

Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG)

&

Programme Assurance Group (PAG) 1

10:00-16:00, 14th October 2024

Mary Ward House - 5 - 7 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9SN

Attendees

Met Office

Alison Wood (AW)
Tom Wigley (TW)
John Harrison (JH)
Nick Bruce-Jones (NB-J)
Jonathan Smith (JS)
Sarah Berks (SBe)

Steven Calder (SC)
Will Lang (WL)
Caroline Bain (CB)
Simon Brown (SB)
Joy Rae (JR)

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

Ian Belcher (IB) PWSCG Secretariat
Paul Riches (PR) PWSCG Secretariat
Celeste Crabbe (CC) PWSCG Secretariat
Lindsay Jamieson (LJ) DSIT

Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG)

Duncan Potts (DP) PWSCG Chair
Kim Shillinglaw (KS) Independent Member
John Thomson (JT) Scottish Government
James Kelly (JK) Northern Ireland Government
Adam Evans (AE) Welsh Government
Stefan Laeger (SL) Environment Agency
James O'Neill (JO'N) Ministry of Defence
Agostinho Sousa (AS) UK Health Security Agency
Lindy Woodage (LW) National Police Chief's Council
Laura Betsworth (LB) Southampton Government
Joanna Aston (JA) Civil Aviation Authority
Dee Payne (DPa) Cabinet Office
Sadie Mayes (SM) National Highways

Apologies

Met Office

Margo Melotte (MM)

Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG)

Matt Sheldon (MS) Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Ben Brook (BB) National Fire Chiefs Council
Steve Mulrooney (SM) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Actions

Action Number	Owner	Action	Due Date
01	Met Office	PMD1.5c Evaluate what the cost implications would be if the SLAs for the web and app were changed, along with associated risks and priorities.	Nov 2024
02	Met Office	In relation to D1.8a, organise Deep Dive with PWSCG Secretariat on final Lifecycle Plan on a Page outputs before submission of final paper in November 2024.	Nov 2024
03	Met Office	Provide clarity in relation to what products and services should be PWS funded and what is outside of the PWS remit.	Mar 2025
04	DPa / JS and JR	In relation to D1.8b, DPa or a representative from the Cabinet Office to meet with the Met Office to understand the remit of the GWIA service.	Nov 2024
05	Met Office / UKHSA	Met Office and UKHSA talk to broadcasters about NSWWS and heat health warnings / produce media toolkit.	Feb 2025

06	Met Office	Carry out market analysis to understand, in relation to comparative accuracy, who the public are going to for their forecasts.	Mar 2025
07	CB	In relation to comparative accuracy explore how AI could be used.	Mar 2025

Decisions

Decision Number	Owner	Decision	Decision Date
01	PWSCG	PMD1.1 – Approve the addition of a timeliness criteria into the subjective verification of warnings assessment and agree that the old verification process is stopped at the end of March 2025 so the new process can be used from April 2025 onwards – Complete	Oct 2024
02	PWSCG	PMD2.1c – Review metrics to ensure the most suitable channels are still being monitored – Complete	Oct 2024
03	PWSCG	D2.5a – Pull through of 7 day blended probabilistic site-specific forecasts in tables on web and apps – Complete	Oct 2024

Item 1: In camera session – PWSCG members only

See full version.

Item 2: Welcome Met Office colleagues & introductions

All were welcomed by the PWSCG Chair and all introduced themselves.

Item 3: Updates and Reports

An update was provided on behalf of DSIT and the following new appointments were noted: Peter Kyle as Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology. Lord Valance as Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation.

The following was noted.

There will be a focus on the government missions. A question was asked about how the Met Office was positioned alongside the missions. It was noted that the work of the Met Office does, as a whole, align with the missions in particular with ‘Clean Energy, Growth and Health’ and to a lesser extent with the ‘Safer Streets’ mission but does so with some of the security work.

The London Economics Report had been published and that it highlights the value the Met Office brings to the UK.

With regards to the Spending Review, the Phase 1 bids which relate to the next financial year have been submitted, but Phase 2 hasn’t yet started and will be dependent on the outcome of Phase 1.

Phase 1 has been challenging across the board due to departmental pressures.

The Met Office should focus on the supercomputer delay, accuracy, new competitors in the market, AI and ensuring that the Met Office products get into the rights hands at the right time.

Since the last PWSCG the focus for the PWSCG Independent Member has been on keeping a close eye on some of the metrics that are at risk of dropping, or are currently below, target.

The supercomputer delay and the need for a ‘bridging strategy’ was needed to try and mitigate impact to the Met Office’s reputation. Better working across the Met Office departments and functions is needed, and the strategy across digital, communications and engagement needs to be joined up as one, not operating in silos.

There is a need for the Met Office to stay up to date with AI related work and that the Met Office needs to be future facing and innovative. It was suggested that the Met Office could seek out partnership opportunities in the AI challenge. The Met Office is a trusted operator, and this perception needs to continue.

