

Report of the 7 July Review Committee

Volume 3: Views and information from individuals

June 2006

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Volume 3: Views and information from individuals

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7 July Review Committee

23 March 2006

Edgware Road

John
Ben
Tim
Paul

Aldgate

Michael

King's Cross/Russell Square

Jane
Kirsti
Beverli
Angela
Joe
Kristina
Rachel

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 glass 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, 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 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

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

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 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.

[†] later corrected by Paul to '10 firefighters'

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.

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

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.'

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

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

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 leafletting 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 particularly**. 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

** 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.

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.

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 the train, so people could climb down to the tunnel to try to find a route out. That was despite the fear that did exist at the time about the tracks being live. We had no information; we did not know what was happening. They effectively risked their lives to help everyone else, which we all were and still are very grateful for.

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 Central Casualty Bureau 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.' 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.

^{††} Secretariat note: The Metropolitan Police Service representative at the news conference was Deputy Assistant Commissioner Brian Paddick

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 tagging. 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]

7 July Review Committee

18 April 2006

Transcript of Meeting with John

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you find the 23rd?

John: Apart from getting here late, totally stressed. I thought that was really testing me; this is another test, another hurdle for me to get over. I thought that it went very well. We pressed buttons and, *a propos* of your letter, we have got what we wanted out of it. We have got action. We have brought issues out of the Underground and out into reality now where people have to listen to what has taken place, where people who haven't been completely truthful with what they have been saying now have to take heed of it. That's very good. I think the press treatment has been very fair and very supportive.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, across the spectrum.

John: I hope that from that we can make even more progress because we're not there yet. There is a meeting with Tessa Jowell (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) that has been arranged for the survivors, but there are still major questions – major questions and major issues – which haven't been addressed. One is that no one has been arrested; two, there have been no convictions; and there has been very little transparency in what the state is doing. We haven't been told anything. Questions are being asked and we still haven't been given any answers.

Government are giving statements, but it's not good enough because there's no legality to it. You can stipulate an answer to a question, but unless it is tried and tested that the answer is correct in a court or in a legal sense, I don't think that is good enough. I do support a public inquiry or an independent judicial requirement. I don't think that the civil servant's narrative is good enough. I don't think that for the public, for our society, it is good enough, that 52 people dying and 500 people affected by it; that is very, very a conservative figure because there were thousands of people on those trains – we are talking over 3,500 people, and that is just on the trains, let alone in Tavistock Square. I'm not happy about that. I'm not happy about the way in which the survivors have been treated. I'm not happy about the way the state has slapped itself on the back and said, 'We did very well'. Have a gong for you. We have been forgotten about, and I want to talk about that in a minute.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Take us through however you would like. Clearly, we have your testimony from the 23rd.

John: You do have the testimony. I don't have a great deal to say, but why I am here I think is pertinent. That is this: on my way out of the tunnel, being taken out of there by the London Underground (LU) people, I was very shocked that when I walked out on the concourse, there was a group of firemen in a huddle looking inwards, and they weren't looking at us. They weren't looking at me, and when I looked at them, I was very, very angry at the time – I was ridiculously angry – but I managed to control myself. I didn't shout at them, I didn't make any communications, but I made eye contact with them. They all went in a huddle and they looked inwards. They wouldn't look at us.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This is at Edgware Road?

John: Why didn't they not want to look at us? Because they didn't come down to us. They stayed where they were. No fire brigade came down at Edgware Road. The people who came to Edgware Road were the paramedics; there was no fire brigade. I know and have heard subsequently that they feel very, very annoyed themselves that they didn't come down to us. At the time, I was more than annoyed; I was ridiculously angry. But I'm not walking around carrying anger with me. I know that they have their guilt they have to take care of. As far as I am concerned, I can forgive them for that because I understand that the state in which we were coming out of Edgware Road and looking at us, they had a very good idea of what happened down there. The way in which they responded was their individual response. I don't blame anybody for their conduct because of the horrendous situation that it was, and people respond in different ways. I actually want to make that very clear because I know some people are feeling very, very bad that they didn't, help.

One person whose actions have come to light since our last meeting is a man who, when Jason had got to the end of the carriage, was holding one of the women victims as she died. She died in his arms. He then, with Jason, went over to the hole Stan was in, and they tried to get Stan out of the hole but couldn't because of all the slime, all the blood, and all the jagged bits of metal. After that had happened, Jason put the tourniquet on David's leg to stop him dying; if Jason hadn't done that, David would have died. This man saw me in my hole where I was stuck and pulled me out. I don't know what he looks like. Then, because he was seriously injured – he had shrapnel right across the front of his body; from where he took the blast, He disappeared for a little while, but when I asked for someone to come and help me with Stan, and when Tim came around, it was this man.. He came alongside Stan underneath the carriage and held on to Stan and Tim. As far as I am concerned, that person is ridiculously brave; he showed fantastic courage; and, more than that, he inspired other people to help. I really want to express my gratitude to him because very few people know he actually existed. Most of us have forgotten about him because we haven't seen him since. I am pretty sure that the police know who he is, and I would like to know who he is just to thank him.

Having said that, when I left Marks & Spencer, I walked up Edgware Road to the school where I teach.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You didn't go into the hotel?

John: No. There was nobody I could see who was in charge at Edgware Road, so I walked up Edgware Road I walked up to school and I was taken straight away to the head's office. Fortunately, we had our own community policeman. We then contacted the emergency number as to what we do, knowing that there has been an incident. There was nobody on the other end of the phone; we didn't know what to do.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you get through to an answering machine?

John: We got through to a machine that no one was answering. Fortunately, the head contacted somebody else and he decided then that he was going to take matters into his own hands, and accordingly we found out how many children weren't in school, contacted parents: where were they?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you have any idea roughly what time this was?

John: 10.30.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): The number was a number that the school had?

John: Every member of the authority I work for has a little card about what we do in an emergency: this is the phone number. There was nobody at the phone number.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Run by?

John: My local authority, but it didn't work. Fortunately, we got through to some hierarchy there and communication was made in that instance. In terms of how do we deal with the school, and what do we do at the school, fortunately my head teacher was very organised. We dealt with the children and got the parents to come and take the children away at some point during the course of the day. I think the Assembly needs to sharpen that up. I believe that they are aware of it, but across London it would be a good idea if those systems were tested regularly – like the fire alarms. It might be a good idea if those phone calls and connections were made.

The school police officer managed to contact my wife and my son to tell them that I was okay. Me being covered in broken glass and blood, the head organised for a colleague to take me to Ealing Hospital. You couldn't get an ambulance; that was a waste of time, so I was taken first of all to pick up my wife from the school where she teaches, and then we went to Ealing Hospital, which I am pleased to report was waiting for emergencies coming out. The good news was that they were waiting and ready.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They would have been part of this acute hospital alarm system?

John: It did work; I need to report that it did work. I was seen straight away; the teams were waiting and they were all kitted up, watching the television and waiting to see if people were going to be airlifted out. That was very good. I saw the hospital registrar in accident and emergency (A&E), and also because of my mental state, I was fortunate to see the psychiatrist attached to the hospital, who I then saw subsequently. For me, I got into a system of help, mental help, dealing with me. For three weeks, that was fine. I was given his personal telephone number to contact him at any point during the course of the day.

I was contacted the following week by SO13, the anti-terrorist police, and made a statement to them. I was still traumatised; most of it didn't make sense, really. You are talking about a man here, a person there, and none of that made much sense. But we managed to get the statement together and they recommended that I went to the family centre that was set up in town after about a week or so. When I arrived there, I was appointed two police liaison officers. This is where a part of the survivors' problems start. I saw the police liaison people, who took all my details, which they could verify through the anti-terrorist police. They were able to contact Stan's family, who had already been contacted anyway, but they were also able to have people like Peter and Jason, who had been there, contact me. They wanted to talk to me to find out.

At that time, I didn't want to talk to anybody about it. One of my biggest concerns was what had happened to David. I said that the only way I found out, even before I got there, was through the newspaper. There was no way we could access any information; there was nothing there. There was no response.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that because they didn't want to give it to you, or don't you think they had it?

John: I think that the way it worked was that the police have their job to do to find whoever did the crime. That is their first job to do. Maybe there was no tier behind them to come in and say, 'We'll take care of that; we'll find that out'. It appears to me that there has been a layer of administration missing somewhere. We have fallen into that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It was the police assistance centre rather than the Family Assistance Centre (FAC)?

