At 0232UTC a 999 call was received. The caller asked for help and stated, “he was finished, and there were ladies”. The coastguard officer asked if he had called before. The caller replied he had and there were 40 persons



onboard. The coastguard officer asked what colour the small boat was but was unable to get an answer as the caller did not understand the question, but replied saying they were outside of the boat. The caller then tried to provide a telephone number for a WhatsApp message to be sent, and at this point the coastguard officer recognised the telephone number and mentioned a name of a previous caller, who then came to the phone. At this point the coastguard officer was able to link this call to small boat incident CHARLIE.

- 4.8.2 The coastguard officer explained to the caller that a boat had been tasked but they would have to wait for it to arrive and they were asked to stop calling unless their situation changed, as each time they called, the Coastguard thought it was a different small boat incident. During the call, the caller stated that it was cold, and he was in the water. The officer stated he understood, and a rescue boat had been sent. The caller asked for it to arrive quickly. The call then ended. The call duration was 6 minutes and 58 seconds.
- 4.8.3 At 0240UTC the small boat incident was closed as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE.
- 4.8.4 There is no rationale recorded in the incident narrative for this small boat incident to be closed as a repeat of CHARLIE. However, it is clear on the replay of the call that the officer is speaking to the caller from small boat incident CHARLIE, and the telephone number was familiar and therefore this small boat incident is a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE.
- 4.8.5 Other calls were received by HM Coastguard in the same time period, but telephone numbers were not provided/recorded, and it has not been possible to confirm what small boat they originated from. These calls were received at 0306UTC and 0311UTC.

## 4.9 Information Gathering

- 4.9.1 The analysis of the information from the morning of 24 November has been completed and it is very clear that the events which occurred were complicated by the volume of small boat incidents and numerous avenues via which information was being received. The French Coast Guard tracker was not sent to HM Coastguard until almost three and half hours after the French authorities had detected small boat movements from the French coast, during the call at 0034UTC from HM Coastguard. From the information contained within the French Tracker the first report received to the French Coast Guard was at 2102UTC, and this was French Migrant 1, which the French Coast Guard had later assessed as being possibly linked to Migrant 7 – the small





boat which subsequently sank in the English Channel. It is also linked to Migrant 9.

- 4.9.2 There is also confusion regarding the position of migrant 1. On the French Tracker at 2102UTC the small boat is reported to be in position 51° 07.40N 001° 42.67E which is 1.38 miles within the UK search and rescue region. This is then questioned in a call from HM Coastguard to MRCC Gris-Nez at 0106UTC, when the French Coast Guard provided an update to the position which was 51° 04.54N 001° 58.24E, when plotted is 8.4nm to the UK search and rescue region, and within the French search and rescue region. The French Coast Guard do not say how the updated position has been received and HM Coastguard does not ask this question either. It is also determined that Flammant is not with Migrant 1. It is recorded on the tracker that they were.
- 4.9.3 There were seven calls received by HM coastguard which have been linked to small boat CHARLIE. It is unknown how many calls were received by the French authorities. Conversations between France and the UK confirm that France continued to receive calls even after coordination was handed to the UK, however the information received, and details of these calls were not relayed to the UK from France, after coordination had been passed to the UK. There are reports in the media that calls were made, and this is also confirmed during the call from MRCC Gris-Nez at 0242UTC when the French operator states that the small boat keeps calling to request help, however full details of the calls were not provided to HM Coastguard. It is also possible to hear a French officer telling someone to dial 999 in the background of the call.
- 4.9.4 The volume of information being received by HM Coastguard from various sources which included: direct calls from those on the small boat (relaying different information); French Coast Guard – calls and Tracker; Port of Dover; Police control rooms relaying information they had received; resources on scene – R163 and HMC Valiant; responses from Mayday Relay, etc. This made it difficult for the Coastguard officers to be able to determine which piece of information related to which incident as small boats are not easily identifiable and conflicting information is received from the same small boat.
- 4.9.5 HM Coastguard were working to piece together the information which could be gleaned from conversations which were often in broken English on calls which would lose connection and contained significant background noise. Many of the calls received that morning were challenging in nature due to the





conflicting information which those onboard the small boats were trying to convey to HM Coastguard and other authorities.

- 4.9.6 As stated previously in the report HM Coastguard has been responding to small boat incidents since 2016 and since 2018 has seen an increase in the number of crossings each year. In this time HM Coastguard has received thousands of calls from those on small boats requesting assistance. Many of these calls have contained traumatic content which staff respond to, as callers report that they are in the water, small boats are sinking, children are in cardiac arrest, persons have died, etc. When rescuers arrive on scene, they usually locate persons on the small boats not in the danger they have been describing.
- 4.9.7 This has resulted in officers becoming aware that callers will exaggerate the situation they are in, and whilst it does not change that a resource is tasked to rescue them, the real situation is not always understood, or conveyed accurately. This adds to an already complicated and confused picture, which highlights the challenges of determining the actual situation which requires a response.

#### 4.10 SAR Resources

- 4.10.1 During the 2100UTC Network call it was recorded that the weather for the night was variable cloud with fog in southern areas. This was confirmed in the aviation brief that overland there would be thick fog in the south of the UK and in the north of France. Despite the forecast information on the Op Deveran Report there were no actual aircraft impacts reported to the ARCC by aircraft prior to the 2100 call. The Op Deveran report assessed conditions as amber for the Drones, fixed wing, and helicopter 163. The Home Office document does not define what amber is but green is impact unlikely and red is impact likely.
- 4.10.2 There were several calls during the night shift by the air commander to 2Excel and also to RVL who were operating a flight in the English Channel on behalf of the Home Office. The calls ascertained if the flight with 2Excel would be able complete the programmed sortie in the English Channel, as there were concerns regarding the weather and diversion airports. The fixed wing aircraft stated it could go but it was not known if it would be able to complete the task once on scene due to possible low cloud which would result in the camera not being any use, resulting in a likely waste of 4 to 5 hours flying time. This was accepted by the air commander. It is not known how effective 2Excel could have been in the conditions, if they had attempted their intended flight.



- 4.10.3 The conversation between the air commander and 2Excel was intended to gauge opinion as to what was possible, however the outcome convinced both parties that 2Excel would not fly until later in the morning when the forecast was due to improve. The final decision to accept a tasking is with the captain of the aircraft. The air commander then discussed the possibility of the rescue helicopter from Lydd being tasked to search for small boats.
- 4.10.4 There were a number of conversations between R163 and the air commander, discussing the viability of R163 being tasked to search for small boats. The tasking from the air commander was out with policy, as it did not follow the normal tasking request procedure. It was a conversation and the air commander provided options for the captain to accept the tasking or not.
- 4.10.5 HM Coastguard Rescue Helicopters have a contractual readiness time of 15 minutes during the day and 45 minutes readiness time at night. Having reviewed the small boat incident on the 24<sup>th</sup> November, it was established that the readiness time of R163 was delayed by 16 minutes. This was due to an aircraft technical problem whilst taxiing which for safety reasons had to be investigated.
- 4.10.6 Once airborne, the search of the area by R163 took 2 hours 6 minutes, during which time 2 targets (small boats) were found and rescued by UK Border Force within the search area. The first small boat was located at 0418UTC, and the second small boat was located at 0509UTC. All of these small boats had similar characteristics to the numerous reports received that morning, including those relating to small boat incident CHARLIE (and linked small boat incidents).
- 4.10.7 When R163 arrived on scene they were asked to undertake a search for small boats. The SMC(2) asked them to conduct either an expanding square search or a parallel track search which ever they thought was appropriate, from the Sandettie Light Vessel.
- 4.10.8 Based on the fact that no other targets were identified in the search area by R163, and the SMC(2) believing that the small boat relating to Incident CHARLIE (and linked small boat incidents) was one of the small boats rescued, the search carried out by R163 for the small boat incident relating to CHARLIE was completed at 0609UTC.
- 4.10.9 As part of the review the HM Coastguard Clinical Director was contacted regarding the impact of exposure on a person from the conditions on the night



of 23/24 November, based on the equipment they had been provided with for the journey. The response received included the following:

- 4.10.10 “On the balance of probabilities, it would have been incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to detect the individuals in question given the likely preceding events, the environmental conditions that night, and the search equipment available to the Search and Rescue Helicopter (R163). Assuming the casualties have not succumbed to cold shock or drowning upon entering the water and have at least their head above the surface of the water: Following prolonged, potentially up to 7 hours, immersion in water at 14°C without protective clothing a casualty's skin temperature would be the same temperature as the sea and therefore there would be no temperature differential for an Infrared Thermal imaging Search Camera to detect them. Any cooling that has occurred prior to a person entering the water, (i.e. inadequate/poor clothing, no protection from the boat, on a cold night), would shorten the time to superficial cooling of the skin and ultimately hypothermia. In addition, that particular night had no ambient light so traditional night vision cameras/ goggles would also be ineffective. One of the remaining search modalities left would be visual search using artificial ("night sun") or other light sources from either the casualties in the water, other vessels present at the time, or survival suits or floatation aids with reflective or light emitting functions.”
- 4.10.11 The tasking of the surface asset was through the UK Border Force MCC. This is the point of tasking for HM Coastguard. MRCC called UK Border Force MCC at 0120UTC and the message was recorded in ViSION at 0124UTC. During the call it was confirmed that HMC Valiant was the duty boat, and they would confirm with HM Coastguard once Valiant had been informed. HM Coastguard received the confirmation that HMC Valiant had been tasked at 0129UTC.
- 4.10.12 HMC Valiant was a vessel which had been operational in the Dover Straits and was accustomed in responding to SAR requests from HM Coastguard to rescue small boats in the English Channel. On 24 November upon receiving the distress relay broadcast it was confirmed that HMC Valiant was proceeding to the same small boat incident and permission was given to contravene Rule 10 of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS). This assisted HMC Valiant with arriving on scene more quickly and confirmed that they were responding to the distress incident.





- 4.10.13 The response time for HMC Valiant was appropriate. They were provided instructions to proceed to the mayday relay position. On arrival they did not locate a small boat and they stated they would proceed in the line of drift from the MDR position. They then located two small boats, rescuing the small boat which was stopped in the water. Further taskings were provided to HMC Valiant, to the positions of small boats which had been located by R163 as part of their search.
- 4.10.14 In total HMC Valiant rescued three small boats on 24 November. From the entrance to Dover port to the mayday relay position is approximately 15nm, which took Valiant 1 hour and 24 minutes to reach. The first small boat had 35 persons onboard, the second 31 persons onboard and the third small boat 31 persons on-board. During the rescues HM Coastguard asked the crew to confirm if persons rescued had called the emergency services. Responses received from HMC Valiant were based on their experience. Whilst the people rescued from the first small boat claimed that they had not made calls, Valiant reported to HM Coastguard they did not know if that was true.
- 4.10.15 HM Coastguard considered that the first small boat rescued by HMC Valiant was potentially small boat incident LIMA, based on information from the French Coast Guard that the small boat was black and had 40 persons onboard. It was not known what colour small boat CHARLIE was, despite many attempts by officers to obtain this information from those onboard. The totals for the first small boat was that there were 35 persons rescued (men, women and minors),
- 4.10.16 The second small boat rescued was light grey in colour with 31 males rescued. The third boat was attributed to small boat November.
- 4.10.17 The tasking of HMC Valiant was the appropriate vessel and crew were based in Dover to respond to small boat incidents. The vessel was tasked to small boat incident CHARLIE prior to HM Coastguard assuming coordination for the small boat incident, from the French Coast Guard. This was when the small boat was reported as being 0.6nm from the UK search and rescue region. As soon as they reached survivor capacity, they then returned to Dover at 0722UTC.
- 4.10.18 At 1013UTC HMC Valiant reported they would not be available for further taskings as they had responded at 0100UTC and completed their hours and were stood down from duty. At this time the following resources had been tasked to the increasing number of small boat incidents by HM Coastguard: 0636UTC UK Border Force Hunter; 0646UTC Safeguard (tasked to recover





small boats); 0729UTC CG26 (fixed wing); 0822UTC Hurricane; 0827UTC Dungeness Lifeboat; 0841UTC AR3 (drone); and Hastings Lifeboat at 0931UTC.

- 4.10.19 At 0242UTC the SMC(2) discussed the availability of the French Warship Flamant to respond to the Distress incident with MRCC Gris-Nez but was informed the warship was with French migrant case 10 another small boat making way to the UK. This was challenged by the SMC(2) due to the calls the French Coast Guard had received and the reported level of distress the small boat was in, but he was informed that the Flamant was not able to respond.
- 4.10.20 The responses provided by HM Coastguard to the vessels who responded to the mayday relay broadcast were appropriate given their size, their limited manoeuvrability and the potential of further incidents to occur within the TSS, such as collision, grounding or running over a small boat.
- 4.10.21 The RNLI were not tasked as the SMC(2) believed based on the information available to him at the time that the UK Border Force surface assets were sufficient and able to rescue those onboard and additionally tasked the rescue helicopter to search the area and locate small boats.

## 4.11 Search Instructions

- 4.11.1 The search instructions provided by HM Coastguard to HMC Valiant were to proceed to the mayday relay position which had been obtained from a WhatsApp message from those on the small boat. Once on scene HMC Valiant reported that there were no small boats visible, and proceeded in the direction of drift which was appropriate. Shortly after they detected two small boats one underway and the other stopped in the water, prioritising the small boat stopped in the water for rescue.
- 4.11.2 The SMC(2) using his experience tasked R163 to a datum position and requested they conduct either an expanding square or parallel track search. R163 conducted an expanding square search. All search planning models completed as part of the review, indicate that the small boat was within the area searched.
- 4.11.3 R163 used an expanding square search, and they calculated a track spacing of 0.7nm. They searched for 2 hours and 6 minutes and then returned to Lydd, on completion of the search, having located two small boats in the search area. Both of these small boats were rescued by HMC Valiant.





correct distress alert designator. The content of the broadcast was appropriate and clear for passing vessels. The broadcast was not cancelled.

- 4.12.4 The use of an Urgency DSC alert rather than a Distress DSC alert for a Mayday Relay broadcast, whilst unconventional, does achieve the same result – an audible alarm being received on the bridge of a ship; and the VHF transmitter being tuned automatically to Channel 16 in readiness to receive the VHF mayday relay distress broadcast. This had no adverse impact on vessels in the area receiving these alerts. Under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety system (GMDSS), the use of digital selective calling (DSC) is to provide vessels at sea with a watchkeeping capability for VHF/MF radios. This effectively is a paging device which will alert a vessel of a broadcast being made by voice on a specific frequency. On the morning of the 24 November, vessels within a 30-50 nautical mile radius of the Langdon remote aerial site will have received an urgency DSC alert. This alert is sent to all vessels and upon receipt their VHF radio will automatically tune to VHF channel 16 where upon they will have received the mayday relay broadcast. Therefore, the difference between the categorisation of urgency and distress DSC alert messages is that the VHF DSC Alert would have said urgency alert instead of distress, however the output of switching the VHF radio telephony equipment to Channel 16 is the same. The mayday relay regardless of classification would have been heard and under SOLAS regulations vessels are duty bound to respond if it is safe for them to do so.
- 4.12.5 The SMC(2) using AIS, identified the French War Ship Flamant as being the nearest asset to the WhatsApp position. During a conversation with the French Coast Guard, he inquired about the availability of the Flamant, to assist. The SMC(2) was told that the Flamant was escorting another small boat which was making way to the UK. According to AIS at 0241 UTC, the Flamant was 3.2 nautical miles from the WhatsApp position. Based on a speed of 20 knots it would have taken approximately 9 minutes to arrive on scene and would have arrived approximately 34 minutes before the first UK rescue asset to arrive on scene, which was HMC Valiant. The Flamant did not respond to the broadcast.
- 4.12.6 A replay of AIS also highlights that at 0310UTC the Flamant heads in an easterly direction away from the French/UK border. This alteration of course is 9 minutes after the third mayday relay was broadcast. At 0321/22 the Flamant alters course again to a south-westerly direction (back towards the French/UK border). At 0346 the Flamant then alters course once again this is 26 minutes after the final mayday relay broadcast and heads in a southerly





direction back towards the French Coast. Given we have received no information from the French, we cannot verify why this was or why the Flamant did not directly respond to the mayday relay broadcasts.

#### 4.13 Communications between France and the UK

- 4.13.1 During the night shift of the 23/24 November there are examples of good collaborative working with the French Coast Guard. However, there are a number of areas where this could have been better, with one incident update from the UK to France regarding small boat incident FOXTROT, and the French to the UK for small boat incidents ALPHA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, FOXTROT, DELTA, INDIA, NOVEMBER, as examples.
- 4.13.2 It is clear from the information within the French Tracker that MRCC Gris-Nez were aware of small boats departing France on the evening of 23 November. This however was not communicated to MRCC Dover until 0057UTC, this resulted in a delay of the UK being informed and not able to task a response to small boats in a timely manner and in preparation for UK surface assets to be near to the UK / France boundary for when small boats would start arriving in the UK search and rescue region. As a result, the HM Coastguard response was reactive. It has not been possible to establish the reasons why the French Coast Guard did not inform HM Coastguard earlier on 23/24 November, as information requests have been declined.
- 4.13.3 The French Tracker states that migrant 1 was first detected at 2102UTC. Migrant 1 is identified as a possible repeat of migrant 7 (CHARLIE). The French Coast Guard is recorded as being informed of Migrant 7 (UK small boat incident CHARLIE) at 0048UTC on the French tracker. At this point SAR coordination was with the French Coast Guard, but there is no evidence of any French resource responding to the small boat incident in information exchanged with HM Coastguard or visible on AIS replays from 24 November. The French Coast Guard passed coordination for incident migrant 7 to the UK at 0128UTC. The small boat was in the French search and rescue region for approximately 4 hours and 26 minutes prior to the coordination being handed to the UK, but it is not known what actions were taken by MRCC Gris-Nez during the time the small boat was in the French search and rescue region, or what action was taken once they were receiving emergency calls from the small boat.
- 4.13.4 There is also evidence to suggest that not all the information which the French Coast Guard received relating to small boat incident CHARLIE was passed to HM Coastguard once coordination was accepted to the UK. This





includes comments on telephone call received at 0242UTC where MRCC Gris-Nez stated that people were calling them; you can hear in the background a French Operator telling someone to dial 999; reference is made in the MAIB investigation report to information received by the French Coastguard, article in Le Monde<sup>8</sup> newspaper suggested that MRCC Gris-Nez continued to receive calls from the small boat linked to incident CHARLIE, the call details were not passed to the UK, both prior and post the handover of coordination to the UK. This includes the following:

- 4.13.5 The full details and contact numbers of all the calls the French Coast Guard were receiving from small boat CHARLIE. Had the full details been provided, the SMC(2) may have responded differently.
- 4.13.6 Responses to mayday relay broadcast from the Vessel Concerto was not shared with HM Coastguard. The MAIB investigation found that “At 0323, after the fourth broadcast, Concerto contacted Gris-Nez Traffic again to report that it had sighted a small unlit boat with people on board passing close to the vessel. Gris-Nez Traffic acknowledged this message and advised Concerto not to wait while it contacted MRCC Dover. Despite this message Concerto’s engines were stopped and the vessel awaited instruction on any action that might be required. At 0324, Gris-Nez Traffic instructed Concerto to resume passage and advised that the French coastguard would take over the search and rescue. Concerto then resumed passage. Concerto’s recorded log position at 0323 was approximately 2.2nm east of the “Mayday Relay” position, the closest point of approach was 1.27nm to the south-south-east at 0314. The MAIB investigation found no evidence that this information was passed to HM Coastguard.” Had this information been shared with HM Coastguard it would have provided critical information on where to deploy assets given a new confirmed position of a small boat.
- 4.13.7 A call which was received by the French Coast Guard by small boat NOVEMBER, who reported that there were persons in the water. This call was played to me on 5 July 2022 from the Gendarmerie Maritime. No details of this call were passed to HM Coastguard on the night. Had this happened then a search for persons in the water from a small boat may have commenced.
- 4.13.8 At 0242UTC MRCC Gris-Nez called HM Coastguard to enquire if there was a rescue boat proceeding to Migrant 7 incident (CHARLIE) as the small boat

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<sup>8</sup> [Investigation of 2021 drowning of 27 migrants in Channel shows rescue services ignored calls for help \(lemonde.fr\)](https://www.lemonde.fr)



was calling the French Coast Guard and had told them they were in the water. HM Coastguard confirmed that they had broadcast a mayday relay and that HMC Valiant was proceeding but was 9.5nm away. The SMC(2) continued to tell the French Coast Guard that the Flamant was the closest vessel, to which they responded that the Flamant was with Migrant 10 incident.

- 4.13.9 On this call the SMC(2) made it clear, several times, that the Flamant was the closest vessel to respond and did question what the status of the small boat was that they were escorting as the reports from the French Coast Guard themselves said that the small boat migrant 7 were sinking. From the call it was clear that HM Coastguard were requesting assistance from the nearest vessel, the Flamant.
- 4.13.10 It is also clear from a replay of AIS that the Flamant departed the scene at 0310UTC, nine minutes after the third mayday relay broadcast and headed in an easterly direction (away from the mayday relay position). They then changed course at 0322UTC back to a south-westerly direction back towards the median line until 0346UTC when they headed in a southerly direction towards the French coast. The last mayday relay was broadcast at 0320UTC, but at no time did Flamant respond to the broadcasts, despite HM Coastguard speaking to MRCC Gris-Nez about their ability to assist.
- 4.13.11 It is evident that the Flamant would have been the closest suitable vessel to assist in the search for small boat incident CHARLIE (migrant 7). At the time of the first mayday relay Flamant was approximately 5nm from the mayday position. At 0242UTC the Flamant was approximately 3nm from the mayday position, and whilst she was tasked to migrant 10 by the French Coast Guard, the small boat was being escorted not rescued, so a higher priority tasking could have been accepted.
- 4.13.12 Had the Flamant been tasked by the French Coast Guard after the first mayday broadcast, they could have been on scene at the mayday relay position at 0243UTC, which was 41minutes prior to HMC Valiant arriving on scene. This may have resulted in small boat CHARLIE being located and the persons rescued.
- 4.13.13 The National Crime Agency via Gendarmerie Maritime provided the telephone number linked to a HM Coastguard small boat incident NOVEMBER PD (012). They were interested in this telephone number because they linked it to a report of persons in the water, from a passing migrant small boat to the emergency services in France. Information received during the July 2022



meeting was that MRCC Gris-Nez had received reports from a passing small boat (NOVEMBER) travelling to the UK, reporting persons in the water. This information was not passed to HM Coastguard at the time of the report by MRCC Gris-Nez. This number is linked to UK small boat incidents DELTA and NOVEMBER. These two small boat incidents relate to a single small boat, which was identified by R163 at 0542UTC. The people on this small boat were rescued by HMC Valiant which arrived on scene with the small boat at 0646UTC according to the ViSION incident log for NOVEMBER small boat incident.

#### 4.14 HM Coastguard and UK Border Force collaboration

- 4.14.1 Since 2016 HM Coastguard has worked closely with UK Border Force when responding to small boat incidents in the English Channel. The UK Border Force vessels can be tasked by HM Coastguard to respond to SAR incidents through the UK Border Force MCC. The two agencies have worked closely together for several years responding to the SAR incidents in the English Channel.
- 4.14.2 There are weekly meetings chaired by HM Coastguard attended by UK Border Force to discuss expected crossings and weather assessment information to anticipate the SAR response to small boats. When red days are identified additional meetings can be arranged again with multi-agency attendance, including UK Border Force.
- 4.14.3 There have been joint tabletop exercises delivered jointly to UK Border Force crews and HM Coastguard staff, as well as other stakeholders.
- 4.14.4 As soon as the French Tracker was received via email at 0100, UK Border Force queried the position of one of the small boats on the Tracker (Migrant 1). They requested HM Coastguard to contact the French Coast Guard and check the position, which was completed. This was completed and an updated position was provided by the French Coast Guard, which was passed to UK Border Force.
- 4.14.5 The UK Border Force MCC was requested to task the duty vessel (Valiant) to respond to small boat crossings at 0120. This was after information was received by HM Coastguard that there was a small boat (not listed on the tracker) which was 0.6nm from the UK search and rescue region.
- 4.14.6 The transit time of HMC Valiant from Dover to the initial distress position was 1 hour and 24 minutes. The speed of the response is the responsibility of the





Master of the vessel considering environmental factors and crew and vessel safety.

#### 4.15 Mobile Phone and WhatsApp

- 4.15.1 HM Coastguard had modified their communication procedures when dealing with persons in difficulty in the maritime environment to be able to receive some form of position information from small boats. This was a result of being asked for a WhatsApp number during emergency 999 calls from persons on small boats. It was also an outcome from feedback received from the French Coast Guard when discussing SAR response in the English Channel, the mobile phone was introduced at MRCC Dover on 20 October 2020. The French Coast Guard shared how they obtained position information through WhatsApp from people on the small boats, to assist them (French Coast Guard) in obtaining some form of position information.
- 4.15.2 The use of mobile phones is not a reliable means of communication in a maritime environment, but it was the only means of communication with those on small boats were provided with by organised crime groups, and position information from mobile phones was the only way of providing any location details. It is important to recognise however that the accuracy of the positional information is unknown, despite asking WhatsApp directly, and may be subject to significant errors, however in the absence of any other information to assist in finding small boats it is the only information available.
- 4.15.3 During the small boat incident, a number of locations were sent from a number of mobile telephone numbers which post incident were confirmed as being from the small boat which sunk in the English Channel. The first position received at 0201UTC was the position from the small boat mobile phone and was used in the mayday relay broadcast as the location of the distress incident.
- 4.15.4 There were two other positions received on the stand-alone mobile phone at 0220UTC and 0221UTC, however these were not seen until much later in the small boat incident (0328UTC) and the only position used was the one received at 0201UTC. The distance between the 0201UTC position and the 0220UTC position was 0.673nm. The distance between the 0201UTC position and the 0221UTC position is 0.855nm.
- 4.15.5 As part of the review contact was made with WhatsApp to establish position accuracy. However, no information was received.





- 4.15.6 Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that obtaining positional information through WhatsApp was the only way at the time in which HM Coastguard could ascertain the general location of a small boat. Without which the SAR response would be significantly hampered and reliant on information being passed by passing vessels, aircraft or through voice calls with those from small boats. When using WhatsApp, the accuracy of the position should be a consideration and appropriate errors considered for search plans.

#### 4.16 Network Operations and Staffing

- 4.16.1 On the night of 23 November into the morning of 24 November, the national network watchkeepers were in excess of the recommended staffing levels. There was adequate resource in the national network to respond to small boat incidents, UK wide. The network logs clearly indicate that there was a total of 12 operators working in Zone 14 during the shift. The network capability was being utilised from MRCC Humber who were coordinating Zones 11 and the JRCC who were coordinating Zone 13. MRCC Stornoway were also responsible for MRCC Dover's maritime safety information broadcasts for that night. The only function that was not capable of being operated remotely was the stand-alone mobile phone.

#### 4.17 Conclusion of SAR incidents

- 4.17.1 The process used for the termination of the SAR response was inconsistent with some small boat incidents having a clear conclusion, others remaining open until the end of the day and others being closed with no rationale recorded. In some cases, it is possible to determine why small boat incidents have been closed as a repeat of another small boat incident, despite there being no comment or rationale recorded. In some small boat incidents, a generic message was used at the end of the day to close small boat incidents.
- 4.17.2 A more appropriate solution may be to suspend the SAR response, pending further information at an earlier stage during the small boat incident when information has ceased to be received and then consider termination on a case-by-case basis. It is also important the closure of any incident is completed under the authority of the SMC. During the review a number of small boat incidents were identified as being closed by an operator, which when questioned the SMC was unaware of. Since 2021 HM Coastguard has introduced a process to ensure improvements on how small boat incidents are suspended/terminated.



- 4.17.3 Small boat incident Alpha was closed as a repeat of small boat incident Foxtrot. Whilst not recorded in the incident narrative this was a result of the telephone numbers for each small boat incident being the same, so this action was appropriate. The small boat incident was closed at 0302UTC.
- 4.17.4 Small Boat incident Bravo was closed at 0301UTC. There is no rationale recorded for this closure. The French Migrant tracker received at 0152UTC has recorded that Migrant 1 (UK small boat incident Bravo) could be a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE.
- 4.17.5 Small boat incident CHARLIE is closed at 1521UTC with the following summary. "240115UTC to 241008UTC DOVR 041384 Migrant. UK Border Force Cutter Valiant tasked to migrant vessel with 41 pob. Occupants recovered to Dover tug haven". This narrative is based on the entry made into the small boat incident at 1008UTC by the tactical commander which stated, "Note from tracker this incident shows as resolved – Valiant tasked – confirmed 41 recovered and vessel abandoned and marked".
- 4.17.6 Small boat incident Delta was closed as a repeat of small boat incident November at 1600UTC. There is no rationale recorded for this decision.
- 4.17.7 Small boat incident Echo was closed at 1749UTC. The narrative stated:
- 4.17.8 "AFTER THE CESSATION OF MULTIPLE MIGRANT INCIDENTS DURING TODAY. NO FURTHER CALLS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR THIS INCIDENT OR FURTHER CONFIRMED SIGHTINGS. AREAS OF INTEREST HAVE BEEN SEARCHED WITH NOTHING UNTOWARD FOUND. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS BEING CLOSED PENDING FURTHER INFORMATION. AS DISCUSSED WITH JAMES CRANE AND GEORGE PAPADOPOLOS".
- 4.17.9 This statement was used to close a number of small boat incidents around the same time. Whilst each small boat incident should be considered individually it does confirm that no further information had been received, no further sightings and that the area had been searched.
- 4.17.10 Small boat incident Foxtrot as closed at 1747UTC. The narrative stated:
- 4.17.11 "AFTER THE CESSATION OF MULTIPLE MIGRANT INCIDENTS DURING TODAY. NO FURTHER CALLS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR THIS INCIDENT OR FURTHER CONFIRMED SIGHTINGS. AREAS OF INTEREST HAVE BEEN SEARCHED WITH NOTHING UNTOWARD



FOUND. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS BEING CLOSED PENDING FURTHER INFORMATION. AS DISCUSSED WITH JAMES CRANE AND GEORGE PAPADOPOLOS”.

- 4.17.12 This statement was used to close a number of small boat incidents around the same time. Whilst each small boat incident should be considered individually it does confirm that no further information had been received, no further sightings and that the area had been searched. There is also an entry at 1659UTC to record that they attempted to call the mobile number to ascertain what had happened to the small boat. There was no answer. This number is linked to small boat CHARLIE.
- 4.17.13 Small boat incident GIN 041393-24112021 was closed as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE. There is however no rationale recorded for this. There is no evidence to confirm if this was a call from small boat CHARLIE.
- 4.17.14 Small boat incident GIN 041396-24112021 was closed as a repeat of the Migrant admin incident at 0322UTC with no rationale recorded. This small boat incident closure did not follow HM Coastguard procedures for suspending or terminating an incident.
- 4.17.15 Small boat incident GIN 041397-24112021 was closed as a repeat of the Migrant admin incident at 0322UTC with no rationale recorded. This small boat incident closure did not follow HM Coastguard procedures for suspending or terminating an incident.
- 4.17.16 Small boat incident GIN 041395-24112021 was closed as a repeat of small boat CHARLIE at 0240UTC. There is no rationale recorded in the ViSION narrative for this action, however when the call was replayed as part of the review, the SMC(2) confirmed that Mubin was on the call, and so the SMC(2) closed the small boat incident as a repeat.
- 4.17.17 Small boat incident Hotel was closed at 1750UTC. The narrative stated:
- 4.17.18 “AFTER THE CESSATION OF MULTIPLE MIGRANT INCIDENTS DURING TODAY. NO FURTHER CALLS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR THIS INCIDENT OR FURTHER CONFIRMED SIGHTINGS. AREAS OF INTEREST HAVE BEEN SEARCHED WITH NOTHING UNTOWARD FOUND. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS BEING CLOSED PENDING FURTHER INFORMATION. AS DISCUSSED WITH JAMES CRANE AND GEORGE PAPADOPOLOS”.





- 4.17.19 This statement was used to close a number of small boat incidents around the same time. Whilst each small boat incident should be considered individually it does confirm that no further information had been received, no further sightings and that the area had been searched.
- 4.17.20 Small boat incident INDIA was closed at 0358UTC as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE. There is no rationale in the incident narrative for this decision. The French Tracker has French Migrant 9 (INDIA) as a possible repeat of French Migrant 7 (CHARLIE).
- 4.17.21 Small boat incident JULIET was closed at 0309UTC as a repeat of small boat incident KILO. The rationale recorded by the SMC(2) for this action was that the Flamant was reported on scene with the small boat.
- 4.17.22 Small boat incident KILO was closed at 1752UTC with no conclusion recorded. At 0241UTC there is a comment from the SMC(2) which stated it was possible that the incident was also small boat CHARLIE as they were making multiple calls. The small boat incident was never confirmed as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE. This incident closure did not follow HM Coastguard procedures for suspending or terminating an incident.
- 4.17.23 Small boat incident LIMA was closed at 1755UTC. The narrative stated:
- 4.17.24 “AFTER THE CESSATION OF MULTIPLE MIGRANT INCIDENTS DURING TODAY. NO FURTHER CALLS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR THIS INCIDENT OR FURTHER CONFIRMED SIGHTINGS. AREAS OF INTEREST HAVE BEEN SEARCHED WITH NOTHING UNTOWARD FOUND. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS BEING CLOSED PENDING FURTHER INFORMATION. AS DISCUSSED WITH JAMES CRANE AND GEORGE PAPADOPOLOS”.
- 4.17.25 In the incident narrative at 0527UTC the SMC(2) has commented that “BELIEVE THIS VESSEL WAS PICKED UP BY VALIANT AT 0423UTC AND ALL MIGRANTS RECOVERED AT 0436UTC AND BOAT MARKED AND ABANDONED WITH STROBE”. This would be the first small boat which HMC Valiant rescued on 24 November 2021.
- 4.17.26 Small boat incident NOVEMBER was closed at 1758UTC. The narrative stated:
- 4.17.27 “AFTER THE CESSATION OF MULTIPLE MIGRANT INCIDENTS DURING TODAY. NO FURTHER CALLS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FOR THIS





INCIDENT OR FURTHER CONFIRMED SIGHTINGS. AREAS OF INTEREST HAVE BEEN SEARCHED WITH NOTHING UNTOWARD FOUND. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS BEING CLOSED PENDING FURTHER INFORMATION. AS DISCUSSED WITH JAMES CRANE AND GEORGE PAPADOPOLOS". There is a ViSION entry at 0722UTC which stated "MIGRANTS OFF THIRD EVENT ON BOARD AWAITING HEADCOUNT. WILL BE FULL SO HEADING BACK TO DOVER. 51 08.5N 001 31.2E DINGHY ABADONED - DESCRIPTION INFLATABLE BLACK M959 PAINTED ON SIDE."

- 4.17.28 This indicated that the persons from small boat NOVEMBER were the third small boat to be rescued by HMC Valiant.
- 4.17.29 Small boat incident OSCAR was closed as a repeat of small boat incident NOVEMBER at 0524UTC. There is no rationale recorded in ViSION for this decision, but as part of the review it has been possible to confirm that the telephone numbers for the small boat were the same number.

#### 4.18 Search and Rescue Response

- 4.18.1 Whilst the search area was determined using the experience of the SMC(2) and, R163 considering an appropriate sweep width for the aircraft to complete the search for small boats, it also would be appropriate to use a similar sweep width for multiple persons in the water.
- 4.18.2 It is also important to understand that it is important that care is taken to ensure SRUs are provided searches which are technically and operationally suitable and that the track spacing is navigationally achievable. For example, a helicopter is limited to the sweep width distance the craft is able to navigate.
- 4.18.3 IAMSAR Volume II section 5.3.2 (e) states that the time of day when searches are conducted is an important consideration. "Visual searches at night will be futile unless it is known that the survivors have night signalling devices such as flares or lights ...". By the time the rescue helicopter arrived on scene the persons on the small boat had been exposed to the elements for up to seven hours and would have been very cold and wet, therefore this would reduce the ability to be detected by the rescue helicopter, given they had no equipment provided to them to assist them in being detected, such as reflective tape on clothing (IAMSAR Volume II 5.7.7 states "...and reflectivity of search object (reflective tape on survivors or their craft can significantly improve the chances of detection with Night Vision Devices".)



- 4.18.4 Due to the limited information available regarding the small boat the SMC(2) made decisions based on information that was available to him at the time. Initially the SAR plan was to send SAR resources to the last known position and search for the small boat. Shortly after HMC Valiant arrived on scene they detected two small boats in the vicinity of the Sandettie Light Vessel, and then tasked R163 to conduct a search around this when they arrived on scene. This was reasonable given no further calls had been received which could definitively be linked to small boat incident CHARLIE.
- 4.18.5 Shortly after R163 commenced their search they detected a second small boat and then later a third. Both were rescued by HMC Valiant.
- 4.18.6 Contained within this report are search plans which have been calculated using the SARIS computer-based system which was available to HM Coastguard at the time of the small boat incident. These plans demonstrate the varying possibilities of the location of the survivors, based on the differing parameters which could be used, due to the lack of definitive information to assist the search planner for this incident.
- 4.18.7 The only position that was known to be accurate linked to the small boat was the position which was passed to HM Coastguard at 1257UTC from MRCC Gris-Nez who had received a call from a passing fishing vessel that there were 10-15 persons in the water at their position.
- 4.18.8 Backtrack modelling has been completed to try to determine potential drift start positions for the small boat, but there are many variations on the outcomes from the drift projections. This is dependent on the model run – drift only, persons unknown state, person with or without a lifejacket and differing drift start times, as the actual time of when persons entered the water is unknown and using different tidal drift information.
- 4.18.9 Outcomes of the different modelling place some of the drift models in the UK search and rescue region and other models in the French search and rescue region or the drift is between both, for the duration of the drift period. What all scenarios do suggest however is the rescue helicopter was searching in the correct area but did not detect the small boat. This can be for a number of reasons which include, the weather conditions and time of day (darkness) were not ideal for searching for unlit small boats or persons in the water; the temperatures that night would mean that persons who had been in exposed to cold sea water for over 5 hours would be cold and once submerged body temperatures would fall rapidly; people were not equipped to be seen – no



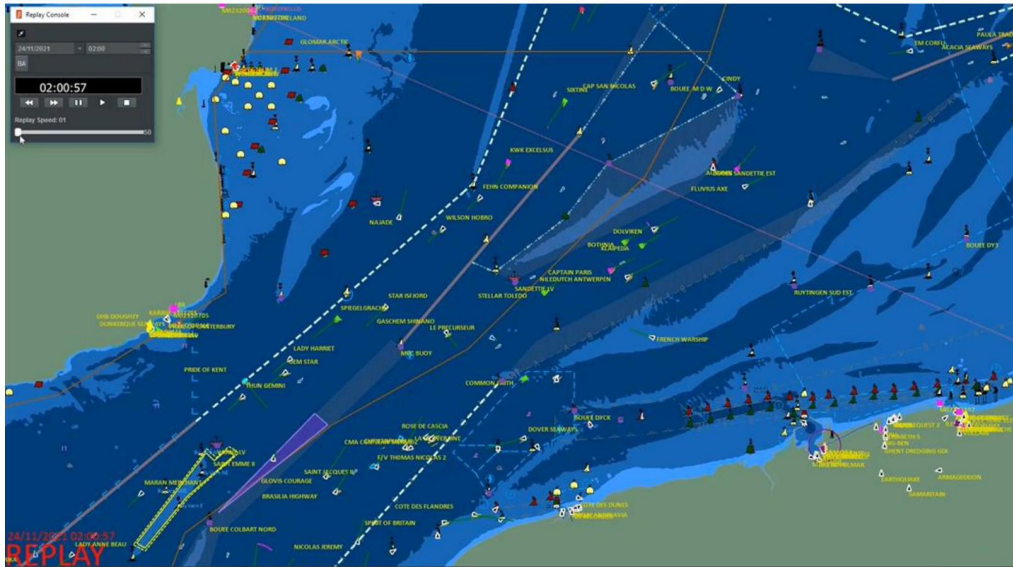
lights to attract attention, reflective tape, etc. all of which would assist rescuers in locating survivors, especially during the hours of darkness.

