

7 July Review Committee

23 March 2006

Transcript of Item 3 – 7 July – Lessons Learned

Richard Barnes (Chair): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Can I welcome you to City Hall, to this, the fifth and final hearing of the 7 July Review Committee of the London Assembly. My name is Richard Barnes, the Chair of the Committee. To my right are Sally Hamwee, Deputy Chair, and Joanne McCartney (AM) and Peter Hulme Cross (AM), who are also members of the panel. As I said earlier, Darren Johnson will be joining us after the first break. To my left is Janet Hughes, the Scrutiny Manager, and Dale Langford, the Committee Officer. Can I say there is another officer who should have been with us today, but his wife went into labour last night. He sends his apologies, and can we send him our good wishes? That is Danny Myers (Scrutiny Manager). Around the Chamber you will notice Greater London Assembly (GLA) officers with clearly marked badges, should any of you require assistance during the course of the hearing.

To remind everybody what this Committee is all about, the purpose of the Review is to identify lessons to be learned from the responses to the events of 7 July, in particular to examine communications in the immediate aftermath of the bombings and thereafter; and to make practical recommendations to improve the response to major incidents in London in the future. We will publish the views and information we receive, our analysis of the lessons to be learned and our recommendations for the future – probably around the end of May. Our remit does not cover issues such as the causes of the 7 July attack, events leading up to the 7 July, the police investigation following 7 July and attempted attacks on London on 21 July. This review is not intended to be a substitute for a statutory public inquiry.

The survivors from the four sites were all offered three alternatives for submitting evidence to us: by written submission, private formally recorded interview or a public hearing. The ladies and gentlemen with us today have determined to tell us their stories here and in public, and for that I do sincerely thank you.

Today, and in our report, we will only use first names in order to protect our guests from unwanted intrusion. I would ask that all of you appreciate that this is a challenging day for all concerned. I am reliably informed that this is the first time that evidence has been heard, from those most affected by a catastrophic event, anywhere in the world, in public. Anyone who is affected by the events of 7 July can contact the 7 July Assistance Centre. I will give their number, which is: 0845 054 7444.

I would make it clear that the stories from the passengers will be heard with respect and dignity. I will tolerate no interruptions of any sort from the public gallery, and will not hesitate to exercise the powers vested in me should that be required.

The process that we shall adopt is that we shall hear evidence from Edgware Road first, followed by Aldgate, and then we will take a 20-minute break, and then on our

resumption, we will hear evidence from King's Cross. All of our guests are allowed up to 15 minutes to speak to give everyone an equal opportunity in this very public hearing, but we are happy to listen to any further points you want to raise at one of our private hearings over the coming few weeks. Those hearings will be recorded and they will be part of our evidence. I would advise you that we have received written evidence from these three sites and Tavistock Square, and we are taking evidence in private from all four sites.

I know there is a great deal of interest in our session today, but I must ask press photographers and any members of the public with cameras not to take any pictures once we start hearings from our guests. It is distracting and disruptive for Members of the Committee and, more importantly, our guests to have flashes going off and the sounds of shutters clicking while we put our thoughts into words. I am sure you will appreciate that. I will ask anyone taking pictures during the session to leave the Chamber. Similarly, please could everyone make sure that mobile phones are switched off to avoid unnecessary disruption? That also includes the Committee. The hearing is webcast and is being widely broadcast by the media.

Once again, can I thank you all for coming? John from Edgware Road, I believe you are going to start the proceedings.

John (Edgware Road): Thank you. Just after the train left Edgware station, there was a massive bang followed by two smaller bangs and then an orange fireball. I put my hands and arms over my ears and head as the windows and the doors of the carriage shattered from the blast. Splintered and broken glass flew through the air towards me and other passengers. I was pushed sideways as the train came to a sudden halt. I thought I was going to die. Horrific loud cries and screams filled the air, together with smoke, bits and chemicals. Large and small pieces of stuff hit me and covered me. A book jammed itself between my shoulder and a panel at the side of me. I was hit on the head by a piece of metal that gave me a headache. I was covered in splinters and broken glass from the window behind me. My eyes were sore and very dry from the fireball. Rubbing them made them only worse. Small splintered pieces of glass were sticking in my head and my face. I could not breathe; my lungs were burning because of the smoke and the dust. I crashed my head between my knees to get some air. There followed a silence.

I sat upright. Through the smoke, bits were dancing in the air making patterns. A young woman sitting next to me asked if I was okay. Screams and cries filled my ears. It was dark. I replied that, 'I was okay, but what about the people sitting opposite?' I then asked a man – I will call him Jason – standing in front of me, if he was hurt. He said he was okay, 'But what about the people further down the carriage?' They were hurt and injured. Shouting and screaming were now coming from the train that had stopped next to us. Passengers left by the trackside door, which had been blown away by the blast.

After the bangs, there was a lot of smoke and dust in the carriage. It was difficult to see; all the lights had been blown out. However, the glass panel to my right-hand side had not shattered. The only lighting available was that from the outside tunnel maintenance lamp on the tunnel brick wall. I was then aware of a man with a large gash along one of his cheeks. Seeing him, I decided to see if I could help any of those who were hurt, and slowly started to walk down the centre of the carriage.

I walked into an unknown hell. I could not see where I was going. I kept on falling over as I stumbled forward. At one point, I was on my knees. I stumbled over what I thought were bags. I could not see because of the dust and the smoke in the air. My eyes were sore and my lungs were burning; it was difficult to breathe. My shoes were sticking to the floor; it became difficult to lift them. I could not see the floor. I used my arms and my hands to right myself. The seats were covered in a film and pieces of black stuff. My head was hurting and the gash in my hair and my scalp was itching. A large lump was now forming on my head from the blow it had received earlier.

I got to the centre of the carriage and my foot slipped beneath me, and I fell into a hole in the floor. My arm stopped me going right through and on to the live rail beneath. My bag, which I had been carrying on one side, jammed me to a standstill. My other arm was resting on what I thought was a soft bag. My forearms were keeping me from falling through the hole. I could not see a thing. I thought I was going to die; there was no one there; they had all left the carriage. I put my knees into the foetal position to stop them from touching the live rail beneath me. I tried to swing my legs to see if I could find a ledge or a bracket underneath the carriage to rest my shoes on, but there was not any. I could not push up one of my arms because it was in something very soft, and now I was stuck – my bag was jamming me from one side. I was very frightened and scared at the thought of such a painful and lonely death. However, that was not going to be the case. I was not alone.

A man found me stuck in the hole. He put his hands under one of my armpits and pulled me out. Everything was covered in a sticky substance, but it was too dark to see what it was. Jason had just finished putting a tourniquet on a man's leg, who I will call David. He was lying on the floor next to where I had fallen in. Jason asked me to look after another man, who I will call Stan, who was halfway through a hole in the floor. This is where the double doors of the carriage should have been. There was a massive hole in the floor and the roof; the metal all around it was all jagged and bent from the explosion. Parts of the metal were covered in blood.

I went to a little ledge – all that was left of the floor – to see if I could get close to Stan to give him some water from my bottle, but I could not because of the jagged pieces of metal. I went inside the hole and tried to reach Stan, but I slipped on a blood-coated sheet of metal. I thought that I might try to jump into the hole, but decided that, if I did, I would get impaled on the large, jagged, pointed piece of metal that was protruding from the hole. Stan was calm and conscious and he was looking at me. I repeatedly told him not to worry, that help was on its way and everything would be okay. I went over to check the other bodies on the floor, and found Jason doing just that. He said he could not find a pulse, and that they were all dead.

The smoke and dust had now cleared. It was very calm, peaceful and serene. The maintenance light from the Tube wall threw a soft beam of light on to Stan's face. All the other areas of the floor were dark with no light. I gave David some water from my bottle. He asked me not to stand on his leg again, as I had done when I climbed out of the hole. He told me he had put his jacket over his leg because it had been injured in the blast. He was in pain, and could not move from the floor where he lay. I told him and Stan that I would go and get help. I could not get out of the train from that side, so I had to return back the way I came. I could not see anything below my waist, but managed not to fall in any of the holes.

When I got to my original place, I was helped out of the carriage by a fellow passenger, already on the side of the track. He cupped his hands for me to use as a step. I told him that I wanted to go down the side of the track and get help for the injured. He told me that I could not and we had to stay where we were. I walked back along the side of the track to give Stan, who was still calm and conscious, some water from my bottle. I tried to lean near to him but I could not reach him. I kept on telling Stan not to worry – he would be okay, and that help was on the way. I asked that, if he understood me, to blink his eyes twice, which he did.

As I was reassuring Stan, I was giving David some water. I then realised that I was on my own with Stan, David and the dead. Jason had gone down to help people who were hurt at the other end of the carriage. I did not know what to do next. It was a desperate, hopeless situation, so I kept on telling them that help was on its way, and that everything was okay. We were trapped and alone for 15 minutes. Stan kept on looking at me, as I assured him that help was on its way and everything would be okay. My water ran out; my eyes were sore; the gash in my head was itching; and my head was throbbing from the blow it had received earlier.

I could see figures in the train that had stopped next to us. They had tried to open the double doors of their carriage to get to us, but had not succeeded. We were thirsty and in need of help. Looking at Stan, I could see he was dying of his injuries. He never shouted out or cried. He knew he was dying; he remained calm and peaceful. I told him to keep on looking at me, that help was on its way and everything would be okay. I shouted out I needed water, and then I heard the sound of smashing glass, as bottles of water were passed to me. I took a drink myself and gave some to David, but I still could not reach Stan to give him any water. They tried to open the double doors of their carriage, but they would not move. Looking at Stan, I understood he was dying. He remained calm and peaceful. He kept his eyes on me. I told him not to worry and that everything would be okay – help was on its way.

I gathered strength from Stan's courage and shouted out for first aid or medics to help me. I heard them smashing into the lower part of the carriage. Then a man appeared at my side asking what he could do. I asked him to take some of Stan's bodyweight, because he was slipping down the hole. This he did with the help of another man. They got under the carriage and both held Stan, one on either side. Then they asked if they could ease Stan on to the track, and I said they could. As they eased Stan on to the track, he closed his eyes for the last time. One of the men was calling Stan's pulse to me, which was fading and finally stopped.

He died being held by two of his fellow passengers. As they laid him gently on the track, he looked peaceful. I said a silent prayer for him and that no one else would die. One of the men who had been holding Stan came over and asked David if he had finished the book he had given him. The book had been put under David's head, because it was resting on something soft. David replied that he had been reading a script before the bomb blast. David was now in a lot of pain, and asked for someone just to hold his hand, because everything around him was covered in slime and blood.

I was now aware of another man I will call Peter, who had come from the other carriage. He asked me if I could give him a hand to put a tourniquet on David's leg. As I leaned into the carriage, someone from beside the track passed me a mobile phone to use the light-emitting diode (LED) light. It was pathetic; we could not see; we were working in the dark. Peter used part of his shirt he had ripped into strips. David was in a lot of

pain, and he kept on putting his hands on his head and saying his hair had been burnt in the bomb blast, and he was sorry if he smelt. The floor of the carriage was covered in bits and blood; it also started to smell.

I now leaned into the carriage, and I rested my arm, wrist and hands on what was the top of a large pool of blood, so that David could grab hold of my hands and relieve some of his pain. Two women were now in the carriage, who were in the train, and they said not to give any more water to David, as he would have to be operated on, but to keep him awake by talking to him.

There had been screaming in the carriage alongside, which I had ignored, but now the screaming was coming from the end of our carriage. It was not a good idea to let this carry on, because it might cause panic and destabilise the situation. David had to be kept calm and, most of all, alive. After all the death and destruction in the carriage, we had to get a result: he must not die. The screams were getting louder, 'We are all going to die. It is a waste of time. Al-Qaeda planted bombs in each carriage,' they screamed. I walked alongside the track to find Jason with two women. He said their feet had been severely injured by the blast. The women continued screaming, 'It is all a waste of time. We are all going to die.' I said, 'That might be the case, but you still have your legs. Other people have lost their legs down the carriage, and are in a far worse state than you. Please could you stop screaming and calm down?' which is what they did.

I walked back to where David was in the carriage. I now had to keep him conscious. We talked about the poor performance of the England rugby team, but that was too depressing, so I turned the conversation to something positive. I asked what he was going to be looking forward to. He said he was performing in a play, and he had been reading the script when the bomb went off. I thought, 'Time is running out for David, if help does not get here soon.' We had no first-aid equipment to stem his blood loss. We had no light to see. We had no way of communicating with the people on the surface. David was now getting colder and I knew that we could do no more to help him.

I had been down there for an hour when an Underground man came along the track. He asked me to cup my hands together to form a step to climb aboard, because he had not brought any steps to use. He disappeared into the carriage. Another man from the Underground came along by my side of the track, and said, 'Help is on its way.' Finally, it arrived. An ambulance paramedic attended to David, who was still alive, but seriously injured. London Underground (LU) staff helped me along the track and on to the platform. I was initially taken to the station concourse, and then to the nearby Marks & Spencer store. I was given bought bottled water and I gave my name to a police constable. Then, we had to leave because of a bomb scare.

Lessons to be learned from my experience: internal carriage first-aid kits and breathing equipment to be fitted; an on-board switch to cut off the electric power to the rails to make them safe; internal carriage lighting; battery-operated LEDs could be fitted at ground-floor level as exemplified in aircraft. Research needs to be carried out into isolating areas and zones that will allow the evacuation of passengers and access to emergency services whilst, at the same time, providing protection for the emergency services. Tube wall lighting needs to be reviewed to allow safe detraining of trains in emergencies. Underground communication systems, including the internal train and trackside telephones and radios, must be reviewed. Handheld microphones might also be available to station staff.

Victim and injury tracking: smart materials embedded in dressings and identity tags in paramedic bags would enable victims, even when taken away from the site, to be identified no matter where they were taken. Guards need to be reintroduced on Underground trains. Emergency service protocols for entering dangerous areas of the Underground to be reviewed. Update Underground sensors to detect more than just pressure blasts – poisons, gas and future bomb blasts. A major overhaul of planning processes, systems and functions of central Gold Command. Regular, real-time exercises to be carried out, and to be recorded as to the effectiveness and the response of the emergency services. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much indeed. What I will do is we will take all of you from Edgware Road and then ask questions when done if that is okay. Ben?

Ben (Edgware Road): It was a very normal day. I was on a high about London's winning bid for the Olympics, and travelling to work from Crowthorne to Central London. I was working in Farringdon at the time, and was due to meet a client in town. I was reading the *Metro*, standing in the tunnel-side doorway of the train, heading from Paddington towards Edgware Road.

I had just looked at my watch to make sure that we were still on time for the meeting and noticed it was 08.51. At almost exactly that point, there was an extremely loud bang to my left-hand side, and I was aware of a flash of very bright light. Our train came to a very sudden stop, as did the train travelling in the opposite direction. There were brief screams of panic from some of the people in our carriage, and I recall one woman in particular shouting out, 'Oh no.' I initially thought the two trains had struck each other, or that we had run into something on the track. I remember checking myself to make sure I had not been injured, and then I called out, asking if anyone on our carriage had been hurt. No one had; no one responded that they had.

10 or 15 seconds had passed at this point, and I was not aware of what happened in the second train. The lights in the bombed carriage were out, and it was only later, once we smashed the windows, that we could see what had happened. At this point, debris started raining down on the roof of our carriage and, momentarily, it sounded exactly like water. At that point, I did think we were going to die. I assumed the tunnels were flooding.

A man appeared at our carriage door from the bombed train, into the door that had been facing the tunnel. He had been standing in the bombed carriage; the door of his carriage had been blown off, and he was trying to force open the doors to get into our train. He was shouting for help. He was yelling and, I think that is because of the blast, he could not hear. His clothes were ripped and he was bleeding heavily. He looked like the victim of a bomb blast. It was then that we all realised that something terrible had happened. The man managed to get his hands through the rubber seal running down the centre of the door, and three of us went forward to try to open it. I do not know if it is due to the design of the train, or whether our train became buckled, but we could not force the door open more than three, or maybe four, inches. It was enough for him to get his hand round; again, we could see that he was bleeding heavily.

While we had the doors open, it became apparent that people in the carriage directly opposite were in serious trouble. We could hear screams, calls for help and the sounds of panic. The screams did not last very long, and they soon died down. Everything fell

pretty much silent after 30 seconds or so. There was a group of people trying to force open the door that the injured man had been at, and they were using a fire extinguisher to try to lever open the doors.

I found myself standing next to an equipment pod on the back of one of the doors on the connecting carriage. I opened this and found a large, wooden spade – I do not know how else to describe it. I passed it to the guys by the door, a chap called Peter, and they used it to smash the window. Several passengers went through to see what help they could offer. The spade was then passed further down the train and more windows were smashed. There was also a first-aid box built into the side of the carriage wall, but this was locked. I estimate that 15 minutes had passed by this point.

Once the windows had been smashed, we were able to see directly into the bombed carriage. The lights in that carriage had failed, but lighting on the side of the tunnel wall enabled me to see the damage that had been caused. The inside of the carriage had been largely destroyed; the doors blown off; the roof appeared to have been peeled back; and there was a large hole in the floor. There were injured people being treated on the floor of the carriage. Several people from the bombed carriage were already tending the injured, and they were asking for medical help and also for water, ties, jackets, anything to be used as makeshift bandages, etc. Further people from our train then entered the bombed carriage to try to offer help.

The driver of the train from Paddington passed through our carriage at this point checking to see if anyone was injured. I asked him if he could open the first-aid box, as we needed to get bandages, etc., into the second train. He told me that he did not have the key; he also said that the box would be empty anyway.

The tunnel, or at least our carriage, because of the recently smashed windows, had also started to fill with acrid, bitter smoke. Several people started to panic about a fire, and wanted to jump on the track to escape. Several of us calmed people down and pointed out that we did not know there was a fire, we did not know where the fire was, if there was one, and we also did not know if the tracks were still live or not. At this point, several people were having difficulty breathing, and were lying on the floor of the carriage. We opened the second door then, as far as we could, to allow more clean air in. It was a very real concern that the smoke we were breathing in may have been part of a chemical or biological attack.

Despite everything that happened, everyone, including the injured, was still remarkably calm. It is a great credit to everyone that no one caused further problems by panicking. Peter, and several of the others, had crossed into the bombed carriage, and I had continued to pass water, etc., through the window to the people who were tending the injured. It was my impression at the time that these people who had gone to help were medically trained but, since then, I have found that many of them were not. It was remarkable that they were able to offer the injured as much care as they were able to in such horrific circumstances.

An announcement was then put out through the train intercom system to say the train would now be evacuated, and we would be walking up the track towards Edgware Road. Peter returned to the window from the bombed carriage that he had been into, and explained that he had looked around to see how bad things were. He told me that four people were dead and four more were dying. He also said that someone was caught

under the train, and asked me to go for help. At this point, I moved through the train towards Edgware Road station. Approximately 40 minutes had passed by this stage.

I found a group of five or six paramedics standing on the platform. It looked as though they were waiting for equipment or for clearance to go into the tunnel. I told them that it looked like a bomb had gone off on the westbound train, and that there were at least four dead and four badly injured. I also told them that someone was caught under the train and that people were suffering from blast injuries. I could not make them go back.

I then carried on up the stairs at Edgware Road and found myself outside the station. There was quite a lot of confusion above ground. There were several police cars, ambulances, blocking off the road. I walked up to the cordon and asked a policeman what I should do. He advised me to go home. I then asked him if I needed to leave my name and address and my details. I also asked him if we needed to be tested to see if the smoke we had been breathing in may have been some sort of chemical poison, etc. He told me to go home and watch the news to find out.

I walked to Paddington station and then travelled home by train. It was not until the following week that I contacted the police helpline to tell them that I had been on the second train at Edgware. I was then contacted and interviewed by New Scotland Yard. I assumed that I would return to work on Monday 11 July, but I did not return to London for just over a month. When I did return, I found I was unable to continue working in London and resigned from my position. I found that my initial treatment for the shock took place after I had initiated a visit to my local general practitioner (GP). If I had not gone to my GP or contacted the police, I feel I would have been bypassed by the treatment process. I feel that there may be many individuals, who were affected on the day, who have yet to go forward for treatment. I would urge them to do so.

