



Information & Communications Survey Report

7th July 2005



Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey was designed to provide an exchange of experiences and provide the opportunity to analyse some of the key business continuity management issues from the London Bombings of 7th July 2005. None of the responding organisations suffered fatalities or casualties. All of the responding organisations were subjected to the survey questions regarding:

Sources used to gain information

Television and websites were equal highest as sources and the BBC ranked first in both cases.

The most useful websites

News websites were more popular than industry or emergency services/local authorities.

Methods for contacting employees

Accounting for staff proved more difficult than expected and is an major area for improvement and the use of tools.

Responding to relatives inquiries

Surprisingly companies were not prepared for the call volume which demonstrates a lack of reality in rehearsals.

Business Continuity Plans and Disaster Recovery (DR) activation.

Definitions for invocation/activation were unclear however companies with rehearsed plans were quick to escalate and convene crisis management team

Main Points:

- Establish a plan for voice communication. There was a high reliance on mobile phones and many problems were reported including loss of mobile network. Overloading switchboards and individual's incoming call volume need addressing.
- Accounting for employees and directing them to safety was agreed as vital but took longer than anticipated.
- Processes for communicating with employees to provide updates on the rapidly changing situation and to offer reassurance are required.
- Solutions to address problems with transportation (including information on status) and the possible need to accommodate staff are required.
- Responding to relatives' inquiry calls need adequate resources.
- Location of DR sites and access during threats to the transport infrastructure caused problems

Introduction

The early morning news reports of the 7th July 2005 celebrated London's successful bid to hold the 2012 Olympics.

In Scotland the G8 summit in Gleneagles was subjected to peaceful protests from "Make Poverty History" campaigners. Police were dealing with anti capitalists in Stirling with news reporters and film crews were capturing all the action.



At 0849 the first bomb exploded on the Metropolitan Line between Liverpool Street and Aldgate. Whilst the bombing of the capital's transport infrastructure had started the initial media reports were of power surges and electrical problems.

As more information became available the reports started to refer to second, third and fourth explosions. Information was sketchy and unreliable in the initial stages. A timeline of events is provided in Annex A

Survey

The survey has been conducted to share information. It was sent to UK BCI members and the response came from those affected mainly in the London Area.

The comments and information provided has been analysed to provide feedback on what worked well, what didn't work well, where problems with procedures occurred and the lessons learnt within organisations.

The survey questionnaire covered the following issues:-

- Sources used to gain information
- The most useful websites
- Communicate tools for contacting employees
- Responding to relatives inquiries
- Business Continuity Plans and DR sites activation.

Observations & Analysis

Nearly 80 companies responded to the survey of which some 38% invoked their business continuity plans (38%) and a similar number formed a relative response team to address personnel concerns.

Disaster recovery (DR) sites were activated in a number of cases (3%) whilst a third of responders replied that they had put the DR site on standby. With regard to contact with external agencies and services in a number of examples coach companies, taxis, hotels and catering outlets were contacted for assistance.

Mobile networks became overloaded. There was significant demand registered by BT on fixed land lines. There was no reported damage to the mobile networks which continued to function under very heavy demands; O2 said it had doubled its network capacity, while Vodafone said it had also increased capacity and had freed channels for use by emergency services.

Switchboards came under pressure; within companies a number of responders made reference to problems handling enquiries from relatives, 13% replied that their Switchboard/Reception was affected:

- Congestion was due to high volume of incoming and outgoing calls during the morning.
- A large amount of these calls were from worried relatives of employees.
- Calls to busy office extensions were rerouted to the switchboard adding to the workload.



In response to the switchboard problems a number of measures are suggested to deal with these problems including:

- Queuing system developed to manage the calls.
- Providing sufficient incoming lines to handle volume of traffic.
- Temporary staff employed to cover period of heavy loading.
- Prevent the rerouting of calls to the switchboard.

Television news and the internet provided the two main information sources with over 85% of responders reporting that they monitored developments through these media. Many (50%) used radio whilst SMS Messaging, land lines and mobile phones were used to share information and update personnel.