- 4.18.10 Given the variable estimated drift calculations from the Search Planning methodologies, regardless of whichever search and rescue region the targets were actually in, the search area searched by R163 adequately covered all of the estimated downwind drift search models computed.
- 4.18.11 The small boat incident on 24 November 2021 took place in the hours of darkness, and it was difficult for SAR assets to detect small boats as they are not easily detectable. Even when daylight broke, in a busy English Channel (sunrise 0726UTC) it was still five and half hours before casualties were found by a passing Fishing Vessel. See images below which illustrate the shipping from Automatic Identification System (AIS). (Fig 10)

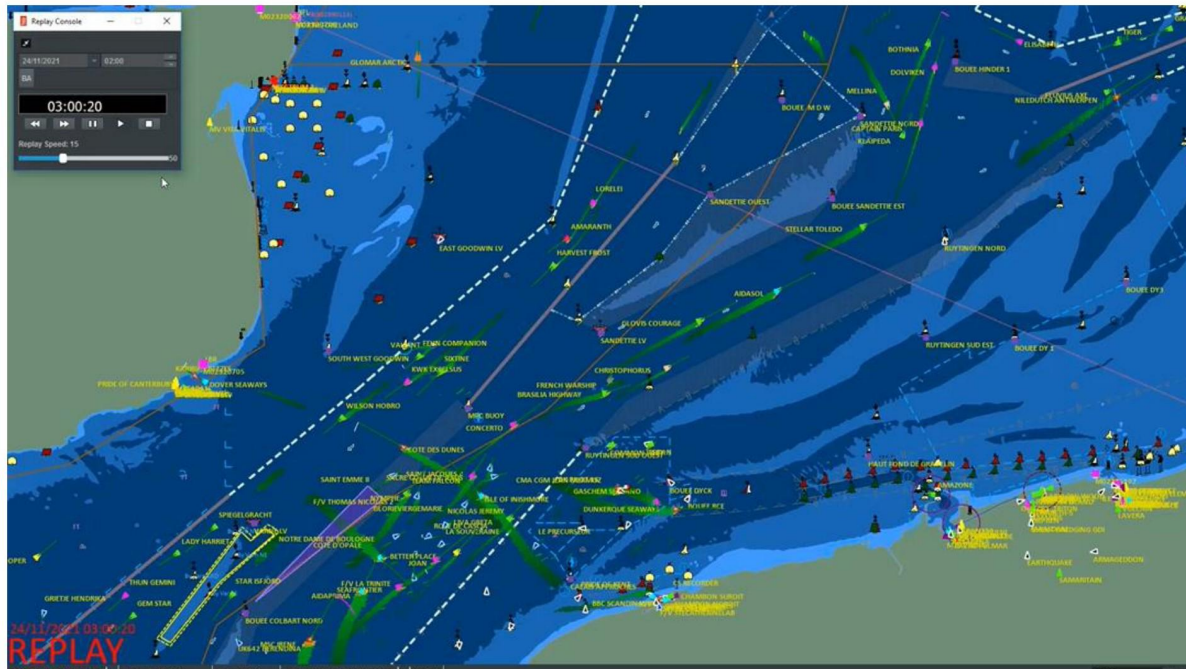




0200UTC



0300UTC



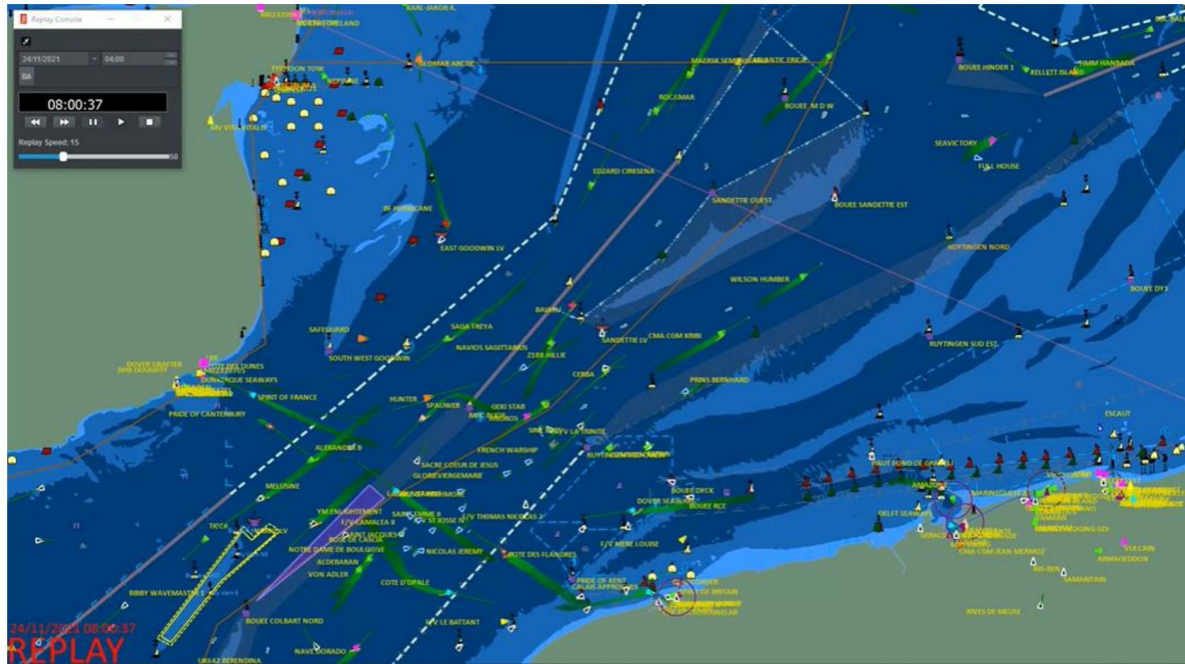




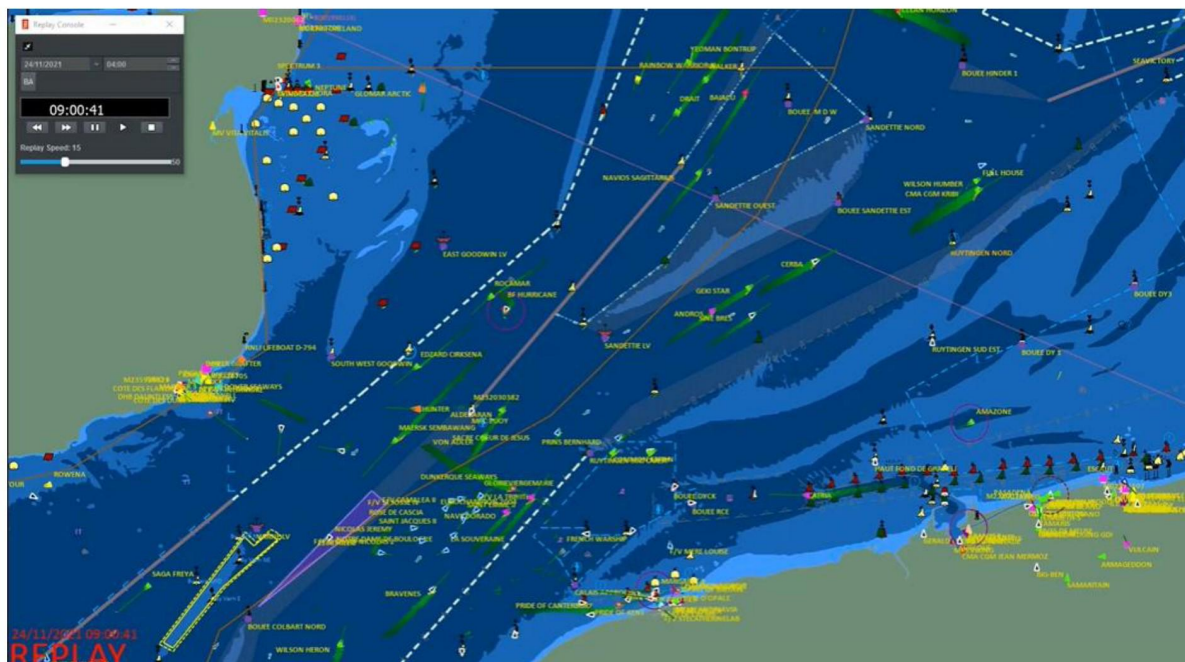




0800UTC

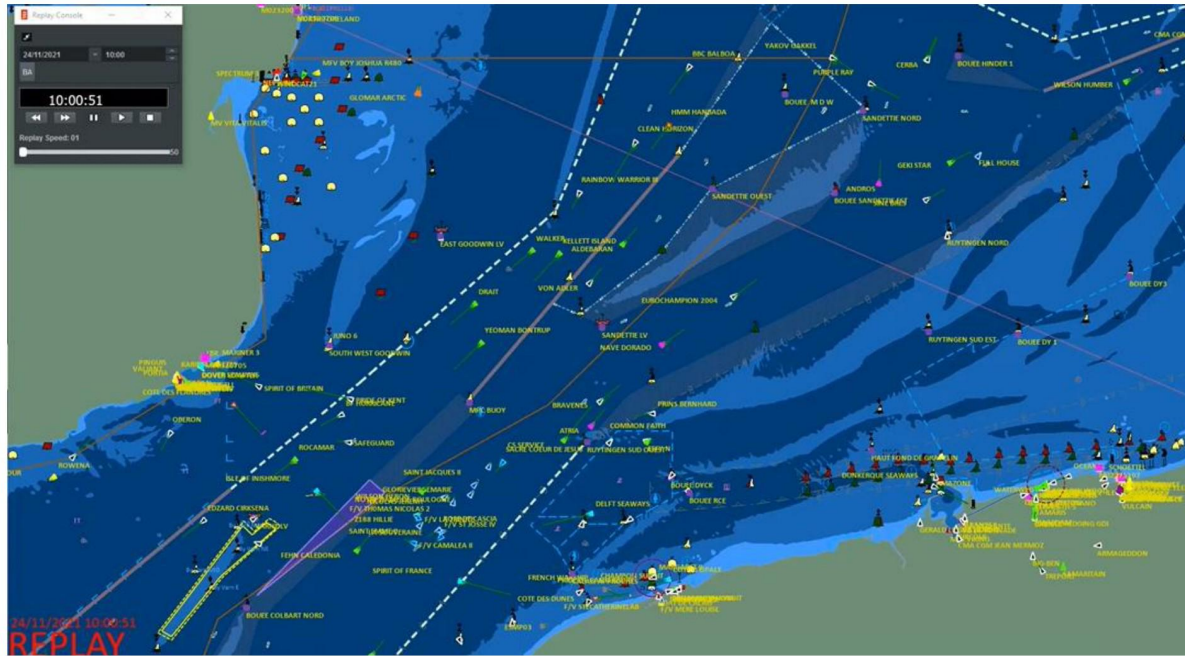


0900UTC

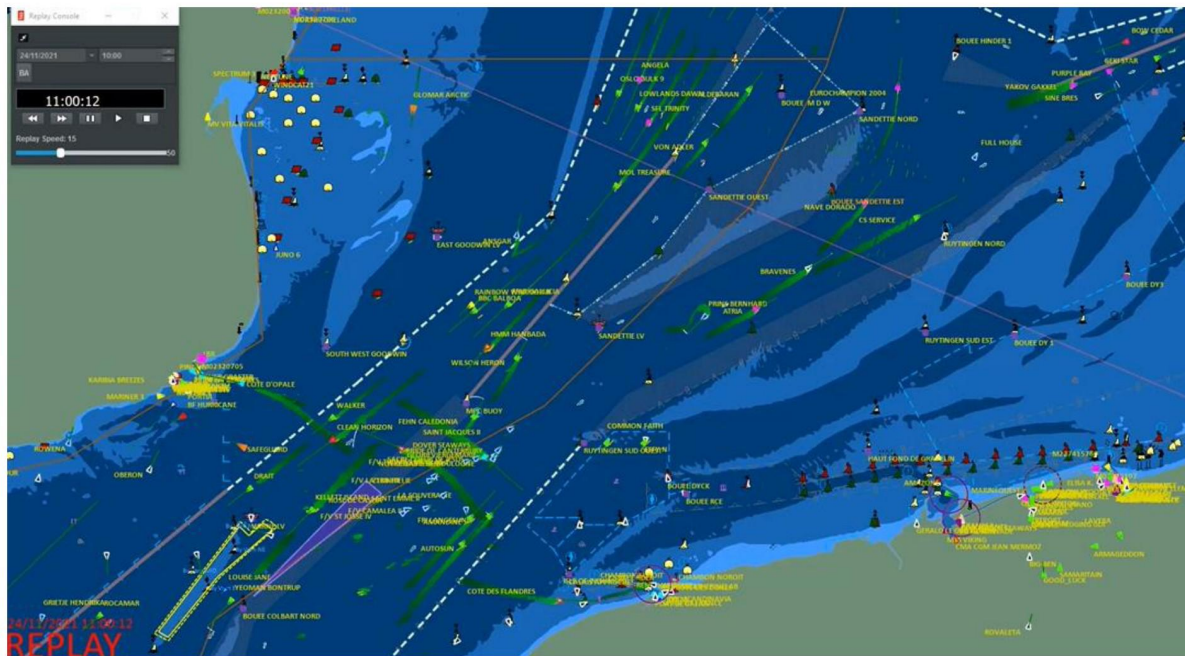




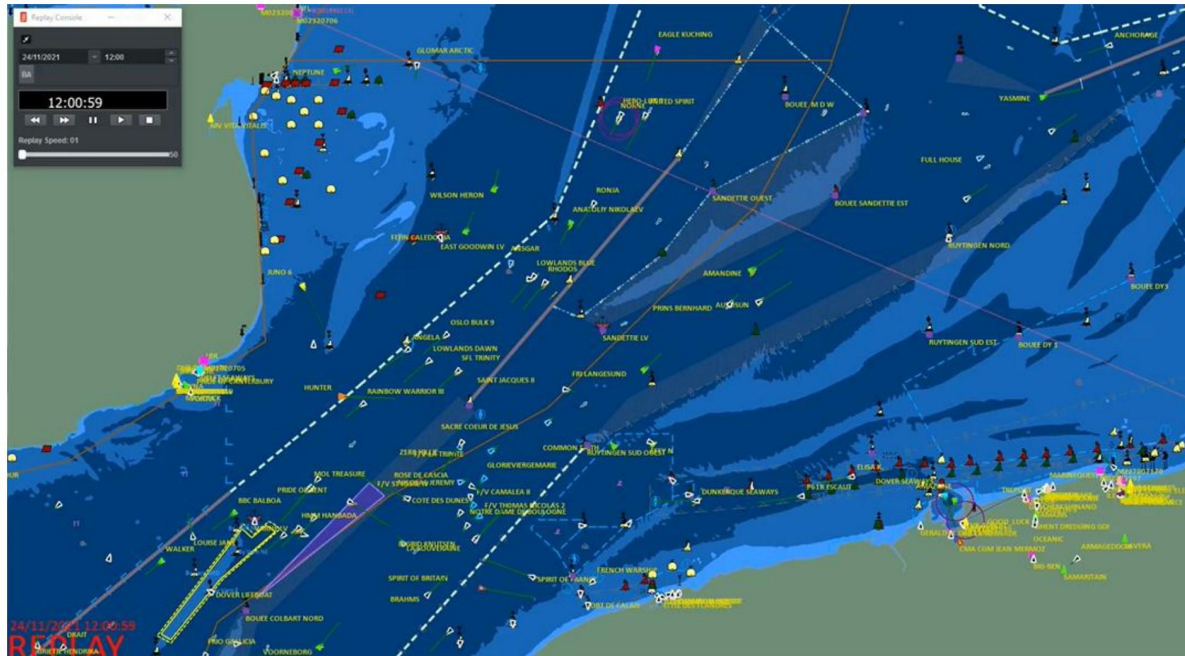
1000UTC



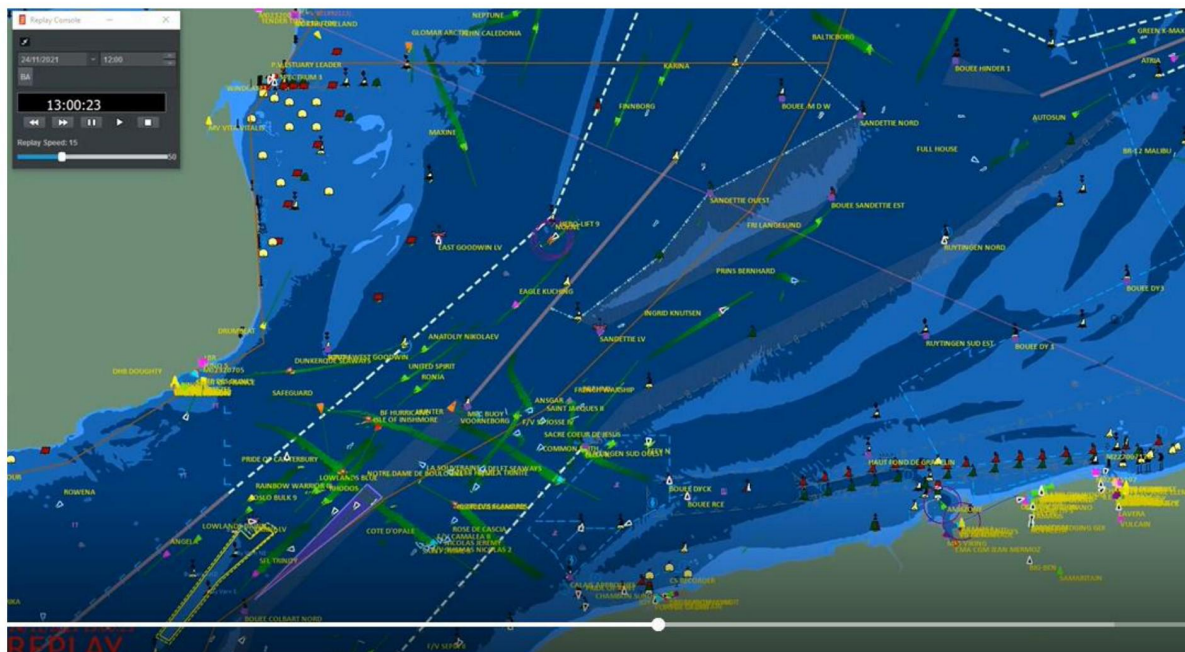
1100UTC



1200UTC



1300UTC





## 4.19 Operation CAESAR

- 4.19.1 Due to the increasingly complex and demanding situation within the English Channel, in October 2021 a strategic direction was made by MCA Senior Management for additional aerial asset capability to be procured. The aim of these additional assets was to increase the situational awareness in the English Channel, which would also increase the availability of fixed wing reconnaissance aircraft taskings. The workstream that delivered this capability was named the Channel Aviation Emergency Search and Rescue or CAESAR project.
- 4.19.2 Due to the speed in which this additional service was required, this uplift in capability was achieved through a contract change with Bristow Helicopters Ltd. HM Coastguard requested that they increase the 'search' capability of their existing search and rescue solution at their Lydd airbase. This additional capability provides dedicated aerial assets located immediately adjacent to the English Channel and is exclusively used to support HM Coastguard's SAR activity in the English Channel.
- 4.19.3 The first phase of Project CEASAR was delivered on the 1st of March 2022 where both a Schiebel S100 drone and a DA42 fixed wing aircraft provide a single line of tasking, 7 days a week for up to 8 hours a day. These assets are able to provide live video imagery into MRCC Dover to greatly increase HM Coastguards operational situational awareness. This then allows our SMCs to dynamically risk assess, verify the on-scene situation, and prioritise surface assets when multiple small boat incidents are simultaneously occurring.
- 4.19.4 From 1 July 2022, this capability was further enhanced with additional S100 drones and with the DA42 aircraft being replaced with larger and more capable DA62 aircraft, providing two lines of tasking available up to 16 hours every day. This project will provide this uplift in capability for the next 3 years.

## 4.20 HM Coastguard Procedures

- 4.20.1 The actions taken and recorded on the night have been compared to information and guidance available to coastguard officers on the Coastguard Information Portal which assists them in the management of SAR incidents. These documents are for guidance. The standard operating procedures (SOPs) were not used for every small boat incident. Officers had responded to hundreds of previous small boat incidents finding and rescuing 36,541 people from 2018 to 22 November 2021, and did not feel it necessary to refer





to the standard operating procedures for guidance. During the call collection and information gathering there was a focus on obtaining the position of the small boats which is important, so that HM Coastguard understand where to send SAR resources. Unfortunately, some calls disconnected prior to officers being able to obtain names and telephone numbers. This prevented HM Coastguard's ability to return calls after the mobile signal disconnected. It is also important to note that due to weak signal strength, language barriers and background noise, it is not always possible to follow the guidelines produced for information gathering. On the morning even when questions were asked due to the language barriers, often callers could not understand the questions and could not provide the information required. When incidents are reviewed then SOPs are updated, the SOP for small boat incidents was updated on 6 October 2021 prior to the small boat incident and then updated on 3 December 2021 once an initial assessment was completed for the small boat incident on 24 November.

- 4.20.2 The coordination of the small boat incidents remained throughout 24 November with the SMCs who were on duty. The tactical commander summarised the discussions with the air commander regarding the difficulty experienced in obtaining the recognised maritime picture due to the inability of the fixed wing aircraft to fly. The actions and concerns are recorded in the small boat incident logs until 0230UTC. After this time there are no further entries made by the tactical commander. A tactical commander has oversight of the actions taken by the SMC for all SAR incidents coordinated by HM Coastguard and is required to maintain awareness of all distress phase incidents and the SAR response through regular review of the VISION incident log and must publish a RAG for all distress phase incidents within 30 minutes of creation or upgrading. There are entries from the tactical commander illustrating that he understood the challenges on the night with the fixed wing aircraft not being available and the tactical commander was proactive in the tasking of the SAR helicopter as an alternative, no further entries or calls were made after 0230UTC by the tactical commander.
- 4.20.3 The tactical commander recorded that he went on a meal break at 0404UTC and returned to the operations room at 0557UTC. During this time, he was contactable via telephone for the national network if required, but he was not contacted.
- 4.20.4 During the small boat incidents recorded on the morning of 24 November there were a total six SMCs working on small boat incidents for the night shift and the day shift, including handover to the oncoming day watch. The small



boat incidents in the early hours of 24 November did not have the identity of the SMC confirmed in the vision log, however the SMC could be identified from the SMC comments made in the ViSION incident, and it had no impact on the coordination of the small boat incidents. The small boat incidents which occurred after 0730UTC did have the SMC identified in the tactical commander RAG messages in ViSION.

#### 4.21 Basic and Root Cause including Human Factors

- 4.21.1 HM Coastguard officers have been exposed to thousands of calls from people requesting rescue from small boats in the English Channel. Each call received through the coastguard incident systems is answered and if sufficient information has been received, a response is considered.
- 4.21.2 Root causes for the incident relating to small boat CHARLIE can be considered as follows. According to the MAIB report the persons on board the small boat were not provided with a vessel which was suitable to undertake the journey from France to the UK. They were also not provided with the appropriate lifesaving apparatus which could have assisted them when they got into difficulty. This includes appropriate and sufficient number of lifejackets, an emergency position radio indicating beacon (EPIRB)/personal locating beacon (PLB) – which would alert the emergency services to a distress incident and provide a position for rescue, distress flares or a life raft. The small boat also did not have appropriate marine communications equipment, which would allow the small boat to communicate on VHF Marine radio channels. Without this equipment which assists in SAR resources being able to detect and locate small boats and persons in the water at night.
- 4.21.3 The weak mobile signals resulted in a number of calls being disconnected prior to information being passed to the emergency services. The number of calls being made from the one small boat to a number of emergency services/organisations in both the UK and France, each providing different information led to challenges in confirming how many small boats were on passage to the UK, and the numbers of persons in need of rescue.
- 4.21.4 Language difficulties resulted in information not being received/understood, from those on the small boat. It is often the situation that persons on small boats will exaggerate the danger when they call the emergency services, often saying that people are dying and in the water. When rescue resources arrive on scene, they then find the persons onboard the small boat not in the level of danger described. From the playback of the calls, we have been able to identify as being from small boat CHARLIE, the information varied from the



boat was finished and people in the water, to the boat was broken and the engine had stopped at various times from 0136UTC. Actions taken by the SMC(2) were appropriate in response to the information he received on the calls. He was however unaware of calls which were received at 0306UTC and 0311UTC, and these were closed without his knowledge, due to no contact information available to obtain further details after the calls disconnected.

- 4.21.5 Normally UK resources, such as UK Border Force vessels are tasked with sufficient time to be able to be close to or on the median line, for the arrival of small boats into the UK search and rescue region. This is because the reports of small boats are received from the French Coast Guard with sufficient time to allow the tasking of the appropriate SAR response. This did not happen on 24 Nov, due to the late notification from the French Coast Guard that small boats had been departing from the French coastline.
- 4.21.6 The unavailability of the Coastguard fixed wing aircraft due to weather constraints, which made it unsafe to fly, at the decision of the aircraft captain, this precluded HM Coastguard from having a surface picture from the fixed wing aircraft. To mitigate this, HM Coastguard tasked the Coastguard rescue helicopter R163 to provide situational awareness of small boats as they arrived into the UK search and rescue region, and the helicopter was subsequently to search for small boat CHARLIE. In addition, the French Warship Flamant did not respond to mayday relay broadcasts when they were the nearest vessel to the small boat position, and they could have arrived on scene at approximately 0243UTC, 41 minutes prior to HMC Valiant. This resulted in HM Coastguard waiting for the arrival on scene of HMC Valiant at 0324UTC.

## 4.22 Management of the Small Boat Incident

- 4.22.1 The small boat incidents from 24 November were managed by SMCs. The tactical commander on the night shift did not enter any RAG statements as is required by procedure for any of the distress incidents. This resulted in their being no tactical comments for the small boat incidents on the night shift which includes a review of the actions taken and if there was anything which the tactical commander required the SMC to complete in addition to actions already taken and recorded.
- 4.22.2 The SMC(2) for small boat incident CHARLIE took immediate action to try to locate the small boat, contacting vessels in the TSS whilst still on the call with the first informant. Once the call concluded he then requested a mayday relay – an action which is not normally carried out for small boats, due to the





location. The tasking of HMC Valiant had already been actioned, prior to the notification from France that small boats had entered the UK Search and Rescue Region, and the tactical commanders at the JRCC were formulating plans to provide air support to search and locate small boats that were crossing from France. Decisions were taken as soon as information was received from France, however the information could have been shared from France earlier in the night which may have changed the UK response.

- 4.22.3 SMC(2) decided that the first boat rescued could be small boat CHARLIE or LIMA. They continued to search for small boat CHARLIE, and a second boat was located and rescued. The cessation of emergency calls from the small boat, and no other reports received, in addition to UK Border Force confirming the number of persons rescued to be similar to the initial report received from the French Coast Guard, resulted in a conclusion that small boat CHARLIE had been rescued. The lack of information provided from the people rescued on the night and previous experience of UK Border Force officials where it is not uncommon for people rescued not to disclose any information, were discussed with HM Coastguard which then resulted in HM Coastguard calling small boat CHARLIE at 0415UTC via WhatsApp. The call failed.
- 4.22.4 There are no findings of negligence or misconduct. The actions taken on the morning of 24 November 2021 in response to the small boat incident CHARLIE were appropriate, based on the information which was available to the SMC(2) at the time. Positive SAR action was taken whilst the small boat CHARLIE was still in the French search and rescue region with the tasking of HMC Valiant, mayday relay broadcasts were made and R163 was tasked to search for the small boat. Three small boats were located, and persons rescued, and this coincided with the cessation of calls from small boat CHARLIE, which resulted in the conclusion that the small boat had been found.

#### 4.23 Actions taken by HM Coastguard post 24 November 2021

- 4.23.1 HM Coastguard has continually adapted the response to small boat incidents. This has included reviewing resource capability and availability with the inclusion of life rafts on SAR helicopters, additional helicopters being located at Lydd when it is known or predicted high numbers of small boats are expected, liaison with RNLi and UK Border Force, HM Coastguard procedures and guidelines reviewed.
- 4.23.2 The use of WhatsApp as a mechanism to obtain position information from those on small boats, whilst it was not a conventional way of obtaining the



information was better than having no capability at all. Since the 24 November small boat incident HM Coastguard has looked at introducing updated technology which provided positional and other information from those using mobile phones on small boats. This included MX locate software introduced in 2022 that provided positional information for a casualty based on their phone's location and then in 2023 ICU was introduced to replace the MX locate software. This was software that provided positional information for a casualty based on their phone's location, with additional functions which included live text chat and video streaming from the recipient's phone. These solutions were integrated into the HM Coastguard systems and allowed information to be recorded and preserved as required. During 2023 HM Coastguard has also engaged with Utopia 56, a non-government organisation, who regularly communicates with persons who are planning on crossing the Channel in small boats to ensure that safety messages are passed to those who undertake the journey to assist their rescue. This includes the use of MX locate software and a dedicated telephone line for Utopia 56 to report persons in distress to HM Coastguard.

- 4.23.3 The Coastguard Information Portal (CIP) contained various documents to assist coastguard officers with information when responding to small boats. These have continued to be reviewed and updated as new information is received and enhancements to small boat incident responses captured.
- 4.23.4 The following standard operating procedures were updated following the small boat incident on 24 November:

SOP	Date	Update
Incidents Involving Migrants V13	03/12/2021	SOP when a report of potential or confirmed migrant activity is received.
Incidents Involving Migrant V14	23/12/2021	SOP when a report of potential or confirmed migrant activity is received.
Incidents Involving Migrant V15	05/01/2022	SOP when a report of potential or confirmed migrant activity is received.
Abandonment of small boats in the Channel v1 and v2	05/01/2022	The standard process to notify the JRCC/ MRCCs and Foreign authorities following the abandonment of small boats in the channel, once persons are rescued.
Terminating a call originating from a migrant vessel v2	19/01/2022	Details the LINP process, and actions to follow prior to the terminating a call from a migrant vessel.



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Terminating a call originating from a migrant vessel v3	25/01/2022	Details the LINP process, and actions to follow prior to the terminating a call from a migrant vessel
Emergency Call Handler SOP V1	23/2/2022	Created an SOP for information gathering process to be completed with the introduction of emergency call handlers
Emergency Call Handler – Migrant calls V1	23/2/2022	Created for emergency call handlers to follow when dealing with calls from small boats
Emergency Call Handlers Operational Detail V1	23/2/2022	Information about the role of the emergency call handlers
MRCC Dover – WhatsApp usage V1	25/2/2022	WhatsApp has been provided on an MCA smartphone at MRCC Dover. This is to provide support to migrant operations
Incidents Involving Migrant V16	11/3/2022	SOP when a report of potential or confirmed migrant activity is received.
Terminating a call originating from a migrant vessel v4	22/3/2022	Details the LINP process, and actions to follow prior to the terminating a call from a migrant vessel
Terminating a call originating from a migrant vessel v5	20/4/2022	Details the LINP process, and actions to follow prior to the terminating a call from a migrant vessel
Terminating a call originating from a migrant vessel v6	21/4/2022	Details the LINP process, and actions to follow prior to the terminating a call from a migrant vessel
SAR Incidents involving Migrant V3	1/7/2022	Guidance on SAR incidents involving small boats
Termination and cessation of small boat crossing incidents	1/7/2022	SOP for closing or merging small boat incidents
Daily small boat actions V1	1/7/2022	SOP to ensure all actions are taken in preparation for small boat activity in the Dover Strait on predicted yellow, amber and red days

- 4.23.5 Additional staffing within the national network was also introduced to respond to the increase in small boat incident numbers expected. This included the allocation of Assistant Chief Coastguard with the responsibility for small boat operations in the English Channel.





# Search Planning



## 5 Search Planning

- 5.1.1 During every search and rescue incident, HM Coastguard through the SMC will consider the appropriate actions to take, based on the information received for each incident they coordinate. This includes the allocation of resources, the actions they require the SAR resource to undertake when they arrive on scene, broadcast action and communication frequencies and the duration of the search. This reviewed as further updates are received during the incident.

### 5.2 Actions taken on 24 November 2021

- 5.2.1 The Captain of R163 spoke to MRCC Dover at 0249UTC and confirmed that they would undertake a patrol for small boats in the English Channel and would be airborne at 0330UTC. The SMC(2) changed the patrol to a search area based on the reported activity from telephone calls received and information received from MRCC Gris-Nez.
- 5.2.2 The original search area provided to the captain at 0249UTC was:
- From the MPC Buoy up to the Sandettie Light Vessel. Then to the East Goodwin Light Vessel as a rectangle. The SMC(2) stated that this would cover the likely passage small boats would take when making their way to the UK.
- 5.2.3 At 0354UTC R163 reported to HM Coastguard that they were proceeding and advised R163 that HMC Valiant were on scene in position 51° 10.5N 001° 47.5E. They were with one small boat and reported a second small boat in the vicinity. HM Coastguard requested R163 search around the Sandettie Light Vessel with either an expanding square search or parallel track (see paragraph 8.3.88 and 8.3.89 for an explanation of the searches) to search for other small boats in the area.
- 5.2.4 R163 arrived on scene at 0403UTC and commenced an expanding square search.
- 5.2.5 The use of an expanding square search was valid, as HMC Valiant was on scene with a small boat and it was reported that other small boats were sighted in the vicinity, including the second small boat which HMC Valiant has reported. The SMC(2) requested R163 to search for this small boat, as well as other small boats in the area.



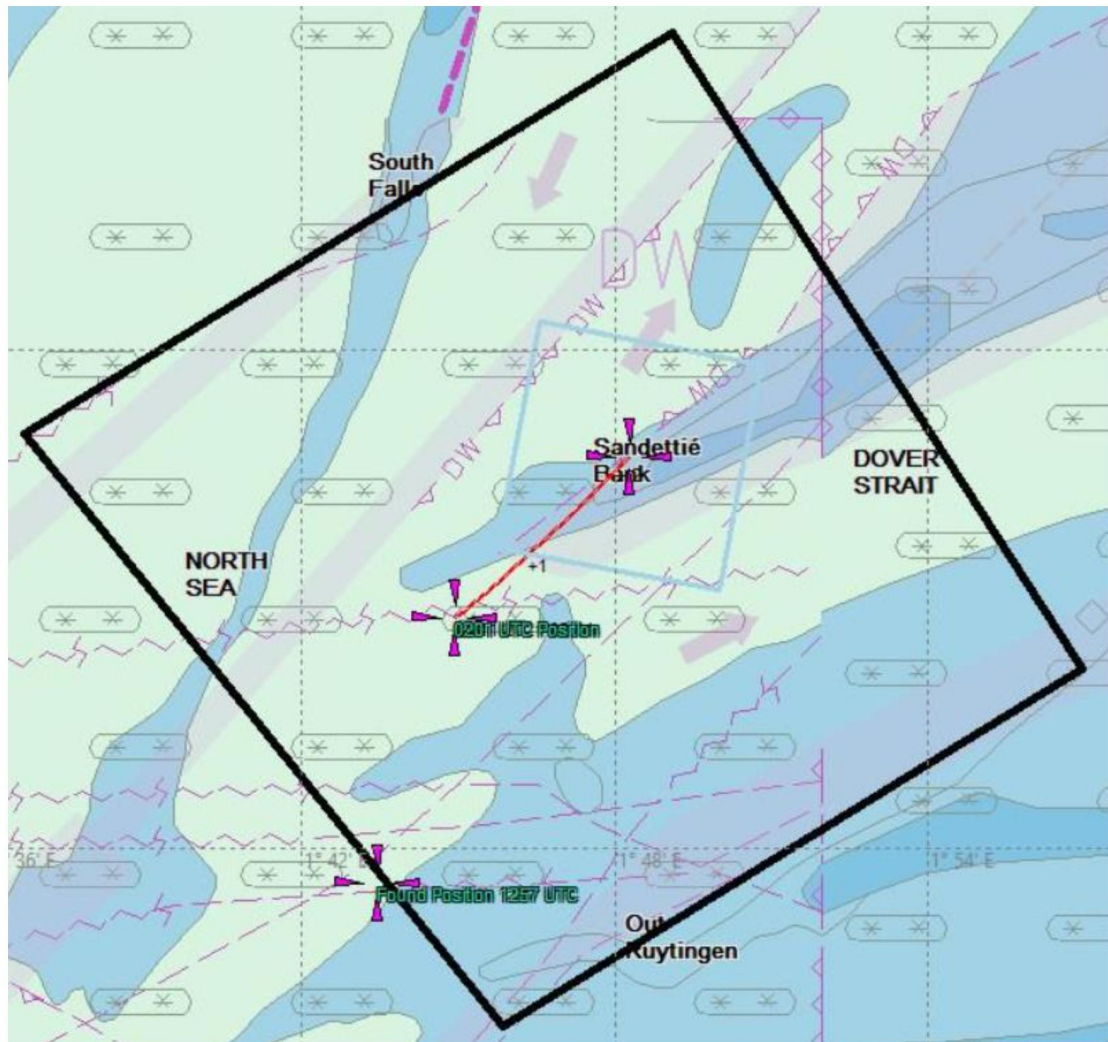
- 5.2.6 R163 decided to complete an expanding square search with a track spacing of 0.7nm.

### 5.3 SARIS Search Plans

- 5.3.1 During this review, search plans have been calculated using SARIS. The target type used was for a person in the water unknown state, this was because we were uncertain of the number and type of life jackets/buoyancy aids. The formula used for this was  $0.011 \times U + 0.070$  divergence  $40^\circ$ . (U is the wind speed).
- 5.3.2 SARIS has been used to establish if the search area searched by R163, was valid. This system uses built in computed meteorological and hydrodynamic (tidal) files. It also allows the user to override this data and input actual hindcast weather if available. To compare all possible outcomes, both computed and hindcast information in backtrack and datum point search determination models have been used, to capture the maximum number of possible outcomes.
- 5.3.3 **Datum Point 1: (Search area established using SARIS computed files.)**
- 5.3.4 The datum point search was established using the following:
- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
- Datum time – 0403UTC (arrival time of R163)
- Target – person in the water unknown state –  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U = wind speed)
- Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it is not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence - applied  $40^\circ$
- 5.3.5 The diagram below was the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. The area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions. The helicopter searched the whole area. The blue box was the search area calculated using SARIS with the above criteria, as part of this review. The search area and the downwind datum drift (red line from the position marker to the PIW target) are clearly within the area searched by R163.







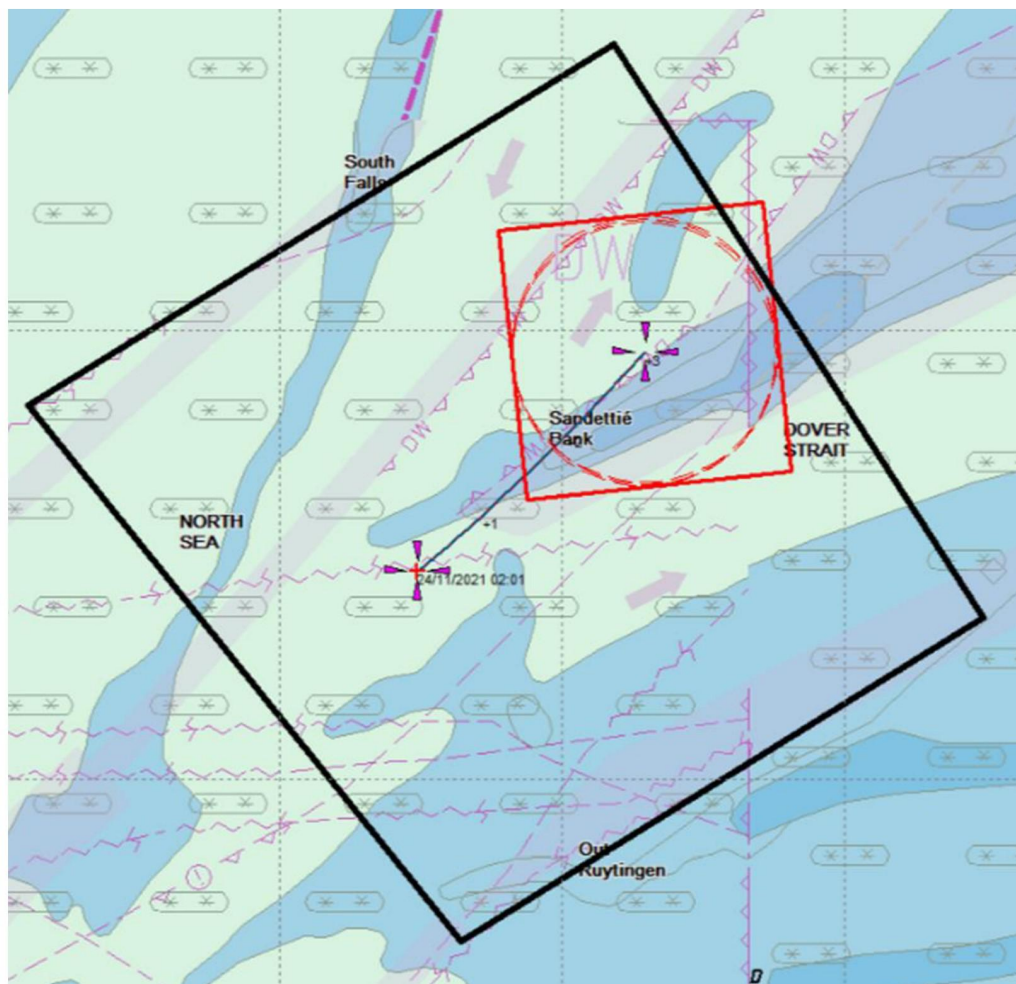
### 5.3.6 Datum Point Number 2: (Search area established using SARIS computed files using a different datum time)

The datum point was established using the following:

- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
- Datum time – 0500UTC (mid-search time based on endurance of R163)
- Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
- Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence – applied  $40^\circ$



- 5.3.7 The diagram below was the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. The area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area.
- 5.3.8 The red box contains a search area, made up of 3 datums; Dmin, Dmax and downwind. An error circle is established around each datum and the datums are then squared off for ease of passing search instructions to SAR units. This means that the four corners of the red box do not contain elements of the three established search areas. In this case, the corner of the red box that is outside of the black box does not contain elements of either of the established search datums.
- 5.3.9 The SARIS search area was within the area searched by R163 and the downwind datum drift (blue dotted lines from the position marker to the PIW target) are clearly within the area searched by R163.



