

# THE CRANSTON INQUIRY

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## OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

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### Introduction

1. This document sets out relevant operational arrangements between organisations involved in search and rescue ('SAR') in the Dover Strait on 23-24 November 2021, including available resources. It is supplemented by a series of charts/organograms. This document should be read in conjunction with the Inquiry's 'Organisations Overview' and 'Operational Roles and Responsibilities' documents. It is not intended to be an exhaustive, comprehensive, or final statement of the matters it addresses, but is provided in order to assist full participants in their participation in the Inquiry's forthcoming hearings.
2. The following organisations are discussed in this document:

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## His Majesty’s Coastguard

### Overview of the national network

3. To deliver the 6 functions in respect of SAR within the UK (see paragraph 37 of the ‘Organisations Overview’), His Majesty’s Coastguard (‘HMCG’) operated a ‘national network’ comprised of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (‘JRCC’), a series of Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (‘MRCC’), and the Aeronautical Rescue

Coordination Centre ('ARCC') [INQ000427 at page 1; INQ010098 at para 1.5; INQ008905 at 2.1.1]. There was also a Maritime Rescue Sub Centre ('MRSC') in London, which was responsible for that region [INQ010098 at para 1.63; INQ008933 at page 6; INQ000073 at para 2.3].

4. These coordination centres cover 36 SAR zones across the UK [INQ008905 at 2.1.7; INQ001459]. The Dover Strait lies in zone 14 [INQ010138 at paras 27 and 40a; INQ007274; INQ007276; INQ001459; INQ000411; INQ010142 at para 37].
5. The JRCC, MRCCs and MRSC are linked through two data centres which means that all routine and emergency telephone lines, and 166 radio communications sites, are available to all MRCCs, the MRSC and the JRCC [INQ008905 at 2.1.7; INQ010138 at para 8; INQ004106 at para 2.1.3]. In addition, all MRCCs operate the same systems, policies and procedures (see paragraph 19 onwards below) [INQ009634 at para 21].
6. Access to these lines of communication, and having common policies and procedures in place, allows staff within each MRCC to coordinate the SAR missions of other MRCCs throughout the UK. This was known as 'zone flexing' and it was used to manage staffing levels within the network by allowing remote support to be provided to a particular MRCC which had insufficient staff [INQ000456; INQ010138 at para 8; INQ003777; INQ009632 at para 29; INQ010142 at para 17; INQ009634 at para 19-21].

#### Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres

7. There were ten MRCCs within the UK (11 if the MRSC in London was counted as such), each of which had a defined, geographical maritime area of responsibility ('AOR') [INQ009632 at para 29; INQ010138 at para 8; INQ001459]. MRCCs were used to coordinate all maritime SAR activities within their area of responsibility [INQ010098 at para 1.62; INQ009632 at para 29].

8. The MRCCs were located at Aberdeen, Belfast, Humber, Falmouth, Holyhead, Milford Haven, Shetland, Stornoway, Solent (based within the JRCC), and Dover [INQ010098 at para 1.62; INQ009632 at para 28].
9. Each MRCC had an 'Operations Room' [INQ009632 at para 6]. Being physically present in the operations room was sometimes referred to as being 'on station' [INQ009632 at paras 6 and 32; INQ009634 at para 22], however, as noted at paragraph 6 above, staff could participate in operations remotely because of zone flexing [INQ009632 at para 29; INQ000446].

#### The Joint Rescue Coordination Centre

10. The JRCC was based in Fareham, Hampshire. It was previously known as the 'National Maritime Operations Centre' ('NMOC') [INQ010094 at para 7].
11. The JRCC had two functions. First, it was the UK Mission Control Centre for HMCG, which coordinated and organised the MRCCs and ensured each had adequate resources available for SAR missions [INQ010138 at para 6; INQ006716].
12. Secondly, in addition to its network coordinating function, the JRCC contained MRCC Solent [INQ009632 at para 28] and the ARCC [INQ009628 at para 2] (see paragraphs 13 and 14 below), making it a combined maritime and aeronautical rescue coordination centre [INQ006716]. This meant it was responsible for coordinating both maritime search and rescue missions within its area, and for tasking and coordinating aviation assets across the entire Coastguard network [INQ010098 at para 1.64; INQ006716]. The JRCC was also the primary fall-back station for any MRCC requiring remote assistance under the 'zone flexing' system [INQ009634 at paras 19-21; INQ009632 at para 29; INQ000456].

Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres Solent (Joint Rescue Coordination Centre)

13. MRCC Solent was situated within the JRCC and was typically responsible for SAR areas 15-21, which covered an area along the South Coast running approximately from Camber Sands to Brixham [INQ001459]. However, at the time of the incident, the JRCC had also assumed responsibility for zone 13 to relieve pressure on MRCC Dover (see paragraph 15 below) [INQ010138 at para 35; INQ001459; INQ010142 at para 37; INQ000411]. It was also supporting Falmouth MRCC [INQ010140 at para 14; INQ010138 at para 40c].

Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre

14. The ARCC was based within the JRCC and coordinated the aeronautical aspects of SAR operations across the HMCG network [INQ009628 at para 2; INQ010098 at para 1.64]. The ARCC's function used to be operated by the Ministry of Defence/Royal Air Force [INQ009922; INQ009628 at para 6]. The ARCC did not receive calls directly from members of the public but instead received requests for assistance from 'recognised coordinating authorities', which were the 3 main emergency services, HMCG and foreign SAR providers [INQ009628 at paras 12b. and 15]. The ARCC would sift these calls [INQ009628 at para 15] and then task Bristow, 2Excel, RVL, Tekever and (exceptionally) Ministry of Defence assets to conduct aerial SAR operations [INQ009628 at paras 26-41].

Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre Dover

15. MRCC Dover usually covered SAR zones 11, 13 and 14 [INQ001459; INQ000411; INQ010142 at para 37; INQ010138 at para 40a]. Zone 11 covered an area approximately from Felixstowe to Bradwell-on-Sea [INQ001459], zone 13 covered an area approximately from Bradwell-on-Sea to Margate, and zone 14 covered an area from Margate to Camber Sands [INQ001459; INQ010142 at para 37]. However, in the lead up to the incident, responsibility for SAR zones was frequently being reallocated so that MRCC Dover was only responsible for zone 14 [INQ010343 at

page 2; INQ000411; INQ010138 at paras 28, 40a; INQ006193; INQ010142 at para 37]. This was the case on the night of the incident [INQ000411; INQ010142 at para 37; INQ010138 at para 40a].

16. As well as being responsible for SAR missions in its designated area(s), MRCC Dover was also responsible for the Vessel Traffic Service ('VTS') [INQ010138 at 40c], which was a radio and radar service which monitors the movement of commercial vessels within the Dover Strait, 24 hours a day [INQ009634 at para 24].

### Joint Control Room

17. MRCC Dover was also the physical location of the Joint Control Room ('JCR') – sometimes referred to as the 'CTC [Clandestine Threat Command] Control Room' [INQ000619 at page 23; INQ010137 at page 54] – which was a body controlled by the Clandestine Channel Threat Command ('CCTC') (see paragraphs 65 onwards of the 'Organisations Overview') established in late 2020/early 2021 [INQ000182 at page 2; INQ010134 at paras 37 and 65; INQ010137 at para 40 cf INQ010098 at para 2.14; INQ005229]. In response to the increase in small boats, from 2019 onwards, Border Force ('BF') liaison officers were placed in MRCC Dover on days when high numbers of crossings were anticipated [INQ010137 at para 41]. The JCR formalised this arrangement and was intended to enable closer working and information sharing between Border Force Maritime Command ('BFMC') and HMCG in respect of small boat activity [INQ010098 at para 2.14; INQ010134 at paras 37 and 65; INQ010137 at paras 39, 40, 41].
18. The JCR had a role in coordinating the arrival and disembarkation of BFMC vessels who had rescued people from small boats [INQ010445 at para 1.10.4; INQ010098 at para 2.14], tasking BF assets [INQ010137 at para 41], and sharing Home Office drone imagery [INQ010098 at para 2.14]. However, at the time of the incident, the JCR generally only operated during day-time hours [INQ010134 at para 38; INQ010137

at para 41; INQ010135 at para 20]. As to the staffing of the JCR see paragraph 35 onwards of 'Operational Roles and Responsibilities'.

## His Majesty's Coastguard Operational Systems

### VISION

19. HMCG used an incident management software called 'ViSION' to record details and information pertinent to a particular incident [INQ010098 at paras 3.71]. Each incident log would receive a 'Global Incident Number' or 'GIN' [INQ010098 at paras 3.71; INQ010142 at para 20]. Small boat incidents would additionally receive an alphanumeric reference number [INQ010142 at para 21]. The information recorded included names of casualties or first informants, location of the incident, resource taskings and search instructions to assets [INQ010098 at paras 3.71].
  