John: I think so. It was set up by Tessa Jowell's Department. If I go through what happened to me when I got there, it probably makes more sense. I was given two police liaison officers, and I was still in a state. They had a bereavement counsellor there, and so I went to the bereavement counsellor because of coming to terms with what happened to Stan. Okay, fine. However, there was a gap. There were also people from Victim Support for people who had lost limbs or who were seriously injured.

Now, that is fine, but you have police liaison interactions, you have bereavement for families, and Victim Support to help with people who have died and people who are seriously injured in hospital. There is nothing for those who have survived. It wasn't part of the system. Subsequently, in everything that we read through all the testimonies, that is the gap. Everything comes back to what we have been saying, and it manifests itself there; that is the testimony of what happened to me when I went to the family liaison. Everything was very helpful, but how could we do it differently? If the Red Cross had been there, and if we had had clinical psychologists who are trained to deal with people who are traumatised, that would have saved a lot of people who aren't in the loop now. People were in contact then on the day, or who have been to the FAC, are now out of the system. They are still traumatised and lots of them, I know, are in denial because that's what you do. I went to work for a whole term telling myself that I was all right, but I wasn't. You think, 'I'm not going to give in to this; I'm going to go to work', but you don't really understand what has happened to you. You do have horrible nightmares, you do have flashbacks, you can't sleep at night, and you're on edge. If you get a trigger as to what happened there, wherever you are, you go into a mode where you were when you were in that carriage. I was fortunate that somehow or other the Red Cross got hold of me and put me in; that was good. They then referred me and asked if I could have my details give to the London Bombing Screening Team, which we did. In November, I was seen by the London Bombing Screening Team at the Traumatic Stress Clinic.

Richard Barnes: In Charlotte Street?

John: Yes. I saw them, and then in January I was seen by my clinical psychologist. Only then, only when I saw the Screening Team person, did I really understand what happened because I honestly thought I was going mad. Most of us, because we didn't know what was happening to us, and probably our families thought, we were going

completely off our trolleys because we didn't understand what had happened to us. Only when we were told that this is what has happened to you and these are your symptoms – they do an analysis of how you are feeling and what you are responding to – do you understand where you are at, which then is reassuring. Up until then, you are just thinking that that is part of it and you have to deal with this. What I think should have happened is that we should have had that Bombing Screening Team at the family centre. If that had happened, I think lots of people's lives could have been put back together, which at the moment they haven't. People are still out there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How soon after the event did you go to the FAC?

John: I was advised about two weeks after I had finished doing my interviews – I had many, many interviews with the anti-terrorist people, answering their questions and putting people in place where they were in the carriage. They recommended that I went to see them. They couldn't answer the questions I wanted answering, and the police liaison people could do. I think it would have also helped if the police liaison – I think they shut it down after a month; it's after that they all went back – because I tried to contact them about an issue I had about one person who they couldn't contact, because it had all been disbanded. That network had gone.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): Which, the family liaison network?

John: The family centre. We now get into a grey area, where we are at now. What happened then is that that was shut down. Westminster Council decided that they would fund a 7 July Centre, which would have been all of that massive amount of input put into a little box. Well, they can't do that. You can't have people who are experts in bereavement, experts in victims and experts in survivors in a tiny little flat. It was done on a charity basis to begin with, and then the council picked up the bill for it. After a while, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) moved onto it.

People were going there and they were getting holistic counselling, not trauma therapy. People are out there who haven't really been referred to the Trauma Clinic and still haven't got into treatment. That's the case today. I spoke to someone last week and asked if they had got their treatment yet, and they said, 'No, I'm still waiting'. In all fairness to the Trauma Clinic, they don't have access other than through the screening team about people. They don't have any data; they have no input on it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So, there is a complete disjoint between the organisations.

John: It's even getting to a stupid turf war, as it were. The 7 July people are holding on to people rather than passing them on. I'm sad to say that, but that is what has happened. You have probably heard that before; it was said on the 23rd, but I can vouch for that. The Trauma Clinic is having difficulty getting hold of people now who are still traumatised because they haven't dealt with it.

What I find astounding is that if it is dealt with, it does go away. The images and the events that you experience are put in part of your brain where it hasn't been properly functioned by your mind. That is sad because it can waste someone's life. You shut down, and shut down, and shut down, and you become non-functional. It is cost effective to get people like me back to work. It's cost effective because most of those people who gave evidence have all changed their jobs. Most of them, who I have spoken to in other parts of the world, have all lost their jobs; they have become

dysfunctional and have reduced down their activities in life to avoid doing this or avoid doing that. Some of their children have been taken into care because everything has collapsed. It's cost effective.

I am pleased to say that my treatment has now been finished. My score on the chart last time I went, two weeks ago, was zero. When I first went there, I scored 44 out of 50.

It is a horrible, awful place to be in when you are at that level of being traumatised. I am very fortunate and I really need to thank them because I didn't believe to begin with that they could ever sort my head out. I thought I had completely gone; I thought that I was never going to get out of it, that the feelings of anxiety, depression, the constant images flashing up into your mind when you're not wanting them there, the inability to sleep, and being completely irritable with everything all the time is awful. But I am pleased to say that the person who treated me was wonderful. I have come out of that. At one point I would be talking as if I was re-enacting in the carriage, but now I'm not. I'm looking down on it and I can talk about it objectively. A lot of the people who were sitting on either side of me on the 23rd can't because of the effect it has had on them. It is individual; there's no yardstick because everyone reacts differently to trauma and to dealing with it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I would say that on the 23rd, when you started giving evidence, I scanned around to make sure everyone was all right, but it was almost as if you could see a dozen cinema screens being clicked on. It was impressive in the true sense of the word.

John: Unless we go through it, we can't understand how events kicked off afterwards and why, coming up to nine months later, why are people not back at work? I can understand how you could be completely traumatised for the rest of your life because you can't come to terms with it. For me, I was told very early on that I would get out of it because I was very active during the course of the process, but I know that some people in my carriage just sat there throughout the entire time because they couldn't make sense of what was going on. It's not their fault; everybody operates in a different way. But I do think that it's right that the state does recognise what happened down there. It's right that people like Jason and Gabriel – they put their lives at risk. They were seriously injured and they went to the help of their dying passengers; they didn't even know them. In Jason's case, he put a tourniquet on a man and saved his life. They are people who we hold in our highest regard, and in the highest of esteem. If the state doesn't choose to acknowledge that, I think it's a very sad state of play. I hope you take on board that in the report and recommendations that you make. I really do mean that because all we have are our mental scars. We have nothing else. I think that it would be a sorry state for London if we don't recognise that those people have done something totally courageous and brave. More to the point is that they have been inspirational. Most people walked away, for whatever reason; these people didn't. They made a conscious decision to stay there and help, and they saved lives and comforted the dying.

That is about as much as I wanted to say. I couldn't say that in public because it wasn't pertinent to be said in public. I think that is everything I need to say now.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It will be part of the public record now.

John: Good.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Including the angel Gabriel.

John: It's very strange how that guy... When he pulled me out of the hole, you are very scared anyway down there, but what has happened to you is that you're not all there; you have been blown up. You know that. You have had the fireball. You can't see; you have no tear ducts because the fronts of your eyes have been singed and you are covered in broken glass. At some point, you've nearly died. You know that. When I fell down the hole and I thought I was going to get electrocuted, I thought, 'Okay, this is horrible', but then when someone pulls you out, you think, 'Wow, I'm not going to die'. What was really strange was there was Jason. Because he had a big gouge in the front his head from shrapnel, he had taken his shirt and tied it around his head to stop him bleeding, and he ripped off other parts of his shirt to make tourniquets to put on David. When I was being pulled out, the light was such that he just looked like Gabriel; he looked like an angel. When an angel tells you to go look after somebody, do you argue? No, you don't. You don't argue with angels, do you?

Richard Barnes (Chair): If there is one lesson we need to learn from it – and I am not talking about the cause, but how we dealt with people afterwards – what would you say that is?

John: The point about survivors. The one point would be the reference point at the family centre. Calling it 'the family centre', I thought it was for bereaved families.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That has come across very strongly.

John: It was just the titling of it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I understand the police addressed that after the evening we had.

John: I think that was it: calling it 'the family centre'. If I hadn't been told by the police to go there, I wouldn't have gone there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Would you have known about it?

John: It was on the news, but no. There was one person who was in the other carriage, and this person is a woman who lives on her own. She was in the carriage and she had shock injuries. She left the carriage, went home, sat in her flat, turned on the television on the Thursday night, and sat watching it on News 24 for something like 48 hours.