5.3.10 **Datum Point Number 4: (Search area established using SARIS with Hindcast override)**

The datum point search was established using the following:

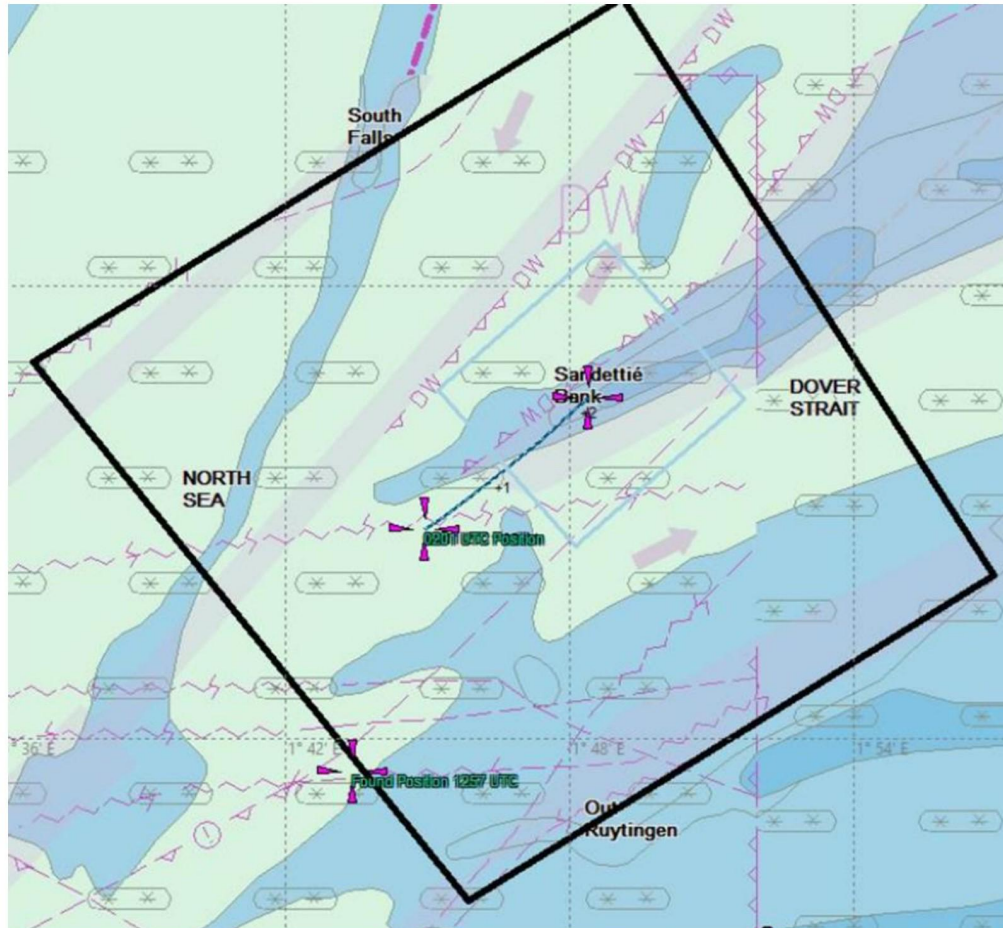
- Hindcast wind data from the Met Office based on actual wind readings recorded from the Sandettie Light Vessel and using SARIS hydrodynamic data.
- Datum time – 0403UTC (arrival time of R163)
- Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
- Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence – applied  $40^\circ$

5.3.11 The diagram below was the computed model from SARIS, using hindcast override. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. The area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area.

5.3.12 The blue box was the search area calculated as part of this review, using SARIS with the above criteria. The search area and the downwind datum drift (blue line from the position marker to the PIW target) are clearly within the area searched by R163. The minor difference between the SARIS files and hindcast data was the estimated downwind drift vector is 0.1nm shorter for the hindcast drift.







5.3.13 **Datum Point Number 5: (Search area established using SARIS with Hindcast override using a different datum time)**

The datum point search was established using the following:

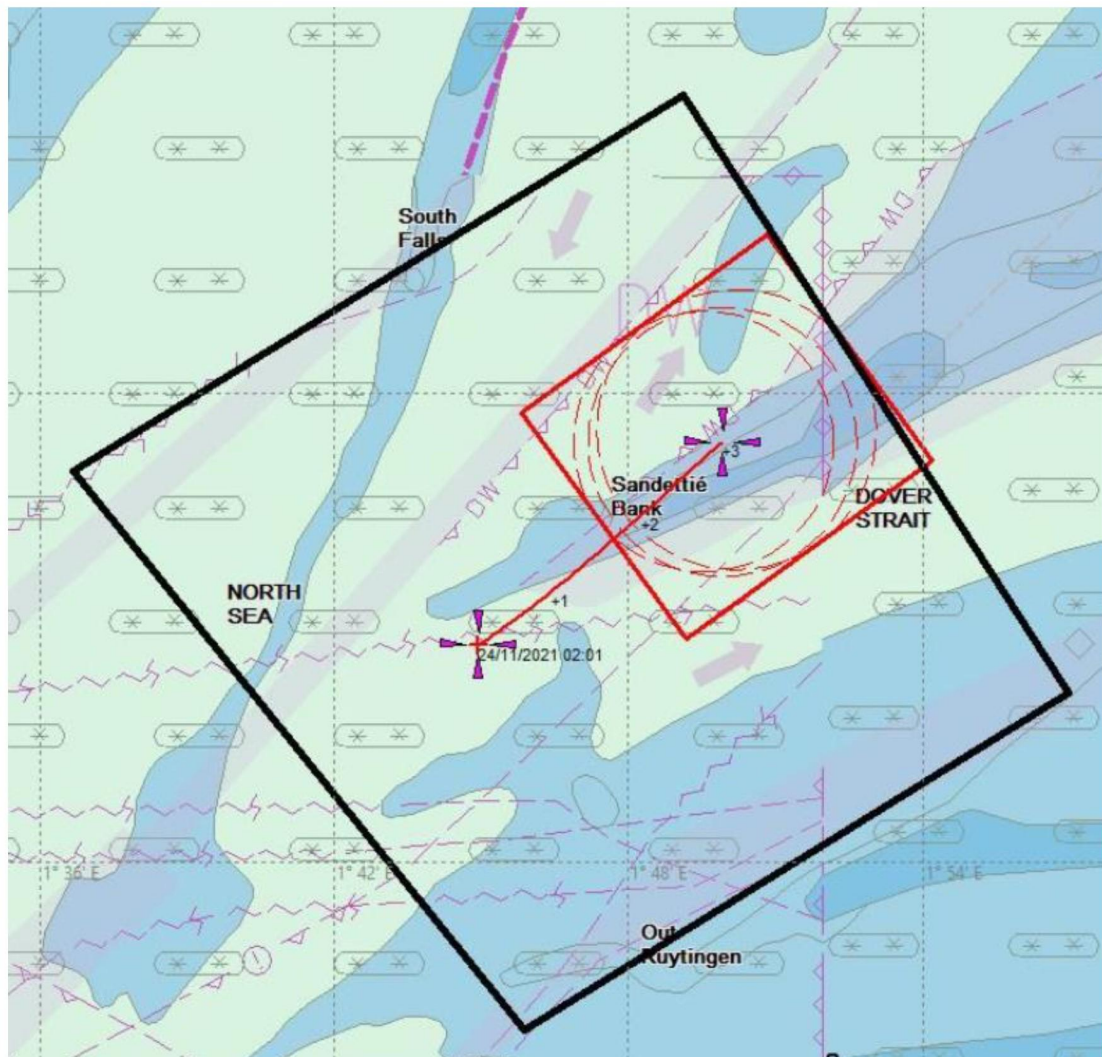
- Hindcast wind data from the Met Office based on actual wind readings recorded from the Sandettie Light Vessel and using SARIS hydrodynamic data.
- Datum time – 0500UTC (mid-search time based on endurance of R163)
- Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  ( $U$ =wind speed)
- Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence – applied  $40^\circ$

5.3.14 The diagram below was the computed model from SARIS, using hindcast override. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from



0403UTC. The area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area. The red box contains a search area, made up of 3 datums; Dmin, Dmax and downwind. An error circle is established around each datum and the datums are then squared off for ease of passing search instructions to SAR units. In reality this means that the four corners of the blue box do not contain elements of the 3 established search areas. In this case, the corner of the red box that was outside of the black box does not contain elements of either of the established search datums.

- 5.3.15 It is clear to see that the SARIS search area was within the area searched by R163 and the downwind datum drift (red dotted lines from the position marker to the PIW target) are clearly within the area searched by R163.



## 5.4 Backtrack Calculations

5.4.1 The only position with a high degree of confidence of accuracy for small boat CHARLIE was the found position for the persons in the water, in the French search and rescue region, located by the fishing vessel. Using conventional backtrack search planning methodologies to compute the estimated drift start position (distress position) from the confirmed found position (where the casualties were found) within the French search and rescue region. This process may provide a more accurate drift start position, than using the unknown accuracy of a WhatsApp position, particularly when a mobile phone is operating on the extremities of its range and the accuracy of the positional information is unknown. The backtrack search planning methodology is contained within the International Aviation and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manual and used by SAR authorities worldwide.

### 5.4.2 Backtrack Number 1: (Downwind drift established using SARIS)

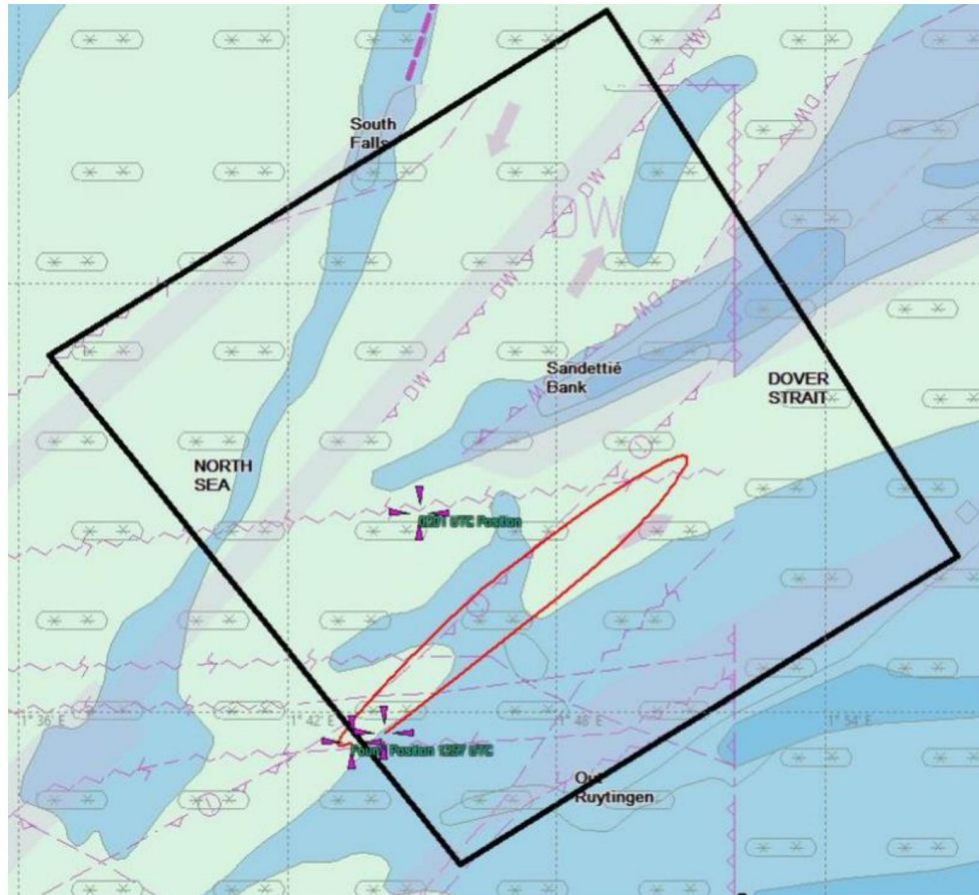
The backtrack drift is established using the following:

- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
- Drift start time – 0201UTC (the time of the first WhatsApp position)
- Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
- Initial position error for the vessel which found the persons in the water – 0.1nm (GPS position from a fishing vessel and in accordance with SAR Graphs & Tables)

5.4.3 The search planning model established the estimated drift start position (distress position) and the line of drift across a period of time, using SARIS data. The estimated drift start position (distress position) was calculated as being within the French search and rescue region. The estimated line of drift was calculated as being predominantly in the French search and rescue region, with the exception of the time period from 1000UTC to approximately 1220UTC. The estimated line of drift for the duration of the search (0403UTC to 0611UTC) was within the French search and rescue region, and also within the search area, searched by R163.







#### 5.4.4 Backtrack number 2: (Downwind drift established using SARIS with Hindcast override)

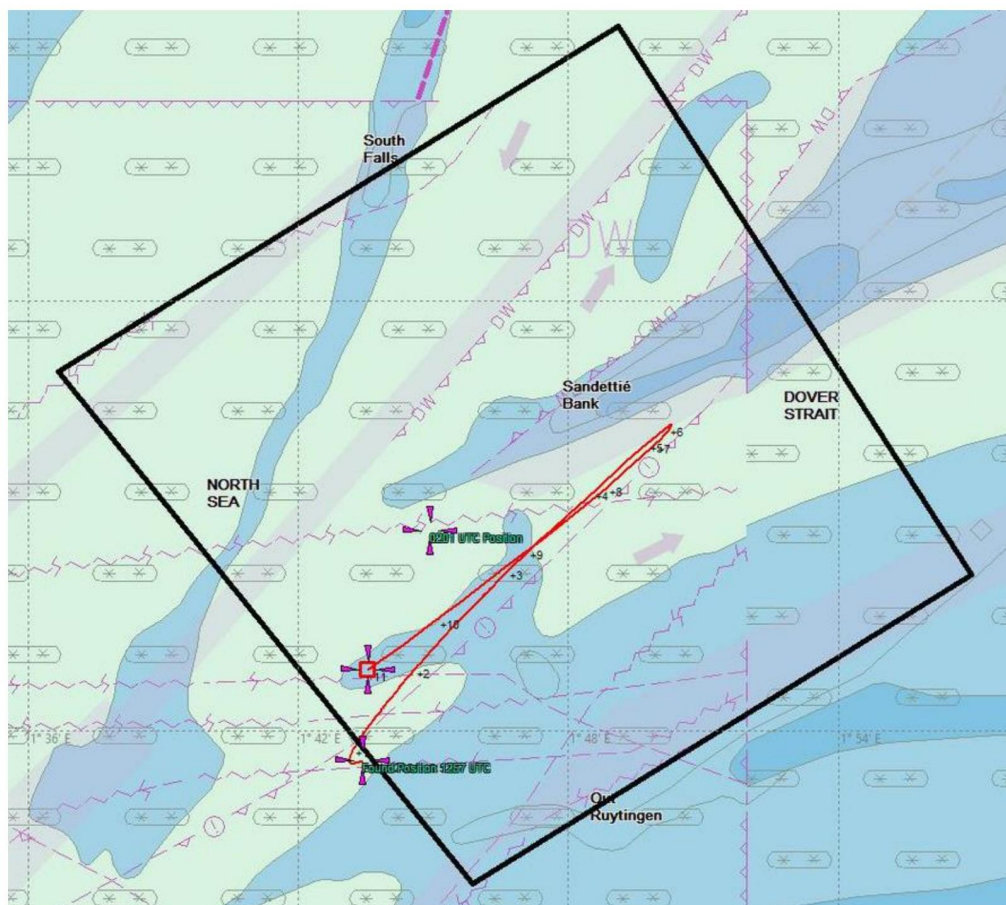
The backtrack drift is established using the following:

- Hindcast weather for the Sandettie Light Vessel and SARIS computed files tide.
- Drift start time – 0201UTC (the time of the first WhatsApp position)
- Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
- Initial position error for the vessel which found the persons in the water – 0.1nm (GPS position from a fishing vessel and in accordance with SAR Graphs & Tables)

5.4.5 The search planning model established the estimated drift start position (distress position) and the estimated line of drift across a period of time, using both the wind hindcast override and SARIS hydrodynamic data. The estimated drift start position (distress position) was calculated as being within the UK search and rescue region. The estimated line of drift was calculated



as being predominantly in the UK Search and Rescue Region, with the exception of the latter part of the search near to the found time of 1257 UTC. The estimated line of drift for the duration of the search (0403UTC to 0611UTC) was within the UK search and rescue region, but also within the search area, searched by R163.



- 5.4.6 **Backtrack Number 3: (Manual calculation of downwind drift established using hindcast data and manual tide).**
- 5.4.7 Using manual calculations of tidal stream and hindcast data and using the target type of person in the water unknown state, the estimated positions of the target related to small boat incident CHARLIE was predominately in the UK Search and Rescue Region with the exception of the time period from approximately 1120UTC until 1257UTC. The estimated drift start position for the target related to small boat Incident CHARLIE was also in the UK Search and Rescue Region, but also within the search area, searched by R163.





## 5.5 Datum Point SARIS calculations using the Estimated Drift Start Position from the backtrack modelling.

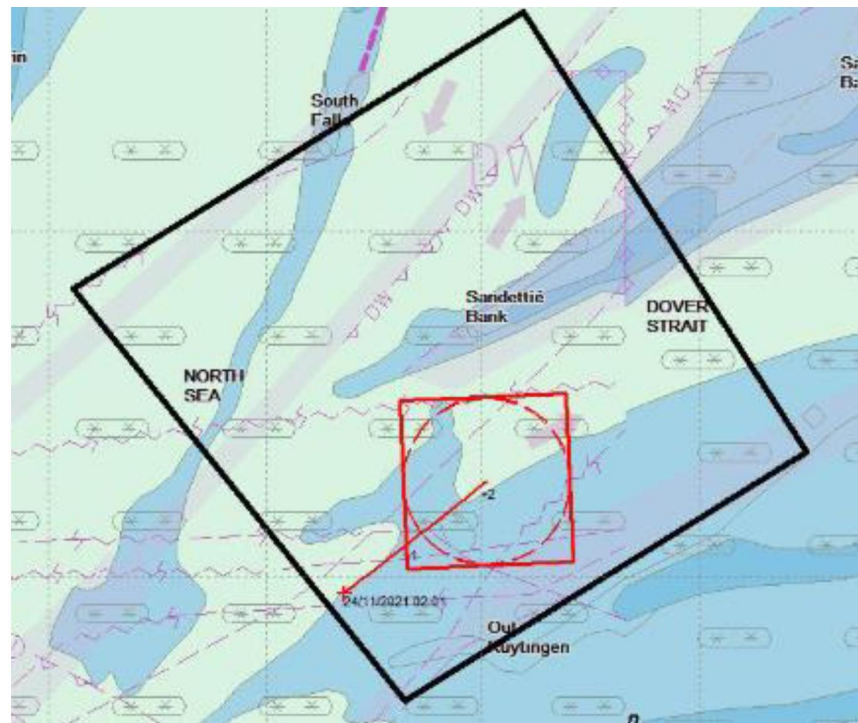
- 5.5.1 In order to establish the search area determination using the estimated drift start positions from the backtrack modelling, the following plans have been created.
- 5.5.2 **Datum Point BTEP1a (Using SARIS computed meteorological and hydrodynamic data)**
- 5.5.3 The datum point was created using the estimated position from Backtrack model 1 above and with a datum time of 0403UTC. The datum point search was established using following:
  - SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
  - Datum time – 0403UTC (arrival time of R163)
  - Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  ( $U$ =wind speed)
  - Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)





- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence – applied 40°

5.5.4 The diagram below illustrates the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. You can see that the area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area. The red box was the search area calculated as part of this review, using the estimated drift start position from the backtrack using SARIS with the above criteria. It is clear to see that the search area and the downwind datum drift (red line from the position marker to the PIW target) are clearly within the area searched by R163, despite the majority of the search area being in the French Search and Rescue Region.



5.5.5 **Datum Point BTEP1b (Using SARIS computed meteorological and hydrodynamic data).**

5.5.6 The datum point has been created using the estimated position from Backtrack model 1 above and with a datum time of 0500UTC. The datum point was established using the following:

- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
- Datum time – 0500UTC (mid-search time based on endurance of R163)

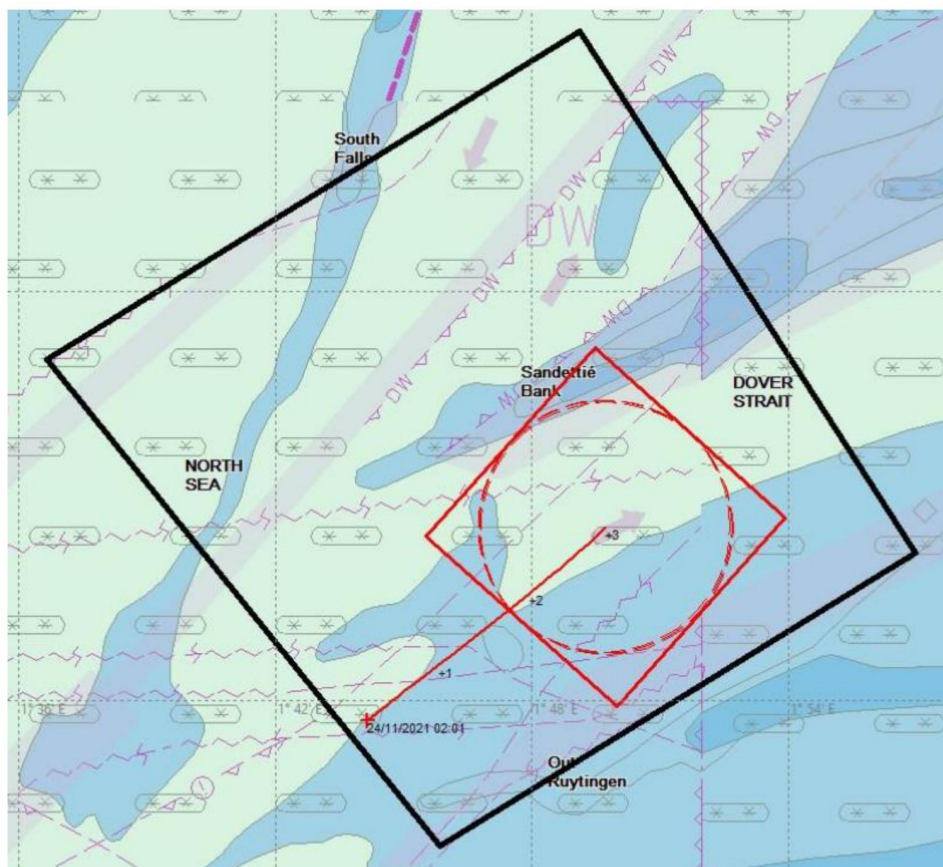


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- Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
- Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence – applied  $40^\circ$

5.5.7 The diagram below illustrates the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. You can see that the area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area.

5.5.8 The red box was the search area calculated as part of this review, using the estimated drift start position from the backtrack using SARIS with the above criteria. It is clear to see that the search area and the downwind datum drift (red line from the position marker to the PIW target) are clearly within the area searched by R163, despite the majority of the search area being in the French Search and Rescue Region.



5.5.9 **Datum Point BTEP2a (Using SARIS computed meteorological and hydrodynamic data)**

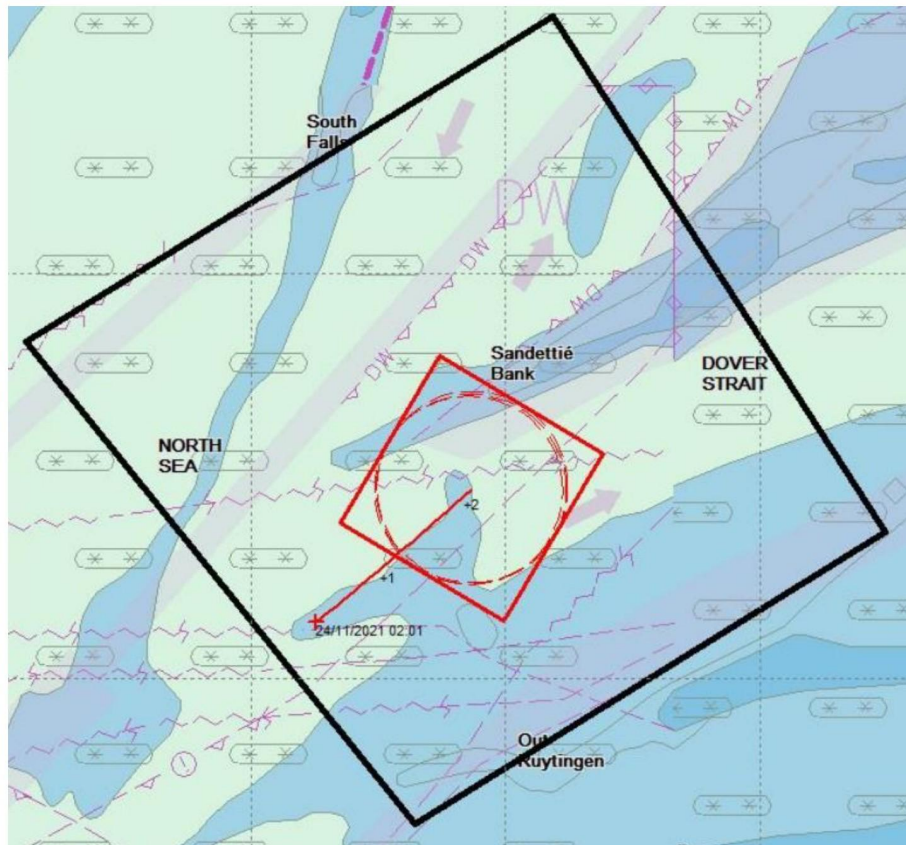
5.5.10 The datum point has been created using the estimated position from Backtrack model 2 above and with a datum time of 0403UTC. The datum point search was established using following:

- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
- Datum time – 0403UTC (arrival time of R163)
- Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
- Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence – applied  $40^\circ$

5.5.11 The diagram below illustrates the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. You can see that the area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area. The red box was the search area calculated as part of this review, using the estimated drift start position from the backtrack using SARIS with the above criteria. It is clear to see that the search area and the downwind datum drift (red line from the position marker to the PIW target) are clearly within the area searched by R163.



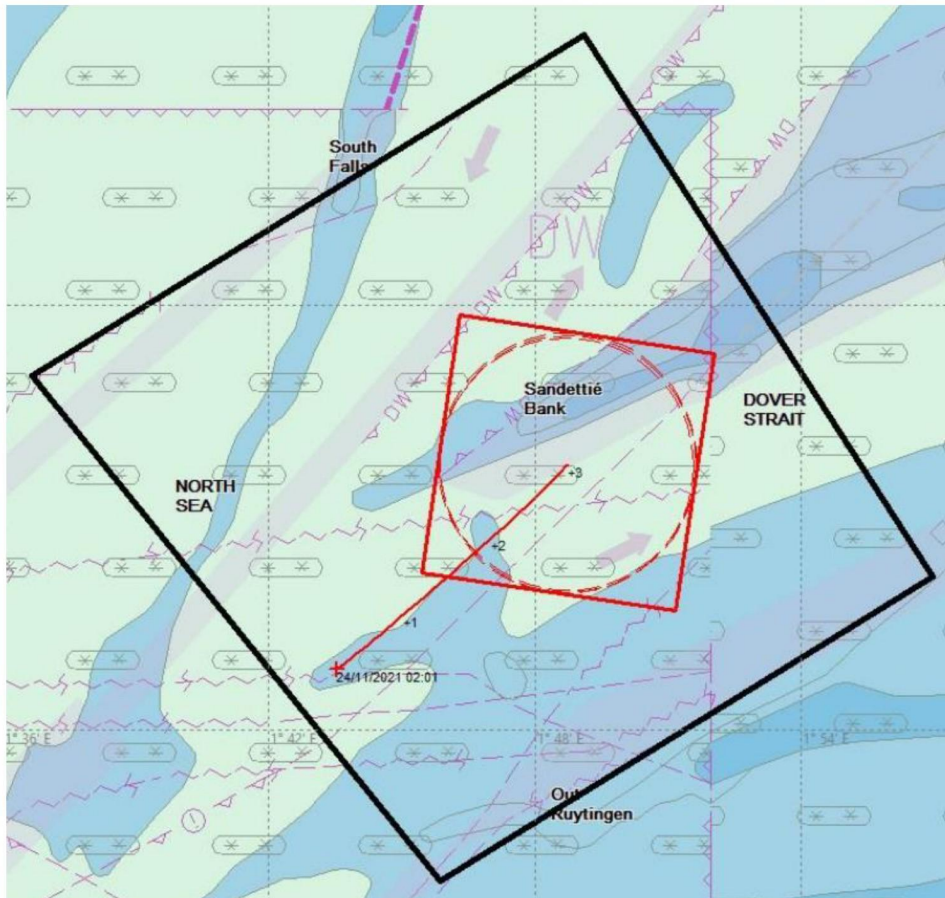




- 5.5.12 **Datum Point BTEP2b (Using SARIS computed meteorological and hydrodynamic data)**
- 5.5.13 The datum point was created using the estimated position from Backtrack model 1 above and with a datum time of 0500UTC. The datum point was established using the following:
- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
  - Datum time – 0500UTC (mid-search time based on endurance of R163)
  - Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
  - Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
  - Drift error – 30%.
  - Divergence – applied  $40^\circ$
- 5.5.14 The diagram below illustrates the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. You can see that the area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area.



- 5.5.15 The red box was the search area calculated as part of this review, using the estimated drift start position from the backtrack using SARIS with the above criteria. It is clear to see that the search area and the downwind datum drift (red line from the position marker to the PIW target) were clearly within the area searched by R163.



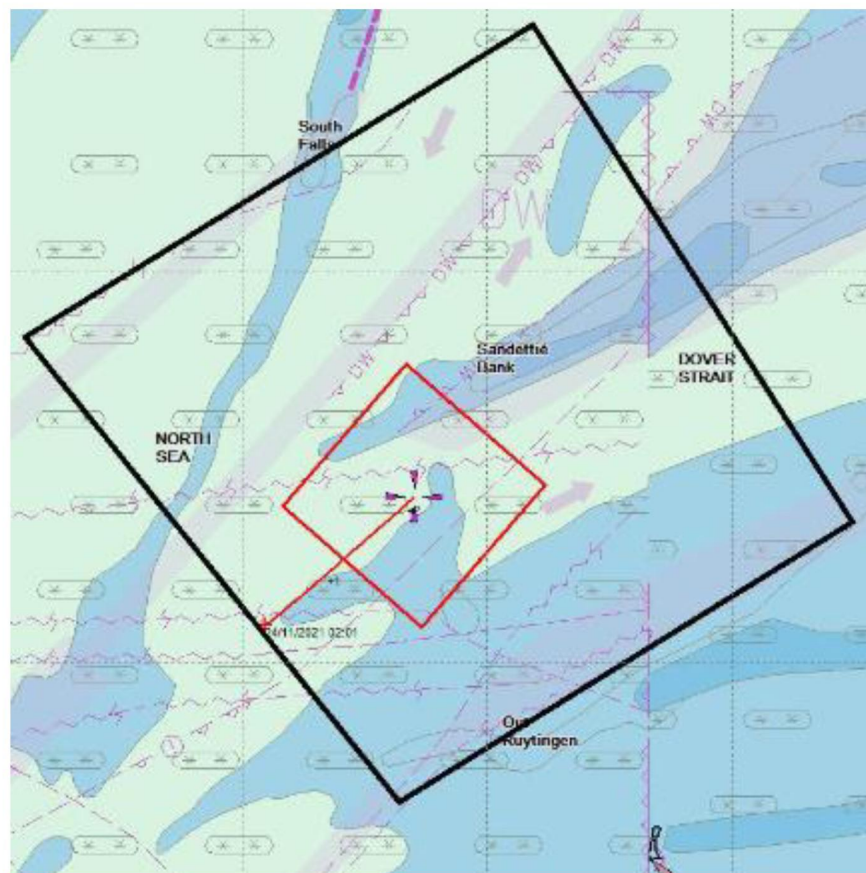
- 5.5.16 **Datum Point BTEP3a (Using SARIS computed meteorological and hydrodynamic data)**
- 5.5.17 The datum point was created using the estimated position from Backtrack model 2 above and with a datum time of 0403UTC. The datum point search was established using following:
- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
  - Datum time – 0403UTC (arrival time of R163)
  - Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)



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- Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
- Drift error – 30%.
- Divergence – applied 40°

5.5.18 The diagram below illustrates the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. You can see that the area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area. The red box was the search area calculated as part of this review, using the estimated drift start position from the backtrack using SARIS with the above criteria. It is clear to see that the search area and the downwind datum drift (red line from the position marker to the PIW target) were clearly within the area searched by R163.

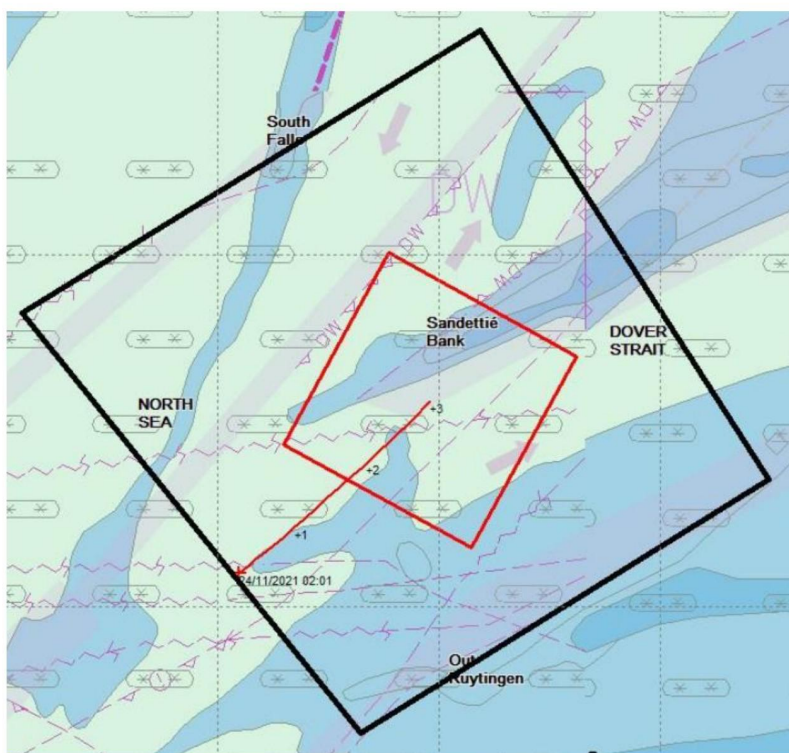


5.5.19 **Datum Point BTEP3b (Using SARIS computed meteorological and hydrodynamic data)**





- 5.5.20 The datum point was created using the estimated position from Backtrack model 1 above and with a datum time of 0500UTC. This datum point was established using the following:
- SARIS computed files for wind and tide.
  - Datum time – 0500UTC (mid-search time based on endurance of R163)
  - Target – person in the water unknown state -  $0.011 \times U + 0.07$  (U=wind speed)
  - Initial position error – 0.5nm (there is no guidance for WhatsApp positions as it not a recognised system for the provision of locations at sea)
  - Drift error – 30%.
  - Divergence – applied  $40^\circ$
- 5.5.21 The diagram below illustrates the computed model from SARIS. The black box was the search area searched by R163 from 0403UTC. You can see that the area spans both the UK and French search and rescue regions, and the helicopter searched the whole area.
- 5.5.22 The red box was the search area calculated as part of this review, using the estimated drift start position from the backtrack using SARIS with the above criteria. It is clear to see that the search area and the downwind datum drift (red line from the position marker to the PIW target) were clearly within the area searched by R163.



- 5.5.23 In summary, the search plans which have been calculated post-incident confirm the validity of the search area searched by the SAR helicopter (R163) at a height of approximately 800ft (from Bristow) from the subsequently calculated backtrack model, it is probable that the search pattern which was flown by the SAR helicopter would have resulted in flying over or near to where the drift of the small boat or persons in the water would be. At no time did the SAR helicopter detect them. The reasons for this are not clear. However, it is important to bear in mind that those on board the small boat were not provided with the correct equipment by the organised crime groups to be seen easily in the event that rescue was required. To the best of our knowledge, they were not equipped with lifejackets with reflective markings and lights; strobe lighting; or maritime equipment such as an EPIRB, PLB or a SART.



# Conclusion on Small Boat Incidents





## 6 Conclusions on the Small Boat Incidents 24 November 2021

- 6.1.1 The small boat incident review has resulted in the examination of recorded incident calls, incident logs, replay of Automatic Identification System, review of digital selective calling logs, assessment of email communication received, review of documentation received from external partners, interviewing staff who were on duty from 23 and 24 November. As is usual when responding to small boat incidents, it was clear from the outset that the developing operational picture on 24 November was complicated, mostly due to the volume of calls being received from various sources reporting small boat activity in the Channel. It is also important to note that the lack of French information regarding the small boat incidents on 24 November has resulted in the complete picture of events and how they unfolded not being known, and the review is incomplete for this reason. What is known is that the persons departed the coastline of France and according to the French tracker received at 0057UTC we know that Migrant 1 was reported to the French Coast Guard at 2102UTC. We also know that the small boats were in the French search and rescue region for at least nine nautical miles, and the first small boat incident coordination was handed to HM Coastguard from the French Coast Guard at 0128UTC, until that time small boat incidents were under the coordination of the French Coast Guard.
- 6.1.2 It is obvious that the receipt of the first notification via the Port of Dover to HM Coastguard resulted in the search and rescue response being reactive rather than proactive. A proactive response could have been instigated if the French Coast Guard had provided HM Coastguard with earlier notification of crossings whilst they had co-ordination. HM Coastguard took immediate action based on this information and this resulted in SAR response from the UK being deployed shortly before the first small boat entered the UK search and rescue region. This small boat had not been escorted by a French SAR unit as it transited through the French search and rescue region the previous 4 hours or so although the French Coast Guard would have had co-ordination during this period.
- 6.1.3 Whilst calls were received directly from small boats it was difficult for coastguard officers to obtain key information which assisted in their rescue. A number of people were calling the emergency services from the same small boat, providing different details (such as persons onboard) which makes it



difficult for HM Coastguard to confirm details when small boats are rescued. The inability of callers to provide their locations was further exacerbated by most callers only speaking broken English and significant background noise in calls, such as shouting and screaming, and calls often disconnecting due to a weak mobile phone signal. Calls were also received and relayed to HM Coastguard from the police, the Port of Dover and the French Coast Guard. This presented significant challenges to HM Coastguard operators being able to obtain credible positional and incident information. It is also important to ensure the sharing of incident information back to the French Coast Guard for small boat incidents they are coordinating. Small boat incident FOXTROT information sharing may have resulted in France sharing their conclusions that FOXTROT and CHARLIE were the same small boat incident earlier.

- 6.1.4 During the review of the small boat incidents which occurred on 24 November, no evidence has been found that HM Coastguard declined to respond to any emergency call or any request to accept coordination for a small boat incident from the French Coast Guard or any other UK emergency service for any small boat incident on 24 November.
- 6.1.5 The small boat which was provided for persons to cross the English Channel was not a seaworthy vessel designed for such a journey. It did not have any recognised maritime communication equipment – VHF Radio, EPIRB, not fitted with radar or AIS. The persons onboard were not provided with suitable clothing for a maritime environment, they had insufficient personal flotation devices (lifejackets) which were not fitted with lights and reflective tape, no safety equipment to be able to raise the alarm when assistance was required, such as a VHF radio, personal locating beacon (PLB), maritime flares or emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB). Had this basic and essential lifesaving equipment been provided to the persons onboard it could have assisted HM Coastguard in locating and rescuing the small boat and potentially saved lives.
- 6.1.6 WhatsApp was used in an attempt to exchange position information from those on the small boat once direct communication was established with HM Coastguard at 0148UTC. Whilst this application was not a recognised international maritime communications system and was not designed to be integrated into HM Coastguard's communication, command and control system, operational learning had identified it as the only means of trying to establish a position of small boats. A number of positions were received from phone numbers which post incident were confirmed as being on the small boat for incident CHARLIE. Since 24 November HM Coastguard has



introduced a new system which can be used by those on small boats which provides more accurate positional information (with known errors), video capability and a text/translation function.