BBC News reported on their web site that up to 115 million pages were viewed during the day more than 5 times the normal daily average with a peak viewing of 40,000 hits per second.

UK websites slowed and became overloaded also. Solutions employed included switching to landlines and blackberry e-mail facilities and move to non UK websites e.g. CNN.

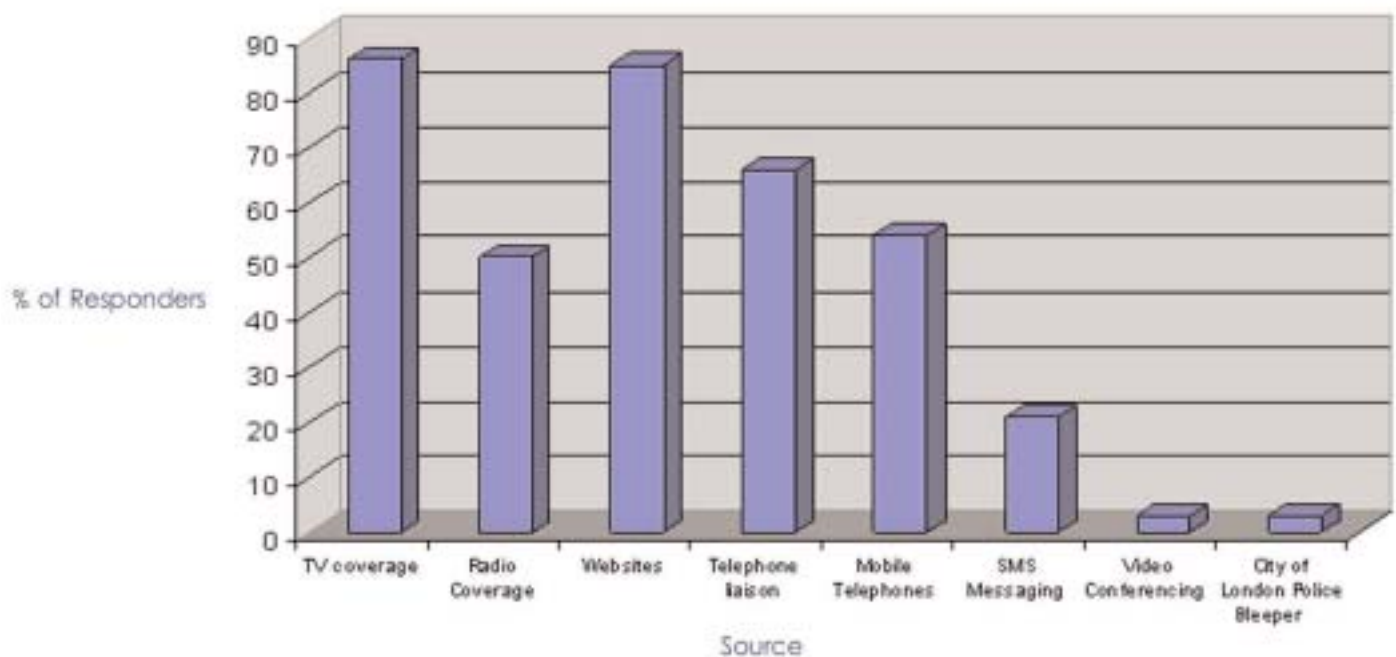
Information Sources Reported¹

Organisations turned to a number of sources for information. Key information requirements were casualty data, locations of incidents, advice from emergency services and travel arrangements.

Some companies reported planning for members of staff to remain in the offices, with the provision of food and blankets. Others booked hotels and sourced alternative travel arrangements.

Public transport infrastructure information was uncoordinated and the only information was visible on newschannels and websites.