I am extremely grateful to my local GP, who arranged counselling sessions, and to my counsellor. I have also received treatment at the 7 July Centre, and am currently on the waiting list for treatment at the London Trauma Clinic. I would also like to thank members of the legal profession who have given up their time to help victims of the 7th and their families. Finally, I would like to pass on my condolences to those people who lost loved ones during the bombings, who were injured or find their lives altered by events of 7 July. The events of that day leave a deep and long-lasting effect on many people and I hope that, where possible, we can continue to support each other.

I also have some points beyond that: firstly, first-aid kits on public transport. This should simply just be available, with lighting within those packs where necessary. Where there is provision for the kit to be available, it should actually be stocked. I would also suggest that the provision of basic medical kit should be looked at in all methods of public transport and also heavily populated public sites.

It may have occurred on many previous occasions, but I was very much aware of the media request for images of events on 7 July from members of the public who were at the scene. I saw at least one of the passengers at Edgware Road take a picture on his mobile phone when he could have been assisting those around him. I feel requests for such images should be curbed.

I appreciate that the scenes at the 7 July were chaotic, and there may have been a concern over secondary attacks, but there should have been a faster response from the emergency services. I understand the medical teams were at the sites extremely quickly,

and they did a fantastic job, but they were delayed in assisting the injured until they had been given clearance to do so. I would like to make it clear that I feel the individual members of the emergency services showed extreme courage, but they may have been let down by bureaucracy. I also find it surprising that no effort was made to record individuals' names at the time I left Edgware Road.

Finally, I feel that it would be impossible to protect every potential terrorist target in the UK, but we can improve the availability of medical help. I would suggest that basic first-aid courses should be introduced as part of the National Curriculum. Over time, this would dramatically increase the number of people able to provide immediate medical assistance. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you, Ben. Tim?

Tim (Edgware Road): My response is as a passenger also on a train from Paddington heading towards Edgware Road. It is also précised because I sent further information in previously.

When I entered the Tube at Paddington, I was aware that communications were only by mobile from the far end of that platform and, as I had only just rung Judy, my wife, I thought no more about contacting anybody. The second train came in, overcrowded, as is the norm, and we entered the tunnel shortly before 08.50. When the explosion occurred, the noise was both vast and quiet. Darkness came immediately, as did fear for my life. There was a slight feeling of disembodiment – looking and listening from the outside at what was developing.

I heard a tannoy message asking for first aid, but only after the screams became louder from outside of my carriage. Three of us moved to the next doorway, and found one man with his foot in the door gap trying to get to safety within our carriage. With help from a bar and another pair of hands, we broke the glass and I climbed out into the void. The acrid smoke, the heat of the air and the screams of the injured assailed my senses. Can I do this? Where do I start to use my skills? There was no time to reach for a phone – a feeling of sheer panic that, at any time, the tunnel may collapse, another crash or explosion could happen. I still might die, but before this came my determination to help others to live.

The scene was so dark and, by now, I am sure, the well-documented interior scene has been described as carnage not seen by ordinary people ever before. So many questions flooded my brain as I worked to tie up leaking blood supplies, observe the dead and move swiftly to those who showed signs of life. A man already referred to by John this morning, half in and half out of the floor, was still breathing. He had no shirt, just a charred torso. I spoke to him, but he showed no response, but he did have a pulse. This is the critical point between life and death, when any form of communication would have helped.

After he died, despite my best efforts, I was left wondering and hoping that someone would come and rescue us before anything else happened. I tried to reassure the few others left that help would come. Surely it would be an automatic response in a control room somewhere? Alison was a person blown out of the doors and into the wall of the tunnel – lying unconscious just returning to a state where she felt the enormity of her injuries. Oh for a working phone or a panic button on the wall, or something to help me keep this woman alive. Her right leg was not the right shape; her left eye was swelling

swiftly and she was in great shock. I chose to move her to a place of safety after checking her carefully, as the floor of the train was safer than being beside the train in the tunnel.

Leaving out so many of the personal fears and traumas, which were occurring for us both, help came in the form of a young paramedic, police and fire crews. This was my first point of release, as I knew from now on that others could help.

From that day forward, the communications were mainly from the anti-terrorist police and the Metropolitan Police, including a home visit within less than 48 hours to get the details of the scene, as they fought to piece together the events of that day. It was only through the help of two excellent doctors, and a referral to a post-traumatic stress trial that I can stand here today at all. I was given a phone line at St Mary's to contact my wife and relay a message to work. It was not until much later that morning that I saw on the news, playing on a television in the ward, what had happened in London.

I do feel that the Tube drivers need a robust system of communication that works deep underground and is not reliant on wires at all. This could also be patched into a tannoy-type system to announce where the help will come from and that, indeed, it will come. Mental reassurance cannot be understated.

Alison and I are two of the lucky ones; we came away with our lives. Whatever the bombers took from us that day is gone, but what we have left is a determination to re-engage in life and to try to overcome the pain and suffering beyond the external healing so obvious to others. I am not, nor ever have been, angry at the bombers, just full of disbelief, and full of praise for all of the professionals who, despite the poor communications systems they had, managed to cope so brilliantly and reach so many of us. Not living or working in London may well have increased my sense of isolation, but in time all will be well. I still feel as though it happened yesterday. The images and emotions are that vivid and real, but every conversation with a survivor, and every new day, helps to put distance between me and the bombers who took so much.

Finally, a short message to the Government and to the purse-string holders of London: please spend all that you can in caring for human life. Buy the best airwave radios; install the highest-quality systems; and please do not be swayed by budgets and promises of next year's funding. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you, Tim. Paul?

Paul (Edgware Road): Good morning, everybody. My name is Paul, and I was involved in the incident at Edgware Road Tube station. I will take you through shortly what my involvement was on the day, and my observations from that scene. I have been involved in the fire-service operations at one level or another for over 10 years. My last actual employment has been as a retained firefighter with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue, which ended in 2002. Before I begin, I would like to thank the GLA for the opportunity to provide feedback and comment on the responses made on 7 July. It is interesting to hear that this is a world's first. It is worth recognising that this is the only occasion that I and, to my knowledge, others have actually been asked to comment, or give any kind of feedback, at any kind of official forum or government committee at all, so that is worth noting.

I think it is quite important for me to set the scene of 7 July, so I will briefly talk you through my movements that led me to be at Edgware Road that morning. I have got the times in here, and I think the times are quite critical. At 08.40, I entered at King's Cross station. I then boarded train 242, a Hammersmith & City Line train, at 08.45, which is the exact time. We stopped at Great Portland Street and a small number of passengers disembarked. Our train came to a stop in a tunnel just short of Baker Street station at 08.50. I have since learned that, at this point, the train directly ahead of ourselves was train 216, a Circle Line service, which was involved in the explosion just outside Edgware Road station.

After approximately three minutes, at 08.53, the train driver made an announcement to say there had been a power short in the area of Edgware Road Tube station. He would attempt to get more information and report back to us. This message could be heard to be interrupted several times, while he was trying to pass the message, by heavy amounts of two-way traffic within his driver's cab. He was obviously trying to listen to what was happening over the radio while trying to give the personal address (PA) announcement to ourselves. Approximately five minutes later, 08.58, the train driver made another announcement, 'Due to an incident at Edgware Road, this train would now terminate at Baker Street.' I'll just add here that that did not really raise any concerns with me or anybody else. I am sure we have all been on the Tubes and all heard 'incidents'; it can be a number of things.

We then immediately moved into Baker Street station where all passengers disembarked. The time now is estimated to be 09.00. It was noticed that a small number of incoming passengers attempted to gain access to the train at Baker Street. They were stopped by LU staff. It was obvious at this stage that an actual evacuation, the amber alert, was not taking place, as we had to exit the barriers in a normal fashion – swiping Oyster cards, etc. I then started to walk towards Paddington station along Marylebone Road. I saw a fire-rescue unit from Battersea pass me along Marylebone Road at 09.10, and I arrived in Praed Street, Paddington, at approximately 09.15.

Fire appliances from Paddington and Knightsbridge were in attendance outside 73 Praed Street. They appeared, from initial observations, to be attending an automatic fire alarm, as there was no show of urgency whatsoever. I looked up the street and across the Edgware Road A5 towards the Edgware Road Tube station. At that point, there was no emergency vehicle in attendance outside the station. I asked two builders, who were working in the area of Praed Street, if they knew what was going on. They reported to me that they had felt an explosion under the road. I have since learned that a 999 call was received by the fire service for 73 Praed Street reporting an explosion. That is why the fire service was there.

At approximately 09.20, a London Ambulance response car came from the direction of Paddington station along Praed Street, and parked outside Edgware Road station. I noticed at this point that police/police support officers were attempting to erect a cordon at the junction of Chapel Street and Edgware Road. I crossed Edgware Road and was stood outside the front door to the Marks & Spencer store. It was obvious at this point that the police resource on scene was having difficulty from preventing members of the public from accessing Chapel Street. Chapel Street is the road that leads directly alongside the Edgware Road station. The road itself was taped off, but the pavement remained open, and the police were fully involved with stopping both the public and the traffic from accessing Chapel Street.

At approximately 09.30/09.35, passengers started to emerge from the station and began congregating on the corner outside Marks & Spencer's main entrance. This number rose quickly to 50. It was obvious due to their appearance that they had been involved in an incident and had inhaled smoke or dust. A number of the passengers were reporting there had been some kind of power surge on their train, and this tallied with what I had heard over the PA system on my train at Baker Street.

A number of passengers made it known they wished to leave and carry on to work. These individuals had inhaled dust from the tunnel walls caused by the explosion, and I felt would require medical attention. The street corner was congested, and it was becoming difficult to establish who was passing public, and who was involved in the incident. At this time, the only police resource on scene was busy restricting access to Chapel Street, and guiding passengers towards the street corner. The Hilton Metropole hotel would have been an ideal site for a rendezvous point (RVP); however, the main Edgware Road dual carriageway was still open, and traffic was extremely heavy. I made the decision to speak to a male member of staff at Marks & Spencer, who was standing in the doorway, and asked if we could use their store as a RVP, which he immediately agreed to. I think I should stress at this stage that this was without any consultation with the emergency services on scene, who I felt at that time were busy performing other tasks. This is not a decision that I regret doing.

I then made the following announcement to those standing outside Marks & Spencer: 'Attention please. If you are involved in the incident at Edgware Road Tube station, please make your way into Marks & Spencer. Do not leave until you have spoken to a police officer.' All passengers, including those contemplating leaving the scene, then made their way into Marks & Spencer. I feel this action was important, as passengers required direction and instruction. Most were in a state of shock. From my understanding, the direct opposite occurred at the Aldgate incident, and people were pushed away from the scene. I believe this has had an effect on the number of passengers who have come forward to seek counselling, as their details have never been recorded.

Going back to Edgware Road, at this point, there was no sign of passengers who had been physically injured. It was my assumption that Marks & Spencer would be used purely as a holding area for the Metropolitan Police to obtain names and addresses before releasing passengers from the scene. I made a police sergeant aware that the RVP had been set up within Marks & Spencer. This enabled emergency workers on scene to utilise the side entrance to Marks & Spencer, which was behind the cordon line.

Passengers had been queuing for cups of water in the reception of Edgware Road Tube station before walking into Marks & Spencer. Working closely with the floor supervisor of Marks & Spencer, and the police sergeant, staff brought bottled water to the front of the store to hand out to people as they entered, and to distribute to those who had dust and foreign bodies in their eyes. Marks & Spencer staff had collected a number of first-aid boxes, and they began treating passengers with minor lacerations. It became obvious as the incident progressed that there was not only going to be injured passengers requiring treatment, but also the space we were in was becoming congested, and more seriously injured passengers were being brought into Marks & Spencer. I made an announcement asking those who were not seriously injured to move further into the store, so to keep the side entrance clear. This was followed shortly afterwards

by another message from a police officer asking us to move even further back inside due to possible further blasts that would send shattering glass into Marks & Spencer.

It became apparent that medical resources arriving on scene were being directed straight into Edgware Road station, and none of this arriving at what was now a casualty RVP. I approached an ambulance officer, whose name I know to be Michelle, in Chapel Street, and made her aware of the RVP, and asked for medical assistance. She arrived shortly afterwards with two paramedics, who emptied their ambulance and medical supplies including burns packs and oxygen. These supplies were soon consumed by the rapidly rising number of casualty passengers now entering Marks & Spencer, which I approximate to be a minimum of 150. It is my understanding that an ambulance officer, at this point, had passed a message reporting 1,000 casualties. A request was made for as many ambulances as they could muster.

A small number of triage cards were handed out, and I began to fill these out for the most seriously injured. It is quite a difficult thing to do, when you have someone who does not know what injuries they have suffered, and you have to write on a card that has 'major injuries'. You write their major injuries down and you attach this to their arm and they are sat there reading it, realising what their injuries actually are. It would appear that only a small number of triage cards are carried on the ambulance vehicles, and these were quickly used. To give an idea, at that point, the range of injuries ranged from people with flash burns, second-degree burns, serious lacerations and amputations.

A plain-clothed Metropolitan Police officer arrived on the scene and asked me how he could assist. I advised him that the store had been sectorised, with seriously injured casualties located towards the front of the store, and walking wounded towards the rear, and that comforting and gaining name and address details would be of great assistance. Shortly afterwards, the same police officer came across the suspect device. This was a laptop bag that had been left unattended next to a supporting column within the Marks & Spencer store. He asked who the bag belonged to and received no answer. He then made the immediate decision to evacuate Marks & Spencer.

I was instructed by the police in Chapel Street to make my way over to the Hilton Metropole hotel. The traffic on Edgware Road had now cleared and the road was closed. I am estimating the time to be approximately 10.30 to 11.00 now. Although the medical response on scene was limited, at least three agency photographers had arrived at Edgware Road and began to photograph those crossing from Marks & Spencer to the Metropole hotel. Staff inside the Hilton Metropole had donned fire warden jackets to make themselves visible, and had placed a cordon on reception preventing the hotel guests from gaining access to the bar area, which was being used as a treatment/triage area.

The medical resources on scene were limited to the two paramedics and the small number of staff from the London Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) team. We had run out of oxygen and dressings, and had become reliant on first-aid supplies from Marks & Spencer and the Hilton Metropole hotel. Plus it became apparent that the police had become aware of the lack of medical resource on scene, and had begun to blue light medical staff from St Mary's Hospital and other hospitals in the area to the scene. Nurses, consultants and even a National Health Service (NHS) priest arrived at the hotel, although I think it is worth mentioning at this point that it was great but

without the medical supplies, there was not that much they could do other than re-triage the people who had been initially assessed by myself and others.

The delay in ambulance vehicles arriving was noticeable. This was eventually facilitated by the Red Cross and St John Ambulance. A large number of walking wounded were conveyed to hospital via police riot vans. The final casualty, a pregnant lady, was removed from the Metropole hotel at 12.00 by a St John Ambulance crew. It was only at this point that I knew that there were other explosions around London due to Sky News plasma screens at the Metropole reception.

Moving onwards, after 7 July, after attending an incident in the capacity of a firefighter, we would always be given the opportunity to debrief – sit round the table as a crew, and discuss openly what we had felt and seen. To me, the crews on 7 July happened to be the members of the public and fellow passengers. However, attempts to re-form have been met by a wall of bureaucracy. The 7 July Assistance Centre has been unable to get a full list of those injured, as lists held by the NHS and the Metropolitan Police are unable to be released to them due to the Data Protection Act. I appreciate that that is a problem that the GLA has had as well in getting people to come forward, because you have not been able to get those lists.

The tools we now have for use with the internet are forever growing, and I feel that the internet is not being used to anywhere near its full potential. Initially, a website with a forum was set up by a survivor, which currently has 77 members. A further forum is run by Metropolitan Police with, I believe, to be limited success. Feedback received suggests that it is quite difficult to navigate. I am sure Jane from King's Cross will give you a briefing in a short while on how successful the web presence has been that she has created for the King's Cross United group.

To comment on the Casualty Bureau – this is something I picked up from reading the transcript from a previous meeting this morning – I have worked closely with a Community Service Volunteers (CSV) coordinator at BBC London who informs me that there is greater public education needed. A large number of members of the public used the Central Casualty Bureau (CCB) line to offer their services – offer help to give blood, basically feeling that they needed to do something. In doing so, that impeded the progress of relatives who had difficulty in getting through to these lines due to them being engaged. I think it needs to be reinforced that those lines are purely for people trying to trace relatives.

On a different note, I personally made the decision to speak to the press due to the high-profile nature of the photograph taken of myself with an injured passenger. I was keen to pass a defiant message via the media to terrorist organisations that will be following the news story. However, I feel it would be appropriate to issue guidelines to regional print media, as one local newspaper printed the road in which I live. With such a unique surname as mine, and the fact that I am not ex-directory, this concerned me greatly. I will come on to that point more in a moment.

By Sunday I made a decision to contact Staffordshire police to gain guidance, due to the publication of my address, the fact that I was not ex-directory and that now the picture, to my knowledge, was being used on terrorist-related websites. I was told by a member of their special branch over the telephone that if I saw anything suspicious to dial 999. I did not find this response either supportive or reassuring.

Moving on to my key points, I would hope that the London Ambulance Service (LAS) were already aware of my key points, and I would not have to be mentioning them. From my own observations, and when somebody says that the ambulances were not wanting, it makes me appreciate that they did not see the complete picture that day. Members of the Committee have got a copy of *Bombs Under London: the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Response Plan that Worked**.

I would like to quote from an online ambulance magazine called JEMS.com. I believe this is a US-related paramedic medical site, where a LAS paramedic training officer, a duty station officer and an emergency planning manager contributed to an article soon after 7 July championing their response. I have written my key points then I found the following extracts, which conflict with my views of the day. This is a quote directly from the *EMS Response Plan that Worked*: 'Major incident equipment vehicles were deployed across the sites taking such additional supplies to the scenes as oxygen, stretchers, dressings and blankets. Tents were also deployed to some sites, but fair-weather conditions limited their use.' There were never any tents set up at Edgware Road. My response to that is there was a severe lack of medical supplies and equipment within both casualty RVPs – both Marks & Spencer and the Metropole. An equipment support vehicle, which would carry such supplies, was also not automatically sent to the incident, even after the ambulance officer reported 1,000 casualties. It was subsequently requested to the scene an hour after this initial report was passed. They passed a report saying there were 1,000 casualties; an hour later, they requested the support vehicle. One would think that, when you said there were 1,000 casualties, that would automatically be sent to an incident.

Going back to quote from this article: 'Good communication was key to the smooth running of the incident. Duty station officer vehicles carried stocks of handheld portable radios and packs for the correct recording of decisions and vehicle movements, allowing for flexible local control of each incident site. Messages that were passed to and from the scene of ambulance control were in a predetermined format ensuring that all relevant information was contained. A primary telecoms officer in Gold Control communicated with hospitals in a similar fashion,' apparently. 'All of these communication procedures allowed the Gold Control team to maintain a pan-London picture. Hotels and supermarkets were used as casualty treatment centres enabling the walking wounded to be rapidly cleared from the scene, and allowing LAS staff to pay maximum attention to the more seriously injured' – seriously not true for Edgware Road.

My response is that LAS was slow to respond in numbers, and was eventually backed up by both the Red Cross and St John Ambulance service, which I am sure everyone will appreciate are volunteer organisations. These people are sitting at home; they will have been requested to go to their ambulance depot, get in their ambulance and come down, so you can appreciate the delay. I do understand how stretched the LAS are on an everyday basis, but find it hard to sympathise when I see a picture of ambulances from other counties, stacked up for deployment, from which none attended our scene. There was a picture in the press you may have seen of ambulances from other counties stacked up ready for deployment, but none of those were used.

It is also my understanding that, from the initial attendance, London Fire Brigade (LFB) did not pass on an assistance message for a further 45 minutes, which from my

* Journal of Emergency Medical Services - <http://www.jems.com/jems/23-8/13171>

understanding and observations on scene left two Pump Rescue Ladders consisting of probably eight firefighters plus the fire rescue unit, which has two guys in – so 12 firefighters on scene for over 45 minutes before they, in technical terms, ‘made pumps eight’ and requested further backup.

Recent exercises conducted at both Bank station and also the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham had not been live. By ‘live’ I mean had not clicked their fingers and said, ‘We are going to do this and we are going to do this now.’ Everybody knew that it was going to happen in advance. Resources were aware that incidents were going to take place; paramedics and consultants were brought in on overtime; and emergency-resource cover moves put into place prior to the start of the exercises. Live exercises need to take place to test resources. I understand that this could also have a detrimental effect on real incidents happening at the time, however, it is my belief that resources are a key element of the response to any major incident, and that seems to be where the failings lie on this occasion.