- 6.1.7 The confirmed position of where the casualties were found in the French search and rescue region has allowed the identification of a number of estimated positions using conventional backtrack search planning methodologies. This included the use of hindcast environmental factors and a drift elapsed time period. The methodologies are internationally recognised. Calculations show that the downwind drift was within the Search Area searched by R163, for the duration of the search period.
- 6.1.8 HM Coastguard transmitted four mayday relay broadcasts over a period of approximately 45 minutes. The SMC(2) determined based on the lack of information received from the small boat associated to small boat incident CHARLIE that the mayday relay was appropriate in order to receive further information and/or response from vessels in the area, including the Flamant. Whilst a number of vessels in the area did not respond to the mayday relay, some merchant vessels transiting the traffic separation scheme did respond and were asked to keep a sharp lookout and report any sightings whilst continuing on their passage. This was an appropriate tasking for the types of vessels which responded, as to request them to deviate from their passage in the Traffic Separation Scheme could have resulted in a catastrophic incident in the Traffic Separation Scheme due to their size and limited manoeuvrability. The Flamant did not respond to any of the mayday relay broadcasts.
- 6.1.9 During the telephone call between HM Coastguard and MRCC Gris-Nez at 0242UTC both operators discussed the SAR response to small boat incident CHARLIE/Migrant 7, and the closest vessel to the small boat incident. Whilst not formally requesting the French Coast Guard to task the Flamant to respond the SMC(2) made it clear on more than one occasion that the Flamant was the nearest vessel to the distress position. The French Coast Guard response to this conversation was that the Flamant was with another small boat. The SMC(2) did try to explain the urgency of the situation, but this did not change the French position that the Flamant was already on a tasking. Throughout the small boat incident, HM Coastguard utilised two response assets. UK Border Force maritime assets are the most experienced surface assets for use for small boat migrant operations and as such HMC Valiant was tasked as the surface asset on this occasion. In addition to this surface asset Rescue Helicopter 163 was tasked as the aerial search asset. Having





assessed the response plan, the decision to utilise these assets was correct given the information available at the time, and the knowledge and experience of small boat operations. Shortly after HMC Valiant arrived on scene they identified a small boat that had similar characteristics to the small boat associated with small boat incident CHARLIE, enquiries then continued to try to establish if calls had been made to the UK from those on the small boat. It is widely reported for occupants of small boats to deny ringing the emergency services once they are rescued for fear of either getting into trouble or inadvertently providing incriminating evidence against the organised crime gangs. It is also common practice for surface assets to arrive on scene and find that small boats were not in the grave situation as described in the distress calls to HM Coastguard.

- 6.1.10 Whilst HMC Valiant was rescuing the small boat, RI63 identified two further targets within the search area both of which, also had similar characteristics to small boat CHARLIE and were also rescued by HMC Valiant. It is understandable why HMC Valiant was tasked as they provided sufficient rescue response, and the vessel had a greater survivor capacity than a RNLI all weather lifeboat. Therefore, was capable of rescuing more than one small boat during the search period.
- 6.1.11 HM Coastguard made attempts to validate, post rescue, the identity of the small boat related to small boat incident CHARLIE with HMC Valiant crew, and called the mobile phone, which went to answerphone. HMC Valiant were unable to confirm the name of the caller, or the telephone numbers provided, however this was not unusual because migrants are told by OCGs to give false names and to throw their mobile phones overboard when SAR units approach.
- 6.1.12 However, other factors in the decision-making process led the SMC(2) to the conclusion that the small boat linked to small boat incident CHARLIE had been rescued, it matched the description given, was in the expected area and had similar numbers of migrants onboard. Often this is the only information available to correlate calls to small boats rescued. Based on the information available at that time, including no further calls post the rescue of what was believed to be small boat CHARLIE or calls from family members or charity groups, the suspension of the small boat incident was reasonable.
- 6.1.13 Prior to November 2021 HM Coastguard officers had been responding to small boat incident calls from those on small boats for a number of years. This has resulted in officers having managed a high number of calls, from



which they had built up experience and knowledge when responding to small boats, in the same way to other SAR incidents. The difficulty and complexity of the task was not underestimated and despite the similar nature of the calls received from those on small boats, a considered SAR response was made for each small boat incident. This is evident with small boat incident CHARLIE having a different response to other small boat SAR incidents, with the allocation of a rescue helicopter to search and the broadcast of mayday relays. The national network resource was utilised throughout the night and subsequent day shift and using experience from previous incidents SAR response and incident suspensions/terminations were made based on previous knowledge of behaviours by those in need of rescue on small boats.

6.1.14 Throughout the review it is clear that influencing factors on the night included the knowledge of exaggeration which people were encouraged to do by OCGs. This resulted in coastguard officers being aware that people being rescued exaggerated their level of distress and were not always in the immediate danger to which they had claimed to be. The ability to identify a small boat once found is extremely difficult. Often the vessel is not in the grave and imminent danger described during the initial call. The language barrier often hinders the ability to confirm basic information i.e., names etc. Occupants of small boat often dispose of their phones when they see rescue assets approaching and are often reluctant to co-operate with rescuers in case, they inadvertently provide incriminating evidence that could be used against the organised crime gangs which they fear. This experience, gained over a number of years rescuing many small boats would have been factors that influenced the thought process and decision making on the 24 November. When confirming the identity of the small boat associated with small boat incident CHARLIE the only information available for consideration by the SMC(2) was: the vessel was found in the search area close to the reported distress position; it had a similar number of persons on board and following the rescue of this boat no further calls were received from occupants of small boat incident CHARLIE. Based on the available information and the fact that three small boats were found and rescued in the search area it is reasonable for the SMC(2) to conclude that the small boat associated with incident CHARLIE had been found.

6.1.15 The small boat incident on 24 November 2021 took place in the hours of darkness, and it was difficult for SAR assets to detect small boats or persons in the water as they are not easily detectable. Even when daylight broke (sunrise 0726UTC) it was still five and half hours before casualties were found by a passing Fishing Vessel. Despite the English Channel being one of



the busiest shipping channels in the world no other vessels reported any sightings of small boat CHARLIE or persons in the water during this time.

- 6.1.16 Since the small boat incident on 24 November 2021, HM Coastguard has made a number of updates to processes and systems for dealing with incidents involving small boats in the English Channel. This has included reviewing and updating standard operating procedures and operational detail in CIP; introduction of a new search planning system THEMIS; introduction of ICU an application to send messages to mobile phones on small boats; improved leadership and supervision through the provision of a Grade 6 senior leader with strategic oversight for small boat operations and a tactical level staff officer as a subject matter expert within the network for small boat operations; implementation of Operation CAESAR; and an increase of dedicated surface assets for small operations.
- 6.1.17 During the review it was observed that officers had not been able to obtain all the information required during the information gathering stage, such as telephone numbers and names were not obtained, prior to calls being disconnected. A review of the information gathering process was completed in December 2021 and updates were made to the standard operating procedure which included a process to be followed when gathering information from those on small boats, when possible. This is also included in the recommendations for this review.
- 6.1.18 There is no evidence or findings, of normalcy bias, negligence or gross misconduct. there are some areas where enhancements to procedures have been identified and made when responding to small boat incidents.





# Observations & Recommendations



## 7 Observations & Recommendations

- 7.1.1 An objective for the review of the small boat incident was to identify opportunities to enhance HM Coastguard's response to small boat incidents and identify any recommendations for consideration. This section is intended to provide a summary of the recommendations/enhancements made as a result of the reviews' findings and conclusions. In addition to these, HM Coastguard has also considered the recommendations made by the US Coast Guard as part of their SAR Case study for the small boat incident, and HM Coastguard responses can be found in Annex E.
- 7.1.2 The observations/recommendations listed below have been to strengthen HM Coastguard operational procedures in their response to small boat incidents. Nothing suggested would have materially changed the impact to the SAR response on the morning of the 24 November 2021. These were the recommendations which were provided to HM Coastguard Operations on 18 March 2022.

### 7.2 Information Gathering

- 7.2.1 I recommended that HM Coastguard Operations remind all staff that all notifications of a small boat incident - 999 calls, routine calls, updates from on scene units, transfer from other emergency services and trackers - are to be created as new incidents unless it is known by alphanumeric reference being provided in the call. The recommendation was made because of the report's finding that a number of small boat incidents were not assigned an alphanumeric reference.
- 7.2.2 I recommended that all staff provide the alphanumeric reference number for the small boat incident to the caller at the end of every call, and to ask them to use it if they call the emergency services again. This recommendation was made to assist operators in identifying and confirming repeat callers.

### 7.3 ViSION and Coastguard Communications

- I recommended that all staff ensure that information recorded in the small boat tracker document must also be recorded in the ViSION incident. This recommendation was made to ensure officers use ViSION which is HM Coastguard's primary information management system.
- 7.3.1 I recommended that all staff consider the use of the "inform" function in ViSION, to be used in small boat incidents, so that resources are allocated to



relevant small boat incident. This recommendation was made as resources were assigned to an admin incident.

- 7.3.2 I recommended that all staff were reminded to use the appropriate DSC alert when making broadcast action (e.g. distress alert for a mayday broadcast). This recommendation was made as on 24 November the urgency alert was used instead of the distress alert.
- 7.3.3 I recommended that “hot keys” were created on the Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) for the Port of Dover, Cross Gris-Nez, Ostend. This recommendation was made to ensure that when calls are made to HM Coastguard from these organisations, the coastguard officer can immediately see who is contacting them and prioritise taking the call, as is appropriate.

## 7.4 Coastguard Procedures

- 7.4.1 I recommended that all staff were reminded to notify the MCA Regulatory and Compliance Team when vessels nearby to a distress position do not respond to a mayday relay broadcast. This recommendation was made as a number of vessels did not respond to broadcast action on 24 November.
- 7.4.2 I recommended that the HM Coastguard Information Management Team created a specific small boat operations section on the Coastguard Information Portal. This recommendation was made to ensure that access to all small boat information is easily accessible to the national network.
- 7.4.3 I recommended that a standard operating procedure (SOP) was created on the Coastguard Information Portal for the use of WhatsApp when responding to small boat incidents. This recommendation was made to ensure that a SOP was available to the national network in how to use WhatsApp in response to small boat incidents.
- 7.4.4 I recommended that the small boat information gathering SOP was updated to provide officers with a list of information they should try to obtain when on the telephone with people who are on small boats. This recommendation was made as in a small number of calls it was not possible to obtain names and telephone numbers prior to the call disconnecting.
- 7.4.5 I recommended that all officers are informed that when closing and merging incidents, SMC approval was required and the rationale for the decision was





recorded in the ViSION incident. This recommendation was made so that there is a record of why an incident was closed/merged and that the SMC was content for the action to be carried out.

## 7.5 SMC and tactical commander

- 7.5.1 I recommended that SMCs made an entry in every small boat incident to identify them as the officer responsible for the coordination of the small boat incident, and to ensure that when the handover of an incident occurred it was recorded also. This recommendation was made to ensure that the SMC for each small boat incident was recorded, and evidence of handovers was made in the ViSION narrative.
- 7.5.2 I recommended that tactical commanders were reminded to ensure that RAG statements were made within 30 minutes for each distress incident. This recommendation was made as during the night watch, the statements were missing from the ViSION incidents, and provided tactical oversight.

## 7.6 Stakeholder Liaison

I recommended that HM Coastguard continued with their engagement with the French Coast Guard relating to small boat incidents and to liaise the French Coast Guard prior to known amber/red days. This recommendation was made to encourage a better understanding of both the UK and French resources and capabilities.

- 7.6.1 I recommended that HM Coastguard liaised with other emergency services who could receive small boat 999 calls to develop a guide for information gathering. This recommendation was made as a number of calls were received on 24 November by various Police forces, the Port of Dover and also South-East Ambulance, and they were not aware of the information HM Coastguard required to be able to send a response.
- 7.6.2 I recommended that HM Coastguard liaised with 2Excel to explore any landing options in France. This recommendation was made as the diversion airports available in the UK on 24 November 2021, were limited to Manchester.

## 7.7 Search Planning

- 7.7.1 I recommended that HM Coastguard considered the establishment of a search planning cell within the network to respond to small boat incidents.



This recommendation was made to ensure that the network function was maximised when required to respond to small boat incidents.

## 7.8 Post Incident Actions

- 7.8.1 I recommended that HM Coastguard completed OLR's for 10% of all incidents. This recommendation was made to ensure that officers review incidents to identify what went well and any improvements to incidents completed.
- 7.8.2 I recommended that HM Coastguard managers monitored the acknowledgement rate for all small boat information on the Coastguard Information Portal. This recommendation was made to ensure that officers were aware and understood changes made to standard operating procedures or operational detail for small boat incidents.

## 7.9 Training and Exercises

- 7.9.1 I recommended that HM Coastguard considered table-top exercises to ensure that officers test procedures in place for small boat incident response. With outputs and learning shared within the national network. This recommendation was made to enable officers to liaise with other stakeholder, to test procedures in an exercise environment and ensure all officers in the national network are kept informed.
- 7.9.2 It is recommended that any updates made to small boat incident response was captured into Coastguard technical training. This recommendation was made to ensure that officers within the national network were trained in small boat response.

## 7.10 US Coast Guard Recommendations

- 7.10.1 As part of its peer review, the US Coast Guard provided HM Coastguard with a number of recommendations. These recommendations have been responded to in a separate document, which can be found at Annex E.



# Annexes





## 8 Annexes

### Annex A

#### DETAILED INCIDENT REVIEW OF SMALL BOAT INCIDENTS FROM 24 NOVEMBER 2021, 0001UTC TO 1300UTC TERMS OF REFERENCE

Policy Reference: Mission Conduct, Tier 3, Detailed Incident Review

Directorate: HM Coastguard

Review Sponsor: Claire Hughes

Review Report Client (s): Peter Mizen

Incident Detail: On 24 November 2021 the HM Coastguard network recorded 99 incidents emanating from small boat migrant activity in the English Channel. These calls were received and coordinated by the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) Dover and the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC).

At 1258UTC on that day, a call was received from MRCC Gris-Nez requesting air support to an incident they were coordinating in the English Channel where a French Fishing Vessel discovered multiple persons in the water. A total of 29 persons were recovered, with 2 survivors.

Decision Officer: To be arranged if required – (Decision Officer only required where negligence or gross misconduct is identified.)

Events Review Panel: to be convened if required by Assistant Director HM Coastguard Policy, Standards and International, following the review report and findings.

#### Management Objective

The event or incident is to be examined, according to the severity of the situation, within the parameters of the Standards Tier reviews:

Tier 3 – Review



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This will apply in all cases where the consequences of the incident management, handling or outcome could have serious implications and are likely to affect the reputational integrity of the MCA.

In addition, it will be the default tier for all Qualifying incidents where:

A fatality has occurred during an incident coordinated by HM Coastguard and,

Another authority has declared its intention to conduct an investigation e.g. Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), Police, Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB)

The Tier Three review is being conducted as HM Coastguard has been informed that the French Authorities are investigating the incident, and following allegations in the press and subsequent notification of litigation against HM Coastguard.

Background and level of review

Objectives:

To consider if any updates to standard operating procedures are required as a result of any learning from the incidents which occurred on the day.

To evaluate the coordination of the incidents that day and assess the actions taken. This will include an attempt to establish if any calls were received by the UK from the vessel which subsequently sank and to try to determine if the vessel was in UK waters at any time.

To assess the tasking of appropriate resources on that day, with careful consideration given to the volume of calls received and the conflicting information from those onboard requiring rescue.

To assess the actions of the resources which were tasked to respond. This should include response times, technical issues reported, search patterns employed and quality of search discussions.

To assess the collaborative working with French Coastguard and UK Border Force – identifying any improvements or challenges which are to be implemented/discussed.



To consider the closure of every incident and assess any updates which may be considered to assist operators in confirming details of those persons who make emergency calls and require rescue.

Identify any improvements which can be made to assist operators when dealing with small boat incidents.

This will include:

Review of the Coastguard incident management system narrative records (currently ViSION).

Inspection and review of any paper records kept e.g., chart plots, print outs, handwritten notes, or documents.

Voice recording system records.

Interviews with those involved (face to face, video conference or by telephone).

Questions and answers provided by exchange of email or other written correspondence.

Inspection of equipment and systems (and any associated electronic records kept by those systems e.g., Digital Selective Calling (DSC) traffic log, system user-history activity logs).

Visits to sites (where necessary).

Photographs and video evidence.

Informal Mission Review (IMR) and Operational Learning Review (OLR)

Review of documentation (paper and electronic) e.g. procedures, processes, instructions, training materials, etc.

Investigation objectives

To determine in detail:

(b) the sequence of events, including associated timeline of all incidents

(ii) the immediate, basic causes and, where possible, root causes of any issues





(iii) Human Factors impacts

(iv) Performance Influencing Factors (including Job, Person and Organisational Factors)

(v) any misunderstanding or misinterpretation or non-compliance with operational instructions, guidance, and training.

b. To enable the Reviewer to make decisions on human behaviours and make recommendations for support, improvements to procedures and processes.

#### References and standards

- Coastguard Information Portal instructions and guidance
- HM Coastguard policies and operational detail
- Other relevant instructions, procedures, and guidance
- Other organisations instructions and guidance, if relevant

#### Review scope.

The above objectives are the principal aspects which will be included but additional material and activity may need to be examined once the review is underway. The review will focus on how the situation occurred and developed, how it was managed and whether there were any weaknesses in decision making, process, procedure, or systems. The review will also try to determine if any calls were received by the vessel which subsequently sank that day, or if the vessel was confirmed to be in UK waters at any time.

The scope of this review may be widened or narrowed as it progresses, with the approval of the review Sponsor, dependent on what facts are established.

#### Approach

The review will follow the guidelines of the Coastguard Operational Detailed Incident Review and Checklist, but will deviate in some areas, due to the nature of the incidents not being isolated to a specific event, but all incidents recorded during a timeframe. The review will be carried out in an objective and impartial manner.



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The process of the review is one of: site visits, discussions and interviews, observation and examination of documentation and electronic records and review of audio recordings. This will include working with those involved and obtaining assistance from subject matter experts where necessary.

Review feedback.

A final report will be produced as soon as possible. Any interim findings will be reported to the Director of Her Majesty's Coastguard and the Chief Coastguard throughout the process.

If there are any findings of negligence or gross misconduct, the findings will then be put to a Decision Officer. MCA Human Resources will need to be advised and involved.

Any findings will also be used by the organisation to make any necessary changes to procedures, processes, techniques or systems.

The report remains the property of HM Coastguard and should only be released outside of the circulation agreed with the commissioning officer with the express permission of the Director of HM Coastguard.

Review team and key contacts:

The review team comprises:

- Reviewers: Julie-Anne Wood, Assistant Director HM Coastguard Policy, Standards and International

- Supporting Investigator and Technical Matter Expert(s)   
HM Coastguard Standards Officer  Clandestine Operations  
Liaison,  Staff Officer Technical Services,  HM  
Coastguard Training Manager,  HM Coastguard Trainer,  
 Business Support Officer, Vessel Traffic Management.



## Annex B

### HM COASTGUARD

#### DETAILED INCIDENT REVIEW PROCESS GUIDANCE & PROCESS CHECKLIST

Note: this process is for the Detailed Review of operational incidents or events where there has been an actual or perceived failure or weakness in delivering a service or function.

**NOTE:** This process is not for the review of accidents. Accident investigations/review should follow the process laid down in MCA instructions or guidance related to accident investigation.

The steps in the process of reviewing an operational incident are:

Reviewer(s) are/ is appointed.

The Reviewer must then:

Activity / Action	Done Y/N
1. Agree Terms of Reference for the review (a template for this is available from HM Coastguard Standards Branch) with the commissioning officer.	
2. Start a Case File (normally located in the Standards Branch SharePoint drive, Operational Standards Incident Review folder, created as a GIN number and incident description e.g., GIN12345 FV Blue Dolphin).	
3. Ensure that relevant local and other responsible managers are informed of the review and are kept updated on progress. Ensure that they brief their staff or volunteers on what the review will be doing and why and how. Allay as far as possible people's concerns.	
4. Review DIR lessons document <a href="#">Lessons from Detailed Incident Reviews Standards Team Debriefings</a> and apply any appropriate lessons to your review activities.	
5. Obtain relevant incident records (BOSS/ ViSION/ Search plans (maritime and/or LAMPS), AIS replays, CG19 images, notebook records, etc. And video recordings, radar replay) and the story of the events and activities.	





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6. Obtain photographs and diagrams if necessary (by people on site, if necessary and possible)	
7. Ensure that voice recordings are tagged and kept.	
8. Create a timeline of events using the 'Timeline & ECFA table' in Standards files.	
9. <b>Carry out an Events and Conditional Factors Analysis (ECFA)</b> of the incident events (from ViSION narrative and/or other information that is known about the incident or events) to generate questions for your interviews and review activities. At least two people should do this, preferably three.	
10. Decide which people need to be interviewed and contact them. Ensure that a rapport is created and that they are set as much at ease as possible.	
11. Ensure that people understand that the review is conducted under Just Culture / MCA Way principles.	
12. Create a review programme and plan –  i) where will be visited, ii) what interviews you will undertake, iii) when and in what order.	
13. Create an initial questions list. <b>Use the SOP(s) for the incident that you are reviewing as a basis for your questions about operational response.</b> Use any other operational instructions or directions to create your questions list.	
14. Conduct the review. Replay audio recordings and AIS and radar replay as required	
15. Carry out Substitution Test(s) <sup>9</sup>	
16. Undertake Routine Test(s) research <sup>10</sup>	
17. Revisit and update the ECFA table to add additional questions or information to inform your review.	
18. Write report first draft: set aside a good amount of time for this e.g. At least 2 to 3 days.	

<sup>9</sup> Testing of the process or procedure or situation on other, similarly qualified and experienced people, to determine if they would have made the same mistakes or errors.

<sup>10</sup> Ascertaining if the same or similar issues have arisen before. This can inform your review and what may be causing systemic problems.



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19. Submit report to Head of Standards for initial review. HoS will conduct a quality control check and may add margin comments and require additional analysis to be done and evidence to be added so that the report is as authoritative and accurate as it can be.	
20. Standards Team carry out a peer review of the report. Their comments to be added where required.	
21. HoS Sends report to Deputy Head of Policy, Standards & International branch for their review.	
22. HoS requests the report author to arrange an Events Review Panel (ERP) be formed to review the report and its findings.	
23. Report is then sent to the commissioning officer for their review and awareness.	
24. HoS sends report to relevant managers – including the manager of the location(s) which are subject of the DIR.	
25. HoS arranges meeting with relevant operational managers, including manager(s) of locations which are subject of the DIR, to consider the report and ascertain what actions are going to be taken.	
26. Actions from meeting are placed into the Standards Findings Tracker for monitoring of improvement progress.	

2. The following activities are part of the Detailed incident Review Process. Those items highlighted in **bold** text are the most important to be completed or investigated.

### **Key Activities and Processes for the Reviewer:**

#### Terms of Reference

- The Review's Terms of Reference (see Incident Review TORs), agreed with the review commissioning officer, must be adhered to.
- Background information (the summary of what happened), in the report, should be brief to prevent the reviewer setting an early view of what happened and why.

#### Reference Documents



- Normally there will be a standard list of reference documentation relevant to the events and situation being investigated. The reviewer(s) may have to find these for themselves. For HM Coastguard these should include, but are not limited to:
  - CIP (Instructions, procedures, operational details, guidance)
  - CRS Website (instructions, procedures, training information and guidance)
  - JRCC-AR operational instructions and guidance
  - MCC operational instructions and guidance
  - Other organisations (if they are involved and impacted on HM Coastguards response) procedures, instructions and guidance.
  - Relevant systems and equipment handbooks and manuals, if available.
  - IAMSAR (International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue) manuals
  - MCA documentation related to the situation or activities being investigated

#### **Performance Influencing Factors**

- The HSE (Health & Safety Executive) Human Factors and Performance Influencing Factors (PIF) are key elements of any review. Copy of this process is attached to this document at annex.

#### **Events and Conditional Factors Analysis (ECFA)**

- The Events and Conditional Factors Analysis (ECFA) process is an important part of the review process to examine events and the underlying and external factors that may have affected the event and caused the failure. Copy of this process is attached to this document. ECFA must be used after the construction of an events and decisions timeline. The ECFA process will enable the reviewer to decide on the framework of questions that they will ask. The ECFA table may be updated throughout the investigatory work as new evidence is found and new questions arise.
- Following the use of the ECFA process, create a list of questions you want to ask of the people you interview. Other questions will emerge during the review and questioning process. Add these to your framework of questions.

#### **Who, What, Where, When, Why and How**

- Always ask Who did What, When, Where, Why and How. If you are questioning an individual about what they did, then the follow up questions are What, When, Where and Why.

#### **'5 Whys' Process**

Asking 'why' something happened and/or was done/not done, with further use of 'why' (why did that happen, why did you do that or not do that, why was that) to probe the initial answers, often leads to a deeper understanding of a situation or event. You may have to ask why around three times or more before you get to the root of an issue or problem or a more complete answer to a question.

When conducting interviews and assessing information and evidence, consider these questions:

- What caused [the problem/issue]?
- What led to [the problem]?





- What are/were the conditions under which [the problem/issue] occurred?
- What contributed to [the problem/issue]?

### Mindset

- Always ask questions about the *mindset* of the people involved during the event or incident:
  - What were they thinking when they did or did not do something?
  - What were they intending to achieve with the actions they took or did not take?
  - What were their assumptions and expectations and why?
  - Were they influenced by other factors, pressures or previous experiences or concerns.
  - What did they know or think they knew at the time they made a decision or took action?
  - How had they come to that belief or knowledge?
  - How reasonable was it for them to construct and interpret the situation in the way they did?
  - What were the key influences on those interpretations of the situation?
  - What options did they have?
  - What uncertainties were they dealing with?
  - What were the wider priorities and goals of the system they were part of?
  - How hard were they working to achieve those priorities and goals?
  - How far had the norms and standards of the system drifted from the desired state and for what reason(s)?

## ROOT CAUSES

Look for Root Causes (there are usually more than one)

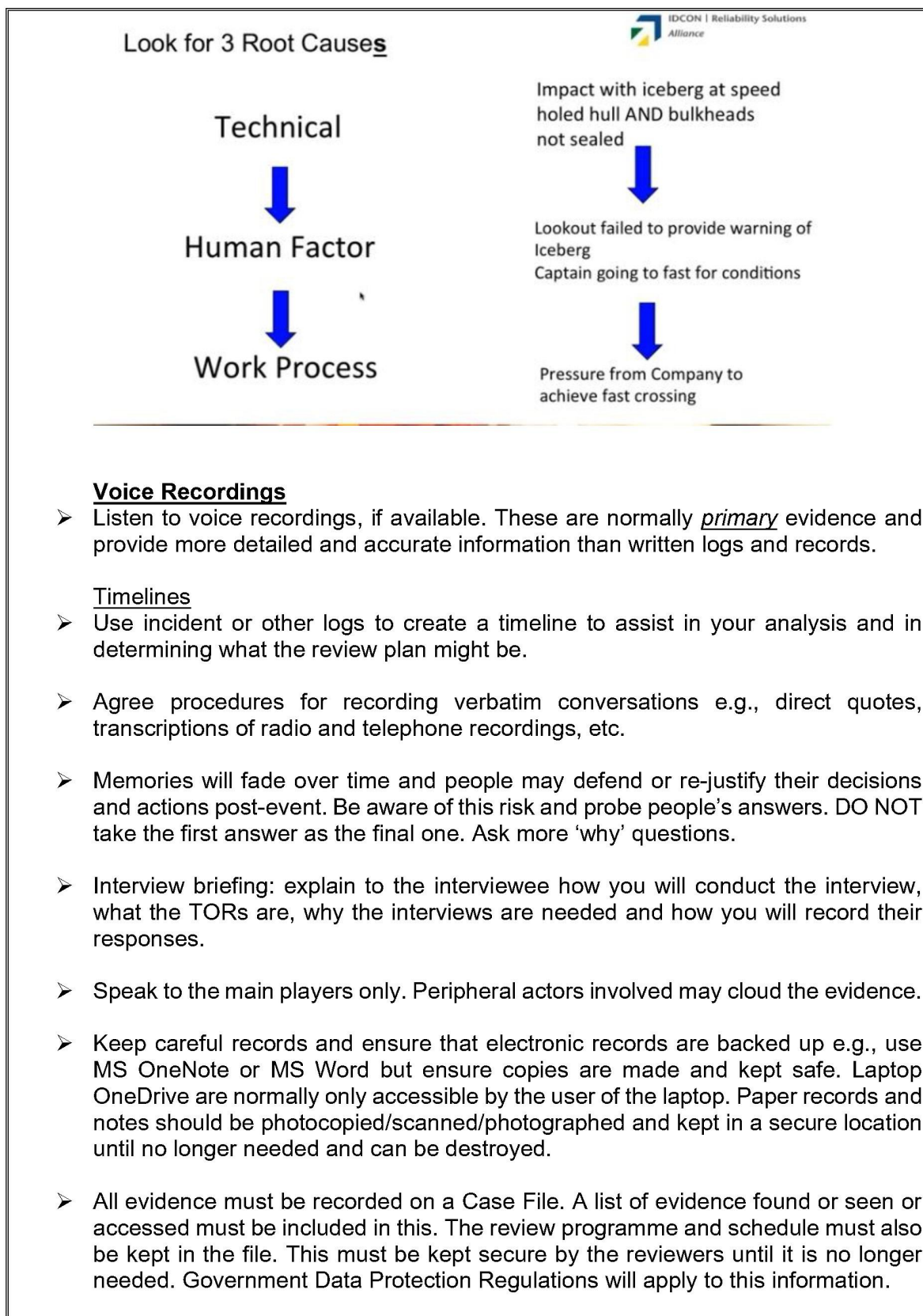
Also, look for these three connections to root causes.

Technical – what caused or led to the failure e.g., team overwhelmed with 999 calls so could not rapidly respond to the incident.

Human Factor(s) – what did the humans do or not do given the circumstances they were faced with

Work Process – what organisational factors did or may have contributed to the root cause(s). What was the environment the humans were working within?





- Check evidence: do not make assumptions. Check, ask, confirm. If evidence suggest something, make a note to check and validate it, if possible.
- Ensure that a factual explanation of events is made. Separate different elements e.g., different viewpoints should be written and explained as separate stories about the same event(s).
- Analyse and explain each viewpoint individually.
- HSE document [HSG48](#) is a useful reference document for review of accidents and incidents.
- Latent and Active failures must be identified and explained.
- **Routine and Substitution Tests must be conducted by the reviewer unless there are good reasons not too.**

### 3. Administrative points regarding interviewing people:

1. Develop an interview programme as quickly as possible balancing the personal situations (day, night, off watch, when next availability is, etc.) of those you need to interview.
2. Face to face interview is best but if interviews must be done remotely, ensure selection of a good communication medium: mobile phone to mobile phone is sometimes less than effective, landline is better, and Skype may be the best 'virtual' interview system because it can mimic a face-to-face meeting. Skype interviews should be done with camera on so that facial expressions and reactions can be assessed, and so that the interviewee can see the interviewer and their expressions.
3. Ensure the availability of a quiet and private space for conversations. A person's work area is to be avoided.
4. Be mindful of the interviewee's situation: ideally do not interview people when they are tired e.g., at the end of the day or after they have finished a night duty. Be aware of people being fatigued, not attentive, not open, or that they may be troubled by what happened (consider TRiM assistance).
5. Do not interview a person while they are working in an ops room or office. You must take them to a quiet space and allow them to focus their attention on the interview and their recollection of events.
6. The incident management system (BOSS v4) requires an allocated username and password so that reviewers can look at incident records and logs.





7. The Voice Recording System in operations centres and the ARCC (currently NICE) requires training to use.
8. Reviewers require Accident or incident Review Training. This may be provided by an external body or in-house by those already trained.
9. Interview Statements must be written down and/or recorded.
10. Interview Notes need to be kept carefully, backed up (if on electronic media) and held safe until no longer required.
11. Reviewers should work in a quiet space when writing up notes and the report – distraction is unhelpful.
12. Once a report has been issued in draft, an Events Review Panel must be convened to review the report. Early planning should be undertaken for this due to availability of people for the panel.
13. Give regular feedback and re-assurance, where possible, to those involved.

### **Recommendations**

4. Any recommendations made in the report by the reviewers must follow the following principles:

### **Recommended Actions Must be SMART.**

- 4.1 All recommended actions must be described using the SMART mnemonic:

- Specific: Ensure the recommended intervention is a clear and specific action that includes a verb. i.e. somebody must do something.
- Measurable: Is it clear when this action will be complete; is it quantifiable?
- Assignable: The action needs an owner. This should be the person who is accountable for ensuring the intervention is implemented.
- Realistic: Ensure the intervention is achievable, within the scope of the action, and that the actionee(s) have adequate time to complete it.
- Time Bounded: Ensure that there is a time frame within which the intervention should be completed and then check that it has been.



**Interventions also need to be:**

- **Effective:** They need to address the actual problem to prevent re-occurrence or minimise its likelihood.
- **Efficient:** If they eliminate the problem but the 'cost' to the business is that it cannot realistically operate then the recommendation needs to be reviewed.

**Sustainable:** The recommendation should not be a quick fix that will be forgotten in 6 months' time, or when staff leave, and new staff arrive







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## Naufrage dans la Manche : face aux enquêteurs, la défense en bloc des militaires du Cross

Amnésie, dénégation, indignation... lors de leurs auditions en garde à vue, les sept militaires mis depuis en examen pour non-assistance à personne en danger dans le naufrage d'une embarcation de migrants, le 4 novembre 2021, ont estimé n'avoir commis « aucune faute ».

Par Julia Pascual et Abdelhak El Idrissi



Publié aujourd'hui à 09h30, modifié à 10h00 • Lecture 4 min.

Article réservé aux abonnés

« Pas d'erreur », « aucune faute », « pas de sentiment de culpabilité », « tout le monde a fait de son mieux »... Dans l'enquête visant à établir les circonstances du naufrage dans la Manche d'une embarcation de migrants, le 24 novembre 2021, les sauveteurs soupçonnés de non-assistance à personne en danger ont contesté en bloc leur responsabilité. A l'issue des auditions de dix-sept gardés à vue, cinq militaires du centre régional opérationnel de surveillance et de sauvetage maritimes (Cross) Gris-Nez (Pas-de-Calais) et deux membres d'équipage du patrouilleur français *Le Flamant* ont pourtant été mis en examen les 25 mai et 1<sup>er</sup> juin.

**Lire aussi :**  [Naufrage de migrants dans la Manche : l'« enquête interne » promise par le gouvernement n'a jamais existé](#)



Les gendarmes enquêteurs ont confronté les mis en cause à tous les manquements relevés la nuit au cours de laquelle au moins vingt-sept personnes sont mortes noyées. Elles avaient appelé à l'aide les secours français pendant plusieurs heures, tandis que leur embarcation pneumatique prenait l'eau. Malgré cela, le Cross n'a envoyé aucun navire à leur secours et n'a pas informé les autorités britanniques de la situation de détresse du canot alors qu'il atteignait leurs eaux territoriales ; plus tard, le patrouilleur français *Le Flamant* n'a pas répondu aux messages d'alerte répétés du centre britannique de secours de Douvres, alors qu'il se trouvait à seulement vingt minutes du bateau qui coulait. Une accumulation de faits qui n'a pas ébranlé les mis en cause du Cross et du *Flamant*, d'après les auditions des mis en examen dont *Le Monde* a pris connaissance.



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« J'ai obéi aux ordres, (...) j'ai donné le meilleur, (...) je ne pense pas avoir une part de responsabilité dans ce qui s'est passé », estime ainsi Fanny R., l'opératrice qui répondait aux appels de détresse entre minuit et 4 heures la nuit du drame, le moment le plus critique. Si elle admet des « paroles déplacées » – « T'as les pieds dans l'eau, bah... je t'ai pas demandé de partir », avait-elle notamment lâché en aparté, après que les migrants l'implorèrent – la militaire de 21 ans les impute au « stress » et à la « saturation » des secours. « Nous avons fait au moins une note par an pour attirer l'attention sur le manque de moyens », plaide aussi Frédéric J., l'officier de permanence cette nuit-là. Matthieu L., un des militaires du Cross présent de 4 heures à 8 heures le 24 novembre, reconnaît que « peut-être l'identification de la détresse réelle aurait pu être plus rapide ».

**Lire aussi :**  [Dans la Manche, les secours face à la prise de risque accrue des migrants : « Nos bateaux ne sont pas adaptés aux sauvetages de masse »](#)



Plus qu'un problème d'appréciation, les enquêteurs soupçonnent les militaires d'avoir eu pour « stratégie » de « jouer la montre » en laissant dériver l'embarcation vers les eaux anglaises, afin que leurs homologues engagent leurs propres moyens de sauvetage. « Ce n'est pas la politique du Cross », balaye Matthieu L. Sa collègue Fanny R. admet toutefois que « les embarcations en position limitrophe étaient moins privilégiées que celles proches des côtes françaises » et que les canots sont notés comme « secourus » dans les registres quand « ils ont passé les eaux anglaises et qu'on ne sait pas où ils sont ».

## Une possible concertation

Bousculés par les questions des gendarmes, plusieurs militaires fondent en larmes. Priscilla D., une autre opératrice, s'offusque : « J'ai l'impression que l'on me considère comme une criminelle, (...) mon boulot, c'est de sauver des gens, pas de les tuer. » D'autres militaires disent ne plus se souvenir du détail de la nuit des faits, à l'image d'Audrey M., commandant du navire *Le Flamant*, qui n'a plus en mémoire les nombreux messages d'alerte radio, dits *mayday*, envoyés par les Britanniques. Alors que d'autres marins ont affirmé qu'il était impossible de ne pas les entendre.

**Lire notre enquête :**  [Mort de 27 migrants dans la Manche : les enquêteurs évoquent la « non-assistance à personne en danger »](#)



Une posture qui laisse les gendarmes sceptiques. Ils en viennent à s'interroger sur une possible concertation des mis en cause. Au gré des auditions, il apparaît que les militaires du Cross concernés



par l'affaire échantent sur deux groupes WhatsApp, intitulés « Suivi 24/11/2021 » et « Groupe convoqué », sur lesquels ils expliquent partager « des nouvelles du naufrage ou de l'enquête ». « Ça a été créé dans le but d'échanger pour l'ensemble des personnes présentes au service sur les convocations, les suites, les ressentis », appuie Matthieu L. Dans un de ces groupes, c'est une cadre de la direction interrégionale de la mer qui « distille » notamment « des conseils pour aborder les gardes à vue », écrivent les enquêteurs.

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En amont des auditions, ceux-ci découvrent qu'Audrey M., la commandante du *Flamant*, a également « remis un rapport circonstancié aux membres d'équipage convoqués (...) afin de leur rappeler la chronologie des faits de la nuit ». Ils ont enfin révélé la tenue d'une « réunion » de « l'ensemble des personnes [du Cross] convoquées » dans un cabinet d'avocats la veille des gardes à vue. « Nous avons fait un point collectif et ensuite nous avons chacun vu notre avocat », a confirmé Priscilla D. La réunion « a duré plusieurs heures », précise l'officier Frédéric J. « Je ne vois rien de choquant à ce que les membres du Cross échantent entre collègues », justifiera un des avocats devant les gendarmes.

La seule qui apparaît à l'écart de ce groupe est Fanny R. Elle explique aux enquêteurs avoir rejoint ses anciens collègues à l'issue de cette réunion : « Je sais que quand je suis arrivée, ils devaient faire un débriefing tous ensemble, mais vu que j'étais là, ils ne l'ont pas fait. » Aujourd'hui en poste dans le sud de la France, la militaire se dit « déçue » du « manque de soutien » au sein du Cross. En première ligne la nuit du naufrage comme opératrice téléphonique, des éléments de son passé – elle avait fait l'objet d'une fiche S étant mineure à la suite de sa conversion à l'islam – avaient fuité dans la presse en novembre 2022, quelques jours seulement après les révélations sur les défaillances du Cross la nuit du drame.

« Traumatisée » depuis le naufrage, elle a quitté Gris-Nez et a été placée en arrêt maladie cinq mois sur les conseils de sa hiérarchie, qui s'appêtait sinon, selon ses déclarations aux enquêteurs, à demander un internement d'office « en hôpital psychiatrique sur ordre du préfet ».

**Julia Pascual et Abdelhak El Idrissi**





## • LES ENQUÊTES DES DÉCODEURS

## Naufrage de migrants dans la Manche : l'« enquête interne » promise par le gouvernement n'a jamais existé

Le secrétaire d'Etat à la mer, Hervé Berville, avait promis de faire la lumière sur de possibles manquements des secours français lors du naufrage du 24 novembre 2021, au cours duquel au moins 27 personnes sont mortes. Selon les informations du « Monde », aucune investigation n'a été entreprise par l'administration.

Par Julia Pascual et Abdelhak El Idrissi

Publié aujourd'hui à 06h24, modifié à 10h10 • Lecture 3 min.

Article réservé aux abonnés



Des migrants secourus dans la Manche, à bord du bateau « Le Flamant », en octobre 2021. BERNARD BARRON / AFP

« Toute la lumière devra être faite. » C'est avec un engagement de fermeté et de transparence que le secrétaire d'Etat à la mer, Hervé Berville, avait réagi le 17 novembre 2022 aux révélations du Monde sur les circonstances du naufrage meurtrier qui avait coûté la vie à au moins vingt-sept migrants dans la Manche un an plus tôt. L'examen des appels téléphoniques émis par les passagers avait notamment mis en évidence l'attentisme des secours français qui avaient laissé l'embarcation en détresse pendant plusieurs heures, avant qu'elle finisse par sombrer. Les militaires du centre régional opérationnel de surveillance et de sauvetage maritimes (Cross) Gris-Nez (Pas-de-Calais) n'ont jamais envoyé de secours vers le bateau, alors même qu'un patrouilleur de l'Etat, *Le Flamant*, se trouvait à proximité.