20. At the time of the incident, the maritime and aeronautical arms of HMCG used different systems; maritime used 'ViSION 4', whereas ARCC used the more modern, 'ViSION 5', [INQ009628 at paras 42-44] which had additional applications to assist with aerial operations [INQ009628 at paras 45-46]. The ARCC could not access ViSION 4 and, as far as the Inquiry is aware, the MRCC did not have access to ViSION 5 [INQ009628 at para 44; INQ010098 at para 3.75].
  
21. In the context of small boats, a new incident log on ViSION 4 would be created by the relevant MRCC (usually MRCC Dover) when a call about a small boat crossing was received (either directly to HMCG or transferred from another emergency service or body), or when incidents were communicated by the French authorities or recorded in the French tracker document (see paragraph 83 below) [INQ010098 at paras 3.72; INQ0009634 at para 41]. A new log would be created unless a call could be immediately correlated with a previous incident [INQ010098 at paras 3.73; INQ000435], for example if the phone number used was identical and could be recognized by the ViSION system [INQ009634 at para 45c]. Sometimes a further

incident would be created but would later be merged with a previous incident number once it became clear that both calls in fact related to the same incident [INQ010098 at paras 3.73; INQ000435].

22. At the time of the incident, the MRCC Dover would also open a daily incident log within ViSION titled 'admin' which was used to record and account for all small boat operations for the day; the log would cover a 24 hour period, from midnight to midnight [INQ009634 at para 45a; INQ004345 at page 16; INQ010138 at para 44; INQ000235].

### C-Scope

23. A further system used by HMCG was 'C-Scope' [INQ000437; INQ007168]. This was used to simulate the projected course of a given small boat, once its initial position was known, so that vessels in or around its path who might be able to locate it or provide further information could be identified [INQ010098 at para 3.36].

### His Majesty's Coastguard Trackers

24. HMCG operated two tracker documents: (i) 'the Shared UK Tracker' and (ii) 'Migrant tracker – MRCC Dover' otherwise referred to as the 'Coastguard Tracker'. They would also receive a tracker from the French Authorities (see paragraph 83 below).

### Shared UK Tracker

25. The Inquiry has been provided with 182 iterations of this tracker [INQ010098 at para 3.64; INQ006771-INQ006952]. This document was an Excel spreadsheet created by HM Coastguard which, at the time of the incident, was accessible online to both HM Coastguard and Border Force [INQ010142 at para 24]. The Inquiry has been

provided with an index which identifies who made changes to the document and when [INQ007058].

### The Coastguard Tracker

26. This document was also an Excel spreadsheet which, in essence, was a copy of the Shared UK Tracker with some columns truncated that was sent by email to Centre Régionaux Opérationnel de Surveillance et de Sauvetage (Regional Operational Centers for Monitoring and Rescue) ('CROSS') Gris-Nez (see below at paragraph 79). The Inquiry has been provided with two iterations of this document: INQ001234 and INQ001262.

### His Majesty's Coastguard Policies

27. HMCG worked pursuant to its operational policies which were published on the Coastguard Information Portal (CIP) and would also circulate significant updates via email [INQ010142 at para 10]. The key policy documents are set out in an annex to this document – Annex A.

### Border Force Maritime Command

#### Border Force Maritime Command Centre

28. The BFMCC was a 24/7 facility based within the Joint Maritime Security Centre ('JMSC') (see para 59 of the 'Organisations Overview') at Royal Naval Command, Portsmouth [INQ010137 at paras 31, 36 and 39]. It was responsible for overseeing the deployment and coordination of BF maritime assets across the UK and provided the overarching command, control and support to maritime operations involving BFMC vessels [INQ010137 at paras 36, 39, 42; INQ010098 at para 2.17].

29. At the time of the incident, BFMCC's functioning in respect of small boats was determined according to the Operation DEVERAN Operational Order (see paragraph 33 onwards below) [INQ000619; INQ010137 at para 54].

### Operation DEVERAN

30. Operation DEVERAN was the formalisation of Border Force's maritime response and continued asset provision to small boats SAR incidents in the Dover Strait [INQ010137 at para 29; INQ000619 at page 1]. Border Force assets were increasingly tasked to small boat incidents in the final months of 2018 [INQ008165; INQ006118 at page 2; INQ006124 at para 14; INQ006125; INQ010137 at para 41], which led the then Home Secretary (the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP) to declare a 'major incident' on 28 December 2018 [INQ010416].
31. By 4 January 2019, a Gold Command structure (or 'Gold Group') had been established within BF [INQ006136 at para 3.2.4] and it was agreed between BFMC and HMCG that BFMC assets would be available to HMCG for SAR taskings [INQ010098 at para 5.16; INQ010137 at para 26; INQ010134 at para 56-57; INQ004447 page 3].
32. On 15 May 2019 this arrangement was formalised through Operation DEVERAN [INQ010137 at para 29]. However, by the time of the incident, Operation DEVERAN had effectively become subsumed within a wider Home Office operation, Operation ALTAIR, which had been established by the CCTC (see 'Organisations Overview' at para 69 onwards) on 21 December 2020 to unify the UK Government response to small boats [INQ010134 at para 39; INQ000619 at page 1; INQ008370 at page 3]. Operation DEVERAN is now known as Operation KIRSTEAD [INQ009632 at para 18; INQ005160; INQ005161; INQ005164].