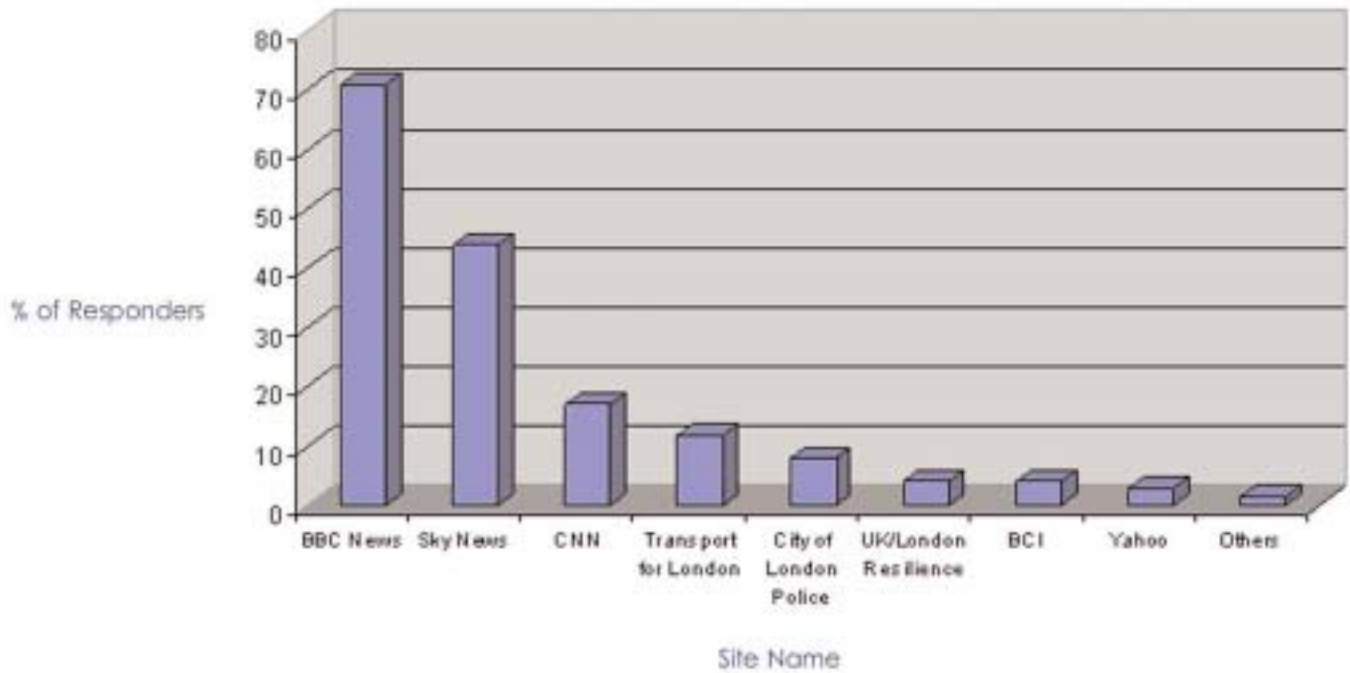
Sources of Information



The first choice of web site for news was the BBC, it dominated the survey some 71% of responses listed it; Sky news and CNN were also high on the list, with a number of responders pointing out that the CNN was much faster perhaps due to the timing of events being overnight in the US. Transport for London, City of London Police and UK/ London resilience were accessed.