« Bien évidemment, si ces faits sont avérés, si ces personnes étaient dans les eaux françaises et qu'à un quelconque moment il y a eu manquement ou erreur, les sanctions seront prises. Soyez-en assurés », avait promis M. Berville devant l'Assemblée nationale, en indiquant que l'administration avait lancé

13/06/2023, 10:41



« une enquête interne » en parallèle des investigations judiciaires.

Or, selon les informations du *Monde*, celle-ci n'a pas eu lieu, alors que l'enquête judiciaire a conduit à la mise en examen de cinq militaires du Cross ainsi que de deux membres d'équipage du *Flamant*, le 25 mai et le 1<sup>er</sup> juin, pour « non-assistance à personne en danger ».

**Lire aussi :** [Naufrage meurtrier dans la Manche en 2021 : cinq militaires mis en examen](#)

Sollicitées par *Le Monde* à propos des déclarations de M. Berville, les autorités françaises ont d'abord refusé de s'exprimer. Le secrétariat général à la mer, placé sous l'autorité de la première ministre, ainsi que le cabinet du secrétaire d'Etat se retranchent derrière l'enquête judiciaire en cours pour ne pas répondre. La préfecture maritime de la Manche et de la mer du Nord précise que « tous les opérateurs du Cross actuellement affectés à Gris-Nez ont toute la confiance du préfet maritime ».

### Rapport qui « ne reflète pas la réalité »

Dans leurs conclusions remises à la juge d'instruction récemment, les enquêteurs notent que « l'existence de cette enquête interne n'a pas été montrée ». Ils s'appuient sur leurs échanges avec l'administration et les réponses des militaires mis en cause. « Pour moi, la seule enquête, c'est la vôtre », leur a confirmé une opératrice du Cross placée en garde à vue en mai.

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Relancé sur l'absence d'enquête administrative, le cabinet du secrétaire d'Etat a finalement « précisé » au *Monde* sa réponse : « Les propos du ministre à l'Assemblée faisaient référence à une enquête interne menée en 2021 à la suite de l'événement. Il n'a donc pas fait d'annonce de nouveaux éléments. »

**Lire notre enquête :** [Mort de 27 migrants dans la Manche : les enquêteurs évoquent la « non-assistance à personne en danger »](#)

Problème : à ce jour, l'unique document administratif produit à la suite du naufrage du bateau est un rapport du directeur du Cross Gris-Nez remis en mars 2022 au préfet maritime. Dans ce « retour d'expérience », Marc Bonnafox affirme que « toutes les opérations du 24 novembre 2021 ont été traitées conformément aux procédures » et qu'« il est inexact d'affirmer que les services de sauvetage français et britanniques (...) n'ont rien fait et se sont renvoyé la balle ».

« Ce rapport, qui n'engage que son auteur, ne reflète pas la réalité de ce que nous avons pu constater », estimaient au contraire les enquêteurs de la gendarmerie dans une synthèse d'octobre 2022. Ils soulignaient au passage le comportement du directeur du Cross pendant l'enquête, et notamment son refus de communiquer les coordonnées des sauveteurs qui travaillaient la nuit du drame.

### « Plein soutien » aux secouristes du Cross

Si l'« enquête interne » évoquée par le secrétaire d'Etat et le rapport du directeur du Cross Gris-Nez ne font qu'un, pourquoi M. Berville n'en a pas présenté le contenu devant les députés au moment de la prise de parole en novembre 2022 ? Le document était en effet en possession de l'administration depuis huit mois.

Le discours de fermeté affiché par M. Berville tranche en tout cas avec le traitement réservé par les



autorités maritimes aux sauveteurs du Cross Gris-Nez et de l'équipage du *Flamant*. En novembre 2022, une semaine après les révélations du *Monde* sur le rôle des secours et l'évocation de leur possible responsabilité pénale par les enquêteurs, la préfecture maritime remettait « un témoignage de satisfaction collectif » à l'équipage du *Flamant* qui travaillait la nuit du naufrage. En mars, le secrétaire général à la mer, Didier Lallement, s'est affiché sur Twitter avec les secouristes du Cross pour leur affirmer son « plein soutien ».

Ces marques de confiance ont pu étonner jusque dans les rangs des militaires. Comme celle apportée par le préfet maritime de la Manche et de la mer du Nord de l'époque. Il a « osé nous remettre une lettre de félicitations (...) pour cette journée du 24 novembre 2021, a expliqué l'opératrice placée en garde à vue. Honnêtement, on n'a pas compris. On aurait préféré qu'il nous envoie des moyens ». L'officier de permanence la nuit du naufrage, Frédéric J., aujourd'hui mis en examen, ne s'explique pas non plus la promotion au grade de « capitaine de corvette » dont il a bénéficié le 1<sup>er</sup> février. « Je ne sais pas du tout pour quelles raisons elle est intervenue », explique-t-il aux enquêteurs.



Non visé par l'enquête judiciaire, Marc Bonnafous, directeur du Cross au moment des faits, a quitté son poste en mai 2022, six mois après le naufrage. Au moment de son départ, il a reçu de la part du préfet maritime de la Manche la médaille d'or de la défense nationale pour avoir « réorganisé de manière remarquable les opérations de sauvetage dans le Pas-de-Calais », selon *La Voix du Nord*. Le directeur adjoint du Cross a également quitté ses fonctions, après avoir été promu au grade d'administrateur en chef de première classe des affaires maritimes. Le 1<sup>er</sup> juin, il a en outre été nommé chevalier de l'ordre national du Mérite.





[www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2023/10/11/nauffrage-de-migrants-dans-la-manche-en-2021-comment-la-marine-nati...](http://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2023/10/11/nauffrage-de-migrants-dans-la-manche-en-2021-comment-la-marine-nati...)

## Naufrage de migrants dans la Manche en 2021 : comment la marine nationale a tenté d'interférer dans l'enquête judiciaire

Abdelhak El Idrissi, Julia Pascual :: 11/10/2023

« Sincèrement les deux mecs... heu... j'aurais préféré qu'ils soient morts. » Ce 31 mai 2023, Marc Bonnafous se confie à un proche. Voilà un an et demi qu'une [enquête a été ouverte sur le naufrage d'un bateau de migrants dans la Manche, en novembre 2021](#). Même s'il n'est plus directeur du centre régional opérationnel de surveillance et de sauvetage (Cross) de Gris-Nez (Pas-de-Calais) depuis plusieurs mois déjà, Marc Bonnafous s'inquiète des développements de cette affaire qui menace les services de secours en mer.

Une semaine auparavant, neuf de ses anciens subordonnés ont été placés en garde à vue par des gendarmes pour des soupçons de non-assistance à personne en danger. Dans les jours qui avaient suivi ce drame ayant coûté la vie à au moins vingt-sept personnes, les deux survivants qu'évoque Marc Bonnafous avaient notamment expliqué dans la presse avoir appelé les secours français et anglais à de nombreuses reprises pour prévenir que leur bateau était en train de couler. En vain. « *Quand j'ai vu que les deux naufragés avaient commencé à dire à la police qu'il y avait eu des soucis sur l'opération [de secours] j'ai dit : "houla, ça pue"* », raconte-t-il au téléphone. Il ne se doute pas qu'il est alors écouté par les enquêteurs.

Au total, une dizaine de personnes, travaillant au Cross ou sur le patrouilleur de service public *Flamant*, en mer la nuit du naufrage, ont fait l'objet d'interceptions téléphoniques. Le contenu des enregistrements, dont *Le Monde* a pris connaissance, montre à quel point l'affaire embarrasse la hiérarchie militaire et révèle les manœuvres de la marine nationale pour suivre de près les évolutions de l'enquête afin de préparer les mis en cause, quitte à s'affranchir du secret de l'enquête.

### Grande tension

D'après les informations du *Monde*, confirmées par le parquet de Paris, une enquête pour violation du secret de l'instruction a été ouverte, à la suite d'un signalement des juges d'instruction dans cette affaire et du dépôt d'une plainte par des parties civiles.

Les soupçons de violation du secret se concentrent sur une période courte, au printemps 2023, quelques jours avant les gardes à vue des militaires du Cross et du *Flamant* – à l'issue desquelles sept d'entre eux seront mis en examen pour non-assistance à personne en danger. Un moment de très grande tension pour la marine.

Le 11 mai 2023, les personnels du *Flamant* ne savent pas encore qu'ils vont être convoqués à la fin du mois par les enquêteurs de la section de recherches de la gendarmerie maritime de Cherbourg (Manche). La marine nationale, elle, est déjà au courant. Et décide d'aviser ses troupes. Le rôle de messenger est assuré par un très haut gradé, le vice-amiral d'escadre François-Xavier Blin, alors



inspecteur de la marine nationale. « Il va y avoir huit personnes de votre équipage (...) qui vont être convoquées (...). Bon normalement la date n'est pas censée être connue », confie, prudent, le vice-amiral d'escadre Blin à Audrey M., la commandante du patrouilleur *Flamant*. Il détient cette information depuis la veille grâce, assure-t-il, au commandant Marc Woodcock, à l'époque numéro deux de la préfecture maritime de la Manche et de la mer du Nord.

D'autres écoutes confirment que M. Woodcock – qui n'a pas répondu aux sollicitations du *Monde* – est au fait des convocations des militaires du *Flamant* alors même qu'elles n'ont pas été envoyées. « Je ne suis pas sûr que je sois censé communiquer cette information d'ailleurs, garde-la pour toi », préconise-t-il ainsi au lieutenant de vaisseau Frédéric J., l'un des militaires du Cross mis en cause.

Tout à sa volonté d'aborder au mieux les auditions des militaires, le vice-amiral d'escadre Blin confie à la commandante du *Flamant* son souhait d'organiser un briefing en amont des convocations, car, souligne-t-il, il faut « un minimum de prudence et de préparation sur ce qu'est une garde à vue ». Mais il insiste : « L'idée n'est pas d'organiser une version commune des faits, ça serait contraire à l'esprit de la justice. »

### « Ne pas dire n'importe quoi »

Quelques jours auparavant, le 24 avril, il prenait des précautions similaires. Après avoir fait relire et annoter un projet de réponse aux enquêteurs rédigé par la commandante du *Flamant* concernant la nuit du naufrage, François-Xavier Blin lui demande de rester discrète : « Ne transmettez pas le fichier avec marqué (...) "vu IMN [inspection de la marine nationale]" (...). Scannez-le, comme ça vous êtes sûre qu'il n'y a pas de métadonnées là-dedans. » Il se veut rassurant : « Ce qui est important, c'est que ce soit bien vous et vous seule qui, sur le fond, choisissiez ce que vous voulez dire. »

Sur le fond, cependant, le vice-amiral partage avec Audrey M. l'objet des auditions à venir. D'après lui, les enquêteurs s'intéressent aux raisons pour lesquelles le navire *Flamant* n'a pas répondu au signal d'alerte radio envoyé par les secours britanniques la nuit du naufrage pour aller porter assistance aux migrants en détresse. « Si on peut faire un petit peu de "off" sur le fond, ce que j'ai compris c'est que c'est essentiellement la question du "mayday" (...), ça va être au cœur du truc, révèle-t-il le 11 mai à Audrey M. Il faut préparer les gens non pas sur ce qu'ils vont dire mais sur le fait de ne pas dire n'importe quoi. »

Ce signal « *Mayday* » concentre toutes les inquiétudes. Le Cross aurait-il dû engager le navire français dessus ? Le *Flamant* aurait-il dû interrompre ses opérations en cours sans attendre de consigne du Cross ? C'est « la seule fragilité », confie un militaire du Cross à l'un de ses collègues au téléphone.

Toujours dans l'idée de se préparer aux auditions, François-Xavier Blin propose à Audrey M. de s'entretenir au téléphone, le 12 mai, avec Thomas Bride, un magistrat détaché auprès du ministère des armées où il dirige la division des affaires pénales militaires. Un fait « très rare », souligne le vice-amiral, de sorte que ce magistrat « aimerait qu'il n'y ait pas de publicité » sur l'échange car « il ne veut pas que quelqu'un puisse dire qu'il y a eu collusion (...) vous voyez ? Il est juge, quand même. »

Interrogé sur son intervention, le magistrat Thomas Bride réfute catégoriquement toute transmission « d'éléments issus d'une procédure pénale à qui que ce soit ». Il explique au *Monde* sa proposition d'un entretien à Audrey M., par la nécessité d'apporter aux militaires des explications sur le fonctionnement de la procédure pénale. « Aucun autre message que celui d'être le plus exhaustif possible, complet et





*sincère n'est porté dans ce type d'entretien », ajoute t-il. C'est pourtant son service qui a reçu des éléments de l'enquête transmis par le parquet de Paris, comme le prévoit le code de procédure pénale, afin d'obtenir un avis consultatif du ministère des armées sur l'opportunité d'élargir l'enquête à des faits de non assistance à personne en danger.*

Juge et partie ? Thomas Bride argue une parfaite étanchéité entre ses deux fonctions. *« Les quelques pièces de procédure de l'enquête préliminaire transmises par le parquet ne sont pas sorties de la direction des affaires juridiques, ni même à l'attention d'un quelconque état-major », explique-t-il. Sollicités, ni le vice-amiral Blin ni la marine n'ont donné suite.*

Les écoutes téléphoniques montrent en tout état de cause que certains militaires du Cross et du *Flamant* sont conscients que leurs nombreux échanges sur l'enquête peuvent *« fragiliser la procédure »*. Ils prennent d'ailleurs soin de supprimer des SMS entre eux et décident de ne plus communiquer que sur la messagerie sécurisée Olvid.

## « On a merdé »

Inquiets de la gravité des accusations portées contre eux, ils entendent faire bloc et bénéficient en coulisses du soutien de leur hiérarchie. Lors d'une conversation, Audrey M. confie que le mois précédant son audition, elle a eu *« tous les amiraux »* au téléphone. A l'issue de sa garde à vue, un vice-amiral d'escadre lui aurait même confié : *« En fait c'est simple, on a merdé, on aurait dû faire une enquête interne pour dire : "Nous, on est confiant, ils ont fait leur taff [travail]" »*.

En lieu et place de quoi, le directeur du Cross à l'époque, Marc Bonnafous, s'est contenté de produire un *« Retex »* (retour d'expérience) sommaire pour lequel, reconnaît-il au téléphone, il n'a pas *« eu le temps d'aller écouter les bandes sonores des appels passés par les migrants au Cross cette nuit-là »*. Le secrétaire d'Etat à la mer, Hervé Berville, sommé de s'expliquer sur les défaillances des secours, a, lui, promis devant l'Assemblée nationale le 17 novembre 2022 que des sanctions seraient prises en cas de manquements avérés. *« Comme soutien, on peut espérer mieux »,* déplore au téléphone Marc Bonnafous.

Conscient du manque d'appui officiel de la marine, le vice-amiral Blin tente de se justifier auprès d'Audrey M., en lui expliquant que le ministère des armées a laissé, à contre cœur, la main au secrétariat d'Etat à la mer. *« C'est ce qui a été arbitré au niveau politique, explique-t-il. Le ministère des armées ne peut pas être énormément sur la photo, c'est pour ça qu'il n'y a pas eu de déclaration pour dire que les gens faisaient bien leur travail, qu'il n'y avait pas de problème (...) c'est regrettable mais c'est comme ça. »*

Le commandant Stéphane M., de l'inspection de la marine, fait lui aussi ce travail auprès de l'opératrice du Cross Fanny R., dont il s'enquiert de l'état d'esprit en vue de son audition. *« Vous avez tous le sentiment, et c'est logique, d'avoir été "abandonnés" par l'institution mais vous avez été suivis [au niveau du cabinet du chef d'état major des armées]. »* Il insiste : *« Maintenant, il y a une action un peu plus directe par mon intermédiaire. »*

Lors de leurs conversations téléphoniques, les militaires du Cross et du *Flamant* font état d'un soutien plus manifeste de leur hiérarchie. Ils croient notamment savoir que les conditions de leur garde à vue ont été dénoncées en haut lieu. *« C'est déjà remonté au cabinet du ministre de la défense »,* a appris





Frédéric J. auprès d'un lieutenant de vaisseau de la marine, alors que lui et ses collègues estiment avoir été soumis à rude épreuve, ne comprenant pas notamment pourquoi ils ont été placés en cellule la nuit. Ils ne seraient pas les seuls à s'en offusquer. Frédéric J. croit savoir que le chef d'état major de la marine, Pierre Vandier – aujourd'hui numéro deux des armées – « *veut la peau de la section de recherches* [de la gendarmerie maritime](...) *Il est fou furieux.* » Un mois après les mises en examen, le commandant de la gendarmerie maritime dont dépend la section de recherches a quitté ses fonctions, alors qu'il occupait le poste depuis deux ans à peine. Questionnées sur ce départ, ni la marine nationale ni la gendarmerie n'ont souhaité répondre.

L'organisation même de la gendarmerie maritime au sein de la marine nationale permet de comprendre la situation délicate dans laquelle se trouvent les gendarmes chargés du dossier. Si la justice les a désignés pour enquêter sur les conditions du naufrage, les magistrats instructeurs ont préféré confier à un service de police les écoutes téléphoniques des secouristes militaires. Et pour cause : la gendarmerie maritime est une « *composante organique et opérationnelle de la marine nationale (...) placée pour emploi auprès du chef d'état-major* », c'est-à-dire Pierre Vandier (qui occupait le poste jusqu'en septembre). « *Il ne nous appartient pas de commenter une enquête judiciaire en cours* », se contente aujourd'hui de répondre au *Monde* le ministère des armées.

Abdelhak El Idrissi et Julia Pascual



## Annex D

### Note Verbale FCDO and US Coast Guard



Date: 2 September 2022

Ref: 69/2022

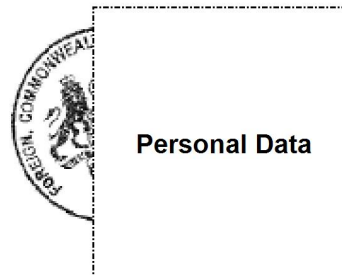
The Ocean Policy Unit (Legal Directorate) of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America in London and has the honour to refer to a request from Her Majesty's Coastguard for assistance from the United States Coast Guard to complete a Search and Rescue Case Study of an incident which occurred in the UK Search and Rescue Region on 24 November 2021 which resulted in the loss of 27 lives.

This request is in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding as agreed between Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, namely paragraph 6.2.7: *"the supporting and conducting joint research and development initiatives aimed at reducing search time, improving rescue effectiveness, and minimising risk to SAR personnel."*

This Case Study will involve a review of the incident and the search and rescue actions undertaken by Her Majesty's Coastguard.

The Ocean Policy Unit (Legal Directorate) of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America in London the assurances of its highest consideration.

OCEAN POLICY UNIT  
LEGAL DIRECTORATE  
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE  
LONDON, SW1A 2AH



No.260

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and has the honor to thank the FCDO for its Note Verbale 69/2022 dated September 2, 2022 regarding the request from His Majesty's Coastguard for assistance from the United States Coast Guard to complete a Search and Rescue Case Study of a November 24, 2021 incident that occurred in the UK Search and Rescue Region.

After consultation with the Department of State and the United States Coast Guard, the Embassy of the United States of America is pleased to inform that the United States Coast Guard agrees to this request. Officials from the United States Coast Guard will proceed in direct contact with relevant counterparts in His Majesty's Coastguard.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to offer the FCDO the renewed assurance of its highest consideration.

Embassy of the United States of America

London, England. September 13, 2022



Personal Data

DIPLOMATIC NOTE





## Annex E

### United States Coast Guard SAR Case Study



US Coast Guard Case  
Study of the 24 Nover

### HM Coastguard response to US Coast Guard SAR Case Study recommendations



HMCG response to  
USCG recommendatic



## Annex F

### RYA What is the difference between buoyancy aids and lifejackets

#### [Buoyancy Aids & Lifejackets | safety | RYA](#)

Buoyancy aids are simply that - an aid to buoyancy that generally relies on help being close at hand.

It assumes that the wearer is able to help themselves to some degree by swimming to safety or by keeping themselves afloat while assistance arrives if required.

Buoyancy aids are suitable for personal watercraft (PWC), dinghies, windsurfing and generally for activities where the wearer might reasonably expect to end up in the water.

A **lifejacket** is intended for use where a high standard of performance is required. It will turn an unconscious person into a safe position and requires no subsequent action by the user to maintain this position.

You should consider whether an automatic lifejacket or manual inflate lifejacket, both with sprayhood, light and whistle, is appropriate to the boating activity you are undertaking. Ideally you should fit or buy a lifejacket that is fitted with crotch straps; these will stop the lifejacket riding up over your head. You should also consider a lifejacket that is fitted with dye-markers and personal locator beacon to aid location and harness D ring for harness attachment to stop you falling off in the first place.

Lifejackets are suitable when on an open boat (e.g. powerboat or RIB), when going ashore in a yacht tender, on a sailing yacht or motor cruiser and generally where you do not expect to enter the water.

Lifejackets come in different styles and sizes, and some will work better for different body styles than others. Where possible test your lifejacket in a controlled environment to check that it will work for you.



## Annex G

Mancheplan - [Mancheplan](#)





## Annex H

### Timeline of All Small Boat Incidents 23-24 November 2021

#### 8.1 Timeline 23 November 2315UTC to 2359UTC

- 8.1.1 In the days prior to the crossings on the night of 23 November into 24 November the previous small boat activity was last seen on 20 November with 827 persons rescued. The highest number of persons rescued in one day was experienced on 16 November 2021 with 1,200 persons rescued from small boat incidents coordinated by HM Coastguard.
- 8.1.2 The network management brief was discussed at 2100UTC on 23 November. It stated under significant events “Op Deveran – likely” (crossings likely, amber day). This is recorded in the ViSION network management log for this period. This resulted in the network being aware of the potential for small boat activity for the Channel. Fog was reported in southern areas and variable cloud but no impact to aerial resources at the time of the call and the weather would be monitored.
- 8.1.3 During the 2100UTC Network call it was recorded that the weather for the night was variable cloud with fog in southern areas. This was confirmed in the aviation brief that overland there would be thick fog in the south of the UK and in the north of France.
- 8.1.4 The aviation brief stated that all rotary wing aircraft were working and the fixed wing “every man and his dog was flying tonight, going to the Dover Straits”. There was one aircraft already at a forward base out of Southend getting ready to deploy. The air commander continued that there would be at least one, at times two aircraft flying in the Dover Straits from 2145 to 0900 on 23/24 November. After which 2Excel would then provide an aircraft at standby from Southend. In addition, there would also be the UAV drone from Tekever going up about 0530UTC. The air commander caveated that it was all dependent on the weather, and if that went out of limits (not safe to fly and therefore off-state) it would not happen.
- 8.1.5 The air commander had spoken to RVL fixed wing operators at 2005UTC confirmed arrangements with the 2Excel aircraft flying later that evening. The timings of the sorties for RVL were passed to the air commander.
- 8.1.6 At 2020UTC the air commander called 2Excel and advised them of the RVL flight in the Dover Strait and the air commander stated he was concerned that there was more than one aircraft in the same area, but he was aware of the mission. 2Excel stated that they would give RVL a call.



- 8.1.7 At 2248UTC a call between ARCC and 2Excel confirmed that 2Excel had spoken with RVL and they were aware of their plans. CG25 would complete Op Altair, 2330UTC from Doncaster and would be on task 0030UTC. Landing at Southend for refuel at 0300UTC.
- 8.1.8 On 23 November at 2315UTC network flexing enabled meal break cover for the Channel Navigation Information Service (CNIS) based at Dover. This is normal practice for the national network and ensured network resource was used for Zone 14. There is an entry in the network management log at 0011UTC recording this. Throughout the night the national network was working Zone 14 and responding to small boat incidents. This included reviewing the French tracker, creating and updating small boat incidents in ViSION, taking routine and emergency calls, VHF radio traffic and VHF broadcast action (mayday relays).
- 8.1.9 HM Coastguard responded to small boat incidents throughout the remainder of the night shift and continued throughout the day. From 0143UTC there were twelve officers available to respond to small boat operations, with more officers available in the network if required. At 0455UTC an additional officer commenced their planned duty at MRCC Dover for SAR.
- 8.1.10 At 0040UTC the air commander called RVL and stated that the 2Excel aircraft had gone to Southend and turned around as they had concerns with the weather and the visibility in the Dover Straits, however this appears to be inaccurate as log entries at 0757UTC and 0803UTC confirm that the flight was terminated. He also stated that there was no suitable weather diversion airport available. He asked if there had been any information received from CG99. Public Interest/Operational Sensitivity  
Public Interest/Operational Sensitivity  
Public Interest/Operational Sensitivity The air commander continued that the airports on the south coast were getting fogged up and asked if RVL could contact the ARCC if they received updates, and he explained his concerns.
- 8.1.11 At 0204UTC the air commander called 2Excel to confirm if there would be any flights during the early hours of the morning, as there were reports of 11 small boats on the way to the UK, and the heli-brief was showing awful weather. The air commander stated that there was no recognised maritime picture, and that 2Excel could be the solution if it was possible to fly.
- 8.1.12 2Excel stated their issue was the weather forecast had fog over France creeping north and their camera would not see through the layered cloud. 2Excel stated that they would not know the impact until they got airborne, and



if they did, they could then waste 4-5 hours of flying. The air commander confirmed that in the south of the UK the weather had worsened with airfields shutting down. 2Excel stated that a concern was the availability of diversion airfields available to them also. The air commander acknowledged this and stated he would speak to the captain of R163 to assess the ability of the SAR helicopter to fly.

- 8.1.13 The weather conditions for the night are recorded in the ViSION incident log as follows:

**North Foreland to Selsey Bill**

24-Hour forecast:

Wind: Northerly or northeasterly, becoming variable for a time, force 2 to 4.

Sea state: Smooth or slight

Weather: Showers in east

Visibility: Good

The tidal high and low waters for 24 November were:

**DOVER**

Low water 0826UTC 1.6 metres

High water 1318UTC 6.0 metres

Low water 2041UTC 1.8 metres

Sea Surface temperature: 13°C

## 8.2 Timeline 24 November 0000UTC to 24 November 0159UTC

- 8.2.1 On 24 November at 0024UTC HM Coastguard received the first report of a small boat crossing. The call was received at the Port of Dover who informed HM Coastguard that they had received a call. They reported lots of voices in the background and believed it to be from a migrant small boat. They could make out “can you help me?” then the line cut out. The small boat incident was created at 0029UTC and was given the reference ALPHA. There were no names passed during the call. The coastguard operator advised that if they called again to ask them to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard, as their position would come up on the system.
- 8.2.2 The telephone number Dover Port had recorded was PD 523. This was the first notification of any migrant activity for that night/morning, to HM Coastguard.





- 8.2.3 At 0032UTC HM Coastguard attempted to call the mobile phone number from the ALPHA small boat incident. It had an international ring tone. HM Coastguard then contacted the French Coast Guard, due to the call having an international dial tone, and passed the details they had received from the Port of Dover.
- 8.2.4 At 0034UTC MRCC Dover called the French Coast Guard at MRCC Gris-Nez, and relayed the information received from Dover Port at 0024UTC. Dover Coastguard informed MRCC Gris-Nez that it was likely that the small boat was in French Waters, and handed over coordination, which was accepted. The French Coast Guard requested that the information be confirmed via email. This was completed at 0044UTC (see below).
- 8.2.5 During the call, the coastguard officer asked Gris-Nez if they had received any other reports of small boats crossing. MRCC Gris-Nez responded they had reports of four dinghies in the Channel. HM Coastguard requested a copy of the French Tracker. This was received by zone 14 at 0057UTC (see below).
- 8.2.6 At 0037UTC a Migrant Administration Incident was created in ViSION for 24 November. This was a log which recorded general activity relating to small boat incidents and included the logging of aerial assets when not tasked to specific small boats. This was created based on the information received via telephone from MRCC Gris-Nez, they reported four small boats crossing the Channel and the French Tracker was being sent to HM Coastguard. The migrant administration incident was a log where operators could record generic messages relating to small boat incidents, including the tasking of resources which were not allocated to specific or multiple small boat incidents, such as the fixed wing aircraft, tactical commander messages, general information received.
- 8.2.7 At 0039UTC the tactical commander (1), made an entry in the admin incident which was copied from the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) ViSION narrative. The entry included a screenshot of the forecast weather (visibility) at 0100UTC. It stated that there was poor visibility on both sides of the Dover Straits, see diagram below (Fig 13).



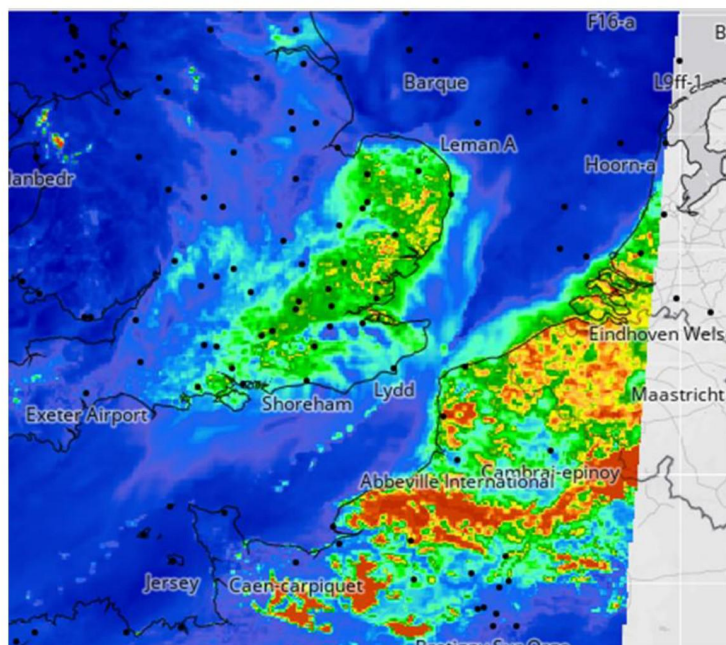


Fig 13

- 8.2.8 2Excel who is contracted to the MCA to provide fixed wing aircraft to HM Coastguard, had already postponed their sortie to the English Channel. This was due to their concerns for suitable weather diversion airports along the south coast for the aircraft. The fixed wing sorties in the English Channel attempted to provide situational awareness for HM Coastguard when coordinating small boat incidents in the English Channel. The information received from the aerial asset, assists Coastguard operators in their attempts to confirm how many small boats, the status – moving (making way or stopped) and priority of rescue. The aircraft can also assist with confirming vessels which are logged on the French Tracker and can spot any vessels which may have gone undetected from French shores.
- 8.2.9 The tactical commanders (maritime and aviation) discussed the situation at 0030UTC and were concerned that with poor visibility and the surveillance aircraft being limited to conduct their mission (not available until later in the day) commented they were effectively blind to activity. Their assessment was that the situation of multiple vessels being reported as departing from France, with no aerial surveillance had the potential of being very dangerous. An entry was made in ViSION at 0041UTC by the tactical commander to capture the discussion. The actions taken by the tactical commander is captured later in the timeline at 0231UTC.



- 8.2.10 At 0044UTC the following email (Fig 14) was sent to MRCC Gris-Nez as was requested at 0034UTC. This follows the guidance within the SAR convention/International Aviation and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manual for the handing over of SAR and sharing of information.

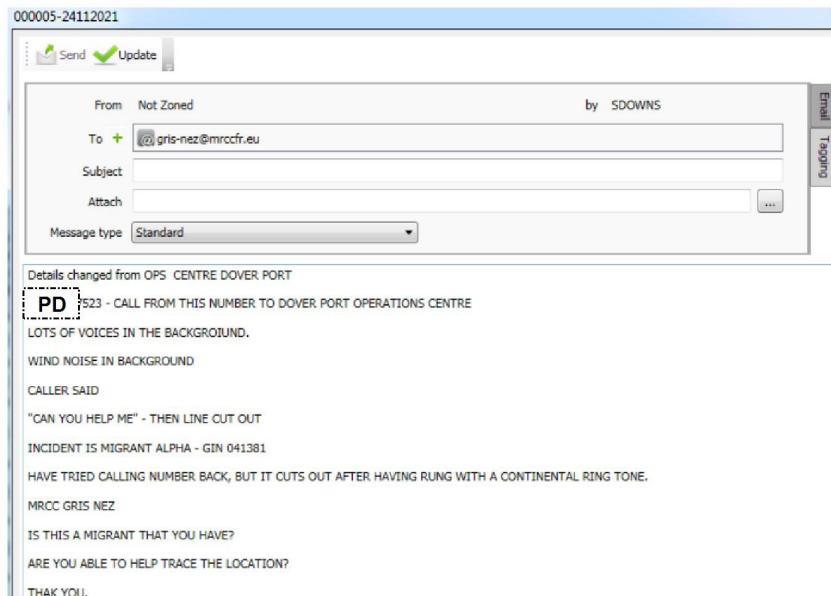


Fig 14

- 8.2.11 At 0057UTC SMC(1) entered a message in the log which confirmed the team had seen the email from MRCC Gris-Nez, which was the French Tracker. This was confirmed and incidents were created for the small boats which were crossing the Channel. The small boat incidents were created in anticipation of the small boats entering the UK search and rescue region, but at the time of creation were still under the coordination of the French Coast Guard. The tracker recorded that the French Warship Flamant was with or had been with small boat incidents 1, 2 and 3.
- 8.2.12 The Tracker (Fig 15) had six small boats listed on it:





OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – DRAFT – NOT FOR ONWARD DISTRIBUTION WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION FROM HM COASTGUARD

Bonjour,  
Point de situation relatif aux tentatives de traversée de migrants en zone de responsabilité SAR du CROSS Gris-Nez.  
Tableau en heures UTC.

Ref FR	Ref UK	n° SITREP	Heure détection (UTC)	Secteur	Origine de l'alerte & Moyen de détection	Support embarquant les migrants (type, couleur, L, propulsion)	POB (H/F/enfant, avec/sans brassières)	SRU en ralliement ou en recherche	SRU au contact ou en sauvetage	Route/vitesse estimée	Heure dernière position (UTC)	Dernière position connue	SRU GB pour relai OU Port FR de destination	Heure ou HPA du relai ou du débarquement (UTC)
1			2102	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	40	FLAMANT		284° / 6 NDS		51°07.40N / 001°42.67E		
2			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		266° / 6 NDS		51°05.16N / 002°12.54E		
3			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		272 ° / 6 NDS		51°04.70N / 002°24.50		
4			2230	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
5			2316	WISSANT	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	15			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
6			0013	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	30			276/4NDS		51°04.58N / 002°25.06E		

Couleur des lignes:

- vert: affaire close du point de vue SAR en SRR française.
- orange: embarcation en cours de sécurisation ou de récupération
- blanc: ni clos, ni sécurisé

Fig 15

- 8.2.13 At 0101UTC BRAVO small boat incident was created in ViSION and was linked to French Migrant 1 from the French Tracker. It stated that French Migrant 1, was detected on 23 November at 2102UTC at Canal des Dunes. It was a semi-rigid boat, with 40 POB. The course for the small boat was 284° speed 6 knots. It stated that the French Vessel Flamant was rallying or searching, and it gave a position of 51° 07.4N 001° 42.67E, in the French search and rescue region. This position is 1.38 nm from the UK search and rescue region.
- 8.2.14 At 0101UTC UK Border Force Maritime Command Centre (UKBF MCC) called HM Coastguard regarding the French Tracker. UK Border Force MCC queried the position for French Migrant 1. They stated that if correct, it would put the small boat in UK waters. The coastguard operator confirmed that the French Warship Flamant was currently close to the French shores according to C-Scope. This meant that the Flamant would not be with the Migrant 1 small boat if the position was correct, as indicated on the French Tracker. UK Border Force MCC asked HM Coastguard to confirm the position with the French Coast Guard.
- 8.2.15 At 0106UTC HM Coastguard called MRCC Gris-Nez to confirm the position of Migrant 1. Gris-Nez had no updated position for the small boat. Gris-Nez confirmed that the Flamant was with Migrant 2 and 3, and not with Migrant 1. Gris-Nez also reported they had an additional dinghy (small boat) which was next to the UK area and was not included on the French tracker. The position for the additional small boat was 0.6 nautical miles from UK waters (when plotted this is 0.8nm from UK waters) (51° 06.51N 001° 46.21E). The small boat had 33 people onboard (13 females and 8 children). They had two telephone numbers for the small boat: Personal Data095 and PD  
PD 666.
- 8.2.16 MRCC Gris-Nez informed HM Coastguard that the small boat (Migrant 1) was in good condition and then passed an updated position 51° 04.5N 001° 58.24E. Gris-Nez also confirmed that the additional small boat they provided the verbal update on, was not yet on their tracker and had the French reference Migrant 7. The call between MRCC Gris-Nez and HM Coastguard lasted for 4 minutes and 30 seconds. The call was made to MRCC Gris-Nez at 0106UTC and was recorded in the ViSION narrative with the creation of small boat incident CHARLIE commenced at 0115UTC.
- 8.2.17 At 0110UTC an entry was made into ViSION that MRCC Gris-Nez had been contacted. This was an acknowledgement to the 0108UTC request above.

- 8.2.18 At 0115UTC CHARLIE incident call collection commenced based on the information received from MRCC Gris-Nez for Migrant 7. At this time the French Coast Guard had coordination for the small boat incident. The information recorded in ViSION is as follows:
- French Migrant 7 is UK Migrant CHARLIE
  - 30 persons onboard – 13 women and 8 children, 14 of the people have lifejackets.
  - Dinghy appears in good condition.
  - Tel numbers: Personal Data095 and Personal Data166
- 8.2.19 At 0115UTC the SMC(1) made an entry into BRAVO small boat incident that the position from MRCC Gris-Nez put the small boat in a different position to the Tracker which had been emailed.
- 8.2.20 The updated position for the small boat confirmed it was in the French Search and Rescue Region. BRAVO small boat incident was downgraded to monitoring, as it was not in the UK Search and Rescue Region, which is normal practice.
- 8.2.21 On the Nice recorder at 0120UTC a call was made to UK Border Force MCC from HM Coastguard and informed them that French Migrant 1 (BRAVO) was still in French waters, and the Flamant was no longer with it. HM Coastguard also informed UK Border Force MCC of French migrant 7 incident which was not yet listed on the French Tracker and was still under the coordination of the French Coast Guard. The small boat was in position 51° 06.5N 001° 46.21E. UK Border Force MCC asked what time they were in the position. HM Coastguard informed them that it was possibly up to 10 minutes ago. The officer stated it was likely that the small boat was in the UK, as the position was 0.6nm away from UK Waters at the time of the report. It was unknown if the vessel was underway or if tidal drift would have put the vessel into UK waters if it was not making way.
- 8.2.22 UK Border Force MCC asked for a description of the small boat, but this information had not been passed to HM Coastguard by the French, only the numbers of persons and that the small boat was in good condition. UK Border Force MCC asked if there was a French asset with the small boat (Migrant 7) and it was confirmed there was not. UK Border Force MCC asked for more details for the small boat incident, and were informed that there was 30





persons onboard, 14 lifejackets, 13 women and 8 children and passed the telephone numbers [Personal Data] 095 and [Personal Data] 666.

- 8.2.23 UK Border Force MCC stated that they would plot the position and get an asset tasked. UK Border Force MCC then confirmed that HMC Valiant was the primary vessel for response, and they were alongside at Dover. UK Border Force MCC would confirm intentions once known.
- 8.2.24 At 0124UTC UK Border Force MCC were logged in the ViSION narrative as being informed of small boat incident CHARLIE. A brief description of the call to UK Border Force MCC at 0120UTC is logged in the ViSION narrative at 0124UTC.
- 8.2.25 At 0125UTC HM Coastguard made an announcement on VHF Radio Channel 16 to all vessels in the Dover Strait. This was an alert to a supplementary information service broadcast concerning search and rescue operations in the Dover Strait to listen to Channel 11.
- 8.2.26 At 0126UTC HM Coastguard made the following broadcast on VHF Channel 11:
- “All Ships this is Dover Coastguard. SAR Operations. Following confirmed reports of small boat crossings this evening, vessels are requested to post extra lookouts whilst transiting the south-west lane between the Interbank Buoy and the South Varne Buoy and report any sightings of small craft to Dover Coastguard on CHF Channel 16. The next routine broadcast by Dover Coastguard on Channel 11 is as 0147UTC. Ends. This is Dover Coastguard.”
- 8.2.27 On the Nice Recorder at 0128UTC MRCC Gris-Nez called HM Coastguard with an update on French Migrant 7. They stated they had spoken to a coastguard officer previously and reported the small boat to be 0.6nm from UK waters. MRCC Gris-Nez stated that the small boat was now in UK waters and the new position was 51° 07.25N 001° 45.22E. The position was reported by the French Coast Guard as being 0.2 nautical miles inside the UK search and rescue region and was approximately 1 nautical mile from the 0106UTC position. HM Coastguard assumed coordination for the small boat incident from France.
- 8.2.28 HM Coastguard asked how MRCC Gris-Nez had received the position and Gris-Nez advised it had been received from WhatsApp and passed the telephone number from the message received [Personal Data] 879. Gris-Nez then asked if there was any updated information from the UK. HM



Coastguard confirmed that Migrant 7 was UK small boat incident CHARLIE. They stated it was not on the Tracker. Gris-Nez then confirmed that it had 33 persons on board, with 13 women, 8 children and 14 of the persons had lifejackets. Gris-Nez also stated that they were called from mobile number **Personal Data** 095, from the same small boat.