To end on a positive note, I think we all appreciate how ignorant we are, when we travel on the Underground, of each other. We all sit there reading our books; we all sit there reading our newspapers. Nobody takes any notice of anybody. I have to mention the show of teamwork I experienced on the day. The staff from both Marks & Spencer and the Hilton Metropole hotel had not been trained to respond to this type of incident and neither had the passengers involved; however, the group dynamics demonstrated by all are highly commendable. The walking wounded, for instance, within Edgware Road at Marks & Spencer, were helping each other. As my friends have told you, it was a group effort, and two minutes before the incident happened, nobody knew each other at all. Whether it was people leaving their unaffected train to try to assist those seriously injured in train 216, everybody assisted greatly. The staff at Marks & Spencer provided refreshments, and the simple but extremely important task conducted by the Hilton Metropole of laser-printing signs showing where the different levels of triaged patients were, all deserve praise. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much, Paul. In fact, that photograph of you was one of the iconic scenes of the day. I understand it went worldwide. Can I also take Michael here so that we can ask questions of the five of you together? Michael, you were at Aldgate.

Michael (Aldgate): Excuse me if I am not as structured as the others, but I will try to give you my account of the day. First, I would start by saying that I feel I am a very lucky man. I am here, and there are those that were not so lucky. If there are any words that I can say, and any of the others can say today, to make other people lucky in the future, then it has been very worthwhile.

My normal journey to work takes me on the Hammersmith & City Line to Liverpool Street station. I always catch the second carriage. That morning I had a meeting near Tower Hill, so instead of walking away from Liverpool Street station, I got off and waited for a Circle Line train. I had been at the front of the second carriage on the Hammersmith & City, so walked down to about midway on the second carriage. The train came in after about five minutes, and I thought I was going to be on time for my meeting. I walked down a little bit further and attempted to get on the rear doors of the second carriage, which I later find was where the bomber was standing. I waited for people to come off, and there were a lot of people coming off that morning. Being a Tube traveller, I thought, ‘A lot of people getting off – that means there is going to be

space on that carriage.’ Fortunately, something changed in my mind, and I walked down to the next set of doors, which took me to the front of the third carriage. I know that decision saved my life that day; that is why I feel particularly lucky.

I got on the third carriage and stood at the front. I stood in the middle with my hand on the central bar. We pulled out of the station and everything that appeared real was real as you knew it. It was not long after we pulled out of Liverpool Street station that that reality changed. I saw the flash, the orange-yellow light, and what appeared to be silver streaks, which I think was some of the glass coming across, and what I can describe as a rushing sound. There was no bang I heard; it was just a lot of noise. I had been twisted and thrown down to the ground.

About halfway down to the ground the brain clicked in that it was a bomb. You then think you are going to die. When I hit the ground, it was all dark and silent and I thought I was dying. I put my hand to my face and I felt the blood, and I thought, ‘It is not over yet.’ At which time, the tunnel lights came on, and visibility was awful in our carriage. I saw one sight, as I picked myself up from the ground, that really sickened me, and has played in my mind since. I will not give too many details – that is for other authorities to deal with – but two men were talking in a foreign language, interspersed with some English. I heard the words ‘wow’ and ‘great’. At which point, I stared at one of the men. For a moment, I thought it was the terrorists that had come through, but there was not a mark on them. I then realised that they had come from the back of our carriage within seconds to see, and say what they said. I did not see them again; they disappeared very quickly.

There was panic on our carriage; there was lots of screaming. A few of us were telling people to calm down, which they did very quickly. As Paul said, a lot of merit goes to the people involved that day in how they acted. When we had calm in our carriage, all we could hear were the screams coming from the next carriage, which looked totally black. I do not want to go into too much detail, but there were people trapped, and the screams coming from people who were dying and seriously injured are very different from those panicked screams. They live with me today.

The floor was covered in glass; there was glass everywhere. I had been hit side on, and there was blood from my face and my neck. I thought I was very seriously injured at this stage; I thought I was going to pass out. We had moved a couple of the other guys who had been hit full in the face, who were sitting next to where I was standing. We sat on the next bank of seats. A few people tried to make suggestions, and I suggested that one should speak for the carriage. There was a girl opposite me, and I cannot say that she was making any more sense at the time than the others, but I said, ‘Why does she not speak for the carriage?’ She took over. We then sat and waited to be rescued.

The girl who had taken charge, and another girl, tried to open the sliding doors. We saw one of the drivers, the orange glow of his coat, from outside come to the door. They could not part the doors more than a few inches. I thought I was really badly injured at the time; I did not realise how lucky I was. I shouted at three big guys standing opposite to help them, but they were looking back in such total shock that they could not have helped anyone. The doors would not budge. We then started to feel trapped and worried about fire.

We sat there for what appeared to be an age thinking that we would be rescued. We even started practical things. Some guy was looking for his glasses, and I found his

glasses. Typical British mentality – he put them on, and one was blown out. He said, ‘At least I can see out of one eye. Thank you.’ The camaraderie of people was a real credit to them, and the calmness of people was a real credit.

We must have sat there for 10 minutes plus waiting to be rescued, and then the decision went that we were going to walk down the middle of the train to the rear and get off. I took the guys who had been hit full in the face and were covered in blood and I shouted for people to let them through. Good, British, London mentality – people got out the way further down the carriages to let them through. I just remember their faces, the double take, as they looked round with shock on their faces. I remember thinking I must be more seriously injured than I originally thought. A few people further down tried to lift the panels on the floor up, and had warned us not to trip over them. They had obviously looked for routes for escape. I found out from one of the drivers at the hospital afterwards that the doors would not open because the electrics and the pneumatics had been severed. Our only means to escape was to get off the rear of the train, which we did.

The drivers, all credit to them – it was our driver, I believe, and certainly a driver from an oncoming train who was not caught in the explosion but saw it – came to help. They helped us off the back of the train. No criticism for them, but the decision was made to walk to Aldgate station, which meant that we had to walk past the train. I subsequently found out that those in the rear carriages did not know there had been an explosion. They had no idea what they were going to see in a matter of seconds. I will try to introduce my points as I go through. There is no criticism whatsoever, but I wonder, having experienced the post-traumatic stress that affects people, and I know has affected people who were not as close to me, whether perhaps we should have walked to Liverpool Street and spared them the views that were coming.

A very kind lady, Mel, was on the train. I thought I was going to pass out, because I thought I was losing a lot of blood. She stayed with me. I use this as an example to show that people can be directed in those situations. She felt she had glass in her foot as we walked out the track. I could not really see out of one eye very well, so I grabbed a guy by a shoulder, he looked in total shock, he was a young Asian man, and I pulled him towards me. I said, ‘Look, can you help her get glass out? I cannot see it.’ He said, ‘Of course I can.’ He just needed that bit of direction. He was going out and he just needed some direction, and he helped that lady.

As we walked further up the track, you could see the debris that had fallen and the bodies on the track. None of them were being assisted: two were motionless; one was just showing signs of movement. I did not know until afterwards – a girl, Jennifer, contacted me afterwards to say thank you. I asked, ‘What for?’ and she said, ‘We had no idea what we were going to see.’ She said, ‘I started to have a panic attack at that point, and you turned round and said, “Hold my hand. Follow me.”’

I had already seen a lot of those sights, but even seeing them again lives in my memory. I do not want to mention names, but she appeared in the press afterwards and she had lost both legs. The lady who was on the carriage helping her, I believe, was an off-duty policewoman who had come through from the front carriage. I remember her look. She was holding her head; the whole body dynamic looked wrong the way the lady was lying. She looked very forlornly at me that she could not do anything. All she could do was hold this lady’s head. We walked further on, but personally I wish I had stayed; I

really thought I was badly injured at the time, but personally I wish I had stayed and done what I could.

I walked on and could see Aldgate station ahead – the lights, firemen on the station. As I got close, three policemen started to gently jog down the track. I said to them, ‘Where are the rest of you? There are people dying down there.’ I was told not to worry about that. Again, none of what I said is a criticism; this is people reacting, and I understand there are protocols involved, which I would like to highlight. I walked up on to the platform and apparently I was very polite, but I asked the first group of firemen why they were not down there. There were people dying down there. They would not look at me; they looked at each other. I went to the second group and said the same thing. I looked back at the first group, and I do not know if they had just had the order, or my words motivated them, but they were putting their kit on and leaving down the edge of the platform. The second group also could not look at me. I was not a very pretty sight, but I do not think that was it. I walked up the flight of stairs with the other survivors as we streamed out. I asked the third group of firemen, and they spoke to me. They said they were worried about a second explosion. Again, apparently I was very polite, I said, ‘That is fair enough, but please can you tell your senior officers there are people dying down there. They need your help.’

I then walked through the ticket hall, and we were streaming to the left. We could see the firemen trying to lift the heavy equipment over the barriers. We were taken outside and assessed in triage. I was told to sit on the pavement by a paramedic. I said I was not going to sit down in my best trousers, but eventually I was persuaded to. The system from there was excellent in my view. We were asked to go across the road to the bus station just opposite Aldgate. We were sat on a bus, which sounds very Monty Python-ish, but it freed up the ambulances for those that really needed them. The camaraderie continued on the bus; we tried to keep people talking. One young lad came up to me, asked if he could sit next to me. In very earthly language, which I shall not repeat here, I told him no he could not; had he seen the state of him? At which point, he double-taked and saw me and laughed. There was a real togetherness there; if anyone was quiet, we would speak to them. There was a paramedic on board and a doctor joined us at one point.

One of the guys who had come out with me had been caught full in the face. He was sitting on his own; he started to lose consciousness and lean forward. I saw one of the senior guys with his lieutenants outside the bus. I went and grabbed him by the shoulder and asked him to get him in an ambulance. An excellent response – by the time I had got back on the bus, this guy was off in an ambulance.

I would like to come back to the trip to the hospital in a bit, but subsequent to the 7th I met one of the first senior officers of the fire service, who had attended Aldgate. I met him at the memorial service. I knew that the Whitechapel fire station was less than half a mile from Aldgate station, and I had known from a contact that the second shift, which came on at 09.00, had been told not to come in; the existing shift was going to take it and carry on until the job was finished. He said that he had been there within 10 minutes, and assessed the situation, but that their protocols – and the very honest fireman said they were worried about the second explosion – stopped them from going down.

There had obviously been some activity of those that could walk out of the first carriage and those that could walk out the second carriage, because those were empty as we

walked past [other than those who were trapped or badly injured in the second carriage][†]. This is no criticism of the emergency services, but I ask them to look at their protocols. I did not think about a second explosion when I was down there, but I sat amongst probably a few hundred people in those carriages. If there had been a second explosion, they would have stood no chance. My thought would be, 'Better get them out as quickly as possible.'

At the end of the day, how can you say when a second explosion is going to be? When is it going to be 10 minutes, 40 minutes, an hour? Is it going to be where we evacuated to at the station entrance? If it was the risk of a definite second explosion that still stopped the emergency services going down, perhaps send one guy down with a loudhailer. He could have stood round the bend in the tunnel and told us to get out, or told the drivers what to do. I think simple communication and direction for people to get out was the order of the day – as quickly as possible to safety. Like good people, we sat waiting; we had no idea.

My grandfather led a rescue service in the Blitz, and they had a ladder, which was their equipment. They went in when bombs were dropping, when buildings were on fire; they did not have a second concern. However, we live and learn, and we live in a modern age. It is correct that the emergency services should assess the situation and have their protocols, but judging by the reaction of all the firemen I spoke to, all three groups, if a senior officer says, 'Look, there could be a second explosion, but are there any volunteers?' I reckon the majority of those firemen would have said, 'Yes.' They seemed frustrated that they could not go down there; they seemed hurt by my words that people were dying down there. I do not think they knew. All I ask is that their protocols are reassessed, that volunteers are perhaps asked for. It is a great British tradition to ask for volunteers. If I had not been so badly injured – or thought I was badly injured – and I had been asked to go back down, I am sure I would have.

We travelled on the bus to the Royal London. We could not go the short route although it is such a short distance from Aldgate; we had to go the long way round. Obviously, the bus access was important. The roads were gridlocked, and of course people were pushing to get out here and there. We had a paramedic and a policeman on board, and the bus driver would hoot his horn for people to get out of the way, and the policeman and the paramedic would get off to shout at people to get out of the way. When we stood in the queue at the hospital for people to be assessed, I spoke to the policeman, he was an older guy and he said, 'No, that is my job,' when I thanked him. I said, 'No, you did an awful lot of running around.' He was not a young guy, and he did a great job, as did the paramedic, but my recommendation would be that they have some sort of escort in the future, because the traffic was totally gridlocked, and we could have been there more quickly.

The hospital was excellent. We had priority badges, or wallets with 'priority' on. They dealt very quickly. I walked into the fracture clinic, and there were a couple of people in white coats there; by the time I had sat down there was a whole queue [of medics in white coats][‡] going out the door. They have to be commended for their diligence. Somewhere along the line I managed to obtain two of these priority tags – one of which was a second priority; one of which was white and said 'dead'. At which point I used the Mark Twain line of, 'I think rumours of my death have been somewhat exaggerated.'

[†] text edited by Michael for clarification following the meeting

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People just pulled together; the camaraderie was absolutely brilliant. What we could have done with was more support, even at a distance – like instructions to get out more quickly. If there was a real risk, we were in the front line; we had survived the first wave. I know there have been a lot of suggestions, and some will involve time and expense to implement, but a lot are very low cost, and do not require too much to implement them. I would suggest that those are not held up by greater deliberations within government.

It could have been worse that day if the drivers had panicked, and I ask what training they have. They could have been well within their rights to be worried about a second explosion and leave us, but they did not. In my mind, they are to be commended as well. In none of what I said do I wish to criticise the emergency services; they did what they had to do within their parameters and their restrictions, but we are in a new territory and new rules need to be considered. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much, Michael. At this point, I am going to take a break for 20 minutes, so we can all gather ourselves. What I am going to do is, at the end, when the girls have given their evidence from King's Cross, there are clearly some issues that I want to ask questions about, like the Family Assistance Centre support mechanism, and family liaison officers, but we can do that as a whole group, rather than individually, if that is okay. Similarly, about the lights on the trains, so you can see to get out – we can examine that as a group. Is that okay? [General consensus of participants.]

[Adjournment]

Richard Barnes (Chair): Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen. I have been told off in the break for calling you 'girls'. I will call you 'ladies'. I am told I am supposed to apologise to Joe, especially, for including him within that honoured group. Can I say the questions at the end will be for points of clarification? If we have got some bits that need clearing up, that is what we will be dealing with. Jane, I believe you are the first from King's Cross.

Jane (King's Cross/Russell Square): Thank you. On 7 July, I boarded the train at Arsenal to go to Russell Square. As it turned out, I was at the front of the third carriage of the Piccadilly Line train on which there was a bomb. Shortly after leaving King's Cross, on a very packed train, there was a huge thud and a blast, and everything went black. I was thrown and buffeted into fellow passengers. I think if it was not for that, there would have been more injuries.

In the darkness, people spoke to each other trying to work out what was going on. The thick smoke and soot meant that there was a fear of fire or maybe chemicals. People reassured each other; we tried to pass messages to the front and the back of the Tube to try to work out what was going on. We did not know how long we were going to be down there; we did not know if anyone knew we were there. We kept on hoping and listening that someone was getting in contact with us and going to find us. After a short time, we decided that we better stay quiet to hope and listen that we could hear someone official. We did not; we could hear screams from the front of the Tube, and the screams going on and on. Because of the soot, we covered our mouths with whatever we could, tissues, and worked out how much water and fluid we had between

us. We had half a bottle of Coca-Cola and one bottle of water. Again, we tried to pass messages and get air into the Tube.

After a short while in the quietness, which could have been a totally different amount of time but was apparently about 25 minutes, we heard someone outside the Tube. All I remember them saying was 'ladies and gentlemen' as they shouted. I remember turning to the girl next to me and going, 'It is someone official; they have found us.' We were then asked to stay calm, to stay where we were, and wait to be taken off the Tube. Everyone looked after each other, held each other's hands, and two normal commuters stood and helped everyone jump down from the Tube out of the door. We then slowly, and in a very British way, queued as we walked down the tunnel – 'After you', and stumbling and holding people up. About halfway down the Tube was the first time I saw someone official. I did say to them, 'Do you know what has happened?' They did not. I asked, 'What did the driver say had happened?' They said, 'We have not found him yet.' We slowly moved down and walked off in the darkness, covered in soot, and went up the escalators at King's Cross.

At the top, there were people handing out bottles of water. We were all ushered into the ticket hall in the mainline station. People were sitting around; everyone was covered in soot and blackness. I do not think anyone realised how bad they looked at the time really; I could tell from my hands, which were so black I could not even take my contact lenses out, which were completely steamed over with soot and dirt. Just as someone came up to me with a small piece of paper and a pen, asking for my name and address, an alarm went off at King's Cross, and we were evacuated out of the mainline station. I am not sure whether it was an evacuation because they had worked out what had happened down there, or whether it was the same time as the bomb on the bus went off. It must have been about 09.50 at that point.

We were all rushed out – no one had taken my name at that point. We were ushered out, and I was with a girl who was bleeding in her head, and there were other people bleeding around us. I cannot remember seeing any ambulances or police officers at that time. I remember one, perhaps, LU worker or triage nurse, came up and grabbed my arm and grabbed another girl's arm to guide us back into the station, but there were alarms and panic and chaos all around us, and lots of normal people, not covered in black stuff, looking at us. I basically said to her, 'I have shock. I want to go home; I do not want to be here.' It was just mayhem, 'I do not want to be here.' She said, 'As long as you go to somebody, you can go.' I live in Highbury, so it was a fairly, well, not easy walk, but I strode off on my own. I did not realise how much soot I was covered in. I tried to contact friends and family to let them know, because I had been told I had to go to someone. It was hard because the mobile network was down. I did walk into a local bank, actually, and clean some of the dirt off myself, because basically everyone was staring at me in the street, and running up to me going, 'What was happening?' I could not tell them. I barely remember the next few hours, and I do not know when I found out whether it was a bomb or not. All I knew is that I had been frightened beyond anything in my entire life before; that I did not realise I was going to get out of the tunnel; I did not know whether we were waiting when we had been stuck in the tunnel for something to come towards us, or to be saved. We did not know. There were no announcements and it took quite a long time.

I fell on the support, for the rest of that day, of my friends and family who, slowly as things dawned on me what had actually happened – it was a bomb – it shook me beyond compare to actually realise how close I was and what had happened and what I

had breathed in. On my mother's insistence, in the next few days, I phoned up the police and told them that I was there and told them where I was.

Before returning to work on the Monday, I went to visit my GP, just because I thought I ought to, and to get him to check my lungs and my breathing, because I was still having black stuff come out my nose and my throat. No one had checked me out, and I had just booked an appointment and turned up like you usually do and said, 'I was there.' It was not what he expected someone to walk into his surgery saying. There was still dirt down my fingernails and in my hair and in my ears. On the day, it had taken a bath and a shower to get the black soot off me. Maybe there should have been someone at the station who looked after and checked what we had been breathing in, but it was my decision to walk away.

On about 22 July, I gave a police statement. They came to my office, and they did it in a very professional way, but I really did not know what to do with myself. I knew about the bereaved; I knew it had been a horrible tragedy. It was only through a friend who said, 'I know someone else who was there,' and pointed me in the direction of Rachel. She worked with her. Rachel invited me along to a pub meeting with about six or seven other people who had been on the King's Cross Tube. We met in a pub, as the British do and, at the end of that meeting, felt so much better. It felt like I was not a freak with nightmares just hearing screams in the middle of the night. Everything I was going through, the fear of public transport, walking back and forth to work on The Strand, because I was too scared to get on a bus – I have lived in London my entire life; it was incredible to hear people reflecting my same experiences.