The Op DEVERAN Operational Order

33. The Op DEVERAN Operational Order set out the particulars of BF's small boats response [INQ000619 at page 14; INQ010137 at para 49 onwards].
34. The deployment of assets in the channel was to be coordinated by BFMCC and reviewed on a daily basis taking into account: weather conditions, intelligence and the risk of migrant crossings, as well as vessel and crew availability (including French deployments), welfare, and resilience [INQ000619 at page 14].
35. The likelihood of small boat crossings was assessed in light of the weather forecast for the Dover Strait [INQ000619 at page 7]. The Met Office had been commissioned to provide this information by the CCTC (as to this organisation see 'Organisations Overview' at para 65), and forecasts were disseminated to stakeholders, including BFMC and HMCG, at around midday on Monday to Friday [INQ000619 at page 7; INQ007314; INQ007316; INQ007318; INQ007320; INQ007322; INQ007324].
36. There was a 5-tier colour coded ranking of how likely crossings were: 'dark green' meant crossings were 'highly unlikely', 'light green' meant crossings were 'unlikely', 'yellow' meant crossings were a 'realistic possibility', 'amber' meant crossings were 'likely or probable', and 'red' meant that crossings were 'highly likely' [INQ000619 at page 7; INQ007315; INQ007317; INQ007319; INQ007321; INQ007323; INQ007325]. Days when crossings were 'highly likely' became known as 'Red Days' (see, for example, INQ000204; INQ006329; INQ008329; INQ009949 at page 23; INQ001187).
37. Specific planning was to be undertaken in relation to 'Red Days' and these became known as 'Red Day meetings' [INQ000619 at page 14; INQ000204; INQ006329]. The BFMCC's resource deployment plan in relation 'Red Days' required approval by senior staff within BF [INQ000619 at page 14; INQ002230 and INQ002231]. Resource

planning within the BFMCC would be reported to the CCTC (again, see generally ‘Organisations Overview’ at para 65) twice per week for their wider oversight and planning regarding matters such as reception facilities [INQ000619 at page 15].

#### Border Force Resources

38. BFMCC had a range of maritime assets available to it [INQ010137 at paras 102-106].

The standard deployment as part of Operation DEVERAN was one cutter and two Coastal Patrol Vessels (‘CPVs’) [INQ000619 at page 14]. A ‘surge’ cutter could be deployed at 12 hours’ notice, and on ‘Red Days’ it was anticipated that additional Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (‘RHIBs’) would be deployed [INQ000619 at page 14].

39. On the night of the incident, according to the BFMCC Operation DEVERAN asset email dated 23 November 2021 [INQ000566; see also INQ002230, INQ002231, and para 37 above], the available assets were [INQ010137 at para 107]:

- a. His Majesty’s Cutter (‘HMC’) Valiant as the primary responder;
- b. CPV Hunter on standby;
- c. Crew Transfer Vessel (‘CTV’) Hurricane available from 0600;
- d. Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (‘RHIB’) Safeguard available from 0630;
- e. ‘Tactical Watercraft’ (‘TWC’ i.e. jet skis [INQ006356]) Juno 5 and Juno 6 would both available from 0700; and
- f. RHIB Artemis available from 0730.

40. MRCC Dover were made aware of which assets were available through the Operation DEVERAN asset emails [INQ000566; INQ010135 at para 23]. BFMCC also had access to systems such as ‘Telesto’, ‘Marine Traffic’, ‘Vessel Finder’ and ‘Geoplanner’, on which they received in-house training, to help them understand coordinates given to them by HMCG [INQ010135 at para 17].