The lessons are maybe to find ways of dealing with not letting people out of the station and finding out where they were. I didn't think it was a suicide bomb; at one point, I thought it was just an ordinary bomb that had gone off. I thought that the guy who dumped it in there jumped into another carriage at Edgware Road and legged it; his mates were outside with cameras filming it. That is just the way your mind works, and that would have made sense. Again, there is all this uncertainty that none of what has happened has been tested. We are only being told what to believe. We have no categorical proof of anything, which, as a member of the public, I am a bit concerned about. 52 people killed, 500 injured or affected. Have we got a result? No. I am told the police are working on it 24/7. Am I wrong in asking these questions?

For us, we need to find a way of dealing with these situations to help get victims out. I have had the conversation with the Underground, and they are working on it, and I accept what they say. In all honesty, from my discussions with them, it was new to them, they had never experienced it, and they have learnt lessons from it – and they have to. We have the Olympics coming up.

Richard Barnes (Chair): As you know, part of our function is to ensure that those lessons are learned. We will be revisiting this to make sure they have been applied.

John: That is all. If we had a trained screening team in the Family Liaison Centre, it would have helped.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are you aware of any difference in support mechanisms for the severely injured – those who were hospitalised and got sucked into the system – and those who were traumatised but not physically damaged?

John: Mentally damaged? No. Thank God that I'm not physically injured, but I know that David, who I visited in hospital, has Victim Support, who will operate and help in a different way. I cannot really speak for him, but I know that he is being looked after and is being rehabilitated, having his artificial leg – he joked that he is doing the London Marathon next year, and he doesn't need any more socks for Christmas. That is David.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You have all developed a macabre sense of humour.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Can I ask you something to follow up something you said on the 23rd? You talked to us about eventually getting out, and you were taken up to the station concourse, into Marks & Spencer, and given water. You said, 'I gave me name to a PC'. Could you amplify that a bit? Did you volunteer your name? Did you give other details? Did the police officer come and talk to you?

John: I came out and the LU person told me to sit down in the concourse and put a blanket over me, but I knew the state of other people, and some of them were in a mess. I thought, 'No, I'm not staying here. I'm going and I'm not going to get in the way'. I then walked out, which was when I saw the fire brigade all huddled together, and saw masses of ambulance people. I wasn't very happy. The Underground person then told me to go into Marks & Spencer, which had got themselves a bit more organised; they had bottles of water for us to drink, and there were people who were injured in there. People had their clothes blown off, so we were putting Marks & Spencer dressing gowns on people.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yet there were paramedics and ambulance people already there?

John: They were standing outside the station; they weren't inside Marks & Spencer. That is their problem. As far as I'm concerned, I don't hold anything against them; they have to deal with that. They saw my face, they saw me looking at them, and they saw the state I was in, but I forgive them for not helping me. I don't bear any grudges. There were a couple of policemen inside there – it's not very far from the police station at Paddington Green. They were inside, and I gave my name to one of them.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): You volunteered that?

John: Yes, there was no one in control. That is when I thought, 'This is madness. This isn't in control; there is nobody taking charge of this. This is still confusion'. I volunteered my name a P C.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): How did he respond to that?

John: He wrote my name down in his book, but, in all honesty, in the circumstances, they were shocked by what they had seen. All hell was breaking loose outside because everything had ground to a halt. There were helicopters coming down. The motorway from the slip road was jammed up; everything had jammed up. There were police cadets who were starting to put a cordon around it, and there was total confusion.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Did you give any contact details to the police, or was it just your name?

John: I gave him my name and my address. When I got to school, fortunately we had our own PC there. I'm not sure whether his mobile was working or not, but we used the school's direct line. From then on, the system worked and did operate. Then the system broke down around how you deal with survivors; survivors weren't dealt with. They were the people who fell through the board. Subsequently, they haven't been looked after really, and this is the first meeting we will be having with the Secretary of State.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are you a member of any support groups?

John: The 7 July people have a meeting once a month for survivors.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You do not have anything like the King's Cross United?

John: No. We have Peter, for example, who set up the first website, LondonRecovers.com, and that was very helpful for a lot of people. Initially, we couldn't get in contact with each other apart from the phone numbers the police had given me to contact people who were in my carriage with me, and vice versa. I was offered Victim Support at Ealing Hospital, but the guy told me that I was dealing with it okay and was down the route of where they would be expecting me to go.

If I didn't have my family, I probably wouldn't be talking to you now because they have borne the brunt of all my trauma. Fortunately, I have been told not to talk too much to them about it because you get what they call transference taking place. Without my family, friends and my colleagues, I don't know; I would have gone down the bin a long time ago. I wouldn't have been able to cope. It's very important that I had that, other people don't. It's very difficult; it's a very black, horrible place to be because you are underground. It was black, and you experience all the hopelessness and despair that you had down there. It doesn't go away. The treatment that you have to go through isn't nice. You have to relive it, but if you positively want to get out of it, you try to do everything they tell you to do. It worked for me. I was very cynical of it, to begin with, but I had to put my hand up and say they got it right, which I am pleased to say.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): Did you go to the memorial service?

John: Yes.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): Did you get invited?

John: Yes

Richard Barnes (Chair): They said they have 52 murders to investigate down there.

John: They still have.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): Do you think it would be useful in the future for the Assistance Centre to facilitate a sort of group like King's Cross United for each of the sites?

John: Yes

Richard Barnes (Chair): It worked during the tsunami and it worked during 9/11. It has been a challenge, hasn't it?

John: We didn't have that system here, did we?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes.

John: As our elected representatives, you have to know what happened, and that if it is going to happen again, and we are prepared. That is what it is about, isn't it?

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is our approach.

John: I know, but our problem is that we have knocked on the doors and been banging away with these issues and have got nowhere.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's a bit of a surprise that someone is listening, is it?

John: It is good, right and proper that issues that have been raised are being dealt with, or being seen to be dealt with. Whether they actually kick in or not is another issue. My underlying reason for all of this is to save lives in future and to stop loss of life where it can be prevented. That must happen; otherwise, those people have all died in vain. We cannot let that happen. We owe them.

I think I have said everything that I needed to say.

Richard Barnes (Chair): John, thank you again for coming in.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): I would just like to say that it was John who first approached me to say that we should start to hear from survivors and have a hearing.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Thank you for that.

John: I am a messenger. I am a messenger from the Underground.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I think it would have been an enormous gap if we had not spoken to the survivors. That is a certainty.

John: What inspired me to do it was the nurse. I thought that she was right; I knew she was right.

Richard Barnes (Chair): If you put your hands up and say, 'We got this bit wrong', what could any inquiry say but, 'We learnt the lesson?'

John: Don't cover up. What goes around comes around, and it will come back and kick you hard.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much indeed for coming in.

[ends]

7 July Review Committee

13 April 2006

Transcript of meeting with Kathy

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you find the 23rd? Were you in the gallery?

Kathy: It was an interesting day. To be honest, it was quite harrowing in places for me, hearing people talk about Edgware Road particularly. I think everyone relates to the incident that they were in much more than to the others. It was also interesting to hear the experiences of people who haven't been as closely involved as I was and all the people who felt they had been out of the loop, really, because they had been able to walk away from the incident and then were out of contact with everyone. That was the complete opposite of my experience. Having been closely involved, I was on everybody's mailing lists. It was interesting to hear.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Why do you think you were on everybody's mailing lists?

Kathy: I think it was because I had been hospitalised and the initial lists probably came to a large extent from the hospitals, so particularly with people who had been in for some time like I was, I think everybody turned first of all to the hospitals for lists of the injured.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is certainly coming across.

Kathy: Right from day one I was on everybody's lists as far as the people who were involved, whereas the 23rd made me realise that a lot of people who were either not physically injured or not so badly injured that they had to be hospitalised and had just walked away from it and have then had all these problems finding out what support might be available to them. That is not a problem I had in that way. It was interesting to hear that. The people I am in contact with who were on the train with me were also badly injured and hospitalised for a while, so we have all had a similar experience.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you have a hospital support group?

Kathy: Yes. They weren't actually in the same hospital but through the police and the help of one of the transport engineers I was able to get in touch with them. I am grateful they did. We were in touch by phone.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which hospital were you at?

Kathy: St Mary's. I think they were taken to St Mary's initially but then transferred to Charing Cross. There was probably better expertise for their particular injuries there. I think they had the same kind of injury. We had one kind of experience and it was interesting to hear that other people had a quite different kind of experience.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That has certainly come across. It is crystal clear within the evidence we have received that those who were hospitalised were part of the system.

Kathy: That's right.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You might have had a label with no name on it but you had a label and you were there.