At the end of the meeting in the pub, we created a list of email addresses. It was the number of people who were there saying, 'Do you want to meet again? What do you want to do?' I work in digital marketing; I am a web strategist, effectively. I took the names, the list of email addresses, and on the Friday after we met in the pub, because I knew how to, I set up a web group on some free groupware, which is available to any member of the public – they can set it up. It did not cost me anything. I got a designer I work with to set up a little logo, with the LU and things like that on it to make people feel welcome. Slowly but surely, when people contacted Rachel and myself, we would add them to the group. People could talk by email, and it is a great relief, sometimes, when you get an email through and it is someone going, 'God, I have not slept for three days. I am having nightmares,' and you realise you are not alone. This feeling of alone is something that official bodies have let us down on – feeling alone down in the Tube, but then feeling alone afterwards is something that will stay with me. People shared stories and simple things.

No one knew who to turn to. At about that time, one of the guys on the website mentioned the Family Assistance Centre, which I had actually heard of, but I thought, 'That is not for me – the Family Assistance Centre. Rightly so, that is for the bereaved; that is for the people who really need it, the friends and family.' At that point, I was still in quite a bad state to be honest, and was encouraged to go down to the Family Assistance Centre. I really think there were hundreds of people, who should have gone, who were on those Tubes, who just because of the name did not go; who were put off and did not know what was going on, and did not know there was a resource there for them. When I turned up, on a Thursday afternoon in early August, there was no one else there but me. I had the full attention of lots of people who were charity workers, who were wonderful. It was like a little cuddle from the world, a cup of tea and cake and a counsellor. It was great, but no one knew it was there, because of a simple,

branding, naming issue. That was a simple thing that anyone in London who works in advertising or marketing as I do could have thought of in five seconds flat, or at least dealt with or discussed. That was a great resource; I am sure people have given money to charity to help people like me and other survivors to get some resource, and it was not being used because of a simple name.

I left the Family Assistance Centre feeling a lot better, actually, having left my name and details and got all my information, and never heard from them again. They have actually managed to lose my name and address three times. I do not exist; there is no list of survivors. I have heard today for the first time from many of the sites that people did not take people's names and addresses. It became obvious actually; Rachel and I, when King's Cross United started, we realised we had about 30 members. When I had given my police statement, I was told that on my Tube there was between 700 and 900 people. We know what happened to the tragic 26, and we probably can guess that about another 50 or so were seriously injured and taken to hospital. That leaves 600 people out there, walking around London, on their own with no support; no one was reaching out to them. There was something that was named wrongly that they did not think was for them, and people were not turning to people for advice. There was no list of names, and no one helping people.

Rachel and I sat down – we both work in marketing and advertising – and realised this was a problem, and that no official organisation was trying to sort it out. I pointed out to the Family Assistance Centre when I visited them about the name, and they said to me, 'You are not the only person to have said that.' Rachel and I work in media and marketing; we made a media strategy up. Actually, it is one of the simplest things we have ever done: 'right, which newspapers, which journalists, will we contact to try to find those 500 people who are out there who do not have anyone to turn to?' It was an afternoon in the pub and we worked it out. All of the administration of setting up email addresses, setting up the web group, was basic and simple and things that professionals in London do everyday. Maybe there is this gap between the kind of people, the demographics, that this happened to, of businesspeople on the Tube that morning who know how things should efficiently and professionally be run, and being let down because the assistance they found afterwards did not meet the expectations they have as businesswomen and businessmen in their everyday lives.

Slowly the group grew. It was not about capturing and finding everyone; we just wanted people to know that there was something there for them, because people did not know it was there. The Family Assistance Centre did change its name, and that was credit to it. Unfortunately, when they did that, due to having mucked up some data-protection issues in the original set-up, they could not contact anyone who had met them as the Family Assistance Centre, because the database and the list of names were literally lost; they could not be transferred over. It could have taken something as simple as a letter to everyone who contacted the first centre to say, 'We are changing the name. Would you like to still be contacted by us? Please get in contact.' No one took email addresses – basic, simple things. People in London, we look around and we are businesspeople. We work and we use different media, and people are turning to the web for communications and information, and nothing was available.

It was the simple things – creating leaflets. I got friends at work to create logos and leaflets to hand out at different kinds of meetings we knew the Assistance Centre was doing. A young graduate in marketing could have done what Rachel and I did, and

probably been paid for it; it has been like having a second job. We have done it ourselves, and we had looked after it ourselves.

There was one meeting, to be frank. It must have been September; there was a meeting held by the Family Assistance Centre or 7 July Assistance Centre, as it was then, for survivors. I think you are going to hear a lot about this from different people – the lack of general common sense about the experience survivors had been through. You have heard enough today here that if you ask survivors to meet on the 17th floor of a tower block where the only way you can get up is by lift, that some people are still too scared of enclosed spaces to get in that lift, and walked up 17 floors to get there, on a Saturday afternoon, in a grey building, where people did not know what to do. Their lack of contact with survivors meant that, from one site, there was only one person there, so they were not meeting fellow survivors. It was just a disgrace, to be honest. At that point, I left my name and address again, to be lost again, which was nice. I do not exist, probably on any official record; they just read my name and throw it away. It has made me very angry; it has made me incredibly angry.

I do not need a lot of care and attention, but everything I have found, whether it is about being invited to the 1 November service, whether it is finding out about today, whether it is finding out about the Charlotte Street post-traumatic stress clinic, has been information I have received from either other members of King's Cross United, or just one person gets contacted and then passes it on. It really has been a lesson to me in understanding that this information is not there to help people. I got quite angry at one point, and stopped giving money to the Red Cross. I thought, if they are this incompetent in their own country, what they hell are they doing when they go into disasters overseas. I have stopped that now; I am a nice person. I just got so angry and so frustrated.

Currently, King's Cross United is about 100 people. If we are talking about a Tube, or 600 people who walked away, that is still a tiny percent. We meet in a pub once a month; not everyone comes along – people come along once in a while. Grown men, barristers, people who work in the media, journalists, from the age of 16 to people who are ready to retire this year, come along and can share an experience and know that other people understand what they are going through. Also, because of the camaraderie down there on the Tube on the day, meeting the person who, because it was so dark cannot remember what you look like, but remember what you said, remembered your name, remembered you talking about where you were going that day, just makes it feel real, and you understand the experience and it makes it more human.

There are many things that can be learned from what happened on 7 July. I can only talk from my experiences about being let down afterwards, about someone just letting me know what was going on and what was there for me. Taking a step back in some ways and thinking how I would improve things – I work in marketing and communications and there are many people in London who work in a similar field to me – it would have taken a small bit of common sense for someone to say, 'Right, what were the people like down on the Tube? What do we know about them? What happened that day? How do we actually work out how to contact them and just let people know that everything is all right?' A bit of insight to say, businessmen, professionals, how do we just say, 'Were you there? Get in contact with us.' It is a leafleting strategy; it is getting in contact with doctors.

It is funny, when we go to the pub we share cabs home. They drop people up and down the Piccadilly Line. It is that simple; contact doctors in that area and say, 'Here is a leaflet. If someone walks into your surgery, here is how they get help.' That did not happen. There are so many things. It is letting people in ticket halls know – leaflets in windows where people buy their tickets; contacting Oyster card holders; all those simple things that should have happened, just letting people know that things are there for them.

London is a dynamic, exciting city and I love it. Maybe there was a gap between the response that was available and the type of people who were there, who were very self-motivated. You see a lot of people round here today who have done everything themselves to look after themselves afterwards, and find information, and have fought to find information to make sure they have what they need to carry on their lives as much as they can, and rebuild their lives.

Maybe the response was slow because we are professional people who run around going, 'I know how to get things done and sort things out, and expect that level.' What I felt – and maybe I am the wrong judge because I work in quite a fast-moving industry – was that it just felt slow and incompetent, and it lacked understanding of the situation at hand, even naming the Family Assistance Centre. It was named after what happened on 11 September (2001). It does not take much to look and say, 'In that situation, a lot of people died and a few people walked away.' On 7 July in London, a small number died, unfortunately, but a lot of people walked away on to the streets of London, with no support and no help. To rebuild this great city and keep on going, there should have been someone to look after them, or at least to let them know people were there. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much, Jane. Kirsty?

Kirsty (King's Cross/Russell Square): I would like to say, as others have, thank you very much for inviting us all to speak here today. It really does mean a huge amount to finally have people prepared to listen to us. As a lot of people have said, we all felt pretty alone through this, and it is great to be able to come here today. Thank you.

I too was on the Piccadilly Line train, and I got on at Manor House, on the back carriage. It was absolutely packed, as probably everyone has heard. As it left King's Cross, there was a bang and the lights went out, and the train filled with black smoke. No one could really move. I was standing up. We were stuck there for some time. Everyone remained quite calm, and people took control; there were the natural leaders in the group. Eventually, somebody started to kick the windows open so that we could get out of the windows. Once they were finally smashed – they had tried to open the doors, but the doors only opened about a foot; they had three men on each side, and there was absolutely no way of getting them any further open. One man actually wedged his shoulder in between the doors, and cut himself quite badly in the process just to keep the doors open, and kept assuring us that there was fresh air coming in, because a lot of people were worried that the fire was outside and that actually we were endangering ourselves even more by breaking the glass.

Once we had broken the glass, we realised that the tunnel was about 10cm away, and it had been a pretty futile exercise, because there was no way we could get out anyway. There was obviously no communication from anyone; I did rather pathetically pull the emergency handle at one stage. It was a desperate need to do something. Eventually

we got the message from the back that they had managed to get the back door open. At which point, there was a bit of a panic, and a lot of the people at my end – I was at the front end – were wanting to get out, and the people at the back were too scared to get out. I think people thought either the tracks would be live, or the fire was outside. There was a lot of, ‘Come on, let us just push,’ and having to calm people down. Then someone, in a very British way, said, ‘Could everybody who does not want to get off please step to one side, because there are people back here who would like to.’ Still nothing happened, and nobody got off.

I then heard that someone said there were two policemen coming down the tunnel. This was after about half an hour I think. I remember being quite surprised, given the obvious severity of what had happened, that two policemen seemed to me to be rather a weak response, but they had come of their own free will. They had heard the bang, and they came down the tunnel with their torch, and they reassured us all, and they led us down the tracks.

When we got to the platform, there were people there in King’s Cross helping us off the tracks. People had bottles of water, and I finally made it up through the steps and I ended up on the pavement at the front of King’s Cross station, at which stage the area had been cordoned off. There was a lot of police standing around. I think by this stage the road had even been closed. I have to say that nobody approached me once, and spoke to me. Everyone was clearly in shock; everyone was covered in soot, with black faces; some people were very distressed. There was not really a very proactive effort by the officers to come and approach people, see if people were all right, let alone take anybody’s details. I eventually, because it just felt like the right thing to do, went and forced myself upon an officer and gave him my details. At the time, it was really only because I thought, ‘Well, I have no idea what has happened here and, if someone has my details, maybe when they find out someone might tell me.’ Still nobody knew what had happened.

There was complete lack of guidance, and I waited around for a while not knowing what to do. I managed to get a few phone calls through, one to my office. My boss said that she would drive up and come and find me. I said she would not be able to get anywhere near because it was all closed off, so I wandered off into the streets, pretty aimlessly, covered in black soot. Then the phone network went down, so it was pretty hard for us to communicate. I did not really know where I was walking. Luckily, we managed to get a couple of text messages through to each other; she had abandoned her car somewhere, and we met in the middle of Russell Square. It was only then when I got back to her car, and we turned the radio on and started driving back to the office, that I then heard the news. They were already at this stage reporting that it had been a bomb, and that there had been casualties. It was only then that the enormity of what had happened, and it was not just a fire on my train, which is what I originally thought, became apparent.

Since then, I never heard anything from anybody. I was not contacted by anybody, despite having given this officer my phone number and all my details. I went back to work on the Monday and pretty much tried to carry on as normal. However, I was not travelling by Tube; I was going on some ridiculous two-hour bus journey to work every morning. It gradually became quite clear to me and others around me, after a couple of months, that I was not actually coping, and I began to feel quite desperate and very alone. ‘Was this just me? I was only on the back carriage. Lots of other people were injured. Did I even warrant any support? Was I just making a fuss?’ I did a lot of

research, tried to find out if there were any support groups, anything that had been set up. I could not find anything.

In desperation, I came on the GLA website and found Ken Livingstone's email address and emailed him. I said, 'I was on the Tube. I am wondering if there have been any support groups set up, etc.' I did not get a response for three weeks. When I did finally get a response, they told me that the Family Assistance Centre had been set up in Victoria and, the email said, 'But unfortunately it closed today.' The irony of that timing was not lost on me. It did also then tell me about the 7 July support centre that had been set up.

In the meantime, I then carried on researching. A friend of mine told me about Rachel's diary on the BBC website and, through leaving endless messages on different websites, I eventually managed to get in touch with Rachel. That led to my first meeting with King's Cross United, which was in about September, when there were about 10 of us. That for me was a huge moment of relief, as Jane said, to come across other people who had been through the same thing. I really thought that I was going mad, and that I should just be getting on with my life and, 'What on earth was wrong with me?' To suddenly sit in the pub and talk to a whole lot of other people who were equally as terrified as me whenever they heard a siren, or could not get into lifts, etc., was a huge, huge relief.

Probably as a consequence of that meeting, I then had my first major panic attack in the middle of the night. I woke up screaming and shouting and I could not breathe. I was obviously pretty terrified. I had a recollection of the 7 July support website advertising a 24-hour helpline. In my panicked state in the middle of the night, I got on the internet, found the website, found the number, which was clearly advertised as 24-hour, phoned it and got a recorded message telling me to call back at 09.00. That morning, I then went to my GP, and was queuing up outside at about 07.00 with the methadone addicts. I think I was probably more desperate than they were at that moment. I went to see my GP who was very sympathetic, prescribed me tranquillisers and signed me off work for a month.

A couple of weeks later I then had another panic attack. Same thing – I went back to the GP, could not get an appointment with the GP, so I was referred to a locum. I walked into her office and I was in tears, and clearly distressed, telling her I had been awake all night, and this had happened before, telling her I had been on the Tube. She did not even look at me, I do not think, and she already had her pen out telling me that she could write me another prescription for tranquillisers. At which point, I said, 'I think I need something more than this. I need to talk to someone. I need help; I need support.' She then got me to see my initial GP who said she would refer me to an NHS psychiatrist, but she did warn me that the waiting list was huge and that it could be many weeks before I got an appointment. She also asked me if I had private health insurance, which I do, but I rang them and they said, 'No, we do not cover psychological treatment.' At that stage, I decided just to wait for this appointment.

In the meantime, I then decided, having heard good reports from other people about the 7 July Assistance Centre, to go and visit them. I rang them up and was told that I could come in at any time, talk to anybody I want; there would be trained people there to help me. I went in one afternoon and was obviously quite nervous about it; it was the first time I had really talked to anyone professional about this. I went and sat in a room on a comfy sofa, sitting opposite a lady, and I started to tell her what I was going

through and how lost and desperate I felt. Gradually, the conversation started to dry up and I was not really getting much feedback from her. I began to wonder what on earth I was doing there. When the awkward silences got too much, eventually she put down her cup of tea and said, 'I am really sorry, but it is my first day, and I really do not know what to say.' I left, and have not really been back there since for any sort of support, although I have still been in touch with them.

Eventually, through a friend's recommendation, I got in touch with a private psychiatrist who specialises in trauma. His books were also full but, only because I knew a friend of a friend, I managed to get an appointment with him. I have been seeing him ever since. That first meeting with him, again, was just hugely helpful to actually have someone medically explain to me what was going on in my head, and why all the things were happening, and that actually the way I was reacting was completely normal; I was not being a freak and I was not losing my mind. This was very normal. He diagnosed me then with medium to severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Just the understanding of what was going on was so helpful, and no one up until then had been able to explain that to me.

Then, having been in touch with the 7 July support centre, they had referred me to the trauma clinic in Charlotte Street. I did many months later finally get a letter from them offering me an appointment. By this stage, I had built up a relationship with my psychiatrist; I was making progress; he had seen me from the start, and I thought it was going to be a huge step backward for me to go and see somebody else and start again. I turned down that offer, so I am still seeing a psychiatrist and paying for it out of my own pocket, because the help that was offered to me came far too late as far as I was concerned.

I then went to the infamous 17th-floor survivors' meeting. At that stage, we all felt we had had enough support from King's Cross United. Personally, I was not really going for my own support; it was more of a mission to go to find other passengers because we realised how helpful it was, within King's Cross United, to have met each other. We were very aware that there was a very small percentage of us, and that one way of getting the word around would be to go and meet people here, and leave some leaflets, and make the support centre aware of us. As Jane said, it was on the 17th floor; one poor lady did walk all the way up and all the way down. Everybody was understandably quite nervous. The first announcement that was made before the meeting started was, 'If the fire alarm goes off, it is real, and there is a fire, and you will not be able to use the lifts, and you will have to go down the stairs.' At which stage, most the people in the room turned green. Then, as an aside, 'But there is a very nice view of King's Cross from here.'

Since then, I have finally returned to work. I had eight weeks off work in all. I went back part time just before Christmas, and I am now back full time. Last year, I applied to the Criminal Injuries for compensation and finally heard, about a month ago, back from them that they had been in touch with the police, who said they had no record of my involvement on that day. If I wanted to progress my claim, I was going to have to give a statement to the police in order to progress that claim. I gave my statement to the police about three weeks ago, which was seven and a half months after the day. For me, it did rather stink off, 'Nobody has been here to support me. No one has been interested in my existence, until I asked the Government for money.' As soon as I started to ask them for money, suddenly everybody wanted to hear from me and talk to me. I did feel better for having given the statement, because I finally felt as if I was an

official survivor, rather than this lone person floating around, who nobody seemed to know had been involved.

Since then, I have been back at work; I have been struggling at work a bit, and I have had some problems at work due to this. Again, that is another thing that there is just no advice, no support, about what my rights are, where I stand, what I can and cannot accept. I did even phone the 7 July Assistance Centre about it, and if they had any advice. They told me they would look into it but, in the meantime, they offered me a massage – when I was terrified I was about to lose my job. Although it was very kind, it was not really the advice and support I needed at the time.

That really is my story up to now, which is probably a very familiar story. I know I am not unique in any of the things that have happened to me. A few recommendations from that: this whole thing about the details on the day is just fundamental, and that is where everything started to go wrong. The fact that nobody even asked me – it was actually my intuition that made me realise that maybe I should give my details. Even then, quite clearly they were lost.

Everybody should have been contacted within a month by somebody. The numbers on the trains and the Tube; we are not even talking 3,000 people. It is not very difficult to get in touch and make a phone call to 3,000 people. It can be done within a week; we are not talking tens of thousands of people here who were directly involved. It is quite extraordinary that that was not able to be done.

Then there is the whole support-centre issue. I never found out about it until I met King's Cross United, and I had looked really hard to try to find it, and I did not find out about it at all. GPs' surgeries, on the Tube, media – I do not think it was difficult to tell people about it slightly better than was done. There is also the fact that a lot of passengers do not live in London, and were commuting in that day. A lot of people on our Tube take the mainline to Finsbury Park, and get on it there. I am sure there are an awful lot of people outside this catchment area that feel even more isolated than we do. They do not even have the support centre nearby. Some people even live abroad now; some people have moved back abroad, because of what has happened. There are people dispersed far and wide who this has affected, who are just being lost through the net.

Psychological help should have been much more readily available. Legal advice for people – because I know a lot of people have either left their jobs, or lost their jobs or have struggled at work, and have struggled financially because of this, and there is no advice and support for anybody on where they stood.

Then there should have been more advice to put people's minds at rest about things. I know there is a lot of worry at the moment that a lot of people have got chest infections and chest problems, and everybody is very concerned about smoke inhalation – what we were breathing in. It may be just that we are all run down and we are catching everything that is going round, but there is nothing to put anybody's minds at rest about that. It is just another worry that we do not need at the moment.

There should be constant monitoring. Once people were captured, if they were, which a lot of people were not, then the constant monitoring of people. Even people who were caught in the beginning have fallen through the net, and there has been no follow-up,

no monitoring and there are hundreds of people out there who are just suffering this on their own.

The compensation issue – again, I only found about that through King’s Cross United. I did not know what to do, who to claim from, whether I could, whether I needed to have been injured physically. I know that a lot of people had concerns that if they were not physically injured that if they claimed they would perhaps be taking money away from people who were more deserving. A lot of people felt guilty about claiming. There was no clear information. I know now that that is not the case, but that should have been much clearer so that people knew who could claim, who was eligible.