### HMC Valiant ('the Valiant')

41. The Valiant was a 42.8m Damen Stan Patrol 4207-type vessel [INQ007224 at page 2], also known as a 'cutter' or 'fast patrol boat' [INQ010136 at para 15], which was designed to conduct anti-smuggling operations [INQ010136 at para 15]. She had a top speed of 26kts and could cruise at a speed of 20kts [INQ007224 at page 2]. She had a total endurance of 890 nautical miles [INQ007224 at page 2].
42. The Valiant required a crew of 12, and her maximum survivor capacity was 100 persons [INQ010136 at para 15; INQ010137 at para 23; INQ007224 at page 2].
43. Cutters were equipped with marine Very High Frequency radio ('VHF'), Airwave, and satellite communications [INQ007224 at page 2; INQ010136 at para 17]. They also carried a Global Maritime Distress Safety System ('GMDSS') which allowed the boat to communicate with other vessels and onshore installations, as well as transmitting emergency and distress messages [INQ010136 at para 17]. They were also equipped with radar, flood lights, thermal night vision and regular cameras [INQ007224 at page 2; INQ010136 at para 19].
44. The Valiant carried a RHIB at her stern, two 20-person life rafts, and personal floatation devices, such as life rings and life jackets [INQ010136 at para 20; INQ007224 at page 2].

### Tasking the Valiant

45. BFMCC did not triage distress calls from small boats themselves but instead received asset tasking requests by phone from HMCG [INQ010135 at paras 16, 21, 22, 27; INQ010136 at para 24]. BFMCC would then call the commander of the vessel to determine the correct course of action; precisely when the vessel would deploy would depend on the location of the small boat (i.e. whether it was in UK territorial waters or, alternatively, when it was predicted to enter them) [INQ010135 at para

18; INQ010136 at para 25]. Once the vessel and crew were ready, the Valiant would proceed to leave the Port of Dover [INQ010136 at paragraph 26]. Once out at sea, the Valiant would communicate directly with HMCG over VHF radio [INQ010136 at para 29], and HMCG would have oversight of the Valiant's movements via Automatic Identification System ('AIS') or radar [INQ010136 at para 30]. However, BFMCC continued to support vessel commanders tasked to SAR as they were still under Border Force command [INQ010137 at paras 42 and 54; INQ000619 at page 23].

### The Border Force Tracker

46. The BFMCC and HMCG would exchange copies of small boat trackers [INQ010135 at para 21]. The BFMCC also operated its own tracker document, known as the 'Op Deveran Live Update' which was distributed to HMCG's <[redacted] PD [redacted]@hmcg.gov.uk> email address [e.g. INQ001202; INQ001206].

### Joint Maritime Security Centre

#### JMSC Situational Awareness Briefings

47. The detail regarding the JMSC is set out at paragraph 59 onwards of the 'Organisations Overview', however it is noted here that JMSC also produced 'Operations Briefs' which provided a broader overview of the UK maritime picture [see INQ000606; INQ000607; INQ000609; INQ000610; INQ000614; INQ000615] and which were circulated on a daily basis to a number of stakeholders [INQ010134 at para 50; INQ010136 at page 57; INQ000609].

### 2Excel

48. At the date of the incident, 2Excel operated from Doncaster Sheffield Airport [INQ010335 at para 4].

## 2Excel Assets

49. As set out at paragraphs 88-91 of the 'Organisations Overview', 2Excel were required to provide 2 types of aircraft pursuant to the Aerial Surveillance and Verification ('ASV') contract: PA31 Panther aircraft and King Air B200 aircraft [INQ010335 at para 79]. Those aircraft were modified with a range of technology, which is set out at INQ010335 at para 44, but can be broadly summarised as follows.
50. All aircraft were equipped with AIS, GPS systems and VHF radio, and, with the exception of one Panther aircraft (G-UMMI), satellite communications systems [INQ010335 at para 44].
51. Both Panther and King Air aircraft were equipped with 'gimbal mounted' electro-optical and infrared cameras. However, the King Air was additionally equipped with a multifunction radar which could detect maritime 'targets' [INQ010335 at para 44].
52. The King Air was also equipped with a 'drop tube', which could deploy small items of survival equipment from air to surface, as well as technology to detect electronic distress signals [INQ010335 at para 44].

## Tasking 2Excel

53. All taskings for 2Excel were received from the ARCC [INQ010335 at para 15]. Upon receipt of a tasking, it was entered into 2Excel's flying program by an Operations Controller, who was responsible for scheduling and planning flights jointly with the pilots on shift, and for providing information to pilots such as Notices to Airmen 'NOTAMS' [INQ010206 at para 8]. On 24 November 2021, 2Excel's Operations Controller was Jacob Lugg [INQ010206 at para 8].
54. Once the relevant information was entered into 2Excel's systems, this would generate a 'flight package' which would then be sent to the pilot for review and a determination on whether it was safe to fly [INQ010206 at para 9]. If there was a

conflict in taskings, 2Excel was required to identify it and communicate that to ARCC, who would resolve it by reference to a prioritisation Matrix [INQ010335 at para 15].