Kathy: That's right, and I think all the follow-up that was arranged and came my way, was just because I was on everybody's lists right from the start. It's interesting to see that obviously a lot of other people just fell out of the system because they had left the scene and nobody knew who they were.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did they get in touch with your family to tell them where you were, or did they?

Kathy: That was something I was going to say.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you written a script that you want to read to us or talk us through?

Kathy: I have written something. I did submit something to Janet (Hughes, Scrutiny Manager, GLA) and I have just slightly expanded what I said. Perhaps the best thing is for me to read what I have prepared and then I am quite happy for you to ask me to expand on anything I have said. I am also happy to answer any other questions that you might want to ask. Shall I just make a start and read this through? If you want to stop me and ask me more, then do.

I would like to preface my comments with an expression of gratitude to all those who were involved in the rescue on 7 July and those who have supported me since, without whom I might not be alive today and I certainly wouldn't have recovered as well as I have. So any criticisms I make shouldn't be taken as applying to individuals personally but rather to the processes and systems within which they work. I hope my comments on what went well and what did not from my point of view will make a positive contribution to the evaluation.

One of the communications problems that I had was that my name seemed to get lost between me being put in the ambulance and getting to hospital. While I was on the Tube train at Edgware Road waiting to be taken off, I was helped a lot by two transport engineers who, amongst other things, took my husband's name and the name of the company where he works. I couldn't remember either his mobile number, which actually at that point wouldn't have been of any use, or the number of the company. One of them managed to find out the company's phone number while he was taking people out of the station and had enough change in his pocket to use the payphone and ring through to the company, speak to my husband and tell him what had happened: that I was still on the train but that he thought I might be going to St Mary's Hospital.

Obviously, that was an immense help because it meant that, for one thing, my husband knew what happened to me, and also knew where to go. He didn't have to do this round of hospitals in London that I think a lot of people had to do. He was able to go straight to St Mary's. I know that this would probably be very difficult to do with a large number of casualties, but it was a tremendous help to us and that was something that he did completely on his own initiative without anybody asking him to do it. I would just like to say that was one of the key things as far as we were concerned in helping us on that day.

By the time they got me off the train I was actually the last survivor to be taken off, so I had been on there a considerable time. I am told there was a delay of about three quarters of an hour between the next-to-last person being taken off and an ambulance being available for me, so added to all the time there had already been while we were waiting for emergency services and then when they were taking off the most seriously injured people, I think it was nearly three hours before I was taken off. By that time, I was suffering a lot from the effects of the injuries I had because I had a collapsed lung amongst other things and probably shock, so by the time they got me out I was finding it difficult to speak at all. The engineer again checked my name with me and I remember managing with a lot of effort to spell it out for him. It is an unusual name and I knew that if I just said it nobody would be able to write it down with the right spelling. I was very determined that if possible my identity shouldn't be lost because I knew at that point I might lose consciousness. I was getting very hazy and they had to keep talking to me to keep me awake at this point.

But when my husband reached St Mary's and was checking the lists of people who had been admitted, he couldn't find my name on the list. I think he was waiting there for about a couple of hours and checking their lists and eventually he realised there was a name on the list which bore a very slight resemblance to ours and he began to wonder whether this could possibly be me. I think it was about that point that he received a phone call on his mobile from a nurse in a ward a few floors up from where he was, saying that they had me in the ward. I think what had happened was that the engineer had taken my home phone number from me and that must have been taken to the hospital with me and somebody at some point had spoken to one of my children and been given my husband's mobile number.

It was very frustrating for my husband and for me that there was this long delay when I was in the same building just a few floors above but he couldn't track me down because of this problem of losing my name. The engineer had gone to quite a lot of trouble to try to find what my name was, and I had tried very hard to get the spelling across.

I would suggest that maybe it could be possible in another major incident to try to attach people's names to them if they are injured, and if they are having to wait a lot of time before being taken away from the scene because obviously their condition is probably deteriorating in that time. There had been time on the train to do that with me because there was this long wait at the end when, in fact, I was the only survivor left on the train. I know it would be difficult to do it for everybody and the priority is to get injured people out to hospital, but something could have been done in my case and possibly with other people whereby something in writing could have been attached to me so there wouldn't have been that problem.

I also realised that there was a particular problem with women who were injured because women tend to carry all their personal bits and pieces around with them in their handbags and not on their person. In an incident like that with a bomb, everything gets thrown around all over the place. I have no idea where my handbag ended up. I didn't really feel as they were carrying me off that I could say 'Excuse me, could you get my handbag?'

I think it was easier to identify men because perhaps they tended to have their details in perhaps a wallet in their jacket pocket or trousers. I know that was how they identified the man who was sitting next to me because he was unconscious some of the time

before they took him off. The transport engineers were able to take his wallet out of his trouser pocket and find out his name. The cases I heard of where people had been several days in hospital unidentified were women, presumably because the same thing happened as with me and they had been taken off with none of their personal belongings and then nobody knew who they were. In one case, I think the paramedics had found out the woman's name but, rather like in my case, by the time she got to hospital that had been lost and nobody knew who she was and she was unconscious by then.

I do wonder if there is something that could be done to try to ensure that people's identities are kept in an incident like that. I know it's probably easier in a smaller incident where you don't have so many people and it is harder in a large incident, but I think perhaps it could be dealt with better than it was.

We had one further problem with communication when I got to the hospital. Although my name had become very garbled, the hospital did have our home phone number which I had given to the engineers. One of the hospital staff rang home and spoke to my 17-year-old son saying that something had happened to Mrs – whatever the name was that they thought they had for me. My son was obviously confused. He didn't know what had been happening in London. He was confused and thought that they were maybe referring to his grandmother, who has the same name. They didn't use my first name. Maybe they didn't have it, and I don't know what they said for my second name, but he thought they were referring to his grandmother who is old and frail and that she must have had a fall or something and been taken to hospital.

Then they asked to speak to Mr, meaning my husband, but because my son at this point thought it was his grandmother, he thought they meant his grandfather who is dead. So he said Mr is dead, and whoever it was at the hospital then proceeded to give my son a precise detailed account of my injuries. He then passed that on to his younger brother and sister when they came home from school. I think by this time he had realised that it was me and not his grandmother.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Your husband was at the hospital at this stage?

Kathy: My husband was at the hospital at this point.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Lost.

Kathy: Yes, exactly. I know certainly my daughter, who was only 12 at the time, was quite distressed by this. She had heard at school what happened and then came home and heard from my eldest that I was in hospital. She heard all these details about my injuries, so it really caused her a lot of anxiety and distress.

When my husband finally got up to the ward and asked to speak to somebody to find out exactly what my injuries were, they were very reluctant to speak to him to begin with because they said they had already informed my next of kin. He then had to speak to my son to find out what my injuries were.

Obviously if somebody at the hospital, whoever made the original phone call, had just been a bit more careful about finding out who they were speaking to and perhaps a bit more careful about identifying to my son that it was me and not anybody else in the family and that could have been explored a bit more, that wouldn't have happened. It

was quite distressing for the younger children. It needed a little more care on the part of the hospital. I know they were probably stressed because it was such a major incident but, again, perhaps that could have been done rather better.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That could apply to road accidents sometimes.

Kathy: The same thing, yes.

That was all that I want to say about the business of identities and names and the problem of communication going to hospital.

The next thing I want to talk about is the police liaison services. While I was in St Mary's there were two police officers assigned to the hospital to offer assistance to all the injured and their families. They told me it was the first time they had had the same officers doing that job each day rather than having a rota of different officers. I just want to say that I thought that system worked very well. My husband got to know who those two officers were very quickly.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were they specifically assigned to you or were they dealing with a whole group?

Kathy: No, the whole of the hospital. They would go around every day and see each of the people who had been injured in the bombings. I think there were 30-something people initially in St Mary's. We had the same two officers until there were actually very few of us left. I think when I left there were two other people still in St Mary's, so by that time there wasn't very much for them to do and we were getting different people coming each day, but I think certainly for the first nine or ten days probably it was the same two. Yes, maybe eight or nine days.

As I say, that was very helpful to us. We didn't have to explain each time what my injuries were, which incident I had been involved in and all of that because these officers knew us, knew our story, and the same presumably for all the other people. It also helped me at a time when I was very frail to know that I could trust the people they introduced me to. For instance, they brought around the police officer who was going to take a statement from me. They brought around somebody from Victim Support at some point. In the first couple of days that I was there, when I was really in quite a bad way, I wasn't very aware of what was going on and people would sometimes appear at my bedside. I had no idea who they were and I wasn't really able to speak to them, which can be quite alarming, so it was a great help to have somebody that I could recognise bringing people in. I was also quite deaf at that point from the explosion, actually in both ears rather than one ear at that point, so again it was quite difficult for me to understand what people said. It was a big help to have somebody that I knew very quickly coming in and introducing people.