Jane has talked about it extensively, but the whole use of the internet, and how you find the 7 July sites – it should have been the first thing that came up whenever anybody was looking for it. The whole interactive website thing – a lot of people are terrified to use the phone. People do not want to phone up the 7 July Centre and say, ‘Help, I am having nightmares.’ They feel a bit pathetic and they think maybe they should be coping. If you can leave a message on a message board somewhere, it is much less intimidating and, quite clearly, by the success of some of the other sites, has worked much better. All these sites that have been set up have all been set up by people like us, who knew nothing about it, who had never been through anything like this before. As Jane said, King’s Cross United has reached over 100 people who are in daily contact by email, who meet up once a month. There are people who live abroad who talk to each other by Microsoft (MSN) Messenger, and have a time and a date when they are all going to meet up. The interaction is amazing. It seems to me that if a bunch of people like us can have that amount of success, the people whose job it is to do that, and who are being paid to look after people who were involved, should be doing it a damn sight better than we are. Quite clearly, they are not.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much, Kirsty. Beverli?

Beverli (King’s Cross/Russell Square): Thank you, Assembly, and thanks for being generous with your time today, and for the invitation to come and speak to you. I was a senior project consultant working for a consultancy firm based in Lynton House in Tavistock Square en route to an Olympic Delivery Committee (ODC) meeting that had been announced the previous day. I was travelling into town on the Underground on the Piccadilly Line, going into head office for that meeting. On that particular day, for once in my life, I was actually on time. I was on the way to the office when all this took place.

Currently, I am unemployed. I relocated to Norwich so I did not have to deal with town, and also the Underground or trains. Coming in today was my third time on a train since the incident. Currently I am also in part-time study. I am doing a doctorate in intelligent transport systems. My injuries include maxillo-facial injuries, which I have had an operation for already; severe PTSD; dysphasia – I will apologise in advance if I stumble over my own words; temporomandibular joint (TMJ) injury; short-term memory loss; and other neurological ailments, which as yet remain undiagnosed, because we have not been able to get an magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) appointment. We are going privately now, in the next couple of weeks, and we are hoping to get to the bottom of the diagnosis quite soon.

With regard to my own personal situation, the fellow survivors pretty much have their own personal accounts which are very similar to my own story. I will not bore you with

additional information. In order to assist myself with getting through the tragedy, I have started writing a book with my own experiences to clear my emotions and to set things straight. I had found out about the Charlotte Street organisation (trauma stress clinic), and did attend, and only recently found out about the King's Cross United website.

I have also read through your terms of reference regarding the agenda for today. In order to approach it in a more structured manner, I will deal with the three areas that have been requested on the agenda, which were: 1) how information, advice and support were communicated to Londoners; 2) how business continuity arrangements worked in practice; 3) the use of information and communication technology to aid response in the process. If you do not mind, I will try to stick to that for you.

With regard to the 7 July incident, this was not my first experience of a first large-scale emergency. I was also involved in the (7 September 1999) earthquake in Greece, which was one of the strongest earthquakes that they had experienced, and involved emergency procedures to evacuate the city. On the day, when I got upstairs, after moving ourselves from the situation, I tried to use 112, which is the single emergency telephone number, which was established in 1991 to govern all emergencies throughout the European Union (EU). Obviously this is a specific service directed for emergencies only, which were like the earthquake in Athens, and other types of emergencies like natural disasters and fires and also terrorist attacks. As only one in five Europeans is aware of 112, one of the fellow survivors said why was I dialling 112 and not 999. I mentioned that it is a large-scale type of attack; it is best to dial to 112. The service centre will then direct assistance to the UK particularly⁵. I was also unsure whether I would be able to dial right through, and I was unable to secure a connection at that time, because the lines were busy.

I did manage to call my office. At the time of calling, the bomb had just been discharged outside our reception area. My colleague was on his way into the office for the same meeting I was going to – and the bomb went off. I said, 'What on earth was that?' He said, 'You are not going to believe this, but a bomb has just gone off on a bus, and I am covered in glass.' I said, 'Where?' He said, 'Outside the office. I am standing outside Lynton House.' I said, 'Why?' He said, 'I do not know. I am going to see if I can help people.' That is when he said, 'Do not come into the office. Get home. Just get home.' That was it, and I never heard from him again. I subsequently realised that the reception area was going to be used as the triage area for those that were on the bus. A lot of my colleagues went downstairs and helped to pull people off the bus, and clear debris and assist where they could.

When I got off the Underground and managed to make my way towards a near safer area, it appeared that the critical infrastructure protection had failed. On speaking with other LU staff, it was mentioned that overall training for the event was either verbal briefings, which included how to deal with suspicious activity in parcels or baggage, and some had fire experience. Other one-to-one briefings included touching on terrorist attacks, but they were not really adequately trained. I believe that this has been over a subsequent period of time; they are not actually sent away to be trained in terrorism activities.

⁵ GLA Secretariat note: calls to 112, the single European emergency call number, from within the UK are automatically transferred to a 999 emergency call centre.

In view of the level of preparedness, I do believe that the staff were extremely brave, kind and clear-headed. We have called them the angels on the Underground; they certainly were my personal angels. The British Transport Police (BTP) seemed to use above and below ground in deep Tubes – different types of the new airwave system. That might have been used to maintain contact with ambulance and emergency crew. They were also using portable drums with cables from the Underground, which went to the surface. That appeared to take longer, but it seemed it was in a relatively short period of time, once everything had got going.

Surface side, I expected more loudhailers than there were, and I also expected electronic boards or further additional communications. None of that was present at all. Maybe my expectations as a businesswoman were far higher than what London could actually achieve at that time. Disaster mitigation of risk and measures for mobilising hospitals and placing Accident & Emergency (A&E) units on standby were specifically lacking, particularly at Chase Farm, Barnet and Edgware hospitals, where staff were expecting to be placed on alert but were not placed on alert. I would have thought that logically, looking at the Piccadilly Line, particularly towards the end of the line you have King's Cross, Southgate, Oakwood and all those other stations. That would have been my logical approach – to put all of those hospitals on standby, because many, many people travel from those areas every single day into town to work, just like myself. None of them was on alert; they were not expecting us at all as walking wounded.

They failed to deal with incoming patients; we were not seen on time. The walking wounded were not seen in acceptable time. I had since found a taxi with a number of other lady survivors. The taxi driver at the time said to me, 'Listen, love, I am not taking credit cards or cheques or anything. You have to give me cash. I want cash to get out of the city.' Between us, we managed to pool £46.50, which was the exact fare to the top of the A10. We got to the top of the A10 and were promptly ousted from the taxi and were told to, 'Get on your bike and walk,' and we did.

Once we got past the A10 we all separated and started calling our respective partners for assistance to come and collect us. My partner then luckily managed to find me wandering down the road like a dithering idiot. Relief operations did reduce the loss of life, but reduced the track-and-trace capabilities of survivors. With reference to the walking wounded, they were sent home to their closest A&E, with absolutely no data in existence to track and trace us or assist us later.

The widespread outage on the telecommunications side, sustained the interruption of mobile services, which reduced emergency telecommunications – even 112 was not contactable. The public protection and disaster communication call requirements did not appear to be in place, from my view, that is. This is only my opinion. Communications between emergency services and authorities were undertaken by runner, which was a human individual running physically between two areas to carry crucial messages. They were not even phoning each other; they were not using broadcast materials; they were not texting. They were using a body – a human person – to physically run between one area to the next to give information, which I thought was appalling. It appeared that joint emergency telecommunications had failed on a large scale.

The aftermath communications in London I found lacking. When asked for medical assistance, the NHS Direct answered questions, but redirected me to local A&E – once again, lacking. Crucial MRI scans were not undertaken, resulting in private MRIs to be

scheduled six months later. Advice on the symptoms of PTSD was forthcoming from the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund, who kept in touch on a weekly basis, and offered advice and support, which later became involved with my GP and eventual clinical diagnosis, and later a lifeline facility. Luckily, I was the only survivor within my GP's practice, and he was very sympathetic, and he was able to offer me substantial time. Sometimes, he was also frustrated at the length of the waiting lists and the requested procedures within the NHS. He then fought to try to have some of the procedures brought forward to no avail.

Further support in allowing zero prescription fees to all survivors would be of great help. My prescriptions so far have cost me over £300, and I will be on this medication for the rest of my life if I intend to even stand up straight. I was told that any private medical fund, in respect of British United Provident Association (BUPA), with which I have had a significant policy, would not entertain any claims from me, as it was an act of terrorism. I have spoken to one of their directors, and they have stated categorically, 'Sorry, it was for the NHS to deal with. We will not be paying any of your claims, so do not even try.' I cancelled my BUPA. NHS waiting lists do not support the 7 July survivors' initiative. There was no system in place to deal with us super-fast, super-quick; we are just one of the masses.

With regard to Item 2, which is how business-continuity arrangements worked in practice, business-continuity arrangements did not work in practice. The consultancy in Lynton House was designated a crime scene. I understand the police had to do their job, but then we had no dial-in; we could not dial in successfully. The Information Technology (IT) helpdesk was overrun; broadband was overrun; the servers fell over. We were understaffed, and the servers were totally inadequate. Passing through police cordons to try to get in the office added an extra two to four hours to your journey, which was already painful.

I was then determined to get to work in spite of the pain and the fear, and obviously extensive medication. The health and safety officer took one look at me and said, 'That is it. You are going home. There is no point going into work.' The lack of business continuity affected my job performance directly and caused a trail of negative events, impacting on my overall performance of my duties within the consultancy firm, which was already suffering from downtime at Lynton House, Tavistock Square, as it was part of the bomb site from the bus. As a result of the bus bombing, I feel that I might have been the only person physically affected by the train bomb, but also damaged professionally by the bus bomb, due to the lack of business continuity.

The cross-examination, also, by Scotland Yard, made me feel like a suspect, and it was extremely hard, unfeeling, and it felt threatening.

With regard to the European citizens' rights to know about 112 and how it can save their lives, I feel that this communication technology was not utilised to aid the response process. I would imagine half of Britain are not aware of 112. I think something needs to be done on that score. Text services were expected, but not received. I did however receive some scores and sporting results, which I do not usually get, but that was interesting – not much use though.

The use of information technology systems (ITS) was similar to that of a third-world country. Having lived all over the world and worked and consulted all over the world, I really did expect more from London. Interactive survivors' lists were an expectation. I

was on that list until about five o'clock, and then I managed to phone in to say I was actually okay, or reasonably okay, and head in towards A&E. Text services to those requiring medical attention – I expected that; they were not forthcoming. Broadcast, or webcast, or medical, services, or a web link to tell us where to go or which hospitals have been mobilised, where you could go for assistance, who you could talk to – nothing. None of those services was forthcoming; they do exist; they have existed since 1991. There is an emergency telecommunications procedure throughout the EU Directive since 1991, and renegotiated 2003 and 2004. As a member state, we would have been aware of it in the UK. I have double-checked that; none of that was utilised. I hope that my commentary on events has motivated the authorities to act at all levels, and that action groups will ensure the safety of all peoples in the future.

With regard to myself and other treatments, I do feel, within the NHS, that I have been fobbed off, with the particular result of other areas of my life being affected. I did note that Kirsty had mentioned that there was no assistance regarding the legality in the workplace of individuals like myself, who came under scrutiny. There is assistance to those who have lost their jobs as a direct result of the 7 July incident, who potentially could be classified as disabled. If PTSD has been in existence for over one year, you are then entitled to a particular process with various departments in order to make your claim in an employment tribunal. Whether they have actually dismissed you or not, my suggestion is that you do not resign under any circumstances at all.

With regard to that, I would like to mention at this time that I was not allowed to talk to the police or talk to anybody regarding my findings or experiences, as being an individual involved with or having experience of both the Russell Square/King's Cross and also Tavistock Square, within the office. We were told as staff, that we were banned from talking to anyone – particularly the press, which was an immediate dismissal offence – police, or anything regarding the experience. I was, at that time, afraid for my job and my position to speak out or even come forward. My conscience, however, was pricking me and, of course, my partner was also doing exactly the same thing. At my partner's insistence, I called the police line anonymously, and requested that there might be a connection between the bomb outside our offices and our involvement in the Olympic bid, as the upper level of the bus was at exactly the same level as our boardroom where the bomb went off. I did not leave my name and I did not comment any further. As far as that goes, I feel that perhaps I could have assisted a little bit further in mentioning more of my involvement but, because we were told not to speak, I was fearing for my job.

Finally, to all who have assisted in the recovery, condolences as well to those who have lost their loved ones, also, from myself and my family, a very big thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Beverli, thank you very much indeed. We have four more people to hear from.

[Adjournment]

Richard Barnes (Chair): Shall we start again? Angela?

Angela (King's Cross/Russell Square): Thank you. I was also evacuated from the King's Cross train back to King's Cross station, travelling in the third carriage – the same carriage as Jane, but slightly further back. We were actually quite fortunate in that there were two men in our carriage that smashed in the window of one of the doors to

Once we got to ground level, after being led through the tunnel by a LU worker, I experienced something slightly different to Jane and Beverli in that I was directed into the ticket hall of the mainline station, where there were first-aiders, mostly from the rail staff and from LU. There were fire officers there, as well, and police officers. At a later point, there were also two paramedics. For the entire time that I was at the station, prior to being taken to the hospital, there were only two paramedics. They told us that they were severely stretched and to bear with them. Obviously we were not aware at that time what had happened elsewhere, but it did seem quite an inadequate response, especially considering that the more people that were coming to ground level, the more severe the injuries appeared to be. It did not take a genius to work out that someone bleeding, apparently from everywhere, was severely injured. Obviously, they needed a lot more help than the walking wounded who were experiencing breathing difficulties or had scratches.

At one point, while we were in the ticket hall, I remember an announcement being made. I cannot recall if it was a police officer or a fire officer; I am afraid I cannot remember who exactly. I do remember them saying that it was not a bomb, and that we should not worry about what we breathed in, which was quite ironic considering what we later found out. I have to say that what was breathed in is something that does concern a lot of people – what the long-term effects of that may be.

During the time at King's Cross, as I said, there was a second alarm that went off as Jane mentioned. At one point, someone shouted out, 'For God's sake, switch it off. They have been through enough already,' because everyone at that point was ready to get up and move out of the station, because we just did not know what was going to happen next. We were reassured that we should stay there and that it was a false alarm, it was going to be switched off, etc.

We were then taken from King's Cross to the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel on a fleet of buses. A police officer on the bus announced that the bus was perfectly safe and we should not worry. Everyone was quite surprised, 'Why should we worry about the bus?' completely unaware of what had happened at Tavistock Square. It was only when another survivor boarded the bus, who luckily managed to have a line on her mobile, that she was told by whoever she was speaking to that there had been numerous other bombs on trains and on several buses as well. That was a bit of a shock to everyone, and we could then understand why the police officer had told us what she had.

In terms of getting to the Royal London, unlike the Aldgate experience, maybe because we had a fleet of buses as well, we had a police escort the entire route. They blocked the roads for us – cleared traffic – so we did have a direct route to the Royal London, which was very lucky for everyone concerned. We were then checked at that point, and those that needed immediate medical attention were directed in towards A&E, and others for further assessment. Everyone did have a concern about how they would get home afterwards, which was why some people did, at one point, get off the bus while it was waiting at King's Cross. They did not know how they were going to get home from Whitechapel in the end, and others, who wanted to get off, were told no they could

not, because they needed to be checked out. There were very mixed responses from those who were looking after us at the time.

Names and addresses of everyone that was on the bus were taken by a police officer. They were very anxious to ensure that all names and addresses of everyone involved were taken. Going back to mobile phones, I do remember, it was my instant reaction as well, that as soon as I came above ground I just grabbed my phone and phoned my family. I managed to speak to them to reassure them that I was okay. They were completely puzzled, 'Why would you not be okay? Are you not at work?' 'No, there has been an explosion.' The first they were aware of anything was my phone call, and even then they were still a bit puzzled afterwards I think.

I then put a phone call through to a colleague at work to tell her that I was going to be late for work, and was cut off mid-conversation. It was only after about 14.30 that I managed to get a line back. It was frustrating, because I could see that other people were speaking on their mobiles, and yet it seemed to be very patchy whose network was working and whose was not. Mine was O2, and that seemed to be a problem particularly.

Following on, while at the hospital, I was then assessed for further medical checks. I was given oxygen for about an hour; I was given a blood test and chest x-ray before I was allowed to go home. Luckily, I was provided with transport home, and I think everyone was from the hospital at that point, although they did not know that that was going to happen before going to the hospital.

As with a number of others, I did have some difficulties. I was quite distressed. I went back to work on the Monday afterwards; I was quite distressed towards the end of that week, and decided to go to my GP to tell her that I was having problems sleeping and I just seemed to be crying all the time. While I burst into tears, she ran out and came back with a folder called 'Terrorist Attacks', which was quite ironic, then did not know what she could tell me. She said, 'I do not know what to say,' and then signed me off sick for a week. When I did go back the second time after that, she advised me about the Assistance Centre.

I had seen somewhere when it was named the 7 July Family Assistance Centre, so I was under the mistaken belief as well, as others were, that it had been set up for the family and friends of the bereaved. Understandably, I did not want to contact them, because I thought they need a hell of a lot more help and support than I did, but my GP encouraged me to contact them, which I did. That was by phone. It was based in Victoria, and the thought of travelling across London to Victoria was too much. Just travelling to and from work at that point was an hour's worth of pure hell twice a day, but something that I had to do.

I did give the Centre my details, but never heard or received anything from them after that, until, for some weird reason, from January onwards, I suddenly started to receive newsletters. I cannot quite understand why I started to receive information after January but never received anything before. That is something that needs to be considered – that the information that they provide has been very patchy. If there was a more central body that could take ownership of any lists of names and addresses and use them as an umbrella body to provide information to others in, heaven forbid, similar situations, then that would be a big step forward.

As Kirsty and Jane have already said, and others will as well, my biggest source of information has been King's Cross United. It has been so helpful to know that there are others that are going through the same anxieties, worries and problems that I have as well. There is some comfort from that. We also help each other out as well. If anyone needs a travel buddy, we volunteer ourselves for that.

Going back to the medical side of things, there have been a number of people that have had issues in terms of their health – whether that is continuous colds, or infections of one thing or another. Others, again, will I am sure mention those, but there seems to be nothing to oversee and to monitor people's health. It seems a bit strange. We were told that there was no bomb, which there was; we were told that there was nothing to worry about in respect of what we breathed in. The first thing they told us was wrong, so how do we know that the second is not? We do not know if we are being monitored, how we are being monitored, and if we are going to be told any information, because we have been given scant information up to now. Will we be given any in the future? Your guess is as good as mine.

The Charlotte Street clinic – the trauma stress clinic – has been fantastic. I am currently attending the clinic, and they have been very good, but they are extremely stretched, especially in view of the number of people that are involved. Perhaps if more help and more resources were provided in respect of that, then that would be useful as well for the future.

In terms of day to day, I do take the Tube every day to go to work – not something I particularly enjoy; in fact, I absolutely hate it. It is one of those situations where I have very little choice. I travel in from Oakwood at the top of the Piccadilly Line down to Holborn where I work. An alternative route means a two-hour journey each way, rather than one hour door to door. There are times when the train stops in the middle of the tunnel, and there is no announcement, no information, nothing. I think a very simple step that can be implemented within five minutes is to tell the drivers to make an announcement when that happens – 'Sorry we have stopped. It is for whatever reason.' Just to at least communicate with the passengers – it is a very, very minor thing and it is something that would help people. It certainly makes me very very nervous when that happens, and I can see other people around that feel quite nervous as well. You can see the reactions on people's faces when that does happen.

The other thing is the drivers' radios. Travelling into work yesterday, the driver was trying to make some kind of announcement, but you could not hear a word they were saying, the radio was so crackly. If they could at least make sure that in every carriage the radio from the driver can be heard very clearly, that is a very useful step. It did not help us on 7 July, but in terms of day-to-day travel, it is a step that could help a great deal.

Finally, I would just like to thank you for giving us this opportunity to put our views across as well, and also say how grateful I am for all the emergency services that did attend on the day. They were very let down by the systems that were in place; the individuals concerned cannot be faulted in any way whatsoever. They did a fantastic job under very trying circumstances, and that goes for those on the day and also to the police officers who interviewed me to take my statement afterwards. They were extremely considerate, very caring and were not at all pushy to try to extract information. That was a big help. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much. Joe?