55. The 2Excel Operations Team would confirm whether the aircraft and crew were available and then complete and return the Tasking Request Form either by 'acceptance' or by 'qualification', identifying any risks or issues [INQ010335 at para 16].

56. Once airborne, the pilot and HMCG would communicate direct via VHF radio [INQ010335 at para 36].

57. 2Excel were also aware of Bristow's taskings through a system called 'iSAR'; a *'cloud-based operational management software tool'* which allowed for shared communications between Maritime and Coastguard Agency ('MCA') stakeholders and provided *'each organisation with detailed visibility of all planned SAR crew rosters, all the respective flying programs and all the aircraft availability'* [INQ010335 at para 30].

### Bristow

58. As set out at paragraphs 97 to 101 of the 'Organisations Overview', Bristow provided Leonardo AW189 and Sikorsky S-92A helicopters for SAR.

59. Bristow's AW189 helicopters were based at Lydd and Lee-on-Solent, while their Sikorsky S-92A helicopters were based in Humberside [INQ010336 at para 3.11; INQ000115]. The former were most frequently deployed for small boat SAR incidents as they were geographically closer to the Dover Strait, although the JRCC were aware of the capacities of each aircraft and would decide for themselves which to contact [INQ010336 at para 3.11].

## R163

60. The helicopter used on the night, R163, was an AW189 aircraft [INQ009651 at para 3.1]. The AW189 was a twin engine 'modern generation' helicopter [INQ009651 at para 3.1] which was equipped with a Forward-Looking Infrared Camera ('FLIR') [INQ009651 at para 3.3.3], a search and weather radar [INQ009651 at para 3.3.4], night vision goggles to be worn by crew [INQ009651 at para 3.3.5], a distress beacon homing system [INQ009651 at para 3.3.7], VHF and High Frequency ('HF') long-range radios, and TETRA, the UK emergency services end-to-end encrypted communications network [INQ009651 at para 3.3.8; INQ010336 at para 6.11]. Whilst the aircraft's radio transmissions were recorded, they were overwritten after a time [INQ009651 at para 4.3.5].

## Tasking Bristow

61. Bristow was tasked by the ARCC at the JRCC by a phone call to the closest Bristow base to the SAR incident [INQ010336 at para 3.9]. The Bristow crew would decide whether or not to accept the tasking and, if necessary, ask the JRCC for further information about the tasking before doing so [INQ010336 at para 3.9; INQ009651 at para 4.1.2].
62. Examples of when they might refuse are if the crew considered the tasking was more suitable for another base, or if the crew had just returned from a tasking [INQ010336 at para 3.9]. Taskings could be accepted whilst at base or whilst airborne [INQ010336 at para 3.9].
63. Once a tasking was accepted, the crew would ready themselves within the agreed readiness times pursuant to the SARH contract (see 'Organisations Overview' at para 99) [INQ010336 at para 3.10]. These were 15 minutes by day (0800–2200) and 45 minutes at night (2200–0800) [INQ010336 at para 3.10].

64. Once airborne, the helicopter could communicate directly with the controlling authority, which, on the night of the incident, was MRCC Dover [INQ009651 at para 4.3.1 and 4.3.2].

#### Tekever

65. On the night of the incident, the Tekever drone ('AR3') was operational and due to be on task from 0530, subject to the prevailing weather conditions [INQ010409 at para 12; INQ009628 at para 70]. In the early hours of 24 November 2021, Tekever indicated that the AR3 drone would not fly due to poor weather [INQ009628 at paras 79-80; INQ010134 at para 112; INQ003884 at page 5]. However, by 0519, Tekever stated they would fly and the AR3 took off at 0710 and was airborne by 0730 [INQ009628 at paras 95-96; INQ010134 at para 112; INQ003884 at page 5].

#### RVL

66. RVL were tasked by the CCTC (see paragraphs 65 and 95 of the 'Organisations Overview') depending on the weather conditions and the likelihood of small boat activity [INQ010102 at para 19]. Typically, RVL were tasked proactively on 'yellow', 'amber' and 'red' days [INQ010102 at para 19]. Once the CCTC identified a requirement for an RVL flight, a tasking form would be submitted to the ARCC, who would formally allocate the tasking [INQ010102 at para 19; INQ010409 at paras 11 and 17; INQ003876].

67. RVL's aircraft operated at a higher altitude than R163 and the Tekever drone (see paragraph 65 above and paragraph 102 of the 'Organisations Overview') and was equipped with VHF radios for both aerial and maritime communications, an AIS receiver, satellite communications [INQ010102 at para 5] and an enhanced surveillance capability which was being trialled by the Home Office [INQ010409 at paras 16-17].