We didn't need a lot of help from them ourselves. I think they did more for other people, who were perhaps non-British visitors and needed to contact family overseas and arrange for them to come to this country or that sort of thing. We did ask for their help with a few things to do with finding out what had happened to my belongings, for example. They also warned us about the possibility of media intrusion, because I think there was a problem with journalists trying to get into the hospital and get access to people. It was reassuring to know that we could contact them. We actually had a

phone number for one of them, so not only were they coming round but we knew exactly who we could contact if we had a problem.

I would hope that the police could consider a similar kind of arrangement if they had a major incident like that again. We were told this was really an experiment to see how it worked, and from our point of view it was very successful.

Similarly, once I came out of hospital it was helpful to be assigned a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) through whom the communications were channelled, especially in the beginning because, again, there were different people contacting us about property and people doing forensic work. It was a help to have that coming through one person that we knew. We were also able to discuss things like what the options might be if the local press got hold of my story and how we would handle it. They explained that we would have the option of just putting out a statement through the police press officer, for example. At that time, when we really just wanted a bit of time and space together, it was very helpful to have that kind of advice and support.

The only hitch was that for some reason I seemed to be assigned two FLOs, one of whom was local and the other was the other side of Hertfordshire. The local one was the one I normally dealt with in the beginning, but he moved jobs early in September and I think there was a misunderstanding at that point about who was to carry on with the role. They each thought the other was doing it with the result that neither of them was doing it for a while, until something cropped up which meant that I needed to contact one of them and that came to light.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were these provided by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) or by a different police service?

Kathy: It would be by Hertfordshire. In fact, I think the local FLO I had gone to work for the MPS when he changed jobs, so I am sure he was with Hertfordshire at the time.

I had the impression they weren't quite clear how long they might be needed as a channel for information. I think it was probably much longer than they had thought, so I think the last contact I had with them was at the beginning of January when they were asked to take plans of the Tube train round to everybody who had been on the different trains and were asking everyone to say exactly where they thought they were sitting or standing on the train because there had been a lot of confusion. I don't think they had expected it to go on as long as that probably. There seemed to be a bit of confusion on that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are you in touch with them now?

Kathy: I haven't been since January, but I could still contact one of the officers who didn't move jobs if I wanted to. I think they had sent back their logbook, or whatever it is they have, in September. I think they had maybe thought that was going to be the end of most of the activity and, in fact, it wasn't because things went on happening through the autumn. In principle, it was very helpful to have that support, although I think they felt they didn't actually do a lot for us. We didn't need a lot of support, but it was very helpful to have that sort of channel of communication and just to know there was someone we could refer to for certain matters.

Finally, I just want to say something about the psychological support services after 7 July. As I said, I was aware at the meeting on 23 March that a lot of people who were affected by the bombings felt they were completely out of the information loop and didn't know what support was available, and found that very difficult. For me, as one of those who was seriously injured, in fact there was duplication in the beginning in the psychological follow-up because both St Mary's and the traumatic stress clinic in Charlotte Street were monitoring my progress: St Mary's was doing it by phone, and the traumatic stress clinic was doing much the same thing but by postal questionnaire. There seemed to be a lack of clarity about who was taking responsibility for what part of the follow-up. From my point of view, it wasn't clear what types of psychological support might be available and how to access them.

Now we are nine months on, it finally seems fairly clear that there are two main types of support available: assessment and, if necessary, a course of treatment by clinical psychologists for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is being done through the traumatic stress clinic; and counselling, which can be arranged via the 7 July Family Assistance Centre. I think they have had quite a large grant fairly recently to provide that sort of support, and that is available on request for the people who were affected rather than it being on a specific diagnosis of post-traumatic stress. They are two quite different kinds of support and the way you access them is quite different but it hasn't really been spelt out to people.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This is support for yourself, but how about your husband because it must have been quite traumatic for him as well? Does he get any form of support apart from you?

Kathy: I don't think he has actually been offered anything. It's an interesting question and I don't think he has been asked to complete any questionnaires. My children have. They were asked to complete a questionnaire that was sent out by the traumatic stress clinic, but I don't think my husband has. He's all right with that. He has coped extremely well, which is good, and I don't think he would have wanted to ask for it. It's an interesting point because nobody has actually asked him how well he has coped.

I think the effort to try to follow-up people affected by the bombings is very praiseworthy and I have been impressed that there has been so much effort that has gone into that. But with hindsight, obviously the net wasn't cast wide enough and there has been a lack of clarity, particularly in the beginning, about who was actually responsible for what. My own experience is that I was referred by my cardio-thoracic consultant at St Mary's in February to their own clinical health psychology department because he felt that perhaps I should have an assessment with them. The traumatic stress clinic had also suggested to me around Christmas time that possibly it might be worth me going in for an assessment with them, but I had actually postponed that.

I did go into St Mary's for an assessment over two sessions and they told me that generally they felt I had coped extremely well, but there were some things that I really wasn't happy about and they told me they would discuss what help they might be able to offer. Then they contacted me after a couple of weeks and said they had decided that given the traumatic stress clinic was doing follow-up anyway and would continue to do so that they should pass me on to them. I then went to the traumatic stress clinic in Charlotte Street for an assessment and they decided that the limited range of stress symptoms that I had didn't qualify for an actual diagnosis of PTSD, so it wouldn't be appropriate for them to put me on one of their programmes of treatment. They

suggested I consider contacting the 7 July Family Assistance Centre to arrange counselling for the issues that did concern me.

I decided to go to see the centre because I hadn't actually been there before. For a long time I wasn't physically capable of getting to it anyway. I had a chat with somebody who arranges counselling and almost the first thing she said was that given how closely I had been involved in the bombings, she thought I should probably be going to the traumatic stress clinic.

Richard Barnes (Chair): At this point you felt like a parcel, did you?

Kathy: I did. I understood that the traumatic stress clinic was saying that the kind of programmes they offer probably weren't quite the appropriate thing for me. I did get some benefit out of the assessment sessions I had, but even so, being shunted around from one agency to another has in itself been a very stressful experience. At the moment, I don't feel that I want to go to yet another person, yet another agency, so I haven't taken up the offer of counselling at the 7 July Family Assistance Centre and decided to leave it for the time being because I really don't feel I can begin all over again with another person. I have done it twice and I just don't feel I can do it a third time.

I do feel quite strongly that it is something that needs to be sorted out much more clearly between the different agencies. I have a feeling they have been working this out as they go along and perhaps now, when they look back, they will be able to sort out more clearly from the beginning who is doing the follow-up and what kinds of support are going to be available and how people can access them. For example, it would probably have been better if St Mary's hadn't been through the assessment process with me, which in itself was a couple of sessions over two weeks and then there is a two-week wait after they do that, so that after four weeks I was then told that they had decided it wasn't really for them anyway.

Richard Barnes (Chair): A bit sub-standard.

Kathy: Yes. Equally, the traumatic stress clinic is focused specifically on post-traumatic stress so they aren't really geared up to deal with other stress symptoms that people may have which don't in their terms qualify for a full PTSD diagnosis, so in the end I felt perhaps I was falling out of the system in a way because I was on the borderline of what they would consider as somebody for whom that kind of treatment would be appropriate at the traumatic stress clinic. In a way, I felt I was being told to go away and tough it out because there wasn't anything very appropriate available.

Richard Barnes (Chair): As you live outside Greater London, I assume you are talking about Hertfordshire Police. Was that any problem, apart from the tragedy itself, that you felt you were still part of the system even though you were outside London?

Kathy: Yes, I did feel I was part of the system, very much so, and I am still going to St Mary's because I still need an operation on my ear, for example. I haven't found that to be a problem. I haven't felt that I have been at all out of the system because I live outside London.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Good, although clearly some did.

Kathy: Perhaps because I was in the system from the beginning it was a different experience for me.

I mentioned some of the follow-up was done by phone from St Mary's and some was done by postal questionnaire from the traumatic stress clinic. Both of them were asking the same kind of questions, but personally I found the telephone contact preferable because I was able to have a better discussion about my progress rather than being limited to the tick boxes on the questionnaire. For example, for each question about possible symptoms of post-traumatic stress that you might have experienced, you have a choice on the questionnaire of answering 'Yes I have experienced this at least twice in the last week' or 'No', which means that if you have experienced something three or four times the week before last but only once in the last week you have to answer 'No'. From the clinic's point of view I can understand they are just trying to draw a line to identify the people who are suffering the most severe symptoms, but if your answers are on the borderline it doesn't really feel right to be saying 'No' when you are actually experiencing some of these symptoms to some degree. When you are feeling quite stressed anyway that kind of thing does actually matter.