Joe (King's Cross/Russell Square): Thank you. I need to preface my testimony by making two points. Firstly, unlike everybody else who is speaking this morning, I am not a survivor. On the morning of 7 July, I was no closer than two to three miles away from any of the bombs. However, tragically, my wife was on the Piccadilly Line train standing just a few feet away from Jermaine Lindsay, and she suffered serious, life-threatening and permanent injuries. She has chosen not to speak today. I wanted to give testimony, firstly both of our shared experience, but also because I think my own personal experience of 7 July and of its aftermath is interesting and pertinent.

Particularly on 7 July starting, like anybody else in London, no more implicated than sitting at home, watching the television, feeling angry – very angry – and hurt as the details of this wound on my city became revealed to about 14 hours later, when I was sitting beside the bedside of the woman I love, expecting her to die. I think that testimony is relevant and I will come on to that.

The second preface I have to make is that any criticisms I make of what happened, and not everything I have to say is critical, must be prefaced by saying that this emphatically does not apply to individual members of the emergency services, to transport workers, to medical workers and to volunteers, who behaved in an extraordinary and exemplary fashion on the day itself and afterwards. Throughout that day, and for several days later, my wife hovered, teetered, between life and death. Indeed, we were told afterwards by medical staff that at least twice on that day she, essentially, effectively, died, but they saved her life. Having saved her life, they looked after both her and myself with incredible compassion and expertise and professionalism. The phrase I have come to hate most in the English language is: 'I was only doing my job.' It is never true when it is uttered; it is only uttered by people who do 1,000 times more than their job.

That thing about the actions of individuals on the day is a double-edged thing, because my sad conclusion, my pessimistic conclusion, about the emergency plan and the extent to which it worked – and it did work in the sense that my wife's life was saved, we were reunited, we have survived – is that it only worked because of the brave decisions and actions, and the extraordinary initiative, taken by individuals on the day. In reference to earlier testimony, as far as I understand it, the police officers and others at Russell Square, defied their protocols to enter the tunnel as soon as they could, and placed themselves at great personal risk in the full knowledge and belief that there were secondary devices that were imminently going to explode.

What we have all learned afterwards is that, at times, those extraordinary individuals were, in certain circumstances, let down by higher management and by the systems they have to operate in. I am sorry, but the bitter First World War phrase of 'lions led by donkeys' does spring to mind in reference to the emergency services. God forbid, that if there was a bigger incident than 7 July, and in global terms it was not as big as it might have been, I do not think in its present form the emergency plan would work as effectively as it did on that day. In terms of that, I would add my voice to those people who are calling for a public inquiry, and are angry that the Government has refused so far to call one. Partly because, for anyone implicated, whether the survivors or their families, being able to speak and feeling that you are being listened to, is a natural and essential way of venting emotions, whether that it is anger – and people feel tremendous anger, and sometimes criticisms are just a reflection of that anger; they are a channel for that anger – but of grief also.

More importantly, our voices have to be heard because we are, in effect, the clients or the consumers of the emergency plan. We are the people on whom it was enacted that day; we are technical witnesses. If it is to get any better, then our experiences, whether on the trains or off them, must be listened to and must be acted on. Those are my prefaces.

In terms of what I understand – what happened at Russell Square – we have been fortunate in being able to talk to other survivors, the police officers, to medical workers, to paramedics and so forth. There are lots of questions to be asked of course. Most obviously now, information is coming forth about the failures of the LAS section of the emergency plan and the issue of dispatching. It is not just what we have learned very recently – that ambulances took perhaps up to two hours to arrive at Russell Square. That may not have helped my wife; it took so long to get her off the train. We think – we do not know this is true – but we have been told she may be the last person to have been rescued alive from the train. Then the time it took to stabilise her at the ticket hall at Russell Square meant that it probably made no difference to her that the ambulances took so long to arrive.

One of the issues we do not understand is what happened to the ambulances afterwards. The dispatching of ambulances from the scenes to hospitals seems almost arbitrary. University College Hospital (UCH) is close to Russell Square; many people went there. I was talking to a survivor today who went to Royal Free in Hampstead, whereas my wife and a couple of other survivors of Russell Square were taken to St Thomas' Hospital, which is a very long way from Russell Square – an extraordinarily long way given the extent of people's injuries. Indeed, she arrested for the second time crossing Westminster Bridge, with some degree of style I suppose. The nurse who was treating her, who was in the ambulance with her, thought that they had taken her too far. It was only the actions of the medical staff in A&E that brought her back to life on that occasion.

One explanation we have received, and it is the only credible one we have received, is that this was indeed a volunteer ambulance crew, who had arrived from a different county, and they simply did not know the way to other hospitals; they knew how to get to St Thomas'. After the Tavistock Square explosion, of course, UCH then became very difficult to get to; there was gridlock, but they knew the way to St Thomas' and it may be that that took them there. In terms of that, in terms of it not being a LAS ambulance, we do not think that it was a fully equipped emergency response vehicle, so it had inadequate equipment on board. Not only that, and this is something that we have not had confirmed by other people's testimonies, but we were told that that ambulance and others that arrived at Russell Square had actually been to other emergency sites before – had been to either Edgware Road or Aldgate – and all their supplies had been emptied out. When they got to Russell Square, they were not equipped to deal with serious casualties.

Secondly, and other people have said this already, it is now clear that neither Tube trains nor Tube stations carry sufficient medical supplies. At Russell Square, they did find some rudimentary things like Elastoplast sticky plaster, which was of some use when they had to put lines into people to put fluid in, but not exactly recommended in medical manuals. As far as I know, there was only one stretcher available at the time. Other people were carried out on blankets or on the coats of people who had died. Again, it was people thinking on their feet that saved lives in those terrible

circumstances. There was a great deal of serendipity in that Russell Square is close to hospitals, which were raided, were looted, for medical supplies. The supermarket opposite was looted; hotels were looted, with the full cooperation of the staff in them. Again, there was muddle, and it was individual initiative that made the whole thing work.

It is clear that there was not proper safety equipment for those members of the emergency services who took those brave decisions to go into the tunnel. Police officers have told us that while they were down there, they received radio communications, so that would indicate which police force they were, because the other police force were not able to receive radio communications underground. They were then told how to breathe properly. They were not told why they might have to control or moderate their breathing. Actually, the effect of that was to induce a degree of panic, because they realised they were placing their own physical safety at risk. It would be simple and obvious to have proper breathing equipment and other forms of extreme emergency equipment in situations where they might be of use, particularly as this was not some Tube station out in the far reaches – the lowly populated suburbs. This was a Tube station in Central London, and indeed one of the deepest in Central London.

In terms of my own experience, as somebody implicated but away from the emergency scenes themselves, and in terms of the technical remit of this inquiry – the issue of communications – the thing that caused me absolutely unnecessary extra anguish and grief on the day, and I think many other people, was something that to me is incomprehensible and inexcusable, and that is the failure of the CCB emergency number. This after all is one part of the emergency plan that was not theoretical; it had been tested many times under other circumstances. Telephone systems that require heavy usage are in use all the time. The new Wembley Stadium will sell out within seconds when tickets go on supply. There are websites that take one million hits in a very short space of time. The idea that you can set up an emergency number, an incredibly essential part of the emergency plan, and it fails immediately, is to me utterly inexcusable, and I have not received satisfactory answers as to why that happened.

My experience of sitting at home doing what everybody else, I imagine, did – watching BBC News 24 – is that we waited and waited and waited for means to receive information. Of course, it was impossible to call anyone by mobile phone. Eventually, the emergency number was issued on the BBC, and I started to ring it and, like everybody else, failed to get through. At the first major press conference that afternoon, at which the (Metropolitan Police) Commissioner** and the heads of the LAS and the LFB were speaking, the Commissioner mentioned that there was a technical fault on the line. That was the first and last time that anyone made any reference to a problem.

What horrified me is that the BBC continued to pump out the number. I thought that the problem could only get worse; if the number is not working, and is being put out on screen every few seconds or minutes, then that problem will just get worse. The volume of calls will increase. I managed to get through to the BBC news desk, and I got my brother-in-law, who is a BBC producer, also to contact the news desk, and say, 'Does it really make any sense to keep putting out an emergency number that is not working?' They got slightly huffy; they said, 'We checked on this, and it is just volume of calls.'

** Secretariat note: The Metropolitan Police Service representative at the news conference was Deputy Assistant Commissioner Brian Paddick

Crap – volume of calls does not cause emergency numbers to collapse, or it should not do. It took me slightly more than three hours, if my memory is correct, to register my wife as somebody who was missing and presumably involved. That needs to be addressed. It really really really does need to be addressed.

In terms of other things, in a more abstract definition of communication, the thing that also has caused me most grief, and I think I perhaps diverge slightly from my wife in this, but nonetheless I do feel so angry about, is the absolute complete total lack of communication from Westminster – at any point from 7 July until now. There are two reasons why, for us, that experience was thrown into very stark contrast, why it seemed even more puzzling and bewildering and I think shabby that nobody from Westminster or Whitehall attempted to contact us. We received not a phone call, not a card, not a visit, no contact whatsoever of any kind from anybody in Government.

This was thrown into sharp relief for us, firstly, because we were taken to St Thomas' and, from our bedside on the 10th floor, we had a fantastic view out across the river to the Palace of Westminster and to Whitehall. From my wife's bedside, it would have taken me less than five minutes to walk to the central lobby of the Palace of Westminster, and perhaps a minute or two longer to walk to Downing Street, but nobody made the return journey. Nobody did that journey the other way round. Still we have received no contact whatsoever.

The other reason why that has been thrown into stark relief for us is that, although my wife has lived in London for many years, and has paid her taxes here, she is an Australian national. The support and assistance we have received from Australia, at all levels, have been extraordinary. Within days, John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, came to visit my wife and sat beside her – on a private visit, from which press were excluded – and just paid the visit as a human gesture. If he could make it from Canberra, then perhaps his equivalents might have made it across the river to St Thomas' in Lambeth.

We received extraordinary support from the High Commission here, from the representatives of the South Australian Government – Gill was a native of South Australia – and from ordinary Australians. We have had more contact from Australian Members of Parliament (MPs) than we have had from British MPs, which seems bizarre, but it is the truth. The answer is: if you are going to be in an emergency, make sure you are not British; make sure you are Australian. I feel ashamed at the response. I am British; I am a UK citizen. I feel ashamed of that reaction from my own Government.

I feel proud, on behalf of my wife, and proud in my own right, of that extraordinary response from Australia. The thing that this Government seems to want to create artificially – a sense of national identity, a sense of belonging – seems to become natural to Australians. However long you have been away from that country, you are one of them, and they will look after you. We felt very sorry for the fellow survivor in the next room to Gill, who was also badly injured, as he watched the supply of presents and cards, chocolates, wine, flowers, that arrived from Australia. He of course received precisely nothing. That makes me very sad.

On the other hand, we did receive a lot of help. In contrast to the testimony of some other people, those people who were very, very severely injured, and therefore very visible – the police and other people knew about them – that support was very tangible and very valuable, and essential to us. The Family Assistance Centre was of limited use;

that is partly because it came too early. If you are incapacitated in hospital, recovering from life-threatening injuries, a trip across the river to Pimlico is not really on the cards. It came too early, but I received some support, and they were able to sort out things like free travel for Gill's family. Her family were flown over within hours by the Australian Government at no cost, and taken to the hospital to be at her bedside, which I think is in marked contrast to the experience of British nationals injured abroad.

Through the Family Assistance Centre, we were immediately put in touch with a top firm of London solicitors, who gave us extraordinary pro bono support and continue to do so. That has been invaluable. The one thing, not only if you have been badly injured but if, like me, you are severely traumatised, dealing with administration is very very difficult indeed. I think other people around this table will confirm that, for instance, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) form is a weirdly inappropriate document. If you have been blown up by a suicide bomber on a train, being asked questions such as, 'Did you know the perpetrator? Are the police aware of this incident? Have you spoken to the perpetrator since?' would seem to be irrelevant questions and indeed potentially distressing. Luckily, we laughed at most of them. We were given incredible legal support, that clearly other people here have not received, and we are very grateful for that.

St Thomas' Hospital, which in our minds is in institution beyond praise, also gave us incredible support. It was good fortune that, for whatever reason, we were taken there. Gill not only survived but received medical support that mitigated her injuries in a way that may not have happened if she had gone elsewhere.

We were also given help from the hospital in keeping away the press. Everybody will have received a degree of unwarranted press intrusion; that is not to say the press behaved universally badly. We were well treated by some elements of the media; others were pretty bad. It may be a back-handed compliment to the British press to say that the Australian press is far worse. They come from a lower ring of hell that I did not know about before. The hospital was very good in, for instance, stopping those people who arrived with bunches of flowers pretending to be relatives, or wrote us letters in wobbly handwriting to try to pretend that they were relatives so that their messages would get through. Those were all intercepted, and the phone calls from people who pretended to be from medical records to get medical details of Gill's condition. In Australia, we will never find out who it was, but I can tell you that somebody phoned her family and pretended that she had died in order to elicit a response from them.

Some of these things upset us – that one upset us; some of us made us laugh. You have to laugh. The best one of all: she has the misfortune to share a surname and a place of birth with an inmate of Guantanamo Bay. The press contacted her family and asked if she was indeed related to this inmate at Guantanamo Bay, and if that was the reason the terrorists had targeted her Tube train. I am not making this up, I can assure you.

We also received tremendous support from the police. I think it is fair to say, and it needs to go on record, that the Metropolitan Police in particular seemed to have learned an awful lot in the wake of things like the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. We were immediately assigned to two family liaison officers. Indeed, it was the family liaison officers who found me – they did not know who I was, but they knew there was a me – on the night of 7 July, and raced me to the hospital, because we all thought I was simply going to her bedside, attempting to get me there before she died. They

remained with us throughout, and we are still in contact with them. We would count them as friends. That help was extraordinary.

Anti-terrorist Branch (SO13) officers, who came to return her personal property and to interview her further, also behaved with extreme consideration and were very supportive. We feel very grateful for the support of both uniformed and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers of the Metropolitan Police, and uniformed officers of the BTP, who were the people who actually entered the train and rescued her.

We received no help by the Government by the way – the police helped us keep the press at bay. The 1 November memorial ceremony – I think the most effective rebuffing of an overeager reporter was to be confronted with a couple of police officers in full dress uniform, standing in front of an Independent Television News (ITN) producer and telling her where she could stick her questions. It was very effective. We received no more help than that.

By the way, one very simple recommendation I would make, which seems an incredibly logical one and not a very expensive one, is that one of the biggest difficulties we faced was administration. There is so much to deal with, so many forms to be filled, so many people to make enquiries of, so much to understand in order to receive the help that you need. All it would have required would have been a dedicated team of administrators, perhaps legal secretaries, but competent administrators, who could have been assigned to survivors and to, I would imagine, the bereaved families, as case workers. Even an hour a week from somebody who knew how to do this stuff would have taken so much pressure off us, and it would have been so much easier to set that thing up than some of the more useless kinds of support that were eventually on offer.

Another lesson, which I think has been learned over the last few months, but must not be forgotten, is the natural tendency to lump everybody involved into one basket, as if we were all the same. There is hardly a more random sample of the population than the packed contents of a commuter Tube train. As people, we are all different, but equally the needs and desires and emotions of the bereaved are very different from the needs and emotions and desires of the survivors who were injured, and there are probably also differences between those people who are severely physically injured, and those people who have suffered psychological injuries and after effects, but did not spend, as we did for instance, two and a half months in hospital. The differences between different people implicated in an event like this must be understood.

I went to a very early public meeting held by the police at the Family Assistance Centre, where they had made the mistake of putting everybody in the same room. It became clear very quickly, and shockingly, that we felt very differently, for instance, from the bereaved families in the room. After that, we were separated out, and we have never had contact subsequently of that kind. I think that is very important. That is it. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much indeed. Kristina?

Kristina (King's Cross/Russell Square): Thank you. I boarded the sixth carriage at Turnpike Lane heading into Holborn Tube. My story is similar to that of Kirsty's; we were stuck next to each other on the carriage. I will not go into the detail; everybody knows what happened down there. Obviously there was no communication from

anyone – no assistance. We were stuck there; people took charge and tried to keep everyone calm. We had no idea what had happened, being on the last carriage, no idea how we were going to get out, no idea if we would get out or if anyone knew we were there or were going to come and get us.

I feel that there should be some way to make communication better on the Tube. I know it is hard and could be a costly exercise. We could not communicate with the driver, because communications had been cut, but someone or something to be able to tell us, 'We know you are there.' We were stuck there, for us, for about half an hour, not knowing if we were going to live or die, if someone was going to come and get us or not. To be on that part of the Underground, where you are 10cm away from the wall, when the guys have smashed the windows, and realising you cannot get out. People at the end of our carriage did not want to get out, like Kirsty has mentioned, because they did not know what was outside, did not know if the tracks were going to be live or if there was fire outside.

We finally got out; we had two lovely policemen who came down to the end of the carriage and told us they were going to help us out. They were lovely; I hugged one of them when I finally got off and said, 'Thank you so much. You saved my life.' They told us to keep in between the tracks and to walk back up to King's Cross where we had Underground staff that helped us back up on to the platform and duly handed us bottles of water, which very quickly ran out. We were then just told to go back up the escalators and head out to King's Cross. I got up to the ticket hall, and I was with a guy from the train.

We had no direction; no one was there. There were people all over the place – people just sitting down crying on their own, people trying to breathe, people trying to take water. Yet again, there were no Underground staff, no emergency services, at that stage, telling us where to go, to sit down, 'We will come to you. We will look after you. It is going to be okay.' My husband had only just got off at King's Cross, so my first thought was, 'I am going to get out and ring my husband.' This guy and I made our way out the top, and we were stopped by Underground staff at the stairs to take our details, which I think was something very positive, but I would like to know where that list has gone. It was only on a small pad, and he was quickly writing everyone's names and addresses and phone numbers. I have heard nothing from them since. It was a positive step, and unfortunately it fell apart.

I was then unfortunately separated from the guy I was with, and finally got in contact with my husband. He was still there at King's Cross; he had been evacuated. I thank my lucky stars everyday that he was still there, because I would not have known what I would have done on my own, with no direction and no assistance. We reunited and I just said to him, 'I do not know what has gone on. I do not know what I have breathed in. I do not know what has happened.' He was completely stunned; he did not expect to see me in that state. My worst fear had been that I would one day be stuck on the Tube, because I have a phobia of enclosed spaces. He thought, 'Oh God, I have just got to look after my babbling wife. She has just been stuck in the Tube and just got a bit hot.' When he came out and saw me all sooty, and proceeded to see many others come out behind me covered in soot, he thought, 'I do not think it is just being stuffy. There is a bit more to this.'

We were then left standing around outside King's Cross. By that stage, I think they had done a minor cordon directly outside the Tube, and there may have been one

ambulance and a few policemen. That is all I can remember at this stage. I just wanted to go home and get out of the area. My husband was like, 'No, you need to find out; you need to get checked out – make sure that what you breathed in there was nothing to put you in danger.'

We were trying to work out last night how long we had stood around before we watched the ambulances arrive. No one would pay attention to us. There was probably around half a dozen of us standing directly outside where the ambulances were pulling up asking, 'What is going on? Can we just get seen? Is everything okay? Are we okay that we can just walk away and go home?' Unfortunately, at that stage, I did not know what really had gone on, and how severe things were at the front of the train. They were just telling us, 'Unfortunately, we have to go down and look at other things.' Again, left standing there, I finally said to my husband after probably about three quarters of an hour, 'I just cannot stand here anymore. I just want to get out of here.' A policeman then finally came over to us and said, 'Have you come off the train?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'We are getting people on buses and taking them to the hospital.' We sort of turned to him then and said, 'What has happened?' He said, quietly, 'I should not be speaking this,' he said, 'but we think it is bombs and it has happened at various other places throughout London.'

He then just pointed us to a bus, which we were left to get on, on our own. As I did not know what had happened, I then duly got on the bus and looked down, and there was a guy who was injured and had blood pouring down his face. At that moment, I thought, 'Oh my God, what has happened? This could have been me.' I quickly turned around to my husband and said, 'No, this bus is not for me. Let us go.' The police, by that stage, had walked off somewhere else; I do not know where. No one was on the bus telling us it is going to go in 10 minutes, 'We are waiting for other survivors to come on. We are going to take you to hospital. We are going to check you out.' No one was there. It was just other survivors there trying to help each other through the day. There were some women there trying to help the guy with a gash in his head.