68. Whilst on task, RVL and CCTC would liaise directly, without the involvement of the ARCC, via satellite communications [INQ010102 at para 19; INQ010409 at para 18].

#### Royal National Lifeboat Association

69. The RNLI operated 238 lifeboat stations across the UK, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man [INQ010101 at para 7.i]. The Dover Strait was served by Ramsgate, Walmer, Dover, Littlestone, Dungeness, Hastings, Eastbourne and Newhaven [INQ010101 at para 14]. These stations were supported by a centre based in Poole which operated 24/7. The support centre was not a tasking or coordinating authority but responded to queries via a duty system which had an executive, strategic and tactical level person on call [INQ010101 at paras 30, 68].

#### Royal National Lifeboat Association assets

70. The RNLI primarily operated two classes of lifeboat: all-weather lifeboats (ALBs) and inshore lifeboats (ILBs) [INQ010101 at para 13].

71. The RNLI's ALB fleet consisted of Shannon, Severn, Trent, Tamar and Mersey class lifeboats [INQ010101 at para 13]. ALBs were capable of achieving speeds of 25kts and were designed to operate in all weather, day or night [INQ010101 at para 13]. They were self-righting in the event of capsize and carried a wide range of communication and SAR equipment [INQ010101 at para 13].

72. ILBs on the other hand are operated closer to shore and in shallower waters, or near cliffs and rocks [INQ010101 at para 13]. They were quick and agile boats but were subject to weather limitations [INQ010101 at para 13]. These were B and D class lifeboats [INQ010101 at para 13].

73. Sometimes lifeboats were declared 'off service' if they were unable to safely launch or operate due to damage, defect, crew availability or fatigue, or if undergoing

repair [INQ010101 at para 27]. A lifeboat may also have been placed on 'restricted service' if it was able to launch but with operational constraints [INQ010101 at para 28].

74. The 'Duty'/'Designated' Launch Authority ('DLA'), who was a specially trained operational volunteer and leader within a station [INQ010101 at para 23], was responsible for communicating the available assets in real time to HMCG and other flanking RNLI stations, and the RNLI Operations Room [INQ010101 at para 28].

#### Tasking the Royal National Lifeboat Association

75. In order to request that a lifeboat be launched, HMCG would usually first page the relevant station's DLA directly with relevant details of the tasking [INQ010101 at paras 23-24; INQ005206 at page 1; INQ005208]. The DLA carried a different pager to the rest of the crew so they could assess the tasking before the wider crew was alerted [INQ010101 at para 23]. The DLA was generally the 'Lifeboat Operations Manager' or 'Deputy Launch Authority', with certain specific exceptions in relation to the Humber and Thames lifeboat stations [INQ005206 at page 1].

76. The DLA would then consider the tasking based on his or her knowledge of the crew, available assets, conditions and local knowledge to determine whether the request was '*compliant, appropriate and achievable*' [INQ010101 at para 23; INQ005206 at page 1]. They would also consider if back up from other RNLI stations or aircraft was required [INQ010101 at para 25; INQ005203]. If the DLA agreed that a lifeboat should be launched, then they would give authority to the 'SAR Unit Commander', who was the vessel's coxswain or helm, and instruct HMCG to page the wider RNLI crew [INQ010101 at para 24; INQ005206 at page 1]. Once the crew had been paged, the DLA would brief the crew [INQ010101 at para 25]. If the SAR commander did not feel it was safe for the lifeboat to launch, they were able to override the decision to task made by the DLA [INQ010101 at para 25].

77. If a lifeboat was deployed, the vessel would communicate directly with HMCG via VHF radio [INQ010101 at para 26, 36].

#### French Coastguard/Navy

78. The Inquiry has been provided with limited information about the operational details of the French Navy.

#### French SAR Infrastructure

79. The Maritime Operations Command in Cherbourg was the overarching command and control facility for all French assets deployed at sea [INQ000619 at page 24; INQ009700 at para 2.4]. However, SAR operations were coordinated by one of the 7 CROSS stations [INQ010423; INQ009700 at para 2.3]. The relevant CROSS station in relation to the Dover Strait was 'CROSS Gris-Nez', which was also known as 'Gris-Nez MRCC' [INQ010423].

#### French SAR Assets

80. French maritime deployments generally consisted of French Naval patrol boats (Cormoran, Pluvier and Flamant) and Gendarmerie Maritime patrol boats (Athos, Aramis, Scarpe and Escault) [INQ000619 at page 17-18].