The PWSCG would like to understand how the Met Office strategies are aligned towards joined up objectives and clearer working across key functions such as communications and digital.

The trust people have in the Met Office, and the quality of data, does need to be maintained.

The Met Office strategy is being reviewed, that it will be aligned with the government's priorities and missions, and that work is being done within the Met Office to break down silos. It is key for the PWSCG to have an input into the new strategy.

Item 4: Review of this year's weather and warnings

The following was noted.

It had been a drier summer than usual contrary to people's perceptions. June and July had been cooler than average, and August had been slightly warmer. No extreme heat warnings had been issued, and the public don't always differentiate between the Met Office's and UKHSA's warnings. Feedback from broadcasters also indicated an ongoing desire to review how the two schemes interact with one another.

Storm Lilian, in August 2023, was the most significant summer windstorm since 2020. A yellow wind warning had been issued and that this had been monitored closely. Impacts of the storm were noted.

September rainfall events were highlighted, and it was noted that there was an unusual shift of the amber NSWWS warning area from that of the initial issue. There was a difference between the models and what the Chief Meteorologist was assessing.

Subjective assessment will be judged later in the month, but yellow warnings are not verified.

If performance dips over winter, despite warnings being issued and verified, then the methodology will need to be reviewed. PWS Secretariat confirmed it will be working with the Met Office to review the methodology ahead of next FY.

The Met Office could increase communications around warnings and why they might change, so the narrative shapes perception in real time while increasing the public's understanding. This could help prevent weather events being politicised. Performance of warnings within the right-hand side of the matrix (high impact) are the most important.

With regards to the three-month outlook, there is an idea that because it has been so wet recently there is an increase in the likelihood of flooding, but this is not necessarily the case as there could be dry spells.

PAG 1

Item 5: Review of Theme 1 Performance Measures – PM1.1 to PM1.5

The following was noted.

The PAG1 part of the meeting will review Theme 1.

In relation to PM1.1a there is a risk that Met Office will miss the target of 80% accuracy at end of year, but this is more of a consequence of the methodology of how the score is calculated (36-month average) rather than poor in-year performance. When the Met Office issue an amber or red warning, the PWSCG Secretariat will meet with the Met Office Civil Contingency Advisor team and will agree how to verify and score the warning, and that these scores make up the rolling score as part of the subjective verification process.

In relation to PM1.2, PM1.3 and PM1.4, there haven't been any snow warnings so there is no related data.

In relation to PM1.5, a target was missed in April 2024 but since has been at or above target each month.

Item 6: Review of Theme 1 Performance Measure Development (PMD) – PMD1.1a and PMD1.5c

The following was noted.

In relation to PMD1.1a, evidence is gathered to document the impact of amber and red warnings, and that the level of impact, the area affected, and the validity of time is assessed by the PWSCG Secretariat.

The Met Office want to encourage the right behaviours so want to get messages out to the public as early as possible and having warnings days before a high impact event is useful.

The timeliness criterion has been running in parallel for last few months and is working well. The Met Office would like to incorporate this extra factor which considers the timing of the warnings. The PWSCG were asked to approve the addition of a timeliness criteria into the subjective verification of warnings assessment, and agree that the old verification process is stopped at the end of March 2025 so the new process can be used from April 2025 onwards.

Confirmation was provided that there would not be a significant increase in workload as the processes fall out of the current process.

The Met Office will need to look holistically at all of the warnings, to consider the whole picture.

Warnings are triggers to mobilise resources so there are cost implications for others.

The PWSCG agreed to sign off this item so it can be implemented in April 2025. **Decision 01**

In relation to PMD1.5c, the PWSCG were asked to confirm that this performance measure development has been met and if it requires additional assurance of activity to adopt the target Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

The Met Office have undertaken Business Impact Assessments (BIAs) to evaluate the type of severity of impact occurring following a significant interruption to service. BIAs have been mapped to common SLAs.

A discussion was had about the gold, silver and bronze SLAs and potential issues relating to staff T&Cs and resourcing, to enable people to be available 24/7. If there is a resourcing challenge, then the PWSCG need to understand where the PWS money is spent.

A discussion was also had about the current SLAs relating to the web and app, and the reasons for web having a gold SLA and the app silver SLA/ The group questioned if this was the correct level given the high percentage of users who access information via the app. The website was seen as the point of last resort if other channels of communication were not available.

The work needs to be customer led to understand what resilience users want and need. The Met Office agreed to provide additional information on the pros and cons for each of these levels – including a clear understanding of the costs involved in each level. **Action 01.**

The PWSCG agreed that PMD1.5c would not be signed off until they have more understanding of the risks associated with each SLA and the cost implications of changing the SLAs, with a keen interest in the Mobile app and web.

Item 7: Review of Theme 1 Deliverables (D) – Increase in quality and authority of Met Office channels to the civil contingencies community – D1.8a and D1.8b

The following was noted.