We just turned around and started walking – no direction. We had no idea where we were going or what we were going to do. We walked; I think we were heading up towards Caledonian Road. By that stage, I was just so exhausted and in such shock that I just sat on the side of the road and said, 'I cannot do this anymore.' He turned around and said, 'I cannot leave you sitting here on the side of the road. We need to do something. There is no other way. There is nothing I can do.' We could not get any taxis; they were all full. No one was stopping. There were no buses. We finally got up to Caledonian Road – I think it might have been the High Street – and tried to find a minicab service. They said, 'You are not going to get a minicab for another hour and a half.' I said, 'I have just been on a train and I am covered in soot.' They said, 'Still no: an hour and a half.' I then found a black cab that was dropping some people off and ran over to him and said, 'Can you please take me to the nearest hospital.' He at first said, 'No.' I turned around and said, 'I have just been on a train. I am covered in soot. For half an hour, I do not know what happened.' He duly goes, 'Okay. Hop in,' and turned the meter on, and took me to the Royal Free at Hampstead.

I cannot praise enough, like everyone else has, the individual staff of the emergency services at the hospital. I must have been one of the first in, and they saw me straight away. Unfortunately, because I was one of the first, they were quite interested to know what had gone on – what had happened – so continued to ask me questions: where I was, what had happened, what I saw. At that stage, I could not process anything; I did

not really want to answer it. I still got more nurses coming in, who were not there to help me but just to ask questions. The ones that were helping me were wonderful – gave me all the tests.

We gave our details. I later found out the lady, I do not think, could speak proper English, and took my name down wrong and my phone number. I was later contacted that evening, only because they had taken my husband's mobile number down correctly, and got into contact with me – it was a policeman – to give a minor statement over the phone. They then came out about a week and a half later to take a formal statement. I cannot praise enough how professional and caring they were on the day. Over three hours I sat there and gave a statement, and they were just calm and professional, and put me at ease.

I then, I guess, went into a state of shock for a couple of months. I just tried to get on with life. I saw other people that had been more severely injured than myself, who were so positive about their future. I thought, 'Well, I will just go to work and I will keep going on.' It was not until one day on the phone with my mum back in Australia, and my Human Resources (HR) manager at work had said, 'No, I think you need to go and get checked out.'

One thing, just while I remember, just touching on the mobile-phone service going down, I think we should find out why, or try to put things in place so that it does not happen again. If you can imagine, I did not get home until about 14:30 that day. My family were absolutely worried back in Australia. My husband's family had not heard from us and they knew that that was the line I was travelling on and knew that at that time I would be on the train. My mum thought she was going to have to come over and collect my body. I do believe there has to be some way to keep the mobile service going, keep access going, so we can find out if people are alive or where they are.

I finally went to the 7 July Assistance Centre, which would have been in August. I had the same issue as everybody else, in that I was worried about the name of what it was called. I headed out to Victoria – took some time off work and headed out on my own. I got all the way there, and saw the sign, just before you are meant to turn into the building, that said 'Family Assistance Centre'. I went, 'Oh, maybe it is not for me,' and was about to turn around. I thought, 'No, I will just go and get checked out.' They were lovely on the day; the lady took me into a little room and just let me cry and tell my story, and say 'I am not coping.' However, she said, 'We will put you in the process to get some help.' She then proceeded to go, 'We have lunch here for you. We have a sandwich, and we have someone to give you a massage.' I know that is all well and good and they are just trying to make things better, and give you a nice day out, I guess, but it is not what I wanted: I wanted help; I wanted someone to tell me that it was going to be all right and that, 'We are going to get you help. These are the problems you have and this is the reason why.'

They then put me in a process which I, hate to tell you, took months for me to finally see a psychologist. They then referred me to my local victim support in my area. I then finally thought, 'I am going to see a counsellor. I am going to see someone, who is going to help me, and I am going to see them for a few weeks. They are going to give me tools to get through this.' I went; I was all nervous, and sat there with a lady for about half an hour, crying again, telling my story, going through everything that happened. She then turned around and goes, 'There is nothing much I can do. I am just a little counsellor. I am not actually properly trained so I cannot assist you. I am

going to have to refer you to someone else.’ I then, as you can imagine, just burst out crying, and thought, ‘Here I go again – another two weeks I have to wait for someone to call me and say I have an appointment, then another two to three weeks after that when I finally get to have the appointment.’

That is when I was finally referred to the 7 July Assistance Centre. She was lovely in that normally you have to be referred through your GP, apparently. I had had issues with my GP; I went to see him in tears and did not know what to do – whether I should take time off work, who I should see. He just pushed me out and said, ‘No, I cannot help you. You just have to wait for the NHS Assistance Centre to get to you. That is what they are set up for.’ I have since changed GP to a lovely woman, who now understands, and is willing to talk to me whenever I need.

I then had to wait for my assessment. I finally had an assessment about four weeks after I went to the local Assistance Centre, and that was another two to three hours of just going through everything, which you can imagine can be quite draining. She then, at the end, said, ‘I do not know if you really need help. I am just going to check with a colleague,’ to which I burst out crying and said, ‘I cannot function. I cannot get on planes; I cannot get on trains; I cannot work.’ She went, ‘Okay,’ and came back and said, ‘We are going to refer you on to psychologists.’ It then took another four weeks or so before I finally had my first appointment with a psychologist. This is from the time of August to the beginning to December, when I finally started my first appointment.

I cannot stress enough how wonderful she has been. She did explain in the first session – she did apologise to me that it had taken so long, but obviously there had not been anything set up previously for this. They had to leave the jobs they were currently in and volunteer, or put their names forward, to apply for these positions. I can understand everything takes time; however, like other people have touched on, when something like this happens, and you think you are at the end of your rope, and you do not know if you can get up the next day, to wait four, five, months for some help, and for someone to give you coping mechanisms – I just think it is too long.

I have been seeing her now every week. She has been fantastic. She could not do much more for me; I could not speak more highly of her. There are a couple of things I just want to touch on. Since it has happened, I have received various letters from I do not know who – from people in New Scotland Yard, the hospital I went to and the 7 July Assistance Centre. I do not know where they have all come from – just various leaflets telling me about the bombing relief fund, or going and getting help, or ‘We have this on, or that on.’ There does need to be a central body that takes everyone’s details. I cannot stress that enough. I think it should be the responsibility of something – maybe like the 7 July Assistance Centre. I know that due to the Data Protection Act the police cannot release details, and the hospitals cannot release people’s details, but there does need to be an umbrella body that takes all these details. If you need to get information, they can send it all out directly to the survivors and the bereaved. The information I have received has been few and far between, and I do not know who it has come from.

I did get a letter from the hospital saying they were doing a health check-up because, as everyone else has said, we are all worried about what we have breathed in, and our lungs and our chest. I volunteered and said, ‘Yes, I would like to get checked up.’ I have never heard from them since; that was about three months ago. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much indeed, Kristina. Rachel?

Rachel (King's Cross/Russell Square): I was travelling in carriage one, by the first set of doors. I normally travel by the second set of doors, which is where the bomb was, but on 7 July, because the train was extraordinarily full, I went as far up the train as I possibly could in order to travel in more comfort. I travel from Finsbury Park. The bomb went off between 08.50 and 08.55, and the carriage I was in was plunged into total darkness. I was close enough to the bomb that I could not hear it; it was as if I was punched violently in the ears. I saw a yellow light and silvery lines, which I think was glass. There was an immediate scraping noise as the train, I think, derailed, and then immense screaming began, as the passengers who had been rolling on the floor in the darkness struggled to find out what had happened to them.

I and some other passengers began to ask people to stand up, and to stop screaming if they were not hurt, and to listen out for the injured, and to try to get control of the situation. The driver then managed to open the door and communicate to passengers near him, because there were no lights; there was no communication at all within the train. The driver did manage to communicate with us, and say that he was going to try and evacuate those at the front of his cab out towards Russell Square.

At the time, I knew that something had happened, but I was not aware of where the bomb was – simply that there had been a bomb. It was at that time my belief that possibly the entire train had been killed; possibly the entire tunnel network had been destroyed, and we were the only people left alive. I also believed, and other people near me believed, that we were likely to die at any moment, because of the smoke, possibly because of the fire risk – we could feel the temperature rising, and you are normally understanding that there is no smoke without fire – and because we could see that the carriage was very devastated, as the emergency lights started to come on in the tunnel.

There were about 30-35 of us in the front of the train, who could walk, who managed to get out down the tracks, led by the other driver, down to Russell Square station. As we walked down these tracks, the people who were more seriously injured, but could still walk, were coming behind us. In order to try to calm the people I was with, I said to them that when we got to Russell Square, there would be doctors and there would be nurses, there would be ambulance people, there would be oxygen and water and there would be help. We walked, and it took us about quarter of an hour to make our way in single file down these tracks that we believed, at the time, were live – until we got to Russell Square.

When we got to Russell Square, we queued to be lifted up on to the platform by volunteer members of the public, I think, or possibly station staff. Then we were taken up to the ticket hall, some of us in the lift, in a state of extreme shock – most of us with breathing difficulties, most of us with cuts, shrapnel wounds, blast injuries, blood pouring out of our ears.

I was surprised when I got to Russell Square to find there were scenes of chaos. There was a member of the Tube staff handing out water that he had requisitioned from the store outside, but there were still commuters trying to get into the station at this time. I went and stood outside the station and I tried to prevent commuters coming into the station. People were asking me what was going on, and I said that the train had

derailed. There was a Japanese chap filming people; people were taking photographs on their mobile phones; and there were people swearing at me asking me what the bloody hell I was playing at and why I would not let them into the station. There were no ambulances; there were no doctors.

At 09.18 – because at 09.16 I had just managed to get a text to my partner to say I was alive – a lady came up to me and said she was a nurse, and she could see that I was in some distress. I had blood in my ears, and my wrist was damaged. She suggested that she call an ambulance and took me to hospital. I said I did not need an ambulance, but could she call one anyway, as there were people in the train and on the platform with severe injuries. Could she please go in and look after those people? She did. She contacted another friend of hers, and these two women, who were nurses at Great Ormond Street and who normally looked after small premature babies, joined in and tried to help and administer first aid in the station.

I was outside, and I realised I needed to get to hospital because I had glass sticking out of my wrist and metal. I also knew I did not need an ambulance. I could not see any coming, so I contacted a friend of mine who works in Shaftesbury Avenue, and asked her to take me to the hospital in a taxi. She came along and picked me up in a taxi; we tried to find other people to come in the taxi with us, but they could not hear us. Their ears, I think, were too damaged to hear us shouting to get into the taxi. We set off in a taxi and I left the people behind in the station, on the platform, with more severe injuries than me.

I was one of the first to get to the hospital. I was treated for my injuries. At that time, the news was still saying that it was power surges, but I was explaining to the staff it had been a bomb, and that they should expect people to come in with blast injuries. As I was saying this, people started to come in with blast injuries, covered in blood, with lower limb injuries. One person came in who had lost half his leg, and it became clear that this was a very, very serious situation.

I gave my name and details to the hospital, at the reception desk. I then gave my name and details to a police officer. I had my photograph taken. I gave a brief statement as to where I was on the train. I was given a forensic bag for my clothes. I left the hospital at about 14.00 when we were eventually released having been checked for chest injuries from the blast. Then I met my partner and I walked home to Camden and then I was picked up by a friend some hours later.

Later that evening, because I was unable to sleep, I wrote an account of my day, and posted it on a public message board. That was basically how the whole King's Cross United thing came about, because the editor of the message board placed my account on the home page, and other survivors searching for information seemed to have picked it up. Within two days, I had a message sent to me via email from another survivor, and then another survivor. I went to work on the Tuesday on the Tube, and met a third survivor. When I arrived at work I met a fourth survivor – a guy who worked with me, who had been on another carriage. By 17 July, there were now 10 survivors who had all managed to get in contact with me via the internet. I thought it would be helpful if we all spoke to each other, and we went to the pub, and that was how King's Cross United began.

Meanwhile, if I can just go back to the issue of giving my details, I have already mentioned that I gave my details to the hospital, had a photograph taken, gave a brief

statement – both to the hospital and to the police officers at the hospital. On the Friday, the news started reporting that the bomb had actually been in my carriage, and they had reported the bomb as being exactly where I had been standing, which was distressing and confusing. I telephoned the BBC, and said, ‘Are you sure?’ They said, ‘The police are going along with this information. The bomb was by the first set of doors.’ I explained that it was not, and I explained that if they were trying to, at that time, rescue people, bodies, who were trapped in the train, it would be helpful for them to know that they could in fact enter the way we had left the train – through the driver’s cab – and they should look at the bomb as being further back in the carriage. I managed eventually to get hold of the anti-terrorist hotline number from the BBC and I called them. I gave an hour’s statement over the telephone as to the whereabouts of the bomb, and my testimony that people could in fact enter through the front of the train where the tunnel was not damaged, and they could retrieve bodies that way, if they did not already know that.

On the Saturday, the police came round and took a four-hour statement from me. I gave them my impression of where the bomb was, and they then confirmed it at the end of the statement. By now, on the Saturday, I had given my details four or five times. On 12 July, I received a letter from UCH, from Debra Glastonbury, the A&E ward manager, saying she was sorry for what had happened to me. This was the only time anyone official had ever contacted me saying they were sorry for what had happened to me, and expressing sympathy. They recommended hepatitis injections, gave details of PTSD, recommended an ear, nose and throat clinic, talked about what to do if wounds became infected and gave the number of a charity called Disaster Action, which I understand is run by people who have been through disasters.

I contacted these Disaster Action people, and they told me about the 7 July Family Centre, which was the first time I had heard about it. I went to see my doctor to have my stitches taken out on the Monday, and then again a week later she had not heard of any help that I could take. Thanks to the Disaster Action, I did contact the 7 July Assistance Centre; with the survivor from my workplace I attended there and found it very helpful. Again, we were about the only two people there; there was a huge barn full of resources, but we were pleased that we had been.

On 28 July, I gave the 7 July Assistance Centre my details again by telephone, having visited there the week before. I also gave the Red Cross my details – my name and address. On 21 August, I gave my details to London Recovers, which is the website set up by survivors and to the police officer who was running the police website for survivors. On 23 August, I went down with the first of several chest infections and bronchitis that I have had. This prompted me to find out if there were any body monitoring people with regard to the asbestos and toxic chemicals we may have inhaled. I discovered through researching on the internet there was something called the Health Protection Agency (HPA), and that they had made themselves responsible for monitoring disaster survivors. I got their details and I sent them round the King’s Cross United website that Jane had set up when we had a meeting and we first started the group. I then gave my details to the HPA; I encouraged other members of King’s Cross United to do the same in August. I also found out about the NHS Charlotte Street Trauma Clinic, and I sent the details around the King’s Cross United website, and we all filled in that form as well. I have calculated that, by the end of August, I had given my name and details to eight separate things on over a dozen different occasions.

I then found out that the Government was planning on holding a memorial service on 1 November at St Paul's. I was not able to find out much more about it so I called St Paul's. They said it had been organised by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and it was for VIPs, not survivors. I remonstrated with them at this point, and managed to convince them it would be appropriate that perhaps survivors should come. I am pleased to say that they then became extremely helpful and we were able to get 20 tickets for survivors, which were all posted out to different survivors whose names and addresses and email details were all given to the DCMS. I phoned up the day before to see if my tickets had arrived and was told, after all this, I was not on any official list, which struck me as extraordinary since I have just detailed to you the amount of times I have spoken, and the number of people I have spoken to, and the amount of stuff that I have done to try to get myself and other fellow passengers known to the authorities so that we can be cared for. I eventually managed to convince them that I did exist and I did attend the service.

I have yet to hear anything back from the HPA, who I contacted again in September. I have started seeing the traumatic stress clinic; I began to see them in December, and they are excellent. I would like to say that it is very difficult, you know, that there is no official version, and that there is no one person looking after survivors and people. It strikes me that, from the moment the bomb went off, I and other people on my train have looked after each other in the dark. We have pretty much been in the dark ever since.

We have comforted each other; we have found each other; we have tried to help each other get legal help, psychological help, counselling, medical help, medical advice. We found out about PTSD; we found out about the CICA; we found out about the London Bombing Relief Charitable Fund. We set up a database, very effectively, which we have not lost. We have managed to keep an email database of each other; we are in regular contact; we have set up a website. We were under massive media attention, so we set up a media strategy. We have had about 1,000 media enquiries; we have done a carefully targeted series of interviews, in which we have managed to control the copy and what we have said to simply get the message out to other survivors that we existed. Hence, we talked to BBC North London local radio because we knew passengers lived in that area; we did not talk to the *New York Times*.

We have dealt with hundreds of messages from well-wishers, from weirdos, conspiracy theorists, journalists, students, researchers, all by ourselves, all whilst suffering from PTSD, in many cases – all whilst, in most cases, holding down full-time jobs. We have had no money; we have had no grant; we never asked for any money. Someone, somewhere, must have a job title, and a salary or a grant, that indicates that they are responsible for looking after us. I would like to know who that person is or who those people are. We have looked after each other since the bomb went off; we are looking after each other still. I think it would be nice if someone else could try to help us out now. Thank you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): No, it is we who should be thanking you, Rachel, and we sincerely do. The testimony that you have given to us today, from all of you – I can see the sense of relief that just suddenly swept round that it is almost over – has been incredibly powerful. We truly, deeply thank you for coming in and volunteering to give your stories. What you have said certainly validates some of those things that we have heard from elsewhere, and gives us indicators where we can go back to people where

we have heard some evidence. It was incredibly powerful. You will have your transcripts, and I know a number of you are coming in to give private evidence as well.

Peter Hulme Cross (AM): Ben, you mentioned that when you came out of the tunnel, the paramedics were waiting on the platform. This was about 40 minutes after the bomb went off.

Ben (Edgware Road): Yes. When I got above ground, like many other people, I sent a text to a few people to say I was alive, essentially. It was only really when I got home that I realised the amount of time involved, but it was around 40 minutes when I got to the platform, and there was a group of five, maybe six, people that were paramedics standing there, who were still just standing there. There were other services around as well, but those were the people I went to speak to.

Peter Hulme Cross (AM): Why had they not gone down?

Ben (Edgware Road): I do not know. I told them what I knew. I told them whereabouts and which train and which side and how to get in – either on the left-hand side or, if they had to go through ours, that we had smashed the window, etc. As I say, it is a source of great regret that I did not get them to go down, and I found myself going up the stairs and out. They looked to me like they were waiting for something. Looking back, I do not remember them having a large amount of kit with them. Whether they were waiting for equipment, or whether they were waiting for clearance to go in – I spoke directly to them; they took on board what I said, and then spoke amongst themselves.

Peter Hulme Cross (AM): Thank you. Michael, if I might ask you, you said that you found a number of groups of fire personnel, who were likewise waiting for some sort of direction to go down the tunnel. I am correct in that, am I?

Michael (Aldgate): That is right. I guess I made it – I remember looking at my watch as we walked past the train and it said 09.15. That is 25 minutes, and it was probably 30 minutes by the time I reached those firemen and spoke to them. The third group gave their reason that they worried about a second explosion, and that was why they were not departing. I think, looking back, the first group took it on their initiative to then go down.

Peter Hulme Cross (AM): Thank you. John, I think you mentioned that it was about – did you not say it was about an hour?

John (Edgware Road): Pretty much, from the time the blast went off, until I got out of the Tube, I was down there for an hour.

Joanne McCartney (AM): I want to ask about the name taking. Paul, you also had experience before from being in the fire service. You made a point that the tags that are held in the ambulance, there are a limited number of them. Could you just explain to us – I presume the purpose of tagging is to say where people have come from when they are taking to various hospitals as well – what else are the purposes of tagging? If ambulances could carry more, what would that enable them to do?

Paul (Edgware Road): The triage card, in essence, carries name and address information, age, details of injuries. Then you go through what is called the Glasgow

Coma Scale (GCS), which is where you add up a score. The actual priority that you are given will depend on your score. I did not touch on it earlier, but everybody within the incident was given a low priority; this included people with burns because the GCS does not take burns into account; it takes into account responsiveness, breath and motor contractions or something like that. It is quite easy to go through and fill out.

There is one pack of those on each ambulance. I am not sure how many there are, but there were six triage cards at Marks & Spencer. When we moved to the Metropole hotel, I remember a white box coming in. It was full of pencils and more triage cards, but there were nowhere near enough to go round the amount of people that were inside the Metropole hotel.