From my point of view, as the person responding to the follow-up, I found a personal contact and a brief discussion over the phone was much more satisfactory, although to be fair to the clinic, I think on the second questionnaire I was sent they did offer the option of doing it over the phone, but in general, you weren't encouraged to contact them so I didn't really feel free to do that. They didn't really operate through personal contact, so although I usually had the same name at the bottom of letters or emails I was sent it wasn't always the same and people didn't give you their own phone number, or I would get an email just signed 'The Screening Team'. You don't really feel like ringing up or writing and saying 'Hello, Screening Team', whereas St Mary's took a more personal approach and I knew who the nurse therapist was doing the follow-up there, I knew her name and had her phone number and email address and had the personal contact of the phone call. The clinic may be operating with much larger numbers of people to follow up, so I can appreciate that might be more difficult for them, but from my end it was far more preferable to have the personal contact.

They are really all the points that I wanted to bring up, so I want to say thank you for allowing me to contribute those.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you for coming. Were you offered any legal advice or legal support?

Kathy: No, none at all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about wading through all the other forms and administrative processes? How easy or challenging has that been?

Kathy: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) forms obviously weren't entirely appropriate in a lot of places for what had happened. I also didn't have a very good experience when I rang up CICA to ask them something about filling in the form probably some time in November and the first thing the person I spoke to said was 'Why haven't you applied before?' It does say on their literature that you have two years in which to apply so I was a bit taken aback to be giving a bit of a grilling about why exactly I hadn't applied before November. He was much more helpful when I explained that because I was still being treated for all my injuries and didn't know the final

outcome of them I didn't think it was appropriate to fill in the forms any earlier and I was only doing it because it seemed that a lot of other people were filling them in at that stage, so I thought perhaps I should get a form in.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Would any administrative help have been helpful?

Kathy: Do you mean having some advice on filling it in?

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you know what to do?

Kathy: I felt I was okay about filling in the forms apart from the fact that I did need to ask one or two things and I rang them up directly to ask, so I didn't mind about filling in the forms but I could see that some people might find that quite difficult without advice.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you know where to go and what to do? Did someone from the trauma centre or from St Mary's give you a list of the things you ought to do?

Kathy: I think the CICA scheme was mentioned by the charitable fund, the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund, because I think they consistently said on their letters that they regarded the main source of compensation to be the CICA scheme, but I must say it was really then up to me to pick up on that and do something about it. I think it would have been helpful to have a bit more advice on when to apply and how to deal with it, although I discovered from their website that CICA did produce a booklet specifically aimed at people who were involved in the London bombings. You could download that from the website and I think they also had hard copies to send out to people who contacted them. You had to take the initiative. I trawled around their website a lot, so I discovered things that way, but you did need to have the facilities to be able to do that and take the initiative. It didn't come to me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund?

Kathy: I thought they did an excellent job as far as I was concerned. I thought they were very speedy in getting the first payment out. Again, I am sure I was on their list from the start because I had been hospitalised, so I had a payment certainly within two to three weeks of the incident.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you apply for that or did it just come?

Kathy: I think it just came. I didn't have to contact them; they had my details which I imagine they must have got from St Mary's. I can only think that is how. They contacted me. I was very impressed with all the dealings that I had with them. I thought they were very efficient in any of the communications I had with them and anything I contacted them about. I was very glad to have the initial payment particularly because I worked out we had probably spent over £1,000 replacing things that I had lost on the train and the extra expenses we had while I was in hospital, and that sort of thing. I was very glad to have that money as quickly as it came. As far as I am concerned, they did an excellent job.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Loads of people have said that, and it was non-bureaucratic as well.

Kathy: Yes, non-bureaucratic. Their forms were very easy to understand and fill in. I had a caseworker so there was a personal contact there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): A caseworker from the Relief Fund?

Kathy: Yes. I always had communications from the same person and I knew I could contact her if I needed to ask about something either by letter, phone or email.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Consistency sounds to be very important.

Kathy: Yes, I think so. I think when you are coping with physical injuries plus all the stress of it, the more things can be made straightforward and consistent, the better, definitely. Small things that aren't going well can become extremely stressful, far more so than they would normally be.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is there anything in the aftercare that you would like to see there that was missing? We have already noted your praise for what was there. Were there any gaps?

Kathy: I can't particularly think of anything other than the things I have already highlighted and the problems with the psychological follow-up and support, where I felt that there wasn't really anything available that was quite appropriate for what I needed so I seemed to be falling between the different things. It also wasn't initially possible for me to travel. For example, some of the things arranged in the beginning by the 7 July Family Assistance Centre I wouldn't have been able to get to anyway.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that the meeting on the 17th floor?

Kathy: That was one of them.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did the 7 July Family Assistance Centre organise that?

Kathy: Yes, it was the Family Assistance Centre that organised that. I think I have really been quite fortunate in the amount of support I have. I have had a lot of support from friends and family and also the added benefit of being in touch with a couple of people who were on the train with me and people who weren't only involved in the same incident but were actually in the same part of the same carriage, and that has been a tremendous help for all of us. I think perhaps that is something that would help other people if there were another major incident. I have had the impression that some people have felt quite isolated because they weren't in contact with anybody, maybe not even from the same incident, or if they were from the same incident, they were from different parts of the train.

After the blast, I probably couldn't see more than maybe eight or nine feet in there because it was so dark and those of us who were near the bomb were quite deafened by the explosion, so we didn't have much awareness of what was going on even just feet away from us. That was like a different world really. The thing that has been most helpful to us is that we have been able to be in contact with people who were in exactly the same part of the carriage as we were, so we really do have a shared experience. But, as on 23 March, when I meet with people who were in the same carriage but down the other end of it, their experiences were very different from mine.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That has come across very strongly.

Kathy: I don't know whether it would be possible another time to have a system of putting people who were close in touch with each other.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you just stumble across each other or find each other then? How did you get in touch?

Kathy: This was thanks again to the transport engineers. I really can't say enough to praise the two Metronet engineers who helped me. They did a tremendous amount for me, both in giving me a lot of comfort and reassurance on the train and helping to keep me awake once I was starting to drift, and contacting my husband. My husband contacted one of them who had left his phone number with him, because when I was in hospital I was talking about the young man next to me who had a very serious leg injury and my husband wondered what had happened to him. This engineer had taken the man's wallet out of his pocket so he knew what his name was, and then we were able to ask the police officers who were assigned to St Mary's how we could get in touch with him. He was able to find out which hospital this man was in and somebody there then contacted him and said that the woman who had been sitting next to him would quite like to get in touch if he would like to do that. He said yes and so we were put in touch.

I think when we first spoke I had just come out of hospital and he was just about to come out of hospital. He had been at Charing Cross Hospital with someone else who had been next to us who had a similar injury, so they were already in contact and that is how the three of us ended up being in touch.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you think the organisations should facilitate that contact? Should they organise it? How can it be institutionalised, or indeed should it be institutionalised?

Kathy: I think it would certainly be a good idea if something like that could be facilitated. If there is a body which has details of the people involved they could offer to make those details available to other people who might like to be in touch, and people would then have an option of saying 'No, I think at the moment I don't really want contact from other people.'

Richard Barnes (Chair): Like a clearing house.

Kathy: Yes, so that people could opt out if they wanted but equally they could be included. Having that support from people who were actually with me is something that has been very important to me. I think it's definitely worth trying to facilitate that kind of contact also maybe with rescue workers who were involved if they wished to be included in that.

The three of us have had quite a lot of contact over the phone with the two engineers who helped me and also another person who was on the train going the other way at Edgware Road and climbed into our carriage and tried to resuscitate one of the people who died near to me and helped the man next to me with the leg injury and so on. In fact, all six of us met up about two weeks ago for a meal, which was really a nice thing to do now that we are all out and about again. I think we have all found it a very

helpful and supportive thing to be able to have that contact. It happened almost by chance for us really that we were able to meet up. I am sure other people would have found that kind of thing very helpful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Nevertheless, the institutions really couldn't have organised you to have a dinner. They can facilitate people getting in contact and then it evolves of its own.

Kathy: Yes, they can facilitate the contact with people and then allow people to make of it what they want. Obviously, King's Cross United have gone down one sort of route, and people like me have gone down another, so you can then allow people to make of it what they want, but I think it would be helpful if the initial contact could be facilitated.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is there anything more that you think we need to raise?