In relation to D18a and D18b, the purpose of these deliverables is to provide clearer communication of Met Office plans for PWS Products and Services. The PWSCG were asked for feedback in relation to the proposed Lifecycle Plan on Page.

Th key findings and recommendations as per details in the slide were noted. The Met Office will organise a 'deep dive', with the PWSCG Secretariat, to review the final Lifecycle Plan on a Page outputs in November 2024. **Action 02**

A discussion took place about what products and services should be PWS funded and what is outside of the PWS remit and the PWSCG asked the Met Office to review this. **Action 03**

PWS products are often the first stage of awareness. A representative from the Cabinet Office could meet with the Met Office to understand the remit of the GWIA product as discussed as part of the deliverable. **Action 04**

Item 8: Review of Theme 1 Deliverables (D) – Increase in quality and authority of Met Office channels to the civil contingencies community – D1.8d

The following was noted.

In relation to D1.8d, the PWSCG were asked to note progress made against this deliverable.

The PWSCG Secretariat are pleased with progress made to date, in relation to data being provided to SitCen and available on Esri.

PWS Customer Group Main Meeting

Item 9: PAG reports and performance updates – comments and questions from PWSCG – PAG3, PAG4, MARG

The following was noted.

In relation to the PAG3 meeting which took place on the 3rd October 2024, two deliverables – D3.6a and D3.7a – were taken to the meeting to request sign off. They were both signed off, but the Met Office had been asked to make it clear how the deliverables are aligned to strategic objectives, in future.

The PWSCG recognised that the supercomputer delay and new entrants into the weather market posed risks to the Met Office's brand and reputation, and that actions in relation to the Communications and Engagement Strategy were taken away from the meeting.

The Met Office were also asked to clarify how their various strategies aligned.

In relation to the PAG4, interim papers have been circulated, and the next meeting will take place in March 2024. It was noted that the Leela radar had been operational from the end of 2023.

In relation to the MARG meeting which took place on the 8th October 2024, the broadcasters felt as though they didn't experience a lot of hot weather so the NSWWS and heat health warnings couldn't be tested together as much as hoped.

Data indicated that there hasn't been an increase in weather warnings.

It was suggested that the Met Office and UKHSA could talk to broadcasters / produce a media toolkit about the NSWWS and heat health warnings, as there seemed to be confusion about the colour coding and what these meant. **Action 05**

The Met Office needed to keep pace with the standards other providers have, in relation to the app and visualisation improvements and there is a need to understand what the Met Office are and could be doing in relation to AI and the real-world potential it has.

Item 10: Review priority Theme 2 activities – PMD2.0a and PM2.2

The following was noted.

In relation to PMD2.0, two new metrics have been created – the verification of temperate and wind speed extremes and the verification of rainfall corresponding to '1 drop' and '2 drop' weather symbols as displayed on the web and app. Key findings and recommendations were highlighted.

Verifications being in line with the symbols is helpful as that is what the public see.

In relation to PM2.2, a discussion took place about how the Met Office is ranked 4th in terms of comparative accuracy and in relation to other weather providers. The findings and recommendations were highlighted.

A question was asked about what the weather market looked like in relation to comparative accuracy. It was confirmed that market analysis could be done to understand who the public are going to for their forecasts.

Action 06

In relation to comparative accuracy the Met Office could explore how AI could be used. **Action 07.**

It was important that the Met Office, as the UK's national weather provider, should be within the top 3 providers.

Item 11: Ensure availability of products and services including digital channels, scripts, forecasts, observations, and the Public Weather Media Service (PWMS) – PMD2.1c

The following was noted.

In relation to PMD2.1c, the PWSCG have been asked to review and agree the five recommendations and agree that PMD2.1 has been met.

The review of which channels should be monitored, and how monitoring is carried out, seems to be BAU. This could be categorised as internal housekeeping for the Met Office, but the PWS Secretariat wanted to ensure appropriate channels were being monitored.

All agreed that PMD2.1c had been met. **Decision 02**

Item 12: Improvements in forecast accuracy available to all UK citizens, to help them make better decisions to stay safe and thrive – D2.5a

The following was noted.

In relation to D2.5a, the PWSCG have been asked to agree that the work completed has met the requirements set out within the deliverable. The Blended Probabilistic Forecast data went live in Beta in March 2024 and, following successful testing, the Blended Probabilistic Forecast went live in July 2024.

Broadcasters had commented about clutter and confusion in relation to data being displayed. The Met Office will need to think about the layering of information as a way of catering for all.

Responses from the public have been mixed. The digital team are looking at how to present the 'at a glance' visuals on the App.

The group were informed about the 'big jump' (improvement) in forecasting precipitation using the Blended Probabilistic Forecast. It was good to see that difference and that the Blended Probabilistic Forecast was delivering.

The PWSCG agreed that D2.5a had been met. **Decision 03**

Item 13: In camera session – PWSCG members only

See full version.