Joanne McCartney (AM): One of the things that perhaps we could recommend is that, at Tube stations for example, there should be a cupboard somewhere or something where things like that – things like cards to record people’s identity and stuff – could be kept. Do you think that would be useful?

Paul (Edgware Road): Absolutely, and not just that, but also to have a RVP associated with each Tube station on the network. The guys from King’s Cross – their RVP as such was the station, the main concourse in the station. Whereas at Edgware Road we moved to a different building, and then moved on to another building after that. To actually have somewhere pre-planned to move people to feels quite important.

Just touching on Peter’s (Hulme Cross) question, if I may, with regard to the ambulance staff, I think to some degree the delay in getting down on to the platform was people who were coming out of the tunnel were injured, and they were being met by the ambulance paramedics before reaching the tunnel. It was taking longer to get paramedics, who were circumventing the people who were not in the tunnel and going down.

Ben (Edgware Road): At Edgware Road, there were people being treated upstairs when I got there. There were people being given blankets and looked after, but the people on the station were not seeing anybody – they were not actively involved with anyone – and there were people streaming past them, who they were not interacting with.

John (Edgware Road): At Edgware Road, it would not be very difficult to identify people coming out by a simple whiteboard, and a marker. We are not talking rocket science here, are we? We have just got to think, as my friend has said, where do we go if something happens when we move out from the situation? How do we identify those people if, in future, they have to be flown out of London? There are quite simple ways, as you alluded to, about tags. Have enough tags and also have a marker board, so that people will not be running around looking for people who they knew should have been on that train and who have gone missing.

Paul (Edgware Road): What I have here on my folder, with a big asterisk, is ‘direction’. That seems to be the key, in the other sites, which was missing. People required direction; they just did not know where to go. Lots of people from King’s Cross had just walked off and left the scene. I know that that is the same from Tavistock Square, because we know from reports that the bus driver walked off and ended up in hospital. There was nobody there to say, ‘This is where you are going. This is what you need to do.’ Taking control and offering direction is very very important.

Richard Barnes (Chair): He actually walked from Tavistock Square to Greenford. Strangely, nobody stopped him.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): On direction, one of the things I wrote down was the police officer asking you, Paul, what he could do to assist.

Paul (Edgware Road): That is really quite important. I have mentioned this before, but not here today, in that I feel that was the right response to be given. If that police officer had come in and said, 'Who are you?' and I had said, 'I am a member of the public,' he would have gone, 'Right, I am taking control.' He did not know where the seriously injured people were; he did not know where the walking wounded were; he did not know who was in charge with regard to Marks & Spencer staff. I personally feel that his response on the day was the correct one. He came to me and said, 'What can I do?' rather than taking over at that point. I believe I handed over the incident to a bronze commander at the Metropole hotel when some senior medical person came up to me and said, 'I believe you are in charge.' It was at that point that I thought, 'I do not know if I want to be in charge of this,' and turned to this bronze commander and said 'hi' and gave him a briefing of the situation. At that time, when that police officer initially approached, I think his decision was correct.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): I wonder if I could ask about the role of the media. We have heard some horror stories rather briefly but, on the positive side, I wonder if any of you would like to say anything more about what the broadcast media, and subsequently print media, could have done at the time – also, because a number of you have mentioned continuing problems, whether there is any role that the media have now that could be used.

Jane (King's Cross/Russell Square): Personally, I think it is about making sure that anyone who needs help can get it, and knows how and who to contact, and embracing those people as a communication tool. I am not someone who would ever want to court the media, but when Rachel and I sat down and created a kind of media strategy to find other walk-away survivors from King's Cross, we could do it and it was possible, and people were helpful by just saying, 'Always put this email address in this communication.' Just communicating phone numbers and addresses – it is an ongoing problem. There are still probably people out there who may suddenly realise that, eight months on, they are not feeling okay, and suddenly need help.

There was a bit of confusion, I remember, on the Friday. I was not still convinced that I was on the exact Tube where it happened, and I walked into my local newsagents and decided, to try to work it out, I would buy the two most distinct newspapers – the *Times* and the *Sun*. In their reports of the Tube, one said it was going northbound, and one said it was going southbound. I was still confused about where I was and how I had been involved. There was a need for information and accurate information on the day.

Rachel (King's Cross/Russell Square): I think not having an official version makes it difficult, because people have had to piece together what happened through a series of reports that are done by multiple sources, often on the hoof, which means that you are going to get discrepancies.

We realised as a group that we would need to have a media strategy for two reasons: 1) because the media were very, very interested in talking to survivors and; 2) because we

realised that people would only find out about King's Cross United if we told them about it. It surprised me, for example, that the DCMS has not investigated the possibility of doing advertising on trains and buses. The Central Office of Information (COI) is a huge spender of public money on advertising. It struck me that you could have put together a very effective targeted Tube outdoor campaign using London transport ad media to get the message out about various help available – probably less than £50,000. The Government have currently just spent £500,000 on an anti-rape campaign in lad magazines. That surprised me.

We decided that we would talk to newspapers and media that we thought would be seen by fellow passengers. I have given the example already of local radio, rather than international media. We did try to cover everything: the broadsheets, the tabloids, BBC local news and ITN local news, as well as national news and so on, where appropriate. We did it in a very controlled way. I did quite a lot of it because I have had some experience dealing with the media, and because we knew that we needed a voice. In some cases, I interviewed people and we wrote the copy ourselves. That way we could get some kind of control over the story, not be misquoted and not be pestered. We directed all media enquiries, and all survivor enquiries and, indeed, all enquiries in general to kingscrossunited@yahoo.co.uk. We made it very clear: we put that email address out for everybody to contact us and, as a team, we split up and dealt with all the enquiries that then came in.

We also, when I did stories in women's magazines, in the *Sun*, on Lorraine Kelly, made it clear that 7 July Assistance Centre had a telephone number and an email address. I gave that out as well, so that people who were not from the King's Cross and Russell Square train could try to get help. That is not really my job; I am really quite surprised that nobody thought, 'Hey, I better get a media strategy together.' We did it on the hoof. We think we have achieved something like £500,000-600,000 worth of coverage for free, which went entirely the way we wanted it to go, which is an astonishing thing for a public relations (PR) company to pull off, and we are not PR people; we are passengers and we just did it.

The next time a bomb goes off, you cannot rely on the fact that you will have a Jane, who knows how to set up a website, that you will have a Rachel, who knows how to write stories and handle the media, on that train. It is actually not really fair on Jane and I or any of the other passengers that we should be in this situation. I would strongly recommend to whoever is going to ultimately take responsibility for all of this to consider that the media can be a very powerful communications tool, and need to be worked with, and worked with correctly, and can be effective. That is something that people should have taken on board.

John (Edgware Road): I am not part of King's Cross United, so can only speak for myself. The only way I had found out whether David was alive was through the local *Hampstead and Highgate Express*. Even a week afterwards, one of my biggest difficulties was working out whether he had survived or not. There was no formal communications – any hotline; the Metropolitan Police could not help me at all. It was only through the news desk at the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, who had run a story advertising the play that David was going to be in, that they told me that he was severely ill in St Mary's. Without that information in that arena – I think they have a very positive role to play.

Richard Barnes (Chair): David is in Edgware Road United?

John (Edgware Road): David is Edgware Road Reunited at the moment. He only has one leg.

Jane (King's Cross/Russell Square): I always felt very honoured that King's Cross actually managed to pull themselves together quite quickly. I spoke to the 7 July Assistance Centre saying, 'If you find a few people from Edgware Road, we are more than willing to share information.' We volunteered that, and no one has taken us up on the offer.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Hopefully after today, somebody might.

Darren Johnson (AM): It was a question for Rachel, just for clarification, because I wanted to contrast your experiences coming up to the station to Paul's at Edgware Road. You gave the impression that you were not taken seriously by passengers; did that include station staff?

Rachel (King's Cross/Russell Square): I am not sure what you mean by 'not taken seriously by passengers'.

Darren Johnson (AM): When you arrived at the station, you came up through the tunnel, you were trying to explain to people what had happened and stop commuters coming into the station.

Rachel (King's Cross/Russell Square): There is a difference. I came out of the tunnel with similar walking-wounded type people. We got up – some of us in the lift, some of us on the stairs – to the street-level station entrance. People at this stage were falling over shocked, mostly with blood coming out of their ears and unable to hear. Station staff were trying to hand out some water; there was a general air of confusion. I wanted to have a cigarette, for some reason – to take the taste of blood out of mouth, because we had been breathing in God knows what. I got outside and people started mobbing me and saying, 'Why can I not get into the station?' These were commuters; these were people who had come off the street trying to get into Russell Square station to go on their journey. There were scenes of me telling people, 'You cannot get into the station,' and them trying to get in, and then people taking photographs of me and other passengers with black faces coming out.

It was not until about 09.35 that somebody thought to close the metal barriers to the station keeping the passengers inside and the public out. There were still, at this point, no ambulances. I could not find any police officers; the people there were passers-by. I have mentioned the nurse who I asked to go in and help. It was just complete chaos. As I drove away in a taxi, I saw one ambulance coming to Russell Square. This was at 09.45. There were no medical personnel, nor anybody there giving first aid apart from passengers, civilians and LU staff.

Darren Johnson (AM): There are reasons why medical help may take time – you have that wait. What is worrying is that the situation at the actual station seems totally out of control even waiting for medical help to arrive.

Rachel (King's Cross/Russell Square): Yes. There was not anybody there to cordon it off or chase people away. As I said, there was somebody filming – what appeared to be a Japanese tourist filming. Most passers-by, once the initial very angry commuters

had gone away, were trying to be helpful, and I think were phoning ambulances and asking what they could do. What we needed at that time was somebody to come and take control of the outside of the station, and also to help look after the people inside the station. When I say the people inside the station, I do not just mean the passengers and the injured, I mean the Tube staff as well, who were completely shocked. They do not expect people to come crawling out of tunnels covered in blood, but they were the ones trying to help them.

It was members of the LU station staff from that station who went running into the tunnel to try to pull people out once they saw what was happening. At this stage, they had no idea whether they were running into, as I said, a secondary set of devices, a bio attack or anything. They just went in, and took off their clothes, and used their jackets and coats to tie people's injuries and make tourniquets and drag people out of the stations. It was very chaotic, and it appears that ambulances did not arrive for two hours. As I said, very seriously injured people were in carriage one and were not able to get help. There did not seem to be much in the way of first-aid help in the station to help people, and when people were brought out to street level, to the ticket hall, they were just lying around bleeding, being helped by members of the public and other passengers, who were themselves in great shock. It was extremely chaotic.

Beverli (King's Cross/Russell Square): Mr Chair, I want to revert back to the comments and question raised by Sally (Hamwee), the Deputy Chair, with regard to the media. Although the media has been focused specifically on the events of the day, there are also a number of knock-on effects that I personally, and others that I know, that were involved as survivors, have experienced firsthand. That is to ask the media to motivate their actions to allow for a single source, which we thought was governed by Tessa Jowell (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport). There must be some form of coordinated standardisation of process to deal with the knock-on effects.

Also, the medical issues are not being dealt with by the NHS. Speed that process up.

Also, aspects where individuals have suffered a loss of job and a loss of earnings – considerable loss of earnings like myself – are now being hounded on a daily basis by specific Council Tax individuals and others, expecting to be paid on demand or else, and using strong-arm tactics. It is not just myself experiencing these types of problems; there are many others who have similar issues. I have written to my MP regarding these issues and he basically just threw it back to me saying, 'Sorry. You are going to have to pay your council tax like everybody else. It is tough that you were on the train; I feel sorry for you, but pay your council tax like everyone else.' If you are not earning because of the 7 July situation, how are you supposed to pay your council tax?

Things like debt issues, lost employment and legal issues in order to deal with that, they need to be addressed. The media need to have something in there to show that this is the process, this is what you do, this is how we can help you. The Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), they cannot help; I have been to them, spoken to them; they really do not know what to do. There is not anyone that is sufficiently trained to deal with these issues, or an individual body that is prepared to take on issues like Council Tax, like if I cannot pay my water and lights I am going to get evicted, like, in my case, I was evicted. The media needs to deal with that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Can I quickly go round you, ladies and gentlemen, if there is anything you remember that you want to add, or anything that you want to add to the evidence that you have given to us today?

Paul (Edgware Road): If I can just relate back to what Rachel was saying about King's Cross, and what Darren (Johnson) was saying, and if I could mention what happened at Edgware Road with regard to Chapel Street – Chapel Street is the road that runs alongside the station. You have one road there, and the police taped off the road, but because they did not tape off the pavements, some members of the public went, 'You have not taped off the pavements, so we are going to carry on walking down.' I can sympathise to some degree; it must have been an absolute nightmare to even consider closing down King's Cross station. There are numerous entrances there compared to just the one for Edgware Road. I know what a nightmare and a resource hog it was for the police on scene to stop people from getting into the scene.

Richard Barnes (Chair): At one stage, King's Cross/Russell Square was counted as two explosions. It is confusing.

Rachel (King's Cross/Russell Square): Tavistock Road was obviously very close to Russell Square, so it may well be that some of the resource was diverted from UCH to Tavistock, and they did not realise that Russell Square had one set of people coming out, and King's Cross had the majority of the passengers coming out. There was a conflation of Tavistock Square with Russell Square, and King's Cross being seen as the only place that required assistance.

Joe (King's Cross/Russell Square): With Euston Square as well – the closest fire station is on the Euston Road, in spitting distance of both Tavistock Square and Russell Square. The fire officers from there were directed to Euston Square Tube station. They went; there was nothing going on; they returned to their fire station; they were sent back to Euston Square. By the time they had finally made it to King's Cross – they did not go to Russell Square – there were other fire stations in attendance. The closest fire station was incorrectly dispatched.

Joanne McCartney (AM): It is about future planning as, because of what happened last July, the emergency plans are going to be looked at again, and changes made. Jane made the point that, in essence, for customers and the users of the service it seems that this is the only forum where your views, at the moment, can impact on that future planning. If those emergency services were to ask for views, or to set up somewhere that you to feed your views into, which would have available other aspects that we are not looking at, would that be useful? [General consensus of participants.]

Darren Johnson (AM): If we made that as a recommendation, it certainly would be useful.

Ben (Edgware Road): I would just like to say that certainly myself, and I know various other members who were either victims or there on the day, are very aware that the anniversary is coming up. That is something that has been playing on my mind for the last three months, and I am sure it will until the day itself. There is discussion of arranging something ourselves to mark that event – to get together essentially – and, in the words of one woman who is actually a survivor living in Australia, to celebrate the fact that we have made it through a year, which I think is no bad thing to view it in that way. I would like to see some involvement from a central body to facilitate that.

Darren Johnson (AM): Could I finally ask about Joe's point as well? It is not just the counselling support and ensuring a proper package of that sort of care, but the basic administrative support that was lacking. Is that something you all agree with, that point – dedicated administrative support? [General consensus of participants.]

Ben (Edgware Road): Having the energy to deal with what happened, day by day, is draining, but then you get the administration, and you look at the form, and partly you do not want to fill it in because you have to think about events of the day, and partly you cannot fill it in because it is nonsensical. Certainly, the latest CICA form – I have had one crack at and it went horribly wrong, and I got another copy, but I just do not want to get around to filling it in because it is going to make me face up to the events of the day.

Beverli (King's Cross/Russell Square): Also, the CICA forms that we are getting out now are asking about ongoing medical facilities, and what hospitals you are going to, where you are attending, what treatment have you received. In my case specifically, and I can only speak for my own experience, a lot of these issues are waiting. I am in waiting for CAT scans; I am waiting for the neurological assessment; I am waiting for all of this. I can fill in as much as I can, and I can ask my doctor and pester them to say, 'What do I need to say here?' It is very difficult because it is still ongoing, and it will continue for some time.

Jane (King's Cross/Russell Square): The lack of a joined-up story between the organisations, because they are asking questions that have not actually been answered yet, and are demanding some of that information from you. It becomes more and more difficult. It is about a joined-up professional effort that needs to be made; it should not be that difficult.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is certainly a clear thread that runs through a lot of it. Can I ask those of you who are not living in London, do you feel there has been a different level of support for those within the M25 from those on the outside? Are you really more isolated?

Paul (Edgware Road): I spoke personally to somebody –

Richard Barnes (Chair): You are in Cannock, are you not?

Paul (Edgware Road): Yes, in Staffordshire. I went on a train back to the Midlands on the Friday. I felt very uncomfortable being out of the city, and came back down on the Monday. I was not due to come back in until later in the week; I wanted to be in the city. Back home, I felt a level of ignorance about what had gone on in London. I think I went out on the Friday night in my local town and saw everybody there dancing away. I do not know what I expected, but you kind of expected everyone to be there solemn, but they were not; everybody was carrying on as normal, and I felt a certain level of ignorance. Somebody who was involved in the attacks in New York felt exactly the same when he went back to his state. He felt something very similar – a kind of ignorance.

Ben (Edgware Road): In terms of the support, I live out in Berkshire, in Crowthorne, and all the support is centred in London. I have had some counselling from my local GP, which was a godsend at the time, because it was somebody to talk to. I am working

from home at the moment, and I have changed job completely, and various life changes are happening because of the 7th. Once or twice a week, I am essentially forced to come into London to receive treatment, taking time off from work to do it and with the expense of coming in. I realise it is unrealistic to have centres everywhere for everybody, but it does seem somewhat ironic that I have to come to the heart of London in order to get treated for what happened here.

Tim (Edgware Road): The isolation is different. It is both enlightening and upsetting to hear the stories of so many within London not being able to access what I was able to access from 8 July, and that was for two reasons: my wife took me to the GP the next morning; and also the consultant gynaecologist who saw me at St Mary's – yes, he knew I was a man, but he was available; I am not referring to an earlier issue at all – his recommendation in the police support report that he did on the second floor at St Mary's with me – with my inability to write at the time – stated that that was an essential part. From that day forward, having contacted a GP, who subsequently put me in touch with the realities – that post-traumatic stress counselling cannot start for a period of three months. It is medically inadvisable to enter into that depth of counselling too soon, because of the state we are all in, and some of us may remain in that state for quite a lot longer, it is not helpful to receive that sort of treatment.

I was put on to a programme, which I have now been through for 14 weeks. It is nothing to do with London; it happens in Oxford. I do not live in Oxford; I do a 60-mile return trip to do it – very happily to take part in it. I feel like 7 July was something that happened when I came to work that day, rather than something that happened in and around where I live. 1) Clearly it did not and; 2) press-wise, just to link it, I felt very protected by being a distance away, near Henley, from media. The local press – I gave one interview to when I felt ready to, and that helped an enormous ring of friends and colleagues to find out what had happened to Tim that day. It saved me that enormous task of having to explain every time the phone rang or, from Judy's point of view, to have to explain to everyone who came to the door what was the matter with Tim; he was not seemingly right at the moment and so on.

It is different being outside of London, but I would still say, 'Thank you for letting me be part of,' because I did not experience almost anything the same as anybody here. I stayed, after losing Stan and one or two others, with one person, who did happen to be Australian, and because I stayed so long with her, which was her request and my belief that she would live if I stayed with her, when I came out with a young paramedic – I will not use her name – I came out to an ambulance waiting, which picked us up and took us straight round the corner to St Mary's. No problems whatsoever occurred in my experience. Whether that was because I was from outside of London, I doubt very much. I think I was just fortunate.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I do not think we are asking that question. There is this glorious coincidence that you and John have not seen each other since that day.

Paul (Edgware Road): That does show, in a way, the kind of breakdown in terms of where, for Edgware Road, we did not have the tools available through Jane and Rachel.

John (Edgware Road): Our difficulty down in Edgware Road was that we did not know. I could be working doing something here, and you could be over there, and I would not have known it. There was no lighting; we could not see; people were doing things independently. I do not think there is any yardstick in this; people did things in

their own particular way. I am just very thankful on the day that you came along to help me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We have been going for a very long time; I am very conscious of that. Thank you all very much indeed. Can I first of all remind the media that we are not facilitating any contact with our guests here today and the media? They have come here to tell us of their experiences, and they do not want to be harassed, which I understand happened a little earlier. I would ask the media representatives to refrain from approaching our guests, either inside or outside the building. Please treat them with the respect and the dignity they deserve. Thank you very much indeed.

[ends]