81. Société Nationale de Sauvetage en Mer ('SNSM'), the French equivalent of the RNLI [INQ010098 at para 7.41], had lifeboats based at Dunkerque, Gravelines, Calais and Boulogne [INQ000217 at page 2].

82. As well as maritime assets, the French authorities also had helicopters [INQ009700 at para 2.5.3; INQ000217 at page 2] and, in terms of technology, the French operated an iPad to communicate with small boats via Whatsapp [INQ000217 at page 2].

The French Small Boat Tracker

83. The French CROSS Gris-Nez also maintained an Excel spreadsheet tracker in respect of small boats which they would send to MRCC Dover [INQ001201; INQ007692; INQ007693; INQ001205; INQ001210; INQ001214; and INQ001223].

ANNEX A – Relevant HMCG Policy Documents

INQ ref	Date	Document Description
INQ000096	01/10/2020	MoU between HMCG and RNLI
INQ000100	01/01/2021	MoU on Exchange of Information, HMCG and HO
INQ000362	10/06/2021	Training slides - “Confirmation Bias and Human Factors”
INQ000428	06/10/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Incidents Involving Migrants” v 12.0
INQ000430	04/05/2021	Policy - SAR Coordination and Response and Maritime Assistance Service Policy v2.0
INQ000433	11/11/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Vessel – Reported in Difficulties”, v5.0
INQ000435	29/03/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “ViSION - Multiple Call, Scenario & Incident Functions” v 10.0
INQ000440	06/10/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure - Incidents Involving Migrants - v12
INQ000445	17/11/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Remote SMC” v2
INQ000446	18/11/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Remote SMC policy” v3
INQ000449	09/09/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “SAR Incidents Involving Migrants” v 2.0
INQ000450	13/10/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Search Suspension and Termination” v 4.0
INQ000453	01/07/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Vessel – Sinking or Taking Water”, v5.0
INQ000455	01/07/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Vessel – Unsure of Position”
INQ000456	06/05/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Zone Flexing”
INQ000457	16/11/2021	Policy - HMCG - Duty Operations Director Guidelines
INQ000461	26/10/2021	Policy - ARCC - Small Boats Response - v1 [Tasking Policy for Migrant Surveillance Patrols]
INQ000619	15/05/2019	Operation Deveran Operational Order (Maritime Plan) Border Force 15-05-2019
INQ000955	12/07/2017	Framework document for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
INQ001176	15/07/2019	Policy - HMCG – Maritime Operations – Seasonal Zone Grouping

INQ001456	15/10/2021	Policy - Aircraft Tasking Policy for Migrant Surveillance Patrols MCA 15-10-2021
INQ003004	12/07/2021	Flowchart for Migrant Incident – Termination of SAR
INQ003379	21/08/2021	MCA Document entitled “Migrant activity”
INQ003766	19/10/2021	CIP - Contacting On Call Duty Personnel
INQ003768	12/10/2021	CIP - HMCG Declared and Additional Resources
INQ003775	14/10/2021	CIP - Maritime Tactical Commander Incident Review v2 [RAGS]
INQ005159	01/02/2024	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure - HMCG RNLi Multiple Persons in the Water Triage
INQ005192	23/11/2021	CIP - Emergency Calls and SMS Text Messages v3
INQ005198	24/09/2021	Policy - MCA - Aircraft Tasking Policy (Operation EOS HMCG)
INQ006191	18/10/2021	HMCG Temporary Operating Instruction re Adoption of Named Intelligence Areas for Small Boat Channel Crossings where improved situational awareness is required (TRIAL) v1.2
INQ006195	30/09/2021	Temporary Operating Instruction - ARCC - 'end of day sweep'
INQ006199	29/03/2021	CIP - Incident Coordination
INQ006200	26/04/2021	CIP - Alerting and Tasking General Guidance
INQ006203	02/07/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Language Line”
INQ006204	28/03/2018	ViSION User Guidance (CAPITA) v4.24
INQ006747	19/10/2020	Policy - HMCG - Guidance on CGOC Dover WhatsApp Usage
INQ007277	10/07/2023	Policy - Fixed wing tasking for migrant SAR incidents policy v1.5
INQ007381	13/09/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Protocol for HMCG Termination of SAR”
INQ008370	15/12/2020	Operation Altair Gold Commander’s Strategy - v0.6
INQ008914	17/08/2021	Training slides - “Migrant incidents; Phases of Response”
INQ008922	12/12/2019	Policy - HMCG - Mission Conduct Policy v7
INQ010468	23/12/2021	HMCG Standard Operating Procedure “Terminating a call originating from a migrant vessel” v1.0