- 8.2.29 At 0130UTC UK Border Force MCC confirmed that HMC Valiant had been tasked from Dover.
- 8.2.30 At 0133UTC 2Excel reported that they were planning a flight for 0300UTC, but it was likely to be delayed due to the weather.
- 8.2.31 At 0136UTC call collection for small boat incident FOXTROT commenced. The call was transferred to HM Coastguard from the Port of Dover. The caller stated they needed help, they were in/on the water and finished. The coastguard officer asked for a location. The caller replied he was on the water and to look at his SIM card please as he did not have WhatsApp or the internet, and he was finished.
- 8.2.32 The officer asked again if a location could be provided. The caller then asked for a WhatsApp number. The officer started to pass the number for the stand-alone mobile phone, then there was a lot of shouting on the call. The caller then asked for the SIM card to be checked as they were in the water. The officer asked for everyone to stop talking so he could pass the number. The caller stated he was ready for the number to be passed and the number for the mobile phone was passed. The caller stated he would then send a message and his position and asked for a helicopter please. The officer confirmed if the caller was able to send, that may provide a position.
- 8.2.33 The caller then asked again for the SIM card to be looked at as he had no WhatsApp or internet. The officer explained if there was no internet then it would not work and asked if the caller knew their location. The caller asked for help and to take information from the SIM card please, as he thought it was possible to get a position from the SIM card on a mobile phone, however it is not. WhatsApp was not working, and he asked for help again, he was finished and there was water.
- 8.2.34 The coastguard officer asked the caller to terminate this call and redial using 999 and to ask for the coastguard, because he believed this to be the best opportunity to obtain the caller's position. The caller replied OK and then the call ended. The call duration was 4 minutes and 24 seconds. There is no



record of a 999-call received from this caller, it was a routine call transfer from the Port of Dover.

- 8.2.35 At 0138UTC HM Coastguard received a call from UK Border Force MCC who requested a course and speed for small boat CHARLIE (French Migrant 7). UK Border Force MCC were concerned how HMC Valiant would lock on to the vessel as the small boat was heading to the UK. The coastguard officer explained that the only information available was from WhatsApp, and that there were no aircraft available due to the weather. UK Border Force MCC confirmed that HMC Valiant would deploy soon. HM Coastguard stated they would try to get further WhatsApp messages from the small boat.
- 8.2.36 At 0140UTC small boat incident DELTA was created from the French tracker, (French migrant 3) with 30 persons onboard, in position 51° 04.70N 002° 24.50E at 2224UTC on 23 November.
- 8.2.37 At 0142UTC the ViSION incident narrative system message incident upgraded from monitoring to Distress, by SMC(2) as the updated location received from the French Coast Guard placed the small boat in the UK search and rescue region, and the condition of the small boat and the persons onboard was unknown and there was no French SAR resource with the small boat.
- 8.2.38 At 0142UTC a text (normal) message was sent from the stand-alone mobile phone to Personal Data 095 (small boat incident CHARLIE).
- The message provided a link to WhatsApp and an invitation to download the App. A second message was sent “This is the UK Coastguard. Please download WhatsApp to send us your position”. No response was received on normal text messages. No messages were received via WhatsApp either on the mobile phone for 24 November 2021 that was visible when the mobile phone was reviewed.
- 8.2.39 At 0143UTC the SMC(2) had returned to SAR duty and made an entry in the ViSION narrative that CHARLIE small boat incident was “upgraded to a distress incident as it is in the UK Search and Rescue Region, the condition of the craft is unknown nor the persons onboard as there is no French asset with the vessel”.
- 8.2.40 At 0144UTC call collection in ViSION for small boat incident ECHO was created from the French Tracker. French migrant 6 in position 51° 04.58N 002° 25.06E at 0013UTC with 30 persons on board.





- 8.2.41 At 0144UTC call collection in ViSION for small boat incident FOXTROT was created from a call transferred by the Port of Dover to HM Coastguard on a routine telephone line.
- 8.2.42 At 0144UTC a text (normal) message was sent from the stand-alone mobile phone to [Personal Data] 166 (this is the number recorded as a result of the conversation with MRCC Gris-Nez and upon this review it is noted that it is missing a digit [Personal Data] 666).
- 8.2.43 At 0148UTC MRCC Gris-Nez transferred a call to HM Coastguard from French Migrant 7 / UK CHARLIE. As part of this review, I have asked for the French small boat incident and call information from the French Coast Guard, but the information has not been provided . It is unknown how long MRCC Gris-Nez were on a call with Migrant 7/UK CHARLIE, prior to this call being transferred to HM Coastguard. The call was taken by the SMC(2) and lasted for 21 minutes and 14 seconds. The name of the caller was provided. It is very difficult to understand what the caller was saying due to lots of shouting in the background. A WhatsApp number was requested by the caller, and the stand-alone mobile phone number was passed. There was a lot of shouting in the background of the call making it very difficult, for the coastguard officer to hear what the caller said. The Coastguard operator asked for others to be quiet throughout the call and for only one person to speak. He confirmed he was the UK Coastguard. The log entry in ViSION stated, "Moomin, 40 pob, [Personal Data] 057. WhatsApp message sent lots of shouting unreadable most comms due to shouting".
- 8.2.44 The voice recorder conversation is as follows. The caller stated that he was in the sea and the boat was broken. The coastguard operator asked to caller to be calm and asked for his name. The caller replied. The operator asked the caller to ask everyone else in the boat to be quiet as it was difficult to hear with the shouting in the background.
- 8.2.45 The caller then asked for help. The operator asked what colour the boat was, but the caller replied that he did not understand. The caller then asked for a telephone number so that he could send a WhatsApp message and send a location. The coastguard operator gave the number for the stand-alone mobile phone. This number was then confirmed by the caller. The operator asked the caller to tell everyone to be quiet. The caller then asked if he was connected to the UK. The coastguard confirmed he was. The caller asked the coastguard not to go and he then passed a telephone number [Personal Data] 879. The caller then confirmed he would send a message to the



UK Coastguard. The caller then stated that he did not have any internet. The coastguard officer confirmed again that he would not go and asked how many persons were onboard. The caller stated there were 40 persons onboard and confirmed again that he did not have any internet. The coastguard officer asked if he could readback the caller's telephone number and asked for everyone to be quiet [Personal] 879. The officer stated he would send a message.

- 8.2.46 The caller then stated that he needed the WhatsApp number and asked the officer to wait. The caller then gave the following number [PD] 057. The coastguard officer read back the number and the caller confirmed it. The officer then stated he would send a message – SMS and WhatsApp. The caller stated he did not have the internet.
- 8.2.47 The caller asked if a boat would be sent. The officer stated there would be a boat, but they needed to confirm the position. The caller then stated he had the internet. The Coastguard officer stated they would be coming but it would take time to get there. The caller asked if the WhatsApp had been received, and the coastguard officer confirmed it had. The caller then stated he would send a live location and asked if it had been received. The coastguard officer confirmed it had and was checking the position.
- 8.2.48 The caller then asked if a boat would be sent. The officer confirmed it would be sent and it would take a time to get to the location. The caller then stated he was in UK water right now. The officer stated he was just checking the position and it would take time.
- 8.2.49 The caller then stated he could see a light. A different caller then took the phone and asked for the operator to look left. He stated they were finished. The coastguard officer asked if they could see a boat to his left. The caller replied, "look my left". The first caller then returned on the call and asked if the officer could see his light. There was shouting that the boat is broken and to look to their left please.
- 8.2.50 The coastguard officer called for the first caller. There was a lot of screaming and shouting on the line – look my left repeatedly, asking to look left and to come and get them as they were finished. The officer called for the first caller and explained he was not on the boat, but he was trying to speak to the boat. The caller continued with look my left. Again, the officer explained he was not on the boat, but he was trying to speak with it.



- 8.2.51 The officer asked how far away the boat was. The line was then very broken and distorted. The caller then shouted hello, look to my left. The officer explained that he was not on the boat and that he had asked the vessel to keep a sharp look out for the small boat. The caller asked for help. The officer confirmed he was sending someone, but he was trying to locate them. The officer explained he was not in the middle of the Channel on a boat, he was in the UK. The caller repeated look my left. Para 8.3.5 records the actions requested by the SMC(2) via VTS to contact the vessel which was sighted.
- 8.2.52 The call then cut off and was ended.
- 8.2.53 An entry is made into the ViSION incident narrative for small boat incident CHARLIE at 0211UTC with a brief description that the call was difficult to understand due to the shouting. WhatsApp messages were sent and there were 40 POB and a telephone number [PD] 57 (number associated to small boat incident CHARLIE).
- 8.2.54 At 0148UTC ViSION incident narrative updated for FOXTROT small boat incident, stated that a call was transferred by Dover Port. The operator was not able to get a telephone number from the small boat and that there was a lot of shouting on the call. The small boat was asked to call 999 so that a position could be obtained and then the call cut out. A call back to Dover Port Control confirmed the telephone number to be [PD] 523 the same number attributed to small boat incident ALPHA. The Port had received three calls that evening from the same number.
- 8.2.55 At 0149UTC a message was sent via WhatsApp from the stand-alone mobile phone to [Personal Data] 879 (number associated to small boat incident CHARLIE) saying "This is the UK Coastguard" and "Please send us your position".
- 8.2.56 A response to the WhatsApp message with a position was received at 0220UTC. The position received was 51.149422,1.754940 which converted to latitude and longitude is 51° 08.96N 001° 45.296E. For the review, it has been calculated that this position is 0.67 nm in a north easterly direction from the position from WhatsApp timed at 0201UTC.
- 8.2.57 At 0149UTC small boat incident HOTEL was created from the French tracker in ViSION. There were 30 to 40 persons on board and was French Migrant Incident 8, no other details were available to HM Coastguard.





- 8.2.58 At 0152UTC an updated French Tracker (Fig 16) was recorded in the Migrant Admin incident. No telephone numbers were recorded on the sheet. The Tracker recorded that Migrant 1 and Migrant 9 could be linked to Migrant 7 incident (CHARLIE). It was recorded that Migrant 1 departed Canal Des Dunes at 2102UTC on 23 November 2021 and the origin of the report and detection was from "Lookout DK". It stated that the small boat had 40 people on board and was in position 51° 07.4N 001° 42.67E and it was making way on a course of 284° at 6 knots. Migrant 9 details stated that the report was received at 0111UTC by a call from the migrants on the small boat and was queried to be in the Dunkirk sector. It was recorded that there were 33 persons onboard, including 3 children and 6 females. There was no position information recorded against Migrant 9.



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Ref FR	Ref UK	n° SITREP	Heure détection (UTC)	Secteur	Origine de l'alerte & Moyen de détection	Support embarquant les migrants (type, couleur, L, propulsion)	POB (H/F/enfant, avec/sans brassières)	SRU en ralliement ou en recherche	SRU au contact ou en sauvetage	Route/vitesse estimée	Heure dernière position (UTC)	Dernière position connue	SRU GB pour relai OU Port FR de destination	Heure ou HPA du relai ou du débarquement (UTC)
1			2102	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	40	FLAMANT		284° / 6 NDS		51°07.40N / 001°42.67E	possible MIG 7 et 9	
2			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		266° / 6 NDS	0023	51°05.16N / 002°12.54E		
3			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		272 ° / 6 NDS	00:00	51°05.00N 002°02.50		
4			<u>2230</u>	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
5			<u>2316</u>	WISSANT	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	15			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
6			0013	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	30			276/4NDS	00:00	51°04.58N / 002°25.06E		
7			0048	Bouée MPC	SAMU 62	SEMI RIGIDE	33 13 femmes 8 enfants			305 / 4	0130	51°07.4N 001°45.4E	SRR UK à 0130 UTC Possible MIG 1 et 9	
8			0107	Barck	Police	SEMI RIGIDE GRIS	30 à 40							
9			0111	Dunkerque ?	tél migrant		33 3 enfants 6 femmes						possible MIG 7 et 1	
10			0136				40							

Fig 16

- 8.2.59 At 0154UTC small boat incident INDIA was created from the French tracker in ViSION, which was linked to French migrant 9. It was reported to have 33 persons onboard, 3 infants and 6 females. This was linked to small boat incident CHARLIE as stated on the French tracker.
- 8.2.60 At 0155UTC small boat incident BRAVO ViSION narrative was updated from the French tracker information, and stated the Flamant was informed of small boat incidents BRAVO and DELTA.
- 8.2.61 At 0156UTC small boat incident JULIET created from the French tracker and was linked to French migrant incident 10.

### 8.3 Timeline 0200UTC to 0459UTC

- 8.3.1 At 0200UTC a WhatsApp message was sent to [REDACTED] PD [REDACTED] 057 which was linked to small boat incident CHARLIE. It stated, “please send us your position”. A response was received at 0201UTC with a WhatsApp position. The position was 51.146557, 1.748657 which converted to latitude and longitude is 51° 08.476N 001° 44.552E.
- 8.3.2 A further message was sent from the stand-alone mobile phone at 0207UTC asking “can you re send your location”. At this time the caller was still on a call with HM Coastguard which did not finish until 0211UTC.
- 8.3.3 A second position was received on the mobile phone at 0221UTC. The position was 51° 09.045N 001° 45.568E.
- 8.3.4 At 0204UTC a caller attempted to contact HM Coastguard via the stand-alone mobile phone, rather than through the 999 system. But it was not answered.
- 8.3.5 At 0206UTC Dover Channel Navigation Information Service (CNIS) contacted the LPG Vessel Gaschem Schinano, because the vessel was potentially in an area where the caller from the small boat had said he could see a vessel’s lights Gaschem Schinano stated they had no targets or lights in sight. The image below (Fig 17) was the AIS screenshot of the location of Gaschem Schinano when they were contacted by HM Coastguard. Their position was 0.9 nm away from the WhatsApp position received from the small boat.



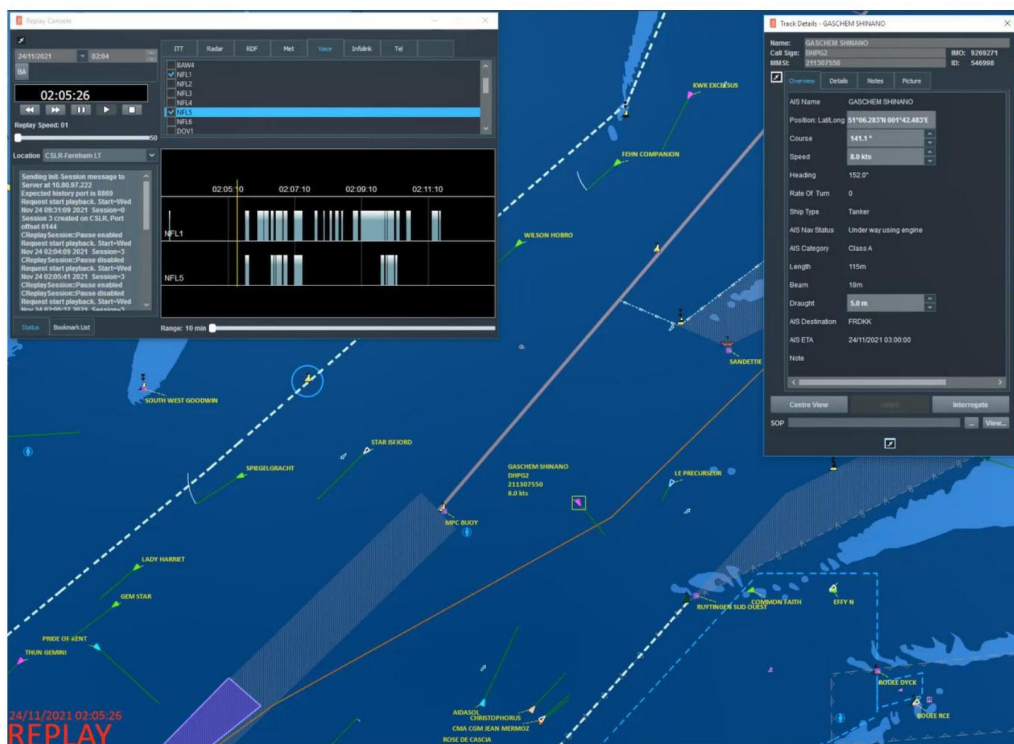


Fig 17

- 8.3.6 At 0207UTC a WhatsApp message was sent to **Personal Data 057** which requested they resend their location.
- 8.3.7 At 0209UTC a text message (SMS) was sent from the stand-alone mobile phone to **Personal Data 057** (number associated to small boat incident CHARLIE).
- 8.3.8 The message stated, “Can you share your Google map’s location”. No response was received on normal text messages. This number did respond to WhatsApp messages previously; however, no response was received to the text message.
- 8.3.9 At 0210UTC a caller attempted to contact HM Coastguard via the stand-alone mobile phone, rather than through the 999 system from **Personal Data 057**. But it was not answered.
- 8.3.10 At 0210UTC small boat incident KILO was created, after information was received through Direct Electronic Incident Transfer (DEIT) from the Metropolitan Police. Persons on board were unknown, but the report stated that it was a small boat in the water on the French border. No other details were provided or available, including no phone numbers.



- 8.3.11 At 0211UTC a ViSION entry is made capturing the call transferred to HM Coastguard at 0148UTC. It was recorded as “name of caller, 40 POB. PD PD 057. WhatsApp message sent lots of shouting unreadable most comms due to shouting”.
- 8.3.12 At 0212UTC in FOXTROT small boat incident the SMC(3) recorded in ViSION that the incident was believed to be a duplicate of ALPHA small boat incident and was re-classified to the monitoring phase as the SMC(3) for this incident believed the small boat was in French waters at the time.
- 8.3.13 At 0213UTC a ViSION narrative entry was made that a position was received from WhatsApp – Personal Data 057 – the position in the ViSION narrative was 51° 08.476N 001° 44.552E. This was received on the phone at 0201UTC. (Small boat incident CHARLIE).
- 8.3.14 At 0214 the air commander spoke with the captain of R163 and asked to be called back once he had gathered thoughts to discuss a tasking in the English Channel.
- 8.3.15 At 0217UTC the stand-alone mobile phone received a call from PD PD 057. The call lasted three minutes. Stand-alone mobile phones are not incorporated into HM Coastguard communication systems and as such calls to stand alone phones cannot be recorded. There was no ViSION entry correlating to a call received from this number either.
- 8.3.16 At 0220UTC a position was received from WhatsApp from Personal Data 879 (number associated to small boat incident CHARLIE) to the stand-alone mobile telephone. However, this position was not seen by HM Coastguard at the time.
- 8.3.17 At 0221UTC a WhatsApp position was received from Personal Data 057 (number associated to small boat incident CHARLIE) to the stand-alone mobile telephone. It was not seen by Coastguard operators until 0328UTC.
- 8.3.18 At 0223UTC R163 captain called ARCC back. The air commander explained the situation with the fixed wing not being available to provide a maritime picture of small boats crossing and asked if R163 could, given the weather conditions. The captain stated that he thought he could do the task, but questioned if it was lifesaving, given the brief received. The air commander continued the conversation that what was required was to search and that the coastguard deemed all small boats in distress once in the UK.



- 8.3.19 The air commander and the captain of the helicopter discussed the weather and visibility conditions further. The captain stated he would speak to his co-pilot who was very experienced and would call the ARCC back. The air commander provided three options to the captain, option1 launch around 0300ish and conduct task for 1 hour, option 2 – stand down then react to any calls received if they do call, and then go on task possibly as early as 0400UTC. Option 3 – despite the coastguard declaring small boats as a distress, unless there was absolute proof that someone was sinking, only then the helicopter is tasked.
- 8.3.20 At 0224 the SMC(2) created a Mayday Relay broadcast; “Small Craft with 40 persons on board in position 51° 08.5N 001° 44.5E this bears 244° 1.8nm from Sandettie Light Vessel, taking water and requiring immediate assistance any vessel that can assist to contact Dover Coastguard”.
- 8.3.21 At 0225UTC a 999 call is received from a small boat. The person provided his name and stated he was in the middle of the sea and was sinking. He stated they had lost their engine and the engine had stopped and they were halfway between France and England. They departed Dunkirk at 2100hrs on 23 November. He could see a vessel approximately 3 kilometres (km) away, then the call cut out. No telephone number was available through the BT operator, for the call.
- 8.3.22 At 0225UTC the SMC(2) sent a flash message and confirmed that the Mayday Relay was ready for broadcast.
- 8.3.23 There is a voice recording at 0227UTC of the Mayday relay which was broadcast. It was preceded by a Digital Selective Call (DSC) but was an urgency alert, not a distress alert, it did however still go to all vessels. The appropriate DSC alert for a mayday relay is a distress DSC alert and for a pan pan broadcast is an urgency DSC alert.
- 8.3.24 The broadcast was:
- Mayday Relay x 3
  - All Stations x 3
  - This is Dover Coastguard x 3
  - Mayday information number 1
  - Small craft with 40 persons onboard in position 51° 08.5N 001° 44.5E, this position bears 244°, distance 1.8 nautical miles from Sandettie Light Vessel
  - Taking Water and requires immediate assistance.
  - Any vessel that can assist call Dover Coastguard





- Date time group 240224UTC. This is Dover Coastguard.
- 8.3.25 At 0228UTC the SMC(2) recorded in the ViSION narrative that according to C-Scope the Flamant was the closest vessel.
- 8.3.26 At 0229UTC UK Border Force MCC contacted HM Coastguard regarding an entry on the French Tracker which showed small boat incident CHARLIE as being resolved. This had been updated by the French Coast Guard. The coastguard operator advised that they were confident the small boat incident was not resolved and that HMC Valiant was requested to continue. We have asked for the small boat incidents and call information from the French Coast Guard, but the information has not been provided.
- 8.3.27 At 0229UTC the SMC(2) assumed coordination for small boat incident KILO.
- 8.3.28 At 0231UTC HMC Valiant called HM Coastguard to report they had observed the broadcast and plotted the position. HMC Valiant stated they were 45 minutes away.
- 8.3.29 At 0231UTC the tactical commander (1) made an entry into the migrant Administration incident which captured his discussion with the air commander. They had spoken with 2Excel (fixed wing aircraft), and the issue was that when the sortie in the English Channel was completed there would be no airfield in the south or southeast corner of England for them to land due to incoming fog. The only option available was Manchester airport but it would make more sense for them to return to Doncaster, meaning there would be very little time on scene.
- 8.3.30 The tactical commanders recorded their response in ViSION. ARCC stated they would speak to the duty captain of the Rescue Helicopter at Lydd (R163), to request a 90-minute sortie be flown sometime between 0300-0530UTC depending on a suitable weather window being available., The tasking would be to replace the intelligence which would have been gained had the fixed wing aircraft been able to fly.
- 8.3.31 The tactical commanders recorded the following issues:
- 2Excel would not launch due to weather limits for refuel on south coast of the UK.
  - Tekever Drone due to launch at 0530UTC, however may be delayed due to weather (fog), it was likely this would not happen.
  - R163 could provide a sweep of the median line from 0300-0530UTC to provide a maritime picture.



- UK Border Force had vessels on standby – HMC Valiant was deployed and responding to small boats arriving in the UK.

8.3.32 The tactical and air commanders summarised that the weather was not good in the Dover Strait. The forecast was set to improve from around 1000UTC onwards. They recorded their concern was that no air assets were launched to identify and track small boats on the way to the UK. Visibility was decreasing and small boats could be in danger as other vessels in the area may not see them.

8.3.33 At 0232UTC HMC Valiant called HM Coastguard to confirm which small boat incident they had been tasked to. They stated they had been called at 0130UTC by their control. They had also overheard the small boat taking water with 40 persons onboard and queried if it was the same small boat incident. HM Coastguard advised HMC Valiant was responding to the mayday relay, which was the same small boat as their original tasking. They were also informed that the Flamant should have been closer to the small boat incident.

8.3.34 At 0231UTC another 999 call was received by HM Coastguard. The number provided Personal 187 (associated to small boat incident CHARLIE). The caller asked for help and stated, “he was finished, and there were ladies”. The caller stated his name. The coastguard officer asked if he had called before. The caller replied he had and “location” and “send helicopter”. The officer asked how many persons were onboard. The caller replied 40 persons. The officer asked for a telephone number. The caller replied with send a helicopter please. The officer asked where they had departed from, and the caller replied - Calais. The officer asked what colour the boat was, but the caller stated they did not understand, and the water was close to his phone. The officer asked what colour the outside of the small boat was, and the caller replied that yes, they were outside, and the boat was finished, and they needed help.

8.3.35 The coastguard officer stated he could only help if he knew the location and colour of the boat. A second person from the small boat then asked if a WhatsApp was required and gave the telephone number PD 394. The coastguard officer then asked how many times they had called the UK as the number passed was familiar and that he had previously spoken with a caller and gave his name. The second person then replied that he was that person who had called previously. The officer then confirmed that a boat was on its way and would get to their position. The officer continued that when they



made further calls, they confused the Coastguard who then thought other small boats required rescue. The caller then asked where the boat was as they were dying.

- 8.3.36 The officer continued that he understood but they had to be patient and stay together as the boat was on its way, but the officer could not make the boat go any quicker. The caller stated that they had sunk and the second person on the small boat asked that they get there quickly, as his phone was close to the water. The Coastguard informed them that he did not have a time for the boat to arrive, but it would be less than 30 minutes. The officer then stated he appreciated everyone was scared but they needed to stop making the calls. The caller stated that it was cold, and he was in the water. The officer stated he understood but they need to stop calling as every time a call was received, the coastguard thought it was another small boat and he did not want to accidentally chase other boats. They needed to sit tight and wait for the rescue boat to arrive and to stop making calls unless something (over spoken by caller). The caller asked they be quick. The call then ended.
- 8.3.37 The call duration was 6 minutes and 58 seconds.
- 8.3.38 At 0235UTC HMC Valiant are recorded as proceeding to small boat incident CHARLIE in ViSION.

At 0237UTC an update to the French Tracker (Fig 18) was received. The tracker linked small boat incidents French Migrant 1, 7 and 9 as possible duplicate incidents. There were telephone numbers listed for French incident Migrant 7 as **Personal Data** 523 (the same number which called the Ferry Port of Dover and is recorded for small boat incident ALPHA and FOXTROT) and **Personal Data** 296.





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Ref FR	Ref UK	n° SITREP	Heure détection (UTC)	Secteur	Origine de l'alerte & Moyen de détection	Support embarquant les migrants (type, couleur, L, propulsion)	POB (Nif/enfant, avec/sans brassières)	SRU en ralliement ou en recherche	SRU au contact ou en sauvetage	Route/vitesse estimée	Heure dernière position (UTC)	Dernière position connue	SRU GB pour relai OJ Port FR de destination	Heure ou HPA du relai ou du débarquement (UTC)
1			2102	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	40	FLAMANT		284° / 6 NDS		51°07.40N / 001°42.67E	possible MIG 7 et 9	
2			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		266° / 6 NDS	0230	51°07.16N / 001°55.54E		
3			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		272° / 6 NDS	0230	51°07.00N / 001°50.50	ETA SRR UK 03 :30	
4			2220	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
5			2316	WISSANT	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	15			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
6			0013	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	30			276/4NDS	0000	51°04.58N / 002°25.06E		
7	A		0048	Boule MPC	SAMU 62	SEMI RIGIDE	33 13 femmes 8 enfants			305 / 4	0130	51°07.4N / 001°45.4E	SRR UK à 0130 UTC Possible MIG 1 et 9	PD 05 23 PD 02 96
8			0107	Berk	Police	SEMI RIGIDE GRIS	30 à 40							PD 09 87
9			0111	Dunkerque ?	tél migrant		33 3 enfants 6 femmes						possible MIG 7 et 1	PD 05 88 PD 05 05
10			0230	Boulée Sandéée	Flamant	NOIR	40	FLAMANT		300 / 6	0230	51°08 N / 001°51 E	ETA SRR UK 03 :30	

Fig 18

- 8.3.39 At 0237UTC small boat incident LIMA is created. Black migrant vessel, 40 POB, reported by Flamant, in position 51° 08N 001° 51E at 0230UTC course 300° Speed 6 knots.
- 8.3.40 At 0239UTC HMC Valiant requested permission to proceed contrary to Rule 10 of the Collision Regulations (ColRegs) as responding to a SAR incident. This was confirmed. Rule 10 states that ships crossing traffic lanes are required to do so "as nearly as practicable at right angles to the general direction of traffic flow." This makes it obvious to vessels transiting the area of the direction and course of other vessels using the traffic separation scheme. By not following Rule 10 requirements Valiant was able to proceed to the last known position more quickly.
- 8.3.41 At 0240UTC small boat incident GIN 041395-24112021 is identified as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE. The small boat telephone number was **Personal Data** 874. There were 40 persons onboard, they had departed from Calais. A second number for the small boat was **PD** 394.
- 8.3.42 At 0241UTC ViSION has recorded the permission given to HMC Valiant to disregard Rule 10.
- 8.3.43 At 0241UTC the captain of R163 called the ARCC back and stated that they could undertake the tasking but would need to keep a close eye on the weather. The crew would be called, and they would look to launch around 0330UTC. The air commander provided a general area for the aircraft to fly, but confirmed more detailed information would be obtained from MRCC Dover, he also confirmed that the first calls were being received from small boats. The air commander also stated that it was likely that once R163 was on task they would be required for the rest of their shift or until they were fatigued.
- 8.3.44 At 0242UTC Dover Port called HM Coastguard and reported they had received a further call from a migrant vessel – it was the same number as before **PD** 523 (this number is associated to ALPHA small boat incident). The call had cut out prior to it being connected to HM Coastguard.
- 8.3.45 At 0242UTC MRCC Gris-Nez contacted HM Coastguard. Gris-Nez were receiving calls regarding the French Migrant 7 incident which was UK small boat incident ALPHA. They enquired if HM Coastguard had a rescue boat responding. The operator stated that HMC Valiant were, however the

Flamant was closer to the small boat position. The coastguard officer reinforced that the Flamant was 3nm from the small boat. MRCC Gris-Nez replied that it was not the same small boat incident. HM Coastguard then questioned which small boat incident it was. Gris-Nes stated it was French Migrant 7. HM Coastguard confirmed that French migrant 7 was UK small boat incident CHARLIE which was to the south-west. MRCC Gris-Nez stated that the telephone number which called them was the UK small boat incident ALPHA. The coastguard officer stated that ALPHA and CHARLIE could be the same incident. MRCC Gris-Nez stated it was as they had the same telephone number.

- 8.3.46 HM Coastguard continued to inform MRCC Gris-Nez that there had been lots of calls from the small boat and HM Coastguard had broadcast a mayday relay, hoping for a response. The operator continued that HMC Valiant were 9.5nm away and the Flamant was the closer vessel to respond if the small boat was sinking. MRCC Gris-Nez stated that the Flamant was with French Migrant 10. HM Coastguard asked about the status of the small boat (Migrant 10) as the quickest response was the Flamant if the small boat was sinking. MRCC Gris-Nez confirmed again that it was with Migrant 10.
- 8.3.47 HM Coastguard stated again that they had broadcast a mayday relay for vessels to respond. MRCC Gris-Nez asked if the rescue boat was near the scene. The coastguard officer replied that they were not on scene, and they were making best speed. Gris-Nez stated that her colleagues were on the phone with the migrants. HM Coastguard confirmed that Valiant were proceeding, but the Flamant was closest and the other small boat with the Flamant was getting closer to the UK waters also. MRCC Gris-Nez asked for a time on scene for rescue and were informed that HMC Valiant was going as fast as possible. MRCC Gris-Nez asked how many minutes until on scene. HM Coastguard replied 35-40 minutes, that they were going as fast as they could, but the Flamant was much closer, but HMC Valiant was making best speed. The call then ended.
- 8.3.48 At 0243UTC small boat incident FOXTROT was assessed as being a repeat of small boat incident ALPHA. This was because the mobile telephone numbers were the same.
- 8.3.49 At 0247UTC the incident narrative was updated that the Search and Rescue Helicopter R163 would be airborne at 0330UTC for a 90-minute sortie.
- 8.3.50 At 0247UTC a further Mayday relay and DSC alert (Urgency) was broadcast.





- 8.3.51 At 0248UTC small boat incident GIN 041393-24112021 is closed as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE.
- 8.3.52 At 0249UTC R163 called HM Coastguard to inform them that they should be airborne at 0330UTC patrolling for small boats. They enquired if any distress calls were being received from small boats. The coastguard operator confirmed they had received distress calls and R163 requested coordination from the start, as they may struggle with the weather. R163 Captain stated they required HM Coastguard to tell them exactly what they were required to do. The Operator then transferred the call to the SMC(2). The captain then informed the SMC(2) that he requested clear instructions and asked if it was possible to provide something over the phone which they could start with and amend once they were proceeding.
- 8.3.53 The SMC(2) stated that they had numerous calls from small boats, however he thought some were repeat calls. He requested R163 search from MPC Buoy up to Sandettie Light Vessel and provided the latitude and longitude for Sandettie and a course and distance from Lydd. The SMC(2) continued that the tide would be in a north-east direction so the rectangle would be to the north-east to East Goodwin Light Vessel and for R163 to concentrate in that area. The SMC(2) continued that HMC Valiant were proceeding to one vessel and another two small boats were reported to be in that area also.
- 8.3.54 R163 stated that the weather at Lydd was not too bad, but there was a risk at 0500UTC of shallow fog, and they would monitor conditions. The SMC(2) confirmed the mission was to search, no rescue as it would not be safe to winch from a small boat. The captain confirmed they would take the life raft onboard. The SMC(2) confirmed that visibility was good at Dover with a cloud height of around 750 feet approximately.
- 8.3.55 At 0257UTC there was a WhatsApp call from Personal Data 057 on the stand-alone mobile phone, instead of a call through the 999 system to HM Coastguard, which was not answered. This is a mobile phone number associated to small boat incident CHARLIE. No call from this number is recorded on the HM Coastguard 999 system around this time.
- 8.3.56 At 0301UTC A further Mayday relay was broadcast, with a DSC urgency alert.
- 8.3.57 At 0301UTC small boat incident BRAVO is closed as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE.



- 8.3.58 At 0302UTC ALPHA small boat incident was closed as a repeat of FOXTROT small boat incident.
- 8.3.59 At 0306UTC a 999 call was received. They stated that they were in the middle of the sea on the way to England. They had lost their boat, and half their body was in the sea, and it was very cold. They had children, women and a pregnant lady and there were 35 people on board. They were asked for a name, but the call then cut out. No telephone number was available from the BT operator for the caller.
- 8.3.60 At 0306UTC in CHARLIE small boat incident the SMC(2) stated that small boat incidents ALPHA and FOXTROT (which are identified as duplicate incidents) could be linked to CHARLIE. The rationale is recorded as similar story and background noise.
- 8.3.61 At 0311UTC UK Border Force MCC called HM Coastguard. They asked if small boat incidents BRAVO and INDIA had been rescued by the French. The coastguard operator stated that BRAVO was a repeat of CHARLIE, and that small boat incident INDIA was a repeat of CHARLIE as the telephone numbers matched. The operator continued they had received multiple calls from the same vessel, and stated small boat incident INDIA was a repeat of CHARLIE as the numbers matched and they had the same story. HM Coastguard confirmed that the tracker had been updated to reflect the information and that no small boats had been rescued by the French.
- 8.3.62 HM Coastguard confirmed that HMC Valiant was proceeding to small boat incident CHARLIE which was southwest of the Sandettie Light Vessel, and the small boat incident was a Mayday as they were informed the small boat was full of water. The SMC(2) continued to explain the rationale for the mayday relay broadcast was to get vessels in the area including the Flamant to respond to the broadcast as part of SOLAS, but they had received no response from the Flamant.
- 8.3.63 HM Coastguard stated that the Flamant was on a heading away from the median line, so there was the potential for a further two or three small boats in the vicinity of the border south of the Sandettie Light Vessel. Once HMC Valiant had rescued small boat CHARLIE there would be other small boats in the area. UK Border Force MCC stated that they would see what the numbers rescued were and ascertain if HMC Valiant could deal, as they did not want to call out other assets at that time. MRCC Dover stated that R163 had been requested to search the area from MPC Buoy to Sandettie Light Vessel and back to the UK coast.



- 8.3.64 MRCC Dover continued that they had received a lot of calls from the same boat, and they had a WhatsApp for small boat CHARLIE. MRCC Dover confirmed that the small boats had also called the Port of Dover which had caused confusion. UK Border Force MCC stated that Valiant would be on scene soon. MRCC Dover stated that the small boats Flamant was alongside had 30 and 40 people onboard so it had the potential to rescue 110 persons, which pushed the limit of people onboard for HMC Valiant. The coastguard operator stated that small boats 10 and 11 were in UK waters according to the French Coast Guard and Flamant had departed the area.
- 8.3.65 HM Coastguard continued that they were unsure how many people were on small boat 11 or what their position was. The French Coast Guard also reported that French Migrant 3 was in UK waters and that would be to the south of HMC Valiant, in the same place as small boat CHARLIE. The coastguard officer stated there was another small boat to the north of Sandettie Light Vessel and another near Sandettie Light Vessel. – migrant 10 and 11 were near Sandettie Light vessel.
- 8.3.66 The coastguard officer stated that R163 would lift in 30 minutes (they operate at 45 minutes readiness for nighttime taskings) and would be on scene 15 minutes after that. R163 also had a life raft to deploy if required. MRCC Dover stated that all the small boats were in the same area.
- 8.3.67 UK Border Force MCC asked if the fixed wing aircraft was not able to fly due to the fog. This was confirmed. The coastguard officer stated he would now call HMC Valiant via Airwave and inform them of the other small boat in the area. The call then ended.
- 8.3.68 At 0311UTC WhatsApp log indicated a call was made to the stand-alone mobile telephone, instead of a call through the 999 system to HM Coastguard, from [Personal Data] 057. This was not answered. No call from this number is recorded on the HM Coastguard 999 system around this time.
- 8.3.69 At 0312UTC there was a WhatsApp call from [Personal Data] 057 to the stand-alone mobile telephone, instead of a call through the 999 system to HM Coastguard. This was not answered by the Coastguard operators. No call from this number is recorded on the HM Coastguard 999 system around this time.
- 8.3.70 At 0311UTC a 999 call was received. The caller stated they were in the water, finished and dying and requested help. There was shouting on the call and the caller stated there were 40 persons onboard. The operator asked where





they were – they stated in the water in English waters and continued their request for help. The operator could not get any other information and advised the caller to re dial 999 so that he might be able to obtain their position. The caller stated he had already dialled 999. The operator stated that if that had not worked, then it was possible they were still in French waters and advised to re dial 999 to see if position information could be made available. The call then cut out.

- 8.3.71 At 0318UTC HM Coastguard advised HMC Valiant that the French Coast Guard had advised that there may be other small boats in the vicinity to the north of the Sandettie Light Vessel. They confirmed that they were in the vicinity and were approaching the area slowly.
- 8.3.72 At 0319UTC small boat incident MIKE was created in position 51° 09N 001° 46E course 330° Speed 5 knots. This was a sighting by Flamant and was French migrant 11.
- 8.3.73 At 0320UTC further Mayday relay and Distress DSC was broadcast.
- 8.3.74 At 0322UTC an update to the French Tracker (Fig 19) was received.



**OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – DRAFT – NOT FOR ONWARD DISTRIBUTION WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION FROM HM  
COASTGUARD**

Ref FR	Ref UK	n° SITREP	Heure détection (UTC)	Secteur	Origine de l'alerte & Moyen de détection	Support embarquant les migrants (type, couleur, L, propulsion)	POB (H/F/enfant, avec/sans brassières)	SRU en ralliement ou en recherche	SRU au contact ou en sauvetage	Route/vitesse estimée	Heure dernière position (UTC)	Dernière position connue	SRU GB pour relai OU Port FR de destination	Heure ou HPA du relai ou du débarquement (UTC)
1			2102	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	40	FLAMANT		284° / 6 NDS		51°07.40N / 001°42.67E	possible MIG 7 et 9	
2			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		266° / 6 NDS	0230	51°07.16N / 001°55.54E		
3			2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		272° / 6 NDS	03.10	51°07.00N / 001°43.50	SRR UK	
4			<del>2230</del>	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
5			<del>2316</del>	WISSANT	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	15			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
6			0013	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	30			276/4NDS	00.00	51°04.58N / 002°25.06E		
7	A		0048	Bouée MPC	SAMU 62	SEMI RIGIDE	33 13 femmes 8 enfants			305 / 4	0130	51°07.4N / 001°45.4E	SRR UK Possible MIG 1 et 9	<div>PD 23 96</div>
8			0107	Berck	Police	SEMI RIGIDE GRIS	30 à 40							<div>PD 9 87</div>
9			0111	Dunkerque ?	tél migrant		33 3 enfants 6 femmes						possible MIG 7 et 1	<div>PD 88 95</div>
10			0230	Bouée Sanddée	Flamant	NOIR	40	FLAMANT		300 / 6	03.00	51°10 N / 001°47 E	SRR UK	
11			0256	Bouée Sanddée	Flamant			FLAMANT		330 / 5	03.00	51°09 N / 001°46 E	SRR UK	

Fig 19





The position was 51° 09.027N 001° 45.341E. This position message was timed at 0221UTC.