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Manager, GLA): There is one thing that occurred to me regarding the memorial service and whether you knew about it or not?

Kathy: I did. I think I first saw something in the press about it, but very shortly after that something came through to me from the FLO, so I did actually get something sent to me personally quite early on, again, because I was in the system, as it were. In fact, I then looked on the DCMS website and found a contact name for the service and emailed them to ask if they could invite the two engineers who had helped me, which they did, and they managed to seat them near to me and near to one of the other people I was on the train with, so that was very nice.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you received the 22 March letter from the DCMS?

Kathy: About the meetings in April? Yes, I did have that. I think there is a newsletter from the Relief Fund which is on their website, which I haven't actually had in the post. I'm not quite sure what's happened there. Otherwise, generally I have received everything because I was on all the lists.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You were within the loop.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Is there anything more that occurs to you?

Kathy: No, I don't think so.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Kathy, thank so much for coming and for coming on the 23rd. It was nice to know that there were people it mattered to in the audience. There were quite a number of you in the audience.

Kathy: I was glad that I came that day. I think I probably made the right decision in not speaking on that day. I am happy with that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, which is why the three alternatives had been offered to everybody and it was for them to determine what is most appropriate for them. It certainly worked out well from our point of view in gathering the information.

Kathy: I think it is a very important exercise that you are doing. I am sure there is a tremendous amount that will come out of it and will mean that people can look again at these things.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Even small things you have suggested today are not small; for instance, totally inexpensive things such as the clearing house if people want to get in touch with somebody else.

Kathy: Sometimes those small things make such a big difference.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Absolutely.

Kathy: It's particularly good if you can pick up on that kind of thing which can be done differently with the minimum of effort or expense.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's clear that if we make a recommendation that the Government spends between £50-100 million or whatever, to make the Tube system much safer, then that's a recommendation which will be dealt with over time and no doubt in some way appropriately, but if we made that type of recommendation it's going to get buried. But there is stuff that is relatively simple and clear that can be applied.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Also marrying things up as well. You were talking about labels and getting people's names recorded and tagged, which fits in with some of the comments we heard on the 23rd about the triage cards. There is a crossover there.

Kathy: Yes. I think there weren't enough cards. I didn't see any cards brought on to the train, although frankly I wasn't too aware then. I would hope that something like that wouldn't be expensive or even particularly difficult to do if it's just literally writing somebody's name and a phone number on a tag and attaching it them.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We have seen films of the evacuee kids with labels around their necks. If they could do it 50 or 60 years ago I am sure we could do it now.

Kathy: It would have made a big difference in my case had that been done and we hadn't had all the confusion about who I was and then the hospital ringing my children and my husband being on the ground floor or wherever at St Mary's while I was a few floors up and it taking a couple of hours, that just wouldn't have happened.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's not an isolated problem, let me reassure you. Kathy, thank you very much indeed for coming in.

[ends]

Additional note

I would like to add an additional note to my comments about the psychological support services. Although I said that the psychologist who assessed me at the traumatic stress clinic decided that their programmes were not appropriate for me, it is only fair to add that he did try to be helpful by offering to spend (a

maximum of) 2-3 sessions with me on issues I was unhappy about, but in the end I didn't take him up on it. This was partly because I didn't think I would feel comfortable with knowing that this wasn't strictly within the clinic's remit and would be worrying that I was maybe wasting his time, and partly that if after those 2-3 sessions I felt I needed a bit more time, I would still end up having to go to yet another agency, another person and start all over again.

Kathy, 28 April 2006

7 July Review Committee

18 April 2006

Transcript of meeting with Amy

Richard Barnes (Chair): You were at King's Cross/Russell Square?

Amy: I was, yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you want to talk us through it?

Amy: I was in the fourth carriage of the King's Cross Tube. I got on at Finsbury Park. I thought it would be a normal day. Very packed, which was quite weird, which I have spoken to a lot of people about, which we thought was quite weird. It was heaving. I was standing by the first set of double doors. Then, when we left King's Cross, the train suddenly came to a halt, but it didn't sound like a bang to me; it was like a thud. All of a sudden smoke started to come in. I just froze and absolutely went mental, crying, and everything. Down there, I didn't know what was going on. No driver came through, which we were quite worried about. At that point we didn't know it was a bomb or anything like that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): If you don't mind me asking, how far away from the bomb was the fourth carriage?

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): The bomb was in the first carriage.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So there were two between you.

Amy: Yes. There were lots of people crying and stuff like that, and everyone was so calm in there, it was amazing. Guys were taking the lead saying that we need to calm down; we need to listen if we are getting out; we need to listen to messages, because messages were being passed up and down verbally via passengers. I would say I was probably down there for 40 minutes, screaming coming from everywhere. At that time, we didn't know it was a bomb, so everyone in my carriage was asking, 'Why are they screaming? They are making things worse,' etc. Then, nothing happened. We were told that we were going to go out via the rear of the train, but that never happened. That was just via verbal communication. Then we were told we were going to go out of the front of the carriage, and then nothing happened.

It was about, I would say, 40 minutes before we finally made it out of the carriage. I don't know who they were; I don't know whether they were train workers or members of the public that got out of their carriages. I had to walk through my carriage and then get into the third carriage, and go down via the first set of doors onto the track. By then, I was friendly with this woman, because I was crying and everything and I had my inhaler out. She said, 'Just come with me; I will take you off the train'. I think I was the worst; I couldn't stop crying, I was shaking and everything, and these two guys were standing at the door and said, 'Come on love – you'll be all right', and they got me down onto the tracks. Then we had to walk all the way to King's Cross. We still didn't know it was a bomb.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were these Underground workers that helped you off?

Amy: I don't know. They weren't wearing anything to indicate that they were, like a fluorescent jacket or anything. I don't know. Then, as we were walking through, there was an Underground worker there with a torch, saying 'You'll be all right – just keep walking'. The only reason why I thought it was serious at all – obviously there was smoke, but when I saw the men crying, I thought, 'Oh God' – I knew something bad had happened, but I didn't know quite what it was. Then we walked to King's Cross.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were the emergency lights on?

Amy: There was lighting, yes, but one of the guys was carrying a torch and he was directing; he was doing that, so we could see where we were going, but we could have tripped on anything – there were nails, bolts; it looked like there was the end of a car in there or whatever. It was just ridiculous. Then we were helped up. I am sure there were firefighters helping us onto the platform and there was a firefighter giving out drinks and bottles of water. I said, 'Look – I can't breathe properly. I have asthma'. All she said was 'go up the stairs', so I went upstairs with this old lady and there was no one there to greet us – nothing. There were bottles of water on the floor. Then she said, 'Right, let's go this way', so we went to a totally different exit. We didn't come out of the front entrance of King's Cross; we came out across the road, where Burger King is. There was no one there – no police or anything. Obviously we heard the sirens. There was, at that point, I think, tape being taped across the road going into King's Cross. Then the lady just left me and I was standing there all by myself.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which lady?

Amy: The lady that befriended me.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Another passenger.

Amy: Yes, the passenger. She said, 'Right, I'm going to work', so she just walked off. I was just standing there like, 'What the hell am I supposed to do?' I was obviously in shock. Then I walked back to where I got out, just to the entrance, and there were other girls standing there, and I just burst into tears with them and we all hugged each other. I asked, 'What's happened?' We all decided to stay together – there were four of us – and we decided to go into Burger King to wipe our faces, because we were covered in soot. We walked in there and everyone was asking 'What the hell has happened?' Even at that point, no one knew what was going on or anything. We came out of the wrong exit to see what we later saw.

Then, we didn't even know it was a bomb or anything like that either. We went in, cleaned ourselves off, and then just walked around King's Cross for an hour, not doing anything, still in shock, trying to get through to our loved ones, but couldn't, because the service was down. My mum finally got through to me via text and I texted her back. She didn't think I meant the actual Tube that was bombed; she just thought I was on the Tube. Then my sister got through to me and just said, 'Oh my God'. It was just so hard to get through to my boyfriend, because he was at my house. He didn't know anything had happened. Then my work colleague got through to me and she said, 'Right, I will phone him and tell him', so she did, but he still couldn't get through to me for about an hour and a half to two hours.

We were walking around and the only way I knew it was some sort of a bomb was when my friend rang me up and said, 'You'd better get out of the area because a bus has just blown up,' and we all said, 'What?' We didn't know anything at that point. Then we all couldn't breathe properly; we started to feel short of breath, so we went up to a policeman there and said we were on the Tube. He said 'Oh, all right then', and he took us through the cordons to the front of King's Cross, where all the casualties were. That is when we saw all the horrible stuff. Nothing was said to us like 'Just beware you might see something you don't want to see'. He just took us there and we got on the red buses that they took us to the hospital in.