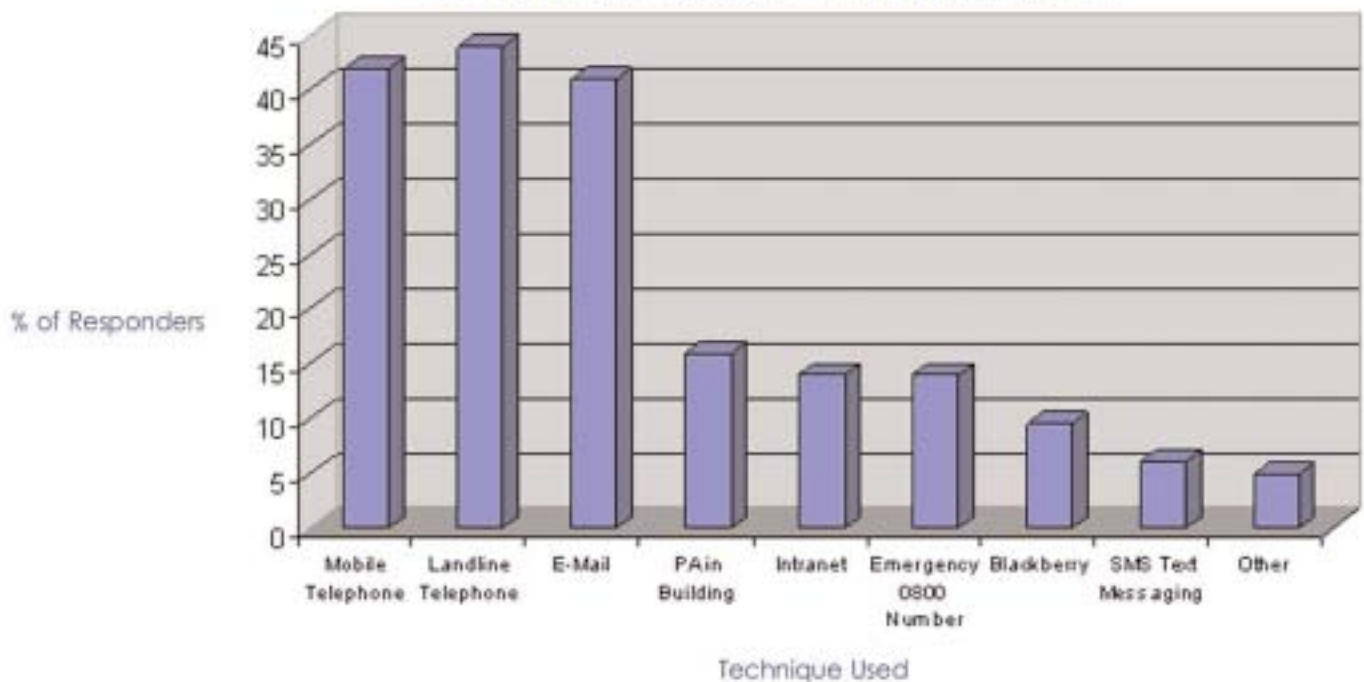
¹Charts represent sources often multiple that responders identified

Websites



Accounting for personnel and communicating during the day formed a key part of the response. The use of text messaging rather than voice communication on mobile phones was often mentioned. Within the grouping of "other" are pagers, radios and video conferencing .

Communicating with Employees





Communications

Individual observations

- When mobile telephone networks are busy switch to text messaging rather than voice calls. Comment: that 'sent' SMS does not guarantee 'received' within a reasonable time.
- Utilise the e-mail facility if personnel are carrying 'blackberry' units.
- Expected automatic diverts from mobiles to landlines did not work, technical solution required.
- Liaison and communications handled by staff outside of London allowed a greater overview of events and provided additional communication routes.
- ACCOLC registered mobile telephones and the Government ECN fixed landlines should be considered to improve connectivity with mobile staff.
- Short wave radio is another viable communication backup.
- Do not rely on Police Bleeper notification.
- Have mobile telephone chargers available in building for staff to charge-up before making journey home.

Accounting for Personnel

- Accounting of employees and knowing their whereabouts was difficult in many cases due to the amount of staff travelling to work at the time.
- Internal checking was made easier by Intranet, Public Address system announcements, e-mail and site radio system.
- External checking was reliant on landline telephones, SMS text messaging, e-mail via 'blackberry' and 0800 emergency free-phone number.
- Assistance can also be provided by vehicle tracking system, work allocation and journey management systems.

Internal Communication

- Updating employees to the rapidly changing situation is essential but needs to be coordinated to ensure only factual information is given.
- The initial Sky News/BBC News provided real time information, but led to rumour, speculation and fear. Companies must be able to separate fact from fiction in their internal communications.
- Media broadcasts provide fast 'on the ground' reporting but do not provide any useful information on what the Emergency Services advice is for the wider community.
- Consistency of the approved messages is a designated task to update website, intranet, 0800 emergency number and the PA Broadcast. Information.
- The Go In/Stay In/Tune In philosophy does work.
- Having a stock of 'Internal staff communication statements' available for intranet, e-mail, PA broadcasts and 0800 emergency recorded messages, saves time and effort on the day.
- Allow staff to access the intranet from home and therefore receive up to date bulletins.
- Provide staff with 0800 emergency free-phone number to gain updates from home.