- 8.3.80 At 0333UTC there was a message to Personal Data 057 (number associated to CHARLIE small boat incident) from the stand-alone mobile phone stating “re send your position please”. No response was received. The two ticks for this message remain grey for this message, previous messages had blue ticks.
- 8.3.81 At 0334UTC HMC Valiant reported two potential targets on their night vision goggles. Range 7 cables from HMC Valiant’s position 51° 09.6N 001° 47.5E. One vessel appeared to be stopped and the other was still moving, in the direction of the UK.
- 8.3.82 At 0339UTC the SMC(2) confirmed there was no further requirement for mayday relay broadcasts as HMC Valiant was in the vicinity of two targets.
- 8.3.83 At 0343UTC ARCC reported R163 was serviceable and was preparing for taxiing.
- 8.3.84 At 0348UTC MRCC Gris-Nez informed HM Coastguard that the small boat assigned to small boat incident LIMA, was in the UK search and rescue region. HM Coastguard confirmed that the asset in the vicinity was HMC Valiant who were searching for CHARLIE and that multiple targets had been spotted and they were investigating.
- 8.3.85 At 0348UTC HMC Valiant reported they were on scene and engaged with an unlit small boat which had stopped in position 51° 10.4N 001° 47.8E. The small boat had approximately 40 persons onboard. HM Coastguard advised that this was likely to be small boat CHARLIE and provided the name of the caller believed to be onboard and telephone number ending 057. HMC Valiant confirmed they would ask the question when they engaged. HMC Valiant reported other small boats in the area, at least one. HM Coastguard confirmed that there could be an extra one or two targets in the vicinity, however some could be repeats from multiple calls and reports from the French. HMC Valiant confirmed they had seen at least one other small boat. HM Coastguard confirmed that at least two small boats sighted, and they would get more information from R163 when airborne. The information was recorded in ViSION at 0350UTC.
- 8.3.86 At 0350UTC ARCC reported that R163 were airborne and proceeding.



- 8.3.87 At 0354UTC R163 was tasked to small boat incident CHARLIE. It had 2 hours and 40 minutes endurance. R163 were informed that HMC Valiant were on scene with a small boat in position 51° 10.4N 001° 47.8E. One other small boat had been sighted. R163 were asked to search around Sandettie Light Vessel with either an expanding square search or a parallel track, which ever they thought was most appropriate to search for other vessels in the area.
- 8.3.88 An expanding square search pattern (Fig 21) is used when the target is confidently anticipated to be within a relatively small area and the search needs to commence at the Datum.

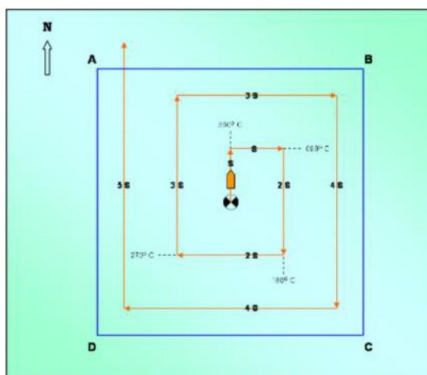


Fig 21

- 8.3.89 A parallel track search pattern (Fig 22) is used to cover rectangular search areas determined in the search area determination phase for any one of the non-Rapid Response models. The pattern follows the long side of the search area, rather than the short side and can be conducted by a single or multiple units.

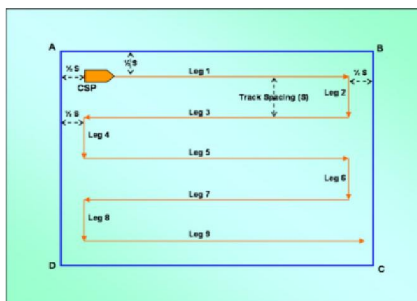


Fig 22

- 8.3.90 At 0355UTC R163 is recorded as proceeding in ViSION.
- 8.3.91 At 0358UTC small boat incident INDIA is closed as a repeat of small boat incident CHARLIE. Migrant 9 with 33 persons onboard including 3 infants and 6 females, reported at 0111UTC.



- 8.3.92 At 0403UTC R163 was reported as being on scene and commencing search. The C-Scope track for R163 for the search is below (Fig 23).

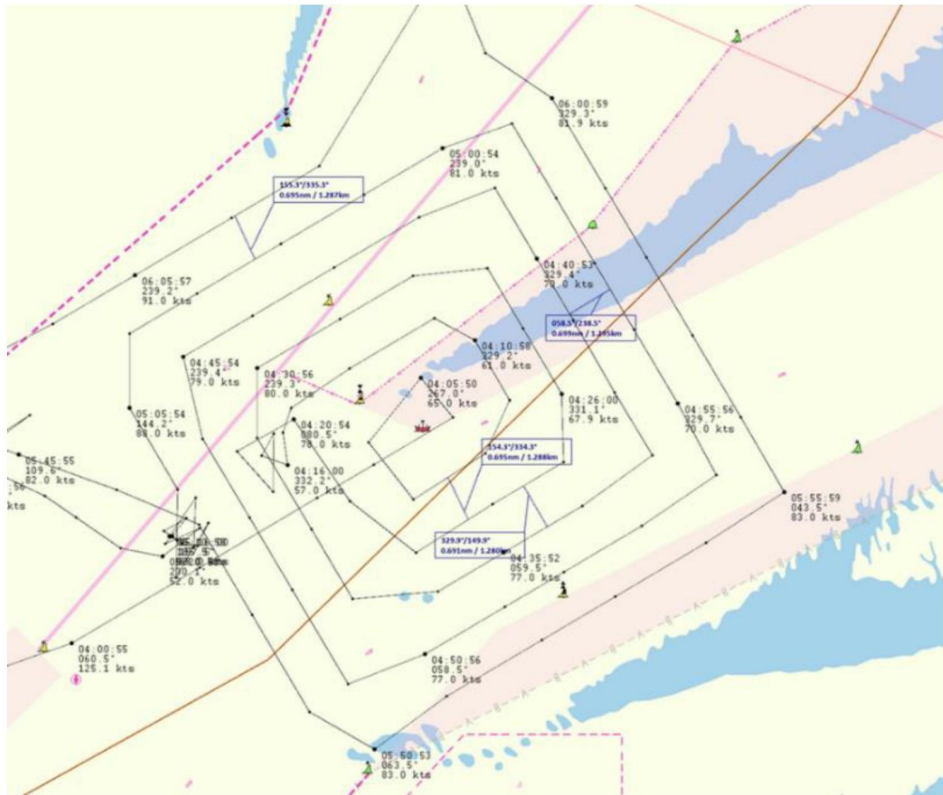


Fig 23

- 8.3.93 At 0404UTC The tactical commander(1) sent a Flash message in ViSION to the network that he was taking a break and could be contacted via telephone if there were any incidents which required his attention.
- 8.3.94 At 0414UTC HMC Valiant reported that the information they had received from the small boat, those rescued claimed not to have called the coastguard. HMC Valiant stated that was what they were told, but they did not know if it was true or not, it was from one person who spoke reasonably good English. HM Coastguard asked HMC Valiant to standby whilst they tried to call the telephone number for the small boat.
- 8.3.95 At 0416UTC a call was made via WhatsApp to **Personal Data** 057. The call failed.
- 8.3.96 At 0418UTC R163 advised HM Coastguard that they had a target in position 51° 09.06N 001° 43.9E. The small boat was light grey and had 30 persons





onboard, was under power and heading westerly, with no imminent threat to persons onboard and no immediate danger to life. R163 continued to search.

- 8.3.97 At 0419UTC HM Coastguard asked HMC Valiant what colour the small boat was, that they had rescued. HMC Valiant responded that they did not know as it was dark but would ask their RHIB when it returned. HM Coastguard advised that small boat incident LIMA, which was French Migrant 10 was reported as a black small boat.
- 8.3.98 At 0421UTC HM Coastguard advised R163 that HMC Valiant would attend the small boat sighted as soon as all persons had been rescued from the first small boat.
- 8.3.99 At 0423UTC HMC Valiant reported the small boat was black in colour. HM Coastguard stated that the small boat was probably small boat incident LIMA, which would match the description being black and reported from the French Coast Guard to have had approximately 40 persons onboard. HMC Valiant responded that it could be one and the same, but there were a lot of reports. They confirmed they would deal with those rescued. HM Coastguard stated that they would work on the small boat potentially being LIMA and continue the search for CHARLIE and other small boats.
- 8.3.100 At 0436UTC HMC Valiant reported all persons rescued from the small boat and the vessel had been marked and had a strobe. HMC Valiant reported 35 persons rescued, 20 males, 2 females and 13 minors.
- 8.3.101 HMC Valiant proceeded to a new position (identified earlier by R163). At 0451UTC HMC Valiant received an updated position of the second small boat from R163. The position was timed at 0432UTC 51° 08.0N 001° 41.8E.
- 8.3.102 At 0451UTC HM Coastguard recorded in ViSION that they had copied a transmission between R163 and HMC Valiant. The updated position for the small boat was 51° 08.0N 001° 41.8E.
- 8.3.103 At 0453UTC an updated tracker (Fig 24) was received from MRCC Gris-Nez.



12			0343	Berck	Tel migrant		50	SNS Berck	SNS Berck	Stop		50°27'N 001°32'E		
13			0349	Chenal Dunkerque	CMA CGM Mermoz	GRIS	30	Escaut		310 / 4.5	04:40	51°05' / 002°00'		

Fig 24

## 8.4 Timeline 0500UTC to 0659UTC

- 8.4.1 At 0505UTC HM Coastguard received a call from Kent Police who had received an emergency call from a small boat at sea. A small boat incident was created in ViSION and reference OSCAR allocated. Information passed was that it was from an UK Mobile number [PD] 012, Eastings and Northings, small black boat engine working, taking water, 32 persons on board, position 510846.75N 001 3903.24E semi major and minor Of 8M, name of the caller was provided.
- 8.4.2 At 0505UTC HM Coastguard created small boat incident OSCAR. The caller stated they were on a boat, and it was sinking, they could not see the land. There were 32 persons onboard, including families. Their engine was running but they did not have much fuel. They had red lifejackets and there were a lot of waves. Their telephone number was [PD] 012 and it was a black boat.
- 8.4.3 At 0508UTC HM Coastguard received another call via DEIT from the Metropolitan Police. The caller advised that his friend was in a boat crossing the Channel, no other details or information was provided by the Police.
- At 0511UTC it is recorded in ViSION that R163 at the end of their endurance would return to base and not return. R163 provided a report of their second target at 0509UTC in position 51° 08.0N 001° 41.8E. They were using the IR camera, so no description or colour.
- 8.4.4 At 0511UTC position 51° 8.46N 001° 39.03E is entered into the ViSION narrative for OSCAR small boat incident.
- 8.4.5 At 0514UTC a new small boat incident was created in ViSION and given the reference NOVEMBER.
- 8.4.6 At 0518UTC a call was received from MRCC Gris-Nez to HM Coastguard. They had taken a call from a small boat who was thought to be in the vicinity of HMC Valiant. They reported that they could see a helicopter, there were 40 persons on board, including one child, they were wearing lifejackets, and the vessel was green. They had two telephone numbers for the small boat [PD] [PD] 263 and [Personal Data] 290.
- 8.4.7 At 0519UTC R163 reported a third target in position 51° 08.8N 001° 37.7E. They reported that they had lost sight of the target due to a fault on the



camera, but the vessel was underway and there was no imminent risk to life, confirmed by a crew member of R163.

- 8.4.8 At 0521UTC HMC Valiant reported to HM Coastguard that they were in position 51° 08.1N 001° 41.2E and were engaging with a migrant vessel, which was making way.
- 8.4.9 At 0527UTC the SMC(2) made a comment in LIMA small boat incident that he believed the small boat that had been picked up by HMC Valiant at 0423UTC and all migrants rescued at 0436UTC, was LIMA small boat incident.
- 8.4.10 At 0528UTC R163 updated HM Coastguard with a further position for the small boat 51° 08.8N 001° 36.4E heading westerly, vessel was 8 metres in length, with approximately 30 persons onboard, with no sign of immediate distress. R163 also advised the Motor Tanker ELISABETH that their heading would intercept the track of the small boat (this message meant that the motor tanker was on a collision course with the small boat carrying migrants.) At 0537UTC R163 advised the MT ELISABETH that they had safely passed the small boat and could continue with their passage.
- 8.4.11 At 0524UTC HM Coastguard received a call from the Metropolitan Police who had received a call reporting a vessel possibly near Le Manche. The information was very confused and unclear. The first informant was relaying information. The first informants name was provided, and he was calling for his friend (name provided), who had seen a social media message from his friend (name provided), who was on a small boat near Le Manche. They provided two telephone numbers [PD] 194 and [PD] 444. It was recorded that the person was possibly in the water near Le Manche, Calais and the first informant was not sure if he was in the water or on a boat.
- 8.4.12 At 0531UTC HM Coastguard were informed that the Tekever Drone was planning to get airborne from 0600UTC.
- 8.4.13 At 0531UTC HM Coastguard received a further update from the Metropolitan Police via DEIT. The original caller's number was [PD] 444. The type of boat was unknown, and the amount of people was unknown. The informant was passing information on from social media.
- 8.4.14 At 0532UTC HM Coastguard received a further update via DEIT that the name of the informant that had called the Metropolitan Police was provided and his number [PD] 194.



- 8.4.15 At 0532UTC HM Coastguard started incident call collection for small boat incident PAPA. They stated that there was a helicopter ahead of them and their mobile number was [REDACTED] PD 012. A position N510856.65 Y E013535.74 was obtained the caller gave their name and then the call cut out. This was the same number as that recorded in small boat incidents OSCAR and NOVEMBER
- 8.4.16 At 0532UTC the air commander recorded in their ViSION narrative that there had been a briefing with the UAV Operator and the intention was to get the drone airborne. Deconfliction issues with R163 were identified. The drone was scheduled to commence its flight operations at 0600UTC.
- 8.4.17 At 0536UTC small boat incident PAPA was created in ViSION.
- 8.4.18 At 0541UTC small boat incident PAPA was identified as a repeat of November, (same telephone numbers). OSCAR was also linked to these small boat incidents.
- 8.4.19 At 0542UTC the SMC(2) commented in the NOVEMBER small boat incident that the small boat had been observed by R163 and it was possible it was a repeat of DELTA small boat incident.
- 8.4.20 At 0543UTC R163 reported a small boat on a westerly to northerly course 4.5nm from Valiant on a course of 289° at a speed of 5 knots. They reported no immediate danger to the small boat, so would continue with their search. ViSION was updated that R163 had informed them that there were no visible signs of immediate danger with NOVEMBER small boat. The small boat was underway at a speed of 4 knots on a westerly course. The SMC(2) downgraded the small boat incident to the alert phase based on the information.
- 8.4.21 At 0543UTC an entry is recorded in the migrant administration incident that PAPA in position 51° 08.933N 001° 35.498E had R163 overhead.
- 8.4.22 At 0544UTC R163 reported the position for the last target as 51° 09.1N 001° 34.3E and they were resuming their search.
- 8.4.23 At 0555UTC HMC Valiant informed HM Coastguard that all persons had been rescued from the small boat. The small boat was light grey in colour and had been abandoned in position 51° 08.06N 001° 41.13E. The coastguard officer asked if anyone from the small boat had called the emergency services. HMC Valiant confirmed they would get back to HM Coastguard with information.



- 8.4.24 At 0557UTC the tactical commander(1) sent a Flash message to inform the network that he had returned from their break.
- 8.4.25 At 0558UTC HMC Valiant reported to HM Coastguard that the deck team confirmed that two rescued persons spoke English and claimed that they had not called UK authorities. The coastguard operator asked if they had any names.
- 8.4.26 At 0605UTC HMC Valiant reported to HM Coastguard that the second small boat rescued had 31 males. Valiant replied that they could not obtain any names, but one person claimed he had seen someone make a call.
- 8.4.27 At 0607UTC HM Coastguard tasked HMC Valiant to a third small boat in the vicinity of the Southwest Goodwin Buoy. This was the target sighted by R163.
- 8.4.28 At 0609UTC R163 confirmed they were returning to base, as they had completed their search and were released from the small boat incident by the SMC(2).
- 8.4.29 At 0609UTC DELTA small boat incident was upgraded to the alert phase from the monitoring phase, and the SMC(2) recorded rationale was the small boat was believed to be in UK waters and that it was possible that it was a repeat of NOVEMBER small boat incident, which had been classified as the alert phase as R163 reported no immediate distress and the vessel was making way to the UK.
- 8.4.30 At 0616UTC ARCC recorded in their ViSION narrative that R163 spotted the last small boat in position 51° 09.3N 001° 31.0E.
- 8.4.31 At 0616UTC ARCC informed R163 that the Tekever drone was still on the ground and would not lift until 0630UTC.
- 8.4.32 At 0617UTC the call collection information was recorded in ViSION for small boat incident QUEBEC. There were 40 persons onboard, French migrant 17 and the Flamant was with the small boat in position 51° 06.4N 001° 45.9E. The small boat was dark grey in colour and the estimated time of arrival to UK waters at approximately 0637UTC.
- 8.4.33 At 0620UTC MRCC Gris-Nez called HM Coastguard and informed them that they had received a call from a small boat in need of assistance. The position was 51° 09.3N 001° 32.18E persons onboard unknown, but there was one pregnant woman. No names or telephone numbers were available. The small boat still had an engine. In addition, they reported that the Flamant was





escorting Migrant 17 with 40 persons on board, dark grey small boat in position 51° 006.4N 001° 45.9E. This was approximately 20 minutes away from UK waters.

- 8.4.34 At 0627UTC ARCC recorded R163 was back at their base.
- 8.4.35 At 0629UTC HMC Valiant reported they had located the third small boat in position 51° 08.9N 001° 31.5E. They were launching their rigid hull inflatable boat to investigate.
- 8.4.36 At 0631UTC HMC Valiant reported that the third target (small boat) was stopped in the water, and multiple casualties were waving.
- 8.4.37 At 0636UTC HM Coastguard informed Kent Police via Airwave radio that there had been many small boat incidents, but no small boats had made UK shores yet as far as HM Coastguard knew (no beach landings reported).
- 8.4.38 At 0636UTC a second UK Border Force vessel, HMC Hunter were informed of small boat incident QUEBEC.
- 8.4.39 At 0641UTC HMC Hunter proceeded to small boat incident QUEBEC.
- 8.4.40 At 0644UTC ARCC confirmed that the drone AR3 would be supporting the small boat incidents.
- 8.4.41 At 0643UTC the SMC(2) recorded in small boat incident QUEBEC that small boat was being escorted by Flamant and that HMC Hunter was tasked to rescue the vessel as it approached UK waters.
- 8.4.42 At 0646UTC HMC Valiant was recorded on scene for NOVEMBER small boat incident and are no longer assigned to CHARLIE small boat incident.
- 8.4.43 At 0646UTC UK Border Force vessel HMC Safeguard was tasked to small boat incident NOVEMBER to retrieve the small boat once the persons were rescued by HMC Valiant.
- 8.4.44 At 0651UTC an update to the French tracker was received from MRCC Gris-Nez, Fig 25



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Ref FR	Ref UK	n° SITREP	Heure détection (UTC)	Secteur	Origine de l'alerte & Moyen de détection	Support embarquant les migrants (type, couleur, L, propulsion)	POB (H/F/enfant, avechans, brésiliens)	SRU en ralliement ou en recherche	SRU au contact ou en sauvetage	Route/vitesse estimée	Heure dernière position (UTC)	Dernière position connue	SRU GB pour relai ou Port FR de destination	Heure ou HPA du relai ou du débarquement (UTC)
1		3501	2102	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	40	FLAMANT		284° / 6 NDS		51°07.40N / 001°42.67E	possible MIG 7 et 9	
2		3502	2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		253° / 5 NDS	03:19	51°07.16N / 001°55.54E		
3		3503	2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		272° / 6 NDS	03:10	51°07.00N / 001°43.50	SRR UK	
4		3504	2230	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
5		3505	2316	WISSANT	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	15			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
6			0013	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	30			276/4NDS	00:00	51°04.58N / 002°25.00E		
7	A	3507	0048	Bouée MPC	SAMU 62	SEMI RIGIDE	33 13 femmes 8 enfants			305 / 4	0130	51°07.4N / 001°45.4E	SRR UK Possible MIG 1 et 9	
8		3508	0107	Berck	Police	SEMI RIGIDE GRIS	30 à 40							
9		3509	0111	Dunkerque ?	tel migrant		33 3 enfants 6 femmes						possible MIG 7 et 1	
10		3510	0230	Bouée Sandettié	Flamant	NOIR	40	FLAMANT		300 / 6	03:00	51°10 N / 001°47 E	SRR UK	
11		3511	0256	Bouée Sandettié	Flamant			FLAMANT		330 / 5	03:00	51°09 N / 001°46 E	SRR UK	
12			0343	Berck	Tel migrant		50	SNS Berck	Abelle	340 / 4	04:40	50°30 N / 001°29 E		
13			0349	Chenal Dunkerque	CMA CGM Mermoz			Escaut	Escaut	315 / 5,5	06:00	51°05N / 001°59E		
14			0449	Berck	SNS Fournier	NOIRE	40 1 femme	SNS Berck	Abelle			50°27.8N / 001°31.9E		
15			0453	Malo	Sémaphore DK			Escaut		stop	05:00	51°03,8 / 002°23,8		Demande assistance - ETA Escaut 0700 UTC
16			0453	Malo	Sémaphore DK					300 / 4	05:00	51°03,8 / 002°23,8		
17			0518	Dyck	Flamant	foncé	40	Flamant	Flamant	280 / 6,5	05:50	51°06 / 001°49		
18			0520	Le Portel	Tel migrant					268 / 4,5	05:20	50°42N / 001°32E		
19			0530	Slack	Tel migrant					270 / 4	05:40	50°48 / 001°33		
20			0547	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	Sémaphore DK					287 / 5,6	05:50	51°03 / 002°24		

- 8.4.45 At 0651UTC HM Coastguard received a call from Sussex Police who had received a 999 call from a boat out to sea. There were 35 persons onboard including women and children. The small boat was black in colour. They had a telephone number [Personal Data] 946. The first informant gave their name and had no idea where he was or where he had departed from. A small boat incident was created with the above information at 0655UTC.

## **8.5 Timeline 0700UTC to 0859UTC**

- 8.5.1 At 0703UTC HMC Valiant reported they were returning to Dover Port, once they had rescued all persons.
- 8.5.2 At 0716UTC ARCC assigned CG26 (fixed wing aircraft) to small boat operations in the English Channel.
- 8.5.3 At 0716UTC HMC Hunter proceeded to MPC Buoy to await the French Warship Flamant and to rescue the small boat it was escorting for small boat incident QUEBEC.
- 8.5.4 At 0717UTC HMC Hunter was released from small boat incident DELTA, and they were assigned to small boat incident QUEBEC.
- 8.5.5 At 0720UTC HM Coastguard were informed that the Flamant had reported that the small boat for small boat Incident QUEBEC had broken down. The small boat refused to be rescued by the Flamant.
- 8.5.6 At 0722UTC HMC Valiant informed HM Coastguard that they had rescued all persons from the third small boat. They were waiting for the deck crew to confirm the headcount. They were at capacity with persons rescued so would return back to Dover port. Their position was 51° 08.5N 001° 31.2E.
- 8.5.7 At 0724UTC HMC Safeguard informed HM Coastguard that they were operational and were recovering small boats from which people had been rescued.
- 8.5.8 At 0726UTC call collection for small boat incident ROMEO was created. The call cut out before the BT operator was able to connect the caller to the Coastguard. The mobile telephone [PD] 697 was recorded, but the signal was very poor. The BT operator thought the person said, "in the water" and something about Dover. They also asked if they were speaking to the Police.



- 8.5.9 At 0726UTC HMC Safeguard reported to HM Coastguard they had located two other small boats abandoned. There were no positions recorded for the small boats. The small boats were marked when abandoned to ensure they were not mistaken for a SAR incident.
- 8.5.10 At 0727UTC HMC Valiant reported that for their third small boat rescue the headcount was 32 persons rescued with 21 males, 4 females and 7 minors.
- 8.5.11 At 0728UTC AR3 (drone) activity message was received into ViSION.
- 8.5.12 At 0729UTC CG26 (fixed wing aircraft) informed HM Coastguard that they were due to depart Doncaster bound Southend. They were advised that the TEKEVER drone was airborne and there were a number of small boat incidents. They requested CG26 proceed to Southend and await tasking. The information was recorded in the migrant admin incident.
- 8.5.13 At 0732UTC small boat incident ROMEO was created.
- 8.5.14 At 0738UTC call collection for small boat incident TANGO was recorded. This was French migrant incident 13. The last position was reported in the UK search and rescue region – 51° 08.65N 001° 45.86. This was an estimated position as contact was with the asset who then departed the scene. Course for the small boat was 295° and a speed of 3 knots. It was a black boat with approximately 30 persons on board. TANGO small boat incident was created at 0740UTC.
- 8.5.15 At 0745UTC the SMC(4) made an entry into the ROMEO small boat incident that the Advanced Mobile Location (AML) details for the mobile phone was around the location of CHARLIE, MIKE and TANGO. The SMC(4) stated that he believed it to be the same small boat incident.
- 8.5.16 At 0747UTC call collection for small boat incident UNIFORM. The mobile number was PD 160. The first informant stated that they had been in contact with people on the boat, who were family friends. The caller stated that their boat was stranded between Dover and Dunkirk. People on the boat had called previously and said there was an emergency. There were 20 persons onboard, and it was a black and yellow boat. The caller then relayed information from someone with them that there was someone onboard who had died but they did not know how. Records for the 24 November landings confirm that no deceased persons were landed in the UK that day.



- 8.5.17 At 0750UTC HMC Hunter was tasked to small boat incident TANGO and was released from small boat incident DELTA.
- 8.5.18 At 0753UTC HMC Hunter was proceeding to small boat incident TANGO.
- 8.5.19 At 0754UTC call collection for small boat incident SIERRA was recorded. This was a relay of information from MRCC Gris-Nez of a report from the Spirit of France. A migrant rib, white in colour in position 50° 58.6N 001° 43.5E on a course of 264° and speed of 5 knots, with 8-10 persons onboard, some people had lifejackets. There were no French units in attendance.
- 8.5.20 At 0757UTC ARCC recorded in their ViSION narrative that they had spoken to 2Excel who confirmed the fixed wing aircraft was unable to support small boat operations in the English Channel, due to a technical issue with the aircraft.
- 8.5.21 At 0757UTC the Advanced Mobile Location (AML) for the first informant for small boat incident UNIFORM placed them on Military Road. The caller was a British female, with a foreign sounding person in the background passing information. HM Coastguard sent some of the Folkstone Team.
- 8.5.22 At 0758UTC small boat incident VICTOR was created. This was a report from a passing vessel Silver Bowers to HM Coastguard. The small boat had 30 persons onboard in position 50° 45N 001° 13E. Some persons had lifejackets. The small boat was in the French search and rescue region.
- 8.5.23 At 0800UTC call collection for small boat Incident WHISKEY commenced. It was from mobile PD 697. They stated that there were women and babies in the UK water, they were near a red ship and about to drown. There were 35 persons on board.
- 8.5.24 At 0800UTC information from MRCC Gris-Nez that French migrant 13, last known position was in the UK search and rescue region 51° 08.65N 001° 45.86E (this was an estimated position as French asset went to another small boat incident). The small boat course 295° and a speed of 3 knots. It was a black small boat with 30 persons onboard. This information was linked to small boat incident TANGO.
- 8.5.25 At 0801UTC information from MRCC Gris-Nez that French Warship Flamant was escorting French migrant 17 (QUEBEC) with 40 persons onboard in position 51° 06.4N 001° 45.9E. The small boat was light grey in colour. The estimated time of arrival to UK waters was 20 minutes. There was no further



information recorded in the ViSION log for this small boat incident and the incident was closed at 1803UTC with a generic statement from the tactical commander(2) and SMC(4) used to close open small boat incidents around this time.

- 8.5.26 At 0803UTC a call from Kent Police reported they had received a call from telephone number PD 697. The position coordinates they had recorded on their system were N510846.18 E013947.34. The call cut out so there was no other information. The telephone number was recorded at 0806UTC in the ViSION log as being the same as the number recorded in small boat incident ROMEO. It was also the same number for small boat incident WHISKEY.
- 8.5.27 At 0807UTC there was a ViSION entry that the Cargo Vessel Saga Freya was in the same position as small boat incident WHISKEY and the cargo vessel had a red hull.
- 8.5.28 At 0808UTC small boat incident WHISKEY was closed as a repeat of small boat incident ROMEO. The rationale had been recorded previously in the small boat incident.
- 8.5.29 At 0808UTC HMC Hunter informed HM Coastguard that they had two small boats visual, and they would assess the sea worthiness of both and inform which had priority for rescue. This related to small boat incident TANGO.
- 8.5.30 At 0816UTC call collection for small boat incident XRAY commenced with a report from MRCC Gris-Nez that the vessel Abeille Languedoc was near French migrant 12 in position 50° 37.13N 001° 05.45E. The black small boat was in the UK search and rescue region, with approximately 50 persons on board, some with lifejackets. The incident for XRAY was created at 0818UTC.
- 8.5.31 At 0818UTC ARCC recorded in their ViSION narrative CG25B (fixed wing) had disappeared from the tracker. It reported CG25 had a technical issue, and engineers were finalising the issue and MRCC Dover were aware. They expected the issue to be resolved by 0900UTC.
- 8.5.32 At 0819UTC Kent Police informed HM Coastguard of a further call from small boat incident NOVEMBER. The call had cut out again. The position recorded was E13947.34 N510846.18.
- 8.5.33 At 0820UTC the Tekever Drone was overhead the small boat for incident VICTOR.





- 8.5.34 At 0822UTC HMC Hunter was recorded as being called and proceeding to small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.5.35 At 0823UTC HMC Hunter informed HM Coastguard that they were on scene with the second vessel they had visual at 0808UTC. It was a black 10 metre small boat with approximately 30 persons onboard. The intention was to rescue those onboard and then they would then proceed to Dover Port to offload.
- 8.5.36 At 0824UTC HM Coastguard tasked Border Force (BF) Hurricane to small boat incident XRAY in position 50° 37.13N 001° 05.45E. It was to a black small boat with approximately 50 persons onboard. BF Hurricane confirmed they would make best speed and had 38 nautical miles to run. They were informed of two vessels in the vicinity.
- 8.5.37 At 0827UTC BF Hurricane was re-tasked to small boat incident YANKEE, and Dungeness RNLI Lifeboat was called and tasked to small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.5.38 At 0827UTC the vessel Edzard Cirksena reported they had sighted a small boat at 0822UTC. The small boat was abeam of port side in position 51° 11.3N 001° 43.3E with lots of people onboard. The small boat incident was created with reference YANKEE.
- 8.5.39 At 0829UTC Dungeness RNLI Lifeboat were tasked to small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.5.40 At 0829UTC BF Hurricane were recorded as tasked and proceeding to small boat incident YANKEE.
- 8.5.41 At 0829UTC call collection for small boat incident ZULU commenced. Telephone number [REDACTED] PD [REDACTED] 380. The first informant stated they were in the sea in a boat with 45 persons onboard, which included 3 children and only half of the people had lifejackets. They believed they were near New Romney, then the call cut out.
- 8.5.42 At 0830UTC the RNLI Launch Authority approved the launch request for Dungeness Lifeboat. HM Coastguard were informed that the lifeboat capacity for those rescued was 50 persons and if the second small boat made UK waters, they would not be able to rescue both small boats.
- 8.5.43 At 0830UTC BF Hurricane informed HM Coastguard they had an estimated time of arrival to small boat incident YANKEE at 0900UTC (30 minutes).



- 8.5.44 At 0833UTC AR3 (drone) was called and proceeding to small boat incident VICTOR, estimated time of arrival was 0903UTC.
- 8.5.45 At 0840UTC an update was made in ZULU small boat incident that the position for the small boat had been repositioned in the UK search and rescue region in the vicinity of Dungeness near to the separation zones. The operator stated that based on the number of persons on board and position it could be a repeat of small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.5.46 At 0841UTC AR3 (drone) is recorded in small boat incident ZULU as being in the area looking for small boat VICTOR.
- 8.5.47 At 0847UTC small boat incident ALPHA1 call collection commenced. The first informant stated that they were in the UK sea from last night. He gave his name and stated there were 40-45 persons onboard with 5-7 children and 10 women, some people had lifejackets. All were very cold. He could not see land but thought he was near to Hastings. A position was recorded in the call collection 50 45 5408 1023903. Telephone number was Personal Data 119. The line was weak throughout the call. The caller stated no one else had called emergency services from the boat. He stated he could see a ship in the distance and the engine for the small boat was working. The small boat incident was created at 0905UTC.
- 8.5.48 At 0848UTC AR3 (drone) informed HM Coastguard that they had eyes on a black small boat in position 50° 50.91N 001° 12.9E course 280° speed 6 knots. Some of the persons had lifejackets and there was 40+ persons onboard. This information was linked to small boat incident ZULU.
- 8.5.49 At 0848UTC an updated position was provided for small boat incident VICTOR from Dover CNIS 50° 39.1N 001° 09.55E.
- 8.5.50 At 0850UTC an updated position for small boat incident XRAY /YANKEE was received from Dover CNIS at 0845UTC 50° 39.1N 001° 02.9E, course 310° speed 3.6 knots.
- 8.5.51 At 0850UTC a WhatsApp message attempted for the telephone number for small boat incident ZULU was not successful.
- 8.5.52 At 0851UTC HMC Hunter informed HM Coastguard they had rescued 28 people from UK Border Force reference M961. They had approximately 60 persons onboard. UK Border Force reference M960 was black small boat, approx. 34 persons onboard. The second small boat M961, grey in colour, 10



metres in length with 28 persons onboard. HM Coastguard asked if anyone had made 999 calls and HMC Hunter stated they would find out. This information was linked to small boat incident TANGO.

- 8.5.53 At 0851UTC a simulated target was assigned to small boat incident ZULU on C-SCOPE. The officer stated they would consider using Dungeness RNLI Lifeboat to head to the small boat and assess the priority for rescue.
- 8.5.54 At 0853UTC HMC Valiant was released from small boat incident NOVEMBER
- 8.5.55 At 0855UTC BF Hurricane reported they were on scene with small boat for small boat incident YANKEE
- 8.5.56 At 0855UTC AR3 (drone) were informed of small boat incident ZULU.
- 8.5.57 At 0856UTC HM Coastguard overheard on Airwave Radio that BF Hurricane was on scene with Coastguard small boat incident YANKEE which was given UK Border Force reference M962.
- 8.5.58 At 0857UTC Dungeness RNLI Lifeboat informed HM Coastguard they were launched on service. They were provided a tasking and responded to small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.5.59 At 0859UTC call collection for small boat incident BRAVO1 commenced. No telephone number was available, the caller stated that they needed help, they were in a boat with lots of people. There were lots of voices in the background and then the call cut out.

## 8.6 Timeline 0900UTC to 1059UTC

- 8.6.1 At 0901UTC an update to the position for the small boat VICTOR based on a radar target, placed the small boat in UK waters and the small boat incident was moved to the distress phase. It was also recorded that AR3 (drone) was in the area.
- 8.6.2 At 0902UTC the container ship YM Enlightenment in position 50° 51.3N 001° 11.7E reported to Dover CNIS that they had sighted a migrant small boat with multiple occupants. The small boat was on a course of 295° at a speed of 5.7 knots. It was a black small boat, 30 foot in length and with over 30 persons onboard. This information was linked to small boat incident ZULU.
- 8.6.3 At 0903UTC small boat incident creation for CHARLIE 1 commenced.





- 8.6.4 At 0904UTC Dungeness RNLI Lifeboat had a launch request to respond to small boat incident ZULU. They had originally been tasked to small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.6.5 At 0905UTC HM Coastguard called MRCC Gris-Nez and confirmed the position for the small boat XRAY was in the UK search and rescue region and near the French vessel Languedoc. The position passed was 50° 39.12N 001° 07.4E timed at 0846UTC.
- 8.6.6 At 0905UTC the HMC Safeguard was released from small boat incident NOVEMBER
- 8.6.7 At 0905UTC small boat incident BRAVO1 was upgraded to distress.
- 8.6.8 At 0906UTC the ALPHA1 small boat incident narrative stated that the caller tried to give their position, but the signal was weak.
- 8.6.9 At 0906UTC call collection for small boat incident FOXTROT 1 commenced. The caller stated that they were in the sea in a boat. There were 50 persons onboard with 5 children and only 6 lifejackets. They left France 8 hours ago. The black small boat was still moving, the first informant's name was provided and telephone number Personal Data 791. He thought they were about 27 kilometres from Hastings, he had no internet, and no other boats were nearby.
- 8.6.10 At 0906UTC BF Hurricane informed HM Coastguard they had rescued 35 persons and were securing the tow for the black small boat. HM Coastguard requested BF Hurricane complete a sweep of the area before returning to Dover Port. This information was linked to small boat incident YANKEE.
- 8.6.11 At 0907UTC small boat incident BRAVO1 was moved to the distress phase.
- 8.6.12 At 0908UTC the SMC(4) commented that the telephone numbers for small boat incidents ALPHA1 and BRAVO1 were the same, and the small boat incidents would be linked. At 0909UTC BRAVO1 incident was closed as a repeat of ALPHA1 incident.
- 8.6.13 At 0911UTC call collection for small boat incident ECHO1 commenced. The caller reported 50-60 persons onboard, including 5 women and 5 children, with only 5 or 6 lifejackets. The caller thought they were in UK waters and the small boat was in a bad condition. The call then cut out.



- 8.6.14 At 0913UTC AR3 (drone) informed HM Coastguard they had eyes on a dark blue small boat for small boat incident VICTOR 50° 45.17N 001° 14.65E. There were approximately 25 persons onboard, and they were doing an erratic course with water over the bow.
- 8.6.15 At 0913UTC call collection for small boat incident CHARLIE1 is commenced. They stated that they were in the sea and needed help. They had 44 persons onboard, 3 children and 4 women. The small boat was white. The caller's name was provided, and they had been at sea for 11 hours and he stated that they were dying. There was a lot of background noise on the call. The Coastguard officer asked if it was possible to get a position on his phone if he had internet.
- 8.6.16 At 0913UTC the SMC(4) made a comment in ALPHA1 small boat incident. There were no exact positions as the calls cut out and it was not possible to reconnect. He believed ALPHA1, BRAVO1 and ZULU were the same small boat incident. Dungeness Lifeboat was proceeding to small boat incident ZULU. The telephone numbers for the small boat incidents were linked.
- 8.6.17 At 0914UTC HM Coastguard received a confirmed sighting for small boat incident VICTOR in French waters and the small boat incident was moved to the monitoring phase. HM Coastguard stated that they would inform MRCC Gris-Nez to handover coordination.
- 8.6.18 At 0914UTC call collection for small boat incident 041433-24112021 was commenced. The caller stated that he didn't know where he was. He was on a boat with women and children, 44 persons onboard – 4 women and 3 children. They had departed Calais and had been on the boat for more than 10 hours. He stated they could see boats, but they were far away and could not see land. The small boat was white in colour. His name was provided, and he was in position 50.4618N 1.01418E. His telephone number was Personal Data 119. He stated this was the first time he had called 999. This telephone number was a repeat of the numbers in ALPHA1 and BRAVO1 small boat incidents.
- 8.6.19 At 0915UTC it was recorded in the small boat incident narrative for CHARLIE1 that coordination had been passed to HM Coastguard. The SMC(4) at Dover records in the CHARLIE1 incident narrative that it was the same telephone number for ALPHA1 incident and was closed as a repeat at 0917UTC.
- 8.6.20 At 0917UTC small boat incident FOXTROT1 is created.



- 8.6.21 At 0917UTC call collection for small boat incident DELTA1 commenced. A report was received from the vessel Vana Maerland of a small boat in position 51° 47N 001° 03E on a westerly course. There were lots of persons onboard. The vessel stated he had seen a lifeboat, but the lifeboat was heading east, and the small boat was more to the west. During the call he then spotted a second small boat. The two small boats were south of the vessel on a north-west course, one small boat was black, and the other small boat was white.
- 8.6.22 At 0921UTC HM Coastguard handed over coordination for small boat incident VICTOR to MRCC Gris-Nez. MRCC Gris-Nez asked if HM Coastguard had any assets in the vicinity of small boat incident VICTOR. The coastguard operator responded that all resources were committed within the UK search and rescue region. MRCC Gris-Nez acknowledged this statement and confirmed they had coordination for small boat incident VICTOR.
- 8.6.23 At 0928UTC small boat incident 041433-24112021 is identified as being a repeat of ALPHA1, the rationale recorded in the incident narrative is that it is the same telephone number, and the small boat incident is closed.
- 8.6.24 At 0927UTC a ViSION narrative entry is recorded requesting rotary support for the named search area for small boats (search area Charlie). This is a pre-defined search box for the tasking of aircraft to spot and identify small boats. This is not linked to small boat incident CHARLIE. The entry identified that the request was passed to R163, and that the air commander would identify another asset if R163 were not available.
- 8.6.25 At 0927UTC Dungeness Lifeboat reported being on scene with small boat ZULU.
- 8.6.26 At 0929UTC SMC(4) made a comment in small boat incident ECHO1 after discussion with the tactical commander(2). The small boat incident had no telephone number or position. The SMC(4) suspected it to be in the vicinity of ALPHA1, BRAVO1, DELTA1 and repositioned it as such and downgraded it to monitoring.
- 8.6.27 At 0929UTC ARCC recorded in their ViSION narrative that CG25 were requested to proceed to named search area for small boats (search area Charlie).
- 8.6.28 At 0931UTC Hastings RNLI Lifeboat was requested to respond to small boat incident XRAY.