HR Implications

- Providing transportation for staff was not helped by the often confusing information about the opening of mainline stations.
- Providing taxis and coaches was nigh impossible and therefore the option of returning to the place of work to spend the night, after attempting to get home was made available. This required businesses to provide sleeping bags and hot and cold food and drink for staff.
- The evacuation plan for London relies on bussing people out of the area - clearly a co-ordinated attack on the transport infrastructure would render that ineffective and staff might need to be internally evacuated. Businesses should look towards providing surplus amounts of provisions and bedding.
- Lift share is an option.

Switchboard

- Many businesses reported switchboard operations overloaded and operators struggling to cope with the inquiries received.
- Further training of staff in dealing with the type of inquiry calls expected is essential.
- Provide statement/instructions as to 'What May Be Said' to the switchboard operators from the Crisis Management/BSM team.
- Prevent direct line office telephone calls redirecting to the switchboard automatically, this will assist in easing the congestion at the switchboard.
- Temporary staff are often employed on the switchboard/reception duties and are generally outside of the scope of the BCP.
- When switchboards are located outside London, good communication links are necessary with the London building to provide updates on personnel whereabouts and details of the relatives inquiry calls.
- When relative responder cells are set up, the liaison with the Crisis Management/BCM team is paramount. A statement/instruction as to 'What can Be Said' must be provided to the responders.
- To reduce the amount of incoming calls, instruct staff to telephone their relatives to report their safety as early as possible

Response Plans

- Invoke the Crisis Management/BCM teams earlier rather than later, it is easier to stand down those not required, who will be then allocated times to relieve team members later.
- BCP to be updated to reflect decisions required when authorities request the building to be secured and not evacuated.
- There will be DR sites located in London and therefore impacted by exactly the same constraints, a key strategy failure within the BCP.
- BCP may need reviewing to include a contingency plan for an event which is not a crisis to the organisation but an event which might impact staff and business trading.
- The need to separate tactical and strategic management environments in a crisis is essential for smooth co-ordination and accurate resourcing.
- BC plans should contain communications and HR procedures that can be used regardless of the nature of the event.
- Public transport and police cordons need to be considered when moving staff to a DR site or alternative location.
- Maps to DR sites are provided for staff via road and rail, but, walking maps are also required.
- Businesses should be prepared for dealing with emotional staff, injured staff and fatalities.

Information Sources

- One dedicated website for definitive up to date transport information would be of great assistance.
- UK websites were either busy or too slow at the peak period of 0900-1100, but US websites such as CNN had less over-demand issues.
- The Police e-mail alert service was disappointing in terms of updating information and advice.
- Little timely information was provided by regulators and authorities.
- The BCI provided real time web updates and media commentary and was branded on TV, Internet, Radio, National Newspapers and Trade press.

One of the features of the news reports is the increasing use of the camera/video/mobile telephone. The media overtly advertised for the general public to provide digital images for broadcast. This means real time reporting by amateurs who have no 'media savvy' and little concept of acceptable content.



ANNEX A

Timeline of the Events in London on 7.7.05

Locations emergency services were called to

Edgware Road

King's Cross

Liverpool Street

Russell Square

Aldgate East

Moorgate

Tavistock Square

Incident timeline²

0849 Seven people die in a blast on a train 100 yards from Liverpool Street station

0856 27 people die in a blast on a train between Russell Square and King's Cross stations

0917 Seven people die in blast on a train at Edgware Road station

0947 Fifteen people die in a blast on a bus at Tavistock Place

Response Timeline

0849 An incident on the Metropolitan Line between Liverpool Street and Aldgate is reported to British Transport Police.

0915 Press Association reports emergency services called to London's Liverpool Street Station after reports of an explosion.

0924 British Transport Police say the incident was possibly caused by a collision between two trains, a power cut or a power cable exploding. Police report "walking wounded".

0933 London Underground reports "another incident at Edgware Road" station, PA reports.

0933 Passengers are told that all London Underground services are being suspended because of a power fault across the network, PA reports.

0940 British Transport Police say power surge incidents have occurred on the Underground at Aldgate, Edgware Road, King's Cross, Old Street and Russell Square stations.

1002 Scotland Yard says it is dealing with a "major incident".

²Timeline based on media reports

1009 Witness Christina Lawrence, who was on a train leaving Kings Cross, tells BBC News 24: "There was a loud bang in the tunnel and the train just stopped and all of a sudden it was filled with black, gassy smoke and we couldn't breathe."

1014 An eyewitness tells PA that a bus has been ripped apart in an explosion in central London.

1021 Scotland Yard reports "multiple explosions" in London, the Press Association reports.

1023 British Transport Police confirm an explosion on a bus in Tavistock Square.

1025 PA reports two buses damaged in explosions - one in Russell Square and another in Tavistock Square. Witness, Belinda Seabrook said of the Russell Square blast: "I was on the bus in front and heard an incredible bang, I turned round and half the double decker bus was in the air."

1025 The BBC's Andrew Marr, with the prime minister in Gleneagles, says Number 10 is "still unsure" whether the explosions are a terrorist attack.

1025 Transport union officials say they have reports of explosions on three buses, PA says.

1030 Mobile phone networks reported to be at near capacity

1039 All London hospitals have been put on major incident alert, a hospital spokesman tells PA.

1049 Police say there are serious casualties, but no deaths are confirmed, Associated Press reports.

1051 A passenger on a train at Edgware Road says he saw several bodies in the wreckage. A police spokesman says two trains remain stuck in tunnels at Edgware Road.

1053 Home Secretary Charles Clarke makes a statement outside Downing Street about "dreadful incidents" causing "terrible injuries". He says Prime Minister Tony Blair has been informed and advises the public in London not to make unnecessary journeys.

1055 A doctor tells Reuters there are at least 90 casualties at Aldgate station.

1118 London's Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair tells the BBC he knows of "about six explosions", one on a bus and the others related to Underground stations. He says he believes the six affected areas are Edgware Road, King's Cross, Liverpool Street, Russell Square, Aldgate East and Moorgate, but says it is "still a confusing situation". He advises Londoners to "stay where you are - all of London's transport is currently disabled" - he refuses to confirm any fatalities.

1125 "We have at least two fatalities, but still unconfirmed," a police spokesman tells the AFP news agency.

1126 The president of the European Parliament, Josep Borrell, blames terrorism for a "co-ordinated series of attacks" and "confirmed deaths".

1130 Signs on major roads into London warn: "Avoid London. Area closed. Turn on radio."

1138 Market has fallen by 207 points

1205 Prime Minister Tony Blair, at the G8 summit in Gleneagles, says there has been "a series of terrorist attacks in London... people have died and are seriously injured... It is reasonably clear this is designed and timed to coincide with the opening of the G8". He says he will return to London within hours, but that the summit will continue without him.

1205 The Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, said: "This is a grave day for London. Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured and bereaved."

1210 The BBC's Security Correspondent Frank Gardner says BBC monitoring services have located a web site linked to al-Qaeda with a 200-word statement saying it carried out the bombings.

1215 The ambulance service says there are people still trapped at King's Cross station, and efforts are being made to rescue them.

1255 Home Secretary Charles Clarke tells the House of Commons that four explosions had been confirmed, three on trains and a fourth on a bus. "We do not know who or what organisations are responsible for these terrible criminal acts," he says. He says the Underground will remain closed all day.

1313 The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, condemns a "cowardly terrorist attack" and says Londoners responded "calmly and courageously".

1325 UK Prime Minister Tony Blair leaves Gleneagles summit in Chinook helicopter.

1333 US President George W Bush, speaking at the Gleneagles summit in Scotland, condemns the attacks, saying that the blasts show the war on terror must continue.