- 8.6.29 At 0931UTC the SMC(4) entered a comment in ViSION that due to the number of vessels south of the area he was tasking Hastings Lifeboat to proceed to the vicinity. HMC Valiant had another 35 minutes before they would depart Dover Port. There were no other SAR units available to proceed, as they were already on task. It is recorded that the weather was not favourable with choppy seas.
- 8.6.30 At 0931UTC ARCC recorded that the fixed wing aircraft would be airborne in 30 minutes and would proceed to named search area for small boats (search area Charlie).
- 8.6.31 At 0931UTC Hastings RNLi Lifeboat was requested as no other units were available to respond to small boat incident XRAY. Communications were on VHF channel 0 and a drone was in the vicinity of the small boat.
- 8.6.32 At 0932UTC call collection for small boat incident GOLF1 was recorded. It was a routine call from Kent Police, reporting a black boat from Calais. They stated that the line kept dropping out and no telephone number was available. They reported there to be 35 persons onboard the small boat, including 5 children. They were wearing lifejackets.
- 8.6.33 At 0932UTC ARCC recorded in their ViSION narrative the tasking for R163 to named search area for small boats (search area Charlie). They stated that it was not yet known if the helicopter would be stood down upon arrival of the fixed wing aircraft. There had been four reports of small boats with 30-50 people onboard. UK Border Force were responding to small boat incidents with no immediate distress or injury reported.
- 8.6.34 At 0933UTC R163 were informed of their tasking.
- 8.6.35 At 0935UTC call collection for 999 call, but the call cut out prior to full details being obtained. The only information available was that they were in a boat and needed help. The small boat incident was recorded by the Global Incident Number (GIN) only.
- 8.6.36 At 0935UTC call collection for 999 call which was suspected to be small boat. Nothing was heard and no position information was available.
- 8.6.37 At 0938UTC small boat incident INDIA 1 call collection. A report from the vessel Four Brothers, reported a possible beach landing towards Dungeness. The small boat was approximately 2 miles offshore. It was a black rubber small boat with 20-30 persons onboard, at a speed of 2 knots.



- 8.6.38 At 0939UTC AR3 (drone) was tasked to investigate small boat incidents ALPHA 1 and DELTA 1.
- 8.6.39 At 0940UTC call collection for HOTEL1 recorded. The caller asked for help and stated they did not know where they were. The line then cut out with no telephone number or position recorded.
- 8.6.40 At 0940UTC R163 informed ARCC that the crew were fatigued and requested R175 (Lee-on-Solent) complete the tasking.
- 8.6.41 At 0941UTC call collection for small boat incident JULIET1. The BT operator stated they transferred the call to the Police, who informed them to pass it to the Coastguard. There was background noise from people with shouting. The call then cut out before the BT operator was able to transfer it to the Coastguard.
- 8.6.42 At 0941UTC R163 was put to standby status.
- 8.6.43 At 0944UTC AR3 reported an updated position for small boat VICTOR as 50° 46.43N 001° 13.45E.
- 8.6.44 At 0945UTC ARCC informed HM Coastguard that R163 had declined the tasking due to fatigue. The fixed wing was due to lift at 1000UTC and would be on scene at 1100UTC. R175 was the next closest rescue helicopter. ARCC asked if the rescue helicopter was still required if the fixed wing would be on scene at 1100. The officer advised they would speak to the SMC and get back to ARCC.
- 8.6.45 At 0949UTC a ViSION Flash message was recorded for the SMC(5) to contact TACOM(3) as soon as possible.
- 8.6.46 At 0948UTC Dungeness RNLI lifeboat reported that all persons were rescued from the small boat for small boat incident ZULU, and they were returning to Dungeness.
- 8.6.47 At 0949UTC the French vessel Abeille was assigned to small boat VICTOR and was reported on scene.
- 8.6.48 At 0949UTC MRCC Gris-Nez informed HM Coastguard that the small boat for small boat incident VICTOR, was on a course towards the UK at a speed of 3.5 knots. The small boat was black/blue in colour. The Abeille was on scene and the persons onboard stated they did not want assistance. All



persons onboard were wearing lifejackets, no confirmed number of persons onboard. MRCC Gris-Nez stated that the Abeille had departed the scene.

- 8.6.49 At 0949UTC call collection for GIN 041442, information from the BT operator was that the person said they were on a boat, just women and children. There was no position information and that they spoke in a foreign language.
- 8.6.50 At 0949UTC HM Coastguard confirmed that the rescue helicopter from Lee-on-Solent, R175 was requested due to the number of reports of small boats and the limited number of surface vessels available, due to them already responding to reports of small boats.
- 8.6.51 At 0950UTC call collection for small boat incident KILO1. The caller was at a campsite at Kingsdown and reported two small boats just off the coast near the golf course approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile offshore. The small boats were heading to Dover. The first informant gave her name and telephone number PD PD 3713.
- 8.6.52 At 0950UTC R175 was tasked.
- 8.6.53 At 0951UTC call collection for LIMA1. Telephone number Personal Data 922 was recorded, and they reported that they were in a boat near Dungeness. There were 60 persons onboard including 5 women and 7 children and had no lifejackets. The small boat was black and had departed from Itablez, France. The first informants name was provided, and the small engine was working. A position 50° 40.38N 0° 57.47E was also recorded in the small boat incident.
- 8.6.54 At 0952UTC the tactical commander(3) entered a ViSION narrative message to reflect the discussion with the SMC(5). Flexing from the network was implemented by the JRCC with 1x VHF Channel 16 distress, urgency, and safety operator and 1x routine operator. The drone was identified as being unable to cover the named search area for small boats (search area DELTA). Request for SAR-H was to cover the gap until the fixed wing aircraft arrived for domain awareness.
- 8.6.55 At 0953UTC call collection for NOVEMBER1. In position 50° 53.48N 005° 21.89 E, with 60 People onboard - 4 Children including a 6-month-old child. The black small boat was making way, and they had been at sea for 6 hours. The first informant's name was provided, and his telephone number PD 510. He also stated that someone had asthma. He stated he had not rung the Coastguard before when asked.





- 8.6.56 At 0956UTC ARCC confirmed that R175 had been tasked and that they would be advised when CG25 was airborne.
- 8.6.57 At 0958YTC Deal Coastguard Rescue Team confirmed they would investigate small boat incident KILO1.
- 8.6.58 At 0959UTC call collection for small boat incident MIKE1. 999 Call. The caller stated they thought they were near Dungeness and had come from Calais. There were 2 children, 26/27 men 33-35 POB. The first informant's name was provided, and his phone number was unknown. He stated that the green small boat was sinking, and the persons onboard were wearing lifejackets. He stated that there was no internet on the phone as no signal and the telephone number PD 243 was recorded. He stated that he was 10km away from land. The following position was recorded 50.886954118183866, 1.11284715535092473 in the small boat incident.
- 8.6.59 At 0959UTC CG26 was identified as responding with an ETA on scene of 1110UTC.
- 8.6.60 At 0959UTC The tactical commander(3) sends a ViSION flash message to use Talk Box 5 for Channel 16 due to the volume of communications between the Clandestine Operations Liaison Officer (COLO) & Dover Operations room.
- 8.6.61 At 1005UTC call collection for PAPA1 recorded. The mobile phone signal was weak, and the line cut out. The caller said that they were on a boat with a lot of people, and they sounded foreign.
- 8.6.62 At 1005UTC call collection for OSCAR1. No service request and the caller just said hi at times but nothing else. The police informed the BT operator to pass the call to the Coastguard, but it cut out before it was possible to do so. There was a boat engine in the background.
- 8.6.63 At 1007UTC call collection for QUEBEC1. The caller requested the Coastguard and stated that they were in the sea but did not know their location. He stated he had no internet connection. There were 44 persons onboard, including 4 women and 3 children. The caller stated that he thought someone onboard was having a heart attack and they could not breathe. The small boat was White, he stated that he had called 4 or 5 times before. He stated that they were freezing and wet. He provided his name.
- 8.6.64 At 1007UTC call collection for ROMEO1. This was call attempt number three from same number. The information was from the BT operator. The caller



stated he needed help and that they were close to the British shore. They had kids and women onboard. The telephone number [PD] 866 was recorded. The telephone number did not appear on the tracker and the small boat incident had no position data and could not be cross referenced to a French Migrant incident reference.

- 8.6.65 At 1007UTC call collection for TANGO1. There were 35 persons onboard the white small boat, 10 metres in length. They departed Audresselles at 0200. They were in the sea and had called previously. There were 35 persons onboard including 3 children The telephone number was [PD] 380. The phone battery was at 30%. The small boat was losing inflation and there were large waves coming over the top of the boat. The outboard was still running but making little progress. Half the persons onboard had lifejackets and they could not see the coast. They could only see three Fishing Vessels and a big cargo ship. They departed at 0200UTC from Audresselles, France
- 8.6.66 At 1008UTC the tactical commander (3) recorded in ViSION that small boat incident CHARLIE was showing as resolved on the Tracker. HMC Valiant had been tasked, with 41 persons rescued and vessel was abandoned and marked.
- 8.6.67 At 1009UTC the tactical commander(3) made an entry in ViSION small boat MIKE incident, that HMC Valiant was on scene with CHARLIE small boat incident and numerous vessels were around, possibly including small boat incident MIKE. R175 and CG22 were proceeding for domain awareness to named search areas for small boats (search areas Charlie and Delta).
- 8.6.68 At 1009UTC Coordination of PAPA1 small boat incident was passed to Zone 14.
- 8.6.69 At 1010UTC call collection for small boat incident SIERRA1. The caller stated that they were off Southampton, off the South of England and were 1 or 2 hours off the beach They stated they were in the boat, but the water was too high, and the boat went left or right. There were 50 persons onboard - 30 men 10 women 10 children. The small boat was black, and they had lifejackets for the adults only, not the children. The first informant's name was provided, and his phone number was not known. The coastguard officer was able to record telephone [PD] 866 which was the number auto filled in ViSION. The caller stated it was a bad situation, they needed food and there was water inside the boat. They came from France. He stated he could see two ships and nothing else.



- 8.6.70 At 1011UTC the tactical commander (3) recorded the following incident review (RAGS) statement in ViSION:
- Review mission (R). TANGO – CPV Hunter on scene and recovered 28 persons on board.
  - Assess Response (A). Phase and actions appropriate
  - Guidance (G). Nil
  - SMC declared and support required (S). SMC (5).
- 8.6.71 At 1011UTC call collection for UNIFORM1 recorded. No number was available. The caller stated that they were in the sea. They had been at sea for 9 hours. The caller stated they had called seven times, but no one had come for them. Their position was 50° 41.002N 000° 56.45E, there were 50 persons onboard including 7 children and 7 women. The small boat was black. The caller's name was provided, and they had no lifejackets.
- 8.6.72 At 1012UTC NOVEMBER1 small boat incident coordination was handed to Zone 14, and it was noted that the position recorded for this small boat incident was incorrect.
- 8.6.73 At 1013UTC HMC Valiant confirmed that they had started to off-load persons at Dover Port. They stated it was unlikely they would be available for a further tasking as they had been called at 0100UTC and would stand down when finished.
- 8.6.74 At 1013UTC the SMC (4) identified the phone numbers for QUEBEC1 and ALPHA1 were the same.
- 8.6.75 At 1015UTC the BT Operator informed HM Coastguard of a 999 call which had cut out, they had no information to pass.
- 8.6.76 At 1016UTC QUEBEC1 small boat incident is closed as a repeat of ALPHA1.
- 8.6.77 At 1016UTC ViSION Flash message that the fault was recorded as a Priority 1 and IT were investigating. This was for a fault recorded on IP aerals. All IP aerals for Zone 14 were faulted.
- 8.6.78 At 1016UTC ViSION flash message that R175 were airborne, ETA 1040UTC and 2 hours endurance.





- 8.6.79 At 1017UTC small boat incident UNIFORM1 coordination was handed to Zone 14.
- 8.6.80 At 1017UTC SMC(4) identified that the phone number for TANGO1 matched ZULU.
- 8.6.81 At 1018UTC ROMEO1 was closed as a repeat of OSCAR1.
- 8.6.82 At 1022UTC SIERRA1 was closed as a repeat of OSCAR1.
- 8.6.83 At 1023UTC The drone AR3 proceeded to relocate VICTOR incident.
- 8.6.84 At 1023UTC call collection for VICTOR1. Telephone number PD 119 was recorded, and the caller stated they were in the sea and could not see land as too far away. There were 44 persons onboard including 3 children and 4 women. The small boat was white, and they departed Calais at 0100UTC. They did not have food or water and only some people had lifejackets. The caller stated they had called the Coastguard 6 times previously.
- 8.6.85 At 1026UTC call collection for ALPHA2. Telephone number PD 866 was recorded, and the caller stated that they were in the sea with a boat and needed help. There were 45 to 50 persons onboard, with 20-30 men, 10 children and 10 women. The small boat was black, and they had called previously. They were worried that the small boat would sink. The first informants name was provided. He stated he did not know his position but thought he might be off Hastings. There were two vessels far away and a large ship a little closer, with a white lower hull and blue/red upper hull. A Maersk vessel of some type.
- 8.6.86 At 1028UTC call collection for WHISKEY1. A report of a green small boat with 25 persons onboard, including 1 child All were wearing lifejackets and the small boat was dead in the water with no power. Position 50° 58.89N 001° 22.88E was recorded in the small boat incident.
- 8.6.87 At 1030UTC ARCC recorded that CG26 was airborne with an estimated time of arrival of 50 minutes.
- 8.6.88 At 1032UTC VICTOR1 was closed as a repeat of ALPHA1.
- 8.6.89 At 1037UTC MRCC Dover contacted UK Border Force MCC to ascertain how long it would be until BF vessels would be available to be tasked again. UK



Border Force MCC stated it would be HMC Hunter, but no time of availability was known.

- 8.6.90 At 1037UTC call collection for small boat Incident ZULU1. Call from Kent police, who received a call from a green boat in the water. There was water in the boat, and they had been in the boat for about 4 hours. There were 40 POB, including 7 children between 2 and 6 years old. The operator recorded that they could hear the children crying quite a bit in the background. There was no telephone number or positions recorded.
- 8.6.91 At 1037UTC call collection for BRAVO 2. No number recorded from BT operator. The caller stated that they needed help, they were 20km from Brighton, they departed from France to England, and they had given this information before, more than 20 mins ago. They had children onboard, 5 patients, and a pregnant lady, who had maybe lost her baby. They were in an emergency situation. The caller's name was provided.
- 8.6.92 At 1039UTC Dover RNLI Lifeboat were tasked to WHISKEY1. The lifeboat was requested to proceed to a small boat that was dead in the water with 25 POB including 1 child. The Vessel Louise Jane was standing by but unable to assist. Position was 50° 58.89N 001° 22.88E.
- 8.6.93 At 1039 call collection for DELTA2. The caller stated that they were on the sea near to Dungeness- 27km off. They had 60 persons onboard - 4 children and 4 women. They were next to a boat - Maersk line. They had called before. The caller's name was provided – telephone numbers [PD] 922 and [Personal Data] 627. They only had 6 lifejackets and had no oil. The coastguard officer identified 50°41.717'N 000°51.517'E - position on the location of the Maersk SEMBAWANG.
- 8.6.94 At 1042UTC call collection for ECHO2. The caller stated they were in a boat between France and UK. They had left 10 hours ago. There were 50 people onboard including 16- 20 children and they had no lifejackets. They had a problem with their motor and were not moving. Caller's name was provided and telephone number [Personal] 208. He stated he had called on another number 30 minutes ago and there was water inside the small boat. The following position was recorded in the small boat incident 50.7521893, 0.9600344.
- 8.6.95 At 1044 ALPHA2 was made a repeat of OSCAR1.



- 8.6.96 At 1044UTC call collection for CHARLIE2. The caller stated they needed help and came from France. There were 60 persons onboard with women, children, and babies. He had called previously many times. He stated he had no network to send a position, he stated they were heading for Brighton but had no engine now.
- 8.6.97 At 1049UTC Southeast Coast Ambulance called HM Coastguard and reported that they had received a call from a small boat. They stated the caller said there were 50 people in a small boat, including 6 children in the boat between 1-3 years old. They left France 9 hours ago and could see a large container ship. No telephone number was available, and they did not have lifejackets. They thought a boat was going to help them and stated RNLI 13-28 was on scene, during the call.
- 8.6.98 At 1051UTC R175 was recorded as being on scene.
- 8.6.99 At 1051UTC Deal CRT were on scene nothing to report.
- 8.6.100 At 1051UTC AR3 reported they had eyes on the vessel Louise Jane, the small boat in position 50° 58.4020N 001° 22.2655E with 20 to 30 persons onboard and not in immediate danger.
- 8.6.101 At 1052UTC ECHO2 coordination handed to Zone 14.
- 8.6.102 At 1055UTC R175 reported, two Migrant small boats – small boat 1 position: at 1048UTC 50° 52.51N 000° 56E was headed on a northerly course at 5 knots. A grey inflatable, approximately 20 ft long. 40 persons onboard some with and some without lifejackets, they did not appear in immediate distress. Small boat 2 position: 1052UTC at 50° 52.18N 000° 57.50E heading on a northerly course at 10 knots, green inflatable, approximately 24 ft, 38 persons onboard mixed with and without lifejackets, not in immediate distress.
- 8.6.103 At 1055UTC Hastings RNLI was on scene with small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.6.104 At 1055UTC LIMA1 was identified as a repeat of DELTA2.
- 8.6.105 At 1057UTC Hastings Lifeboat in position 50° 42.15N 000° 55.57E. The small boat had 60 Persons onboard and was stopped in the water. Lifeboat advised they could not tow the vessel to land.
- 8.6.106 At 1057UTC HM Coastguard informed the Vessel Louise Jane that Dover RNLI Lifeboat was proceeding. The Louise Jane advised that they were not happy to take anyone onboard.





8.6.107 At 1059UTC ECHO2 was closed as a repeat of DELTA2.

## 8.7 Timeline 1100UTC to 1300UTC

- 8.7.1 At 1100UTC call collection for FOXTROT2. R175 reported another small boat sighting by the power station. There were 11 persons onboard, and the small boat was heading east along the beach. An empty small boat was also sighted. The small boat was black and was approximately 500 metres from the shore.
- 8.7.2 At 1102UTC an airwave transmission was received reporting four landings at Dungeness.
- 8.7.3 At 1106UTC LIMA1 small boat incident was closed as a repeat of DELTA2 incident.
- 8.7.4 At 1109UTC Hastings Lifeboat advised that they could only rescue 40 persons onboard the Lifeboat, which left 20 persons still on the casualty small boat. Hastings Lifeboat stated they would then attempt to tow the small boat. It was identified that Eastbourne Lifeboat could be on scene in 1 hour.
- 8.7.5 At 1111UTC Hastings Lifeboat were informed that Dungeness Lifeboat were tasked to assist them.
- 8.7.6 At 1112UTC call collection for GOLF2 small boat incident. There was a lot of shouting onboard and it was difficult to hear the caller. The telephone number was [REDACTED] PD [REDACTED] 866. He stated that they were in the sea but no exact location. The caller's name was provided. The black small boat had 50 persons onboard with 10 women and 10 children and they did not have lifejackets. There was water in the boat, and they were nearly at Hastings.
- 8.7.7 At 1115UTC Dover Lifeboat reported an ETA of 30 minutes to small boat incident WHISKEY 1.
- 8.7.8 At 1115UTC call collection for HOTEL2. The small boat was in UK search and rescue region. Their position via WhatsApp was 51° 05.56N 001° 40.26E, with 30 persons on board. Their phone number was [REDACTED] PD [REDACTED] 584. No other details were available.
- 8.7.9 At 1118UTC Dover Lifeboat was informed the vessel Portia may have gone to the FV Louise Jane. It was believed a film crew may be onboard.
- 8.7.10 At 1119UTC Dungeness RNLI Lifeboat relaunched on service.



- 8.7.11 At 1121UTC Dungeness RNLI Lifeboat were tasked to assist Hastings Lifeboat with small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.7.12 At 1121UTC small boat incident GOLF2 was identified as a repeat of OSCAR1.
- 8.7.13 At 1123UTC Dungeness Lifeboat reported an empty small boat in position 50° 53.93N 000° 59.1E
- 8.7.14 At 1123UTC Call collection for INDIA2. The caller reported that 22 persons had landed ashore and were running towards the power station at Dungeness. The black small boat had been beached.
- 8.7.15 At 1124UTC small boat incident GOLF2 coordination was handed to Zone 14.
- 8.7.16 At 1125UTC Dungeness Lifeboat reported a small boat making way in position approximately one mile from Dungeness Point. The lifeboat was requested to proceed with the original tasking.
- 8.7.17 At 1125UTC call collection for small boat incident JULIET2. Call from Kent Police. A small boat with 44 persons onboard, including woman and children. They could see a lighthouse. Their telephone number PD 521. No other information was provided.
- 8.7.18 At 1127UTC Kent police were informed of the beach landing near the power station at Dungeness.
- 8.7.19 At 1128UTC GOLF2 was identified as a repeat of OSCAR1.
- 8.7.20 At 1132UTC call collection for KILO2. The caller stated they were in the middle of the sea with no location. They had called previously. Caller's name was provided and telephone number PD 866. The small boat was black and with 50 people onboard including 10 kids and 7 women. The engine was still working. The position recorded in the small boat incident was 50.898779, 0.946217.
- 8.7.21 At 1133UTC Hastings Lifeboat reported they were recovering casualties onboard with one pregnant female reporting stomach pain. The lifeboat reported that they were leaving the small boat to head to Rye as the female needed to be taken off quickly.
- 8.7.22 At 1134UTC RNLI HQ were informed of multiple lifeboat taskings.



- 8.7.23 At 1136UTC R175 was assigned to small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.7.24 At 1137UTC Hastings Lifeboat were requested to remain with the small boat until the arrival of R175.
- 8.7.25 At 1137UTC Dover Lifeboat reported being on scene with the Fishing Vessel Louise Jane and the small boat.
- 8.7.26 At 1137UTC call collection for LIMA2. A report was received from the vessel AMANDINE in the north-east lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme. They advised that they would also report the information to Gris-Nez MRCC. The small boat number 1 was 340.2°, distance 0.5nm from the AMANDINE position. The small boat was black in colour with approximately 20-30 POB some wearing lifejackets.
- 8.7.27 At 1138UTC SMC (6) identified OSCAR1 and KILO2 had the same telephone number.
- 8.7.28 At 1140UTC call collection for MIKE2. A second report was received from the vessel AMANDINE in the northeast lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme. The small boat number 2 was 051.7° distance 0.5nm from the AMANDINE. The small boat was grey in colour with approximately 20-25 persons onboard and they could not see any lifejackets.
- 8.7.29 At 1141UTC R175 advised HM Coastguard they would winch the pregnant female and proceed to Eastbourne hospital. This related to small boat incident XRAY.
- 8.7.30 At 1147UTC French Tracker update was received, Fig 26





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Ref FR	Ref UK	n° SITREP	Heure détection (UTC)	Secteur	Origine de l'alerte & Moyen de détection	Support embarquant les migrants (type, couleur, L, propulsion)	POB (H/F/enfant, avec/sans brassières)	SRU en ralliement ou en recherche	SRU au contact ou en sauvetage	Route/vitesse estimée	Heure dernière position (UTC)	Dernière position connue	SRU GB pour relai OU Port FR de destination	Heure ou HPA du relai ou du débarquement (UTC)
1		<u>3591</u>	2102	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	40	FLAMANT		284° / 6 NDS		51°07.40N / 001°42.67E	possible MIG 7 et 8	
2		<u>3592</u>	2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		253° / 5 NDS	03:19	51°07.19N / 001°55.54E		
3		<u>3593</u>	2224	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30	FLAMANT		272° / 6 NDS	03:10	51°07.00N 001°43.50	SRR UK	
4		<u>3594</u>	2230	CANAL DES DUNES	VIGIE DK	SEMI RIGIDE	30			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
5		<u>3595</u>	2316	WISSANT	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	15			AT EARTH		AT EARTH – NO CROSSING		
6		<u>3596</u>	0013	LEFFRINCKOUCKE	POLICE	SEMI RIGIDE	30			276/4NDS	00:00	51°04.58N / 002°25.08E		
7	A	<u>3597</u>	0048	Bouée MPC	SAMU 62	SEMI RIGIDE	33 13 femmes 0 enfants			305 / 4	0130	51°07.4N 001°45.4E	SRR UK Possible MIG 1 et 9	
8		3598	0107	Berck	Police	SEMI RIGIDE GRIS	30 à 40							
9		3599	0111	Dunkerque ?	tel migrant		33 3 enfants 0 femmes						possible MIG 7 et 1	
10		<u>3610</u>	0230	Bouée Sandalié	Flamant	NOIR	40	FLAMANT		300 / 6	03:00	51°10 N 001°47 E	SRR UK	

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11		3511	0256	Bouée Sandstéé	Flamant			FLAMANT		330 / 5	03:00	51°09' N 001°40' E	SRR UK	
12		3511	0343	Berok	Tel migrant		50	SNS Berok	Abeille	340 / 4	0830	50°37' N 001°09' E	SRR UK	
13		3513	0349	Chenal Dunkerque	CMA CGM Mermoz			Escout	Escout	315 / 5.5	06:00	51°05'N 001°56'E		
14		3514	0440	Berok	SNS Fournier	NOIRE	40 1 femme	SNS Berok	Abeille		0830	50°36.6'N 001°05.9'E	SRR UK	
15		3515	0453	Malo	Sémaphore DK		37 (dont 1 femme)	Escout	Escout	stop	05:00	51°03.8 002°23.8		Dunkerque Est
16		3516	0453	Malo	Sémaphore DK					300 / 4	05:00	51°03.8 002°23.8		
17		3517	0518	Dyck	Flamant	foncé	37	Flamant	Flamant	260 / 5.5	05:50	51°06 001°49		Calais ETA 1000UTC
18		3518	0520	Le Portel	Tel migrant		34	SNS 076 J Huret		268 / 4.5	05:20	50°42'N 001°32'E		Boulogne
19		3519	0530	Slack	Tel migrant					270 / 4	05:40	50°48 001°33		
20		3520	0547	LEFFRINCLOUCHE	Sémaphore DK					267 / 5.6	05:50	51°03 002°24		
21		3522	0634	Baie Canche	Sémaphore Boulogne					264 / 4.3	06:34	50°23 001°27		
22		3523	0659	Sangatte	Police		5 à la rame				06:59	50°07 001°46		Départ avorté
23		3524	0704	Chenal Calais Bouée CA2	Côte d'Opale		20				07:04	50°59 001°46		
24		3526	0717	Chenal Calais Bouée CA2	Spirit of B	5 m	8 Pas de pilot				07:17	50°58 001°43		



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25		3527	0730	Vergoyer	M/V Bravenes	Noir et orange				300 / 3.5	07 :30	50°41 00°18		
26		3528	0726	Wimereux	Police		50 Femme et enfant Gilet				07 :26	50°46 00°136		
27		3530	0840	Cap Gris-Nez	Murex M/V Bravenes	Blanc 5 à 6 m	6			270 / 2	08 :47	50°58 00°123		
28		3529	0752	Cap Gris-Nez	Eurocargo 02004	vert	20 Pas tous gilet				07 :55	50°52 00°128		
29		3531	0622	ZST	Drone UK	Bleu sombre	25				06 :20	50°45 00°115		
30		3532	0646	Proximité Vergoyer	M/V Ingrid Knutsen	Blanc	20				06 :48	50°39 00°111		
31		3533	0656	Proximité Vergoyer	M/V Bugsier 30	Blanc	20				06 :58	50°34 00°110		
32		3534	0656	Nord Dyck	F/V Prins Bernhard	Grise	15				10 :01	51°05 00°151E		
33		3535	1023	Incennu	Appel requérant									
34		3536	1050	Proximité Vergoyer	Kleine Jan	Noir	30		Abelle Languedoc		10 :50	50°39 00°116E		

Fig 26





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- 8.7.31 At 1148UTC call collection for NOVEMBER2. The call cut out prior to handover to HM Coastguard. The BT operator stated that the caller stated they were on a boat.
- 8.7.32 At 1153UTC Dover Lifeboat confirmed they had rescued the persons onboard. There were 22 people onboard, with four females and one child. No sickness or injuries.
- 8.7.33 At 1153UTC call collection for OSCAR2. The small boat was in UK search and rescue region. Their position 51° 04.55N 001° 38.0E was obtained from WhatsApp. No number of persons was recorded, and the telephone number was **Personal Data** 919.
- 8.7.34 At 1153UTC call collection for PAPA2. The caller stated they needed help and that they had not seen a helicopter. The caller's name was provided, and he had called 20 minutes ago. The small boat was black with 50 people on the boat. He stated he couldn't drive the boat and the boat was full of water and they were freezing.
- 8.7.35 At 1154UTC MRCC Gris-Nez reported to HM Coastguard, a small boat in UK area in position 51° 04.55N 001° 38.05E. The position was obtained from WhatsApp. No number of persons. The telephone number was **Personal** 919.
- 8.7.36 At 1158UTC PAPA2 small boat incident was closed as a repeat of DELTA2.
- 8.7.37 At 1202UTC a further update on OSCAR2 small boat incident was received from MRCC Gris-Nez, who transferred the call. The caller stated they were on a green small boat with 25 people. The small boat had a problem, and they wanted to go to the UK. The caller's name was provided. There were no children onboard, and all persons had orange lifejackets.
- 8.7.38 1203UTC The COLO informed HM Coastguard that UK Border Force required assistance at the Tug Haven.
- 8.7.39 1203UTC call collection for small boat incident QUEBEC2. MRCC Gris-Nez reported a small boat. Their telephone number was **Personal Data** 717. There were 41 persons onboard, and then the call was transferred. The caller stated they had 1 child onboard and were wearing red lifejackets. They thought they were around Dover. They stated they would send their location then the call cut out.

- 8.7.40 At 1205UTC R175 reported the winchman was onboard small boat XRAY. R175 requested confirmation of the nearest maternity unit. Hastings was identified as the nearest maternity unit.
- 8.7.41 At 1207UTC call collection for TANGO2. The caller stated they were in a white boat, with 50 POB – including 7 children and 5 women. The small boat engine was not working. The caller stated he could see a ship and they did not have any lifejackets.
- 8.7.42 At 1208UTC call collection for small boat incident ROMEO2. The caller stated there were a lot of people on board, approximately 30 people. No Lifejackets and they were in position 50° 51.99N 001° 02.04E.
- 8.7.43 At 1208UTC ARCC informed HM Coastguard that R175 would return to base for a crew change, once the casualty had arrived at Ashford hospital. The coastguard officer confirmed they were happy to keep the fixed wing on-scene.
- 8.7.44 At 1211UTC call collection for SIERRA2. Kent Police reported a Migrant small boat coming from Paris with 10 persons onboard. They could see two blue ships and one white one. No names were provided. The migrants were in a white boat near to two blue ships.
- 8.7.45 At 1212UTC ARCC contacted Ashford hospital to report R175 was bringing in a pregnant female from a migrant vessel who was suffering stomach pains.
- 8.7.46 At 1215UTC a further call from small boat OSCAR2. It was a call back from a previous identified caller. He stated that he needed help, and there was water in the boat. The coastguard operator stated that assistance was on the way.
- 8.7.47 Call collection for UNIFORM2. The caller stated that he had called many times and was near Hastings. The caller stated that someone else on the boat had called and their name was provided. There were 50 people onboard. The telephone number was: PD 366. A position is recorded in VISION 50.821836 0.917742.
- 8.7.48 At 1216UTC BFMCC were informed of small boat ROMEO 2. HMC Artemis was tasked to locate and assess the small boat.
- 8.7.49 At 1218UTC CG26 confirmed they had completed the search of area Charlie, and nothing was seen.



- 8.7.50 At 1220UTC Hastings lifeboat reported that R175 had a second casualty onboard. A second small boat is identified as being in position 50° 48.70N 000° 55.2E. Hastings lifeboat proceeded to Rye and a land team was requested to meet them. Multiple landings had been reported at Dungeness. The lifeboat advised they could proceed to Hastings but CRT and police would be required to meet them.
- 8.7.51 At 1221UTC Dungeness Lifeboat reported they had 25 male casualties onboard. The small boat had been left and marked with red and white tape and pink paint. They stated they would be back at station in 20 minutes.
- 8.7.52 At 1224UTC HM Coastguard requested CG26 to go to MPC buoy to identify any small boats, then to proceed to Sandettie Light Vessel.
- 8.7.53 At 1224UTC OSCAR1 was identified as a repeat of UNIFORM2 small boat incident.
- 8.7.54 At 1226UTC HM Coastguard requested Hastings Lifeboat proceed to Dungeness Lifeboat Station. All officers and transport would be at that location. Hastings lifeboat advised that they would identify landing conditions with Dungeness Lifeboat.
- 8.7.55 At 1226UTC Dover Lifeboat reported they were with the small boat in position 51° 01.24N 001°24.24E.
- 8.7.56 At 1226UTC call collection for WHISKEY2. The caller stated their telephone number was PD 011 and their name was provided. He did not know where he was and could see a ship – with LNG on it. There were 50 people onboard, including 7 children and 5 women. The small boat was white, and the engine was broken. They had been in the water for 8 hours. They stated that he had called before, and he thought he was 6km away from Romney.
- 8.7.57 At 1227UTC call collection for VICTOR2. A call from FV Elizabeth Jane reported a small boat heading towards Dungeness. Most of the persons onboard had lifejackets, and there were approximately 30 persons onboard. The small boat was a black inflatable, in position 50° 52.607N 001° 01.737E.
- 8.7.58 At 1230UTC Hastings Lifeboat confirmed they were proceeding to Dungeness.
- 8.7.59 At 1232UTC HMC Hunter was on scene with small boat HOTEL2.





- 8.7.60 At 1234UTC Dover Lifeboat reported they had rescued those from small boat SIERRA2. They were all males and only two persons were wearing lifejackets. The intention was to return to Dover.
- 8.7.61 At 1240UTC 2Excel informed ARCC that 26A was in the Dover Straits but had a technical issue. The aircraft would keep going and land at Southend for refuel with 1 hour endurance remaining. 2Excel advised they would return to Doncaster after refuelling and transfer to CG25, in order to fix CG26. There would be a two-hour delay to depart from Southend and back to scene.
- 8.7.62 At 1249UTC it was identified that the vessel reported by small boat in WHISKEY2, was the LNG Clean Horizon. CNIS were asked to contact the LNG Clean Horizon to see if they could see the small boat.
- 8.7.63 At 1250UTC Dungeness Lifeboat boathouse was informed that a second tasking was highly likely, and they were requested to turn the boat around quickly.
- 8.7.64 At 1252UTC ARCC informed HM Coastguard that CG26A were able to fly out again for approximately three hours. The technical issue was not affecting SAR capabilities.
- 8.7.65 At 1256UTC Kent Police informed HM Coastguard of a small boat about 4 kilometres from land. The caller stated they could see Romney Power Station. Kent Police stated they had also received a call one minute previously. There was no telephone Number recorded and they stated there was 14 persons onboard, including 7 children.
- 8.7.66 At 1256UTC Hastings Lifeboat reported they could see another small boat 1 mile off their starboard beam. In position 50° 53.55N 001° 00.27E but it looked empty.
- 8.7.67 At 1257UTC HM Coastguard sent a WhatsApp message to small boat WHISKEY2 in an attempt to locate the small boat. The LNG Clean Horizon had been contacted by CNIS and report they had nothing visual.
- 8.7.68 At 1257UTC HM Coastguard received a call from MRCC Gris-Nez stating they had a current rescue operation with 10-15 people in the water. Gris-Nez asked if it was possible to send a drone or aircraft to position 51 05.58N, 001 43.41E. MRCC Gris-Nez received the report from a fishing vessel. Gris-Nez informed HM Coastguard that the Flamant was tasked as well as a SAR helicopter.



- 8.7.69 At 1300UTC HM Coastguard recorded an attempt to contact the casualty for WHISKEY2 by telephone. A voice message had been left.
- 8.7.70 The timeline has completed at this point as a result of MRCC Gris-Nez notifying HM Coastguard of 10-15 people in the water in the French search and rescue region. A further 17 small boat incidents were created by HM Coastguard from reports received regarding small boats in the English Channel after this time.



## Annex I – SAR Resources

### AW – 189 Search and Rescue Helicopter

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT/FRAME	AW189 – SAR Variant
ENDURANCE	Max 4 HRS
TOP SPEED	169 Kts
CRUISE SPEED	145 Kts
SEARCH SPEED	A/R (60-80Kts ideal)
HOME BASE	Lydd, Lee-on-Solent, St Athan, Prestwick, Inverness
WEATHER/WIND LIMITATIONS	For SAR Official Tasking via ARCC - No Limitations
CREW	2 x Pilots 1 X Winch Op, 1 x Winch Paramedic
SURVIVOR CAPACITY	4 seated, 2 stretcher or 10 casualties in an emergency
COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT	HF, VHF (Maritime and Land), UHF, Airwave and Satcom
SENSORS/SEARCH AIDS	HD FLIR Camera Hi-intensity Trakka Beam Full search pattern capability
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT	Full
LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT	Twin Hoist
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Night Vision Capable 15mins response 0800-2200 45mins response 2200-0800
DUTY CONTACTS	UK ARCC





Fixed Wing Aircraft – Piper PA31 Panther

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT/FRAME	PIPER PA31 PANTHER
ENDURANCE	5HRS
TOP SPEED	180 Kts
CRUISE SPEED	150 Kts
SEARCH SPEED	120 Kts
HOME BASE	DONCASTER (DSA/EGCN)
WEATHER/WIND LIMITATIONS	Departure – 300’ 1300m 20kts Xwind Landing – 200’ 550m 20kts Xwind
CREW	X2
SURVIVOR CAPACITY	NIL
COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT	2 x VHF 1X Maritime VHF 1x Satcom voice
SENSORS/SEARCH AIDS	FLIR380HD, AIS Receiver
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT	NIL
LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT	NIL
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
DUTY CONTACTS	UK ARCC



Surface Vessel web link

[HMC Valiant - Wikipedia](#)

[RNLI Lifeboats – Explore The Lifeboats In The RNLI Fleet](#)

[Flamant-class patrol vessel - Wikipedia](#)



## **Annex J**

### **Glossary of Terms**

MRCC	Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
JRCC	Joint Rescue Coordination Centre
MRSC	Maritime Rescue Sub Centre
SAR	Search and Rescue
UTC	Universal Time Coordinated (Greenwich Mean Time)
HMC	Her Majesty's Cutter
SMC	Search and Rescue (SAR) Mission Coordinator
SARIS	Search and Rescue Information System
PLB	Personal Locator Beacons
EPIRB	Emergency Position Indicating radio Beacon.
AIS	Automatic Identification System
GPS	Global Positioning System
MAIB	Marine Accident Investigation Branch
AAIB	Air Accidents Investigation Branch
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
DSC	Digital Selective Calling
OLR	Operational Learning Review
IMR	Informal Mission Review
SOLAS	Safety of Life at Sea
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VHF	Very High Frequency
OCG	Organised Crime Group
CCTC	Clandestine Channel Threat Command
EISEC	Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls
UKBF	UK Border Force
AFATG	Anglo French Accident Technical Group
JCR	Joint Control Room
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
CAESAR	Channel Aviation Emergency Search and Rescue
UKSAR2G	UK Search and Rescue Second Generation
VTs	Vessel Traffic Services
CNIS	Channel Navigation Information System
ARCC	Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre
IAMSAR	International Aviation and Maritime Search and Rescue
UKBF MCC	UK Border Force Maritime Command Centre
NM	Nautical miles
LPG	Liquified Petroleum Gas
DEIT	Direct Electronic Incident Transfer
KM	Kilometres
ColRegs	Collision Regulations
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle



## OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – NOT FOR ONWARDS DISTRIBUTION

AML	Advanced Mobile Location
BF	Border Force
SAR-H	Search and Rescue - Helicopter
COLO	Clandestine Operations Liaison Officer
RAGS	R - Review Mission, A – Assess the response, G – Guidance, S – SMC declared and Support required.
SART	Search and Rescue Transponder
RYA	Royal Yachting Association
VHF DF	Very High Frequency Direction Finder
IPA	Investigatory Powers Act





HM Coastguard



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