1344 The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, describes the attacks as appalling and calls on all religious leaders to stand and work together for the wellbeing of the nation.

1353 Russian President Vladimir Putin expresses his condolences over the attacks and calls on all countries to unite in the fight against international terrorism.

1418 A Transport for London spokeswoman says the bus hit by the explosion was a number 30, travelling from Hackney to Marble Arch.

1458 Sir Iqbal Sacranie, the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, joins other religious leaders in condemning the attacks, saying "as with all other people in the community, we totally condemn the perpetrators of what appears to be this series of co-ordinated attacks in London which tragically has led to several fatalities and a large number of casualties".

1505 The former mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, describes the explosions as "dastardly, cowardly acts". "My heart goes out to the people who were affected by this, it reminds me so much of 11 September," Mr Giuliani, who is visiting London at the moment and was near Liverpool Street station as the first blast hit, said.

1510 UK Prime Minister Tony Blair arrives back in Downing Street.

1525 Police confirm that 33 people have been killed in the London blasts. At least seven were killed in an explosion on a tube train near Aldgate East station. At least another 21 were killed in an explosion on a tube train in the Kings Cross/Russell Square area. Five have been confirmed killed in the Edgware Road station blast and there were fatalities on the bus attacked near Woburn Square, although how many is not yet known.

1533 London ambulance service reports that 45 people were seriously injured in the blasts, sustaining injuries such as severe burns, amputations, chest and blast injuries. A further 300 sustained minor injuries, such as lacerations and smoke inhalation. All injured have been removed from the bombed vehicles they say.

1546 London police say there have been no arrests in connection with the blasts so far and that they are "keeping an open mind as to who the perpetrators might be".

1555 US raises its terror alert level for rail and subway systems, but not for airlines, officials say.

1603 Scotland Yard issues a casualty hotline number for people worried about their relatives.

1609 London transport officials report that all tube lines in the city remain closed, although it is hoped some of the lines unaffected by the blasts will reopen on Friday. All main overland train stations apart from Kings Cross and Victoria are now open. It is hoped that bus services will resume in central London later this afternoon.

1635 The Union Jack flag flying over Buckingham Palace is lowered to half mast at Queen Elizabeth II's request.

1653 The Union Jack flag will be flown at half mast on all UK government buildings tomorrow, a Department for Culture spokesman says.

1657 All major West End theatre productions are cancelled for tonight - something which has not happened since World War II, apart from on the days of state funerals.

1732 UK Prime Minister Tony Blair promises the "most intense" police and security forces action to bring those who carried out the London attacks to justice. He says the terrorists "act in the name of Islam" but he knows most Muslims worldwide "deplore this act of terrorism". He insists that in the face of these attacks the British people remain resolute: "It is a very sad day for the British people but we will hold true to the British way of life."

1753 The UN Security Council unanimously passes a resolution condemning the London attacks, saying it regards any act of terrorism as "a threat to peace and security".

1813 The number of people confirmed dead in the London bomb attacks has risen to 37, Deputy Assistant Police Commissioner Brian Paddick says. Twenty-one were killed at Kings Cross/Russell Square, seven died at Edgware Road, seven died at Liverpool Street and two died on the bus at Upper Woburn Place. A further 700 were injured, 300 of whom were taken to various London hospitals by ambulance.

1816 US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice orders US embassies across the globe to review their security posture in the wake of the London attacks, the US State Department says.

1940 The UK foreign secretary, Jack Straw, says the London attacks bear all the hallmarks of al-Qaeda. Mr Straw, who has temporarily taken over as chairman of the G8 summit in Scotland, said neither the British police nor the intelligence services had any warning of the attacks.

1947 Buckingham Palace says that Queen Elizabeth II will visit some of those caught up in the London attacks on Friday.

2341 Police re-open the majority of the roads previously closed by cordons in central London. But cordons remain in place in Woburn Place, Tavistock Place, Burton Street and Flaxman Terrace.



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