There were policemen on there and we were in shock. As we got on, we saw people with eardrums blown out, heads cut – everything. It was horrible. That is when we thought 'Oh God'. I knew something serious had happened, but I didn't know it was a bomb. It didn't even come into my head. Then we were sitting on the buses and the police started to take our details. We asked, 'Is it true a bus has gone up?' and he said 'Yes and we think that has happened around London as well'. We were just in shock. We were on the first bus and we were police escorted to the hospital.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which one did you go to?

Amy: Royal London. There, it was just awful because I just saw so many things I didn't want to see. I was taken to this designated area for the walking wounded, and we were sat there for an hour not being seen by anyone, just crying and watching the news unfold on the TV. It was so nice, because everyone was just looking after each other; the morale with everybody was just great. People were asking, 'Are you all right?' It was really nice. Then, I was taken in to see a doctor because I couldn't breathe properly, because I have asthma, so they did a full check-up on me. Then, we were told to wait for about two hours to see if we had any recurrence in breathing, because they said that we might get shortness of breath again, or whatever, so we had to stay there. I stayed still with the four girls that I met outside King's Cross and then the detectives started to come in and sit down in the canteen and start to take our names and details.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that the first time that your names had been taken?

Amy: No, on the bus was the first time. There, they took it again; this time, they wrote a description of what we looked like and stuff like that. I was still in shock; I cannot really remember what happened. My boyfriend got in. He walked for three and a half hours to come and get me, because there was no transport, and taxis weren't taking anybody or anything like that. He walked all the way from Finsbury Park and managed to get through security and then came and sat with me. We had to stay there for about two hours, as I said. There was no transport for us to get home or anything – nothing was put on – so we had to wait for his brother to come and pick us up.

Then, from that day on, my life was hell for six months. I didn't go back to work for six months. When I got home, I was just constantly watching the news, just basically scared of leaving the house. Then, the police rang me on the Friday or the Saturday and asked, 'Could we come and take a police statement from you?' I said, 'Fine', so they came round on the Sunday and he was with me for six hours, writing this statement. He actually took me to Finsbury Park station, which I wasn't very happy about, but at the time I just said, 'Yes, all right, let's go'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Why did he take you there?

Amy: Because he wanted to retrace my steps. We went all the way to Finsbury Park station, all the way down onto the platform, but we couldn't get onto that one because it was cordoned off. He was there with me for six hours, taking my statement.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Finsbury Park was cordoned off?

Amy: Yes, because you couldn't get onto the Piccadilly Line, so you couldn't get onto the platform. From then on, I just have done everything myself, I think. I went to the doctors and she didn't have a clue what to do with me. She said, 'I'm going to sign you off work for two weeks', which she did, 'with acute stress'. I told my work that I wasn't coming back to work, and they were fine with it, but every time I went back to the doctor, she just signed me off with acute stress. 'I don't know what to sign you off with; we haven't been given any guidelines yet'. This was going on for about two months, having all the symptoms, which I now know is post-traumatic stress: I couldn't go out properly, I couldn't get on a bus, I couldn't get on a Tube, I had to be driven everywhere, watching the news, having nightmares, crying – everything. I kept in contact with the four girls that were on the Tube as well and we decided – me and this girl,, who lives just down the road from me – when we heard about the Family Assistance Centre (FAC), at first we were very cautious about going, because we thought it was for the bereaved, and then she said, 'No, let's just go and see what it's like', so we drove there – her husband drove us there. The fact that it was in Victoria was just ridiculous because we couldn't get on a Tube or a bus, so I don't know why they came up with putting it in Victoria.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you mean you psychologically couldn't get on a Tube?

Amy: I couldn't get on, no. Then, we went there and they were all lovely. I saw a family liaison officer as we walked in. She took us down and gave us coffee. Then, someone from Cruse came over, which was fine. We talked to them about it all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is a bereavement councillor?

Amy: Yes – exactly, but it was nice to talk to someone who could listen, if you know what I mean. Us two, we were always phoning each other every day, saying, 'I don't know what to do'. We were climbing the walls really, not knowing what to do or whether what was going on in our heads – nightmares and everything – was fine or we were going crazy or anything. I thought my doctor might be able to help me with that, but she said, 'You don't get post-traumatic stress until after four months, or four weeks, but after four weeks, still going back to her, she didn't sign me off with post-traumatic stress; it was still acute stress reaction, or whatever. We went to the FAC and that was fine; we just talked about it. That was it; just talk. They gave us leaflets about what to do in a crisis or whatever, but didn't actually give me what to do next or where to go for help. There were Samaritans there, and stuff like that, but I didn't think they were good for me. I needed something proper, and I knew that, from what I was going through.

Richard Barnes (Chair): By proper, you mean going to see a psychiatrist?

Amy: Yes. Obviously, I didn't know I had post-traumatic stress because I have never had it before, but I knew I wanted to talk about it and I have had trauma in my life before, so I knew I needed to deal with it straight away, but they didn't give me any

information about, 'Right, you need to go and see this' or whatever; it was just leaflets. But I must admit, they didn't lose my information – they kept it – and they have been really good, to the point where they keep me informed with everything, but it was just the fact of where it was, for starters. We couldn't get there. If it was closer to us, in North London or somewhere closer, I probably would have gone to it more, maybe every day, but because it was so out of the way, it just put you off completely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You implied that its name should be different.

Amy: The FAC sounded to us as if it was for families of the bereaved, the way it was said, so we were quite apprehensive about going. We just said, 'Right, let's just go, because we need to do something'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then it changed its name to the 7 July Assistance Centre. Was that better?

Amy: Much better.

Richard Barnes (Chair): But then you were in the loop anyway.

Amy: Exactly – I was in the loop anyway.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you been there?

Amy: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I understand that it's a flat on the ninth floor somewhere.

Amy: No; it is on the fourth floor, I think. Are you talking about the meeting we had?

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): No, we will come on to that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I might be wrong.

Amy: I don't know whether it's on the seventh; I'm sure it's on the fourth or something like that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that okay?

Amy: That's all right, but I was getting better then, so it didn't bother me. They have been very helpful in the sense where I could probably go there and chat to someone, but even ringing them up, they were supposed to be 24 hours. I tried to ring, and they weren't there. I would leave a message and no one rang me back. Basically, for six months I was just climbing the walls, not knowing what to do, going back to my general practitioner (GP). She was signing me off all the time.

My work have been excellent; they kept paying me full pay. Every time I would go into work, I would have a panic attack, so I would have to go in a taxi. They would get a taxi for me and just being in Leicester Square – that is where I work – I just couldn't handle it. They were trying to get me help, as well, because I was saying there was nowhere for me to get help, really – I didn't know where to go. My human resources (HR) tried to get me in to see a counsellor affiliated with us – they have their own counsellors – but

she was no use at all. She was very patronising and said, 'You should have goals', but at that point I didn't know what goals I should have; I didn't know what to do. I was just going mad really; I felt like I was going mad, so I said 'I'm not seeing her again'. I went back to my GP, who got me in touch with a bereavement counsellor, which isn't what I needed. I have seen her before, but I didn't lose anybody, so that wasn't what I needed. I went to her a couple of times.

Then, the only reason I found out about the Trauma Stress Clinic is my friend, who found an article in the newspaper and gave it to me. She said, 'You need to ring it'. At first, I felt 'I can't ring it'. I didn't want to do anything at first. I was a bit scared or whatever. She said, 'No, I will ring them for you', but I said, 'No, I'll do it'. I rang them and they gave me an appointment to see them. This was six months after. I went to see them and had an appointment for three hours. I went through everything again. At this point, I'd been through it with two or three counsellors about three times, and I thought, 'I can't go through it anymore'. I said, 'Are you my psychologist?' and he said, 'No, you have to see someone else. I am just your assessor'. He said, 'Yes, you have post-traumatic stress disorder'. I thought, 'Yes, thank you – I know that already'.

Then he said, 'Right, you need to see someone else', so I had to go all the way to Camberwell to be interviewed again, and that took another three hours and, again, she wasn't my psychologist. She then told me I had to travel all the way to Camberwell for my appointments every week, which I wasn't happy about, because I live in North London, so I had to get my boyfriend to come with me every week on a bus, stressing me out. Even just getting on a bus was horrible. I had to go there every week. Finally, I have come to the end of my weekly sessions with him, which is great. I feel I have come a long way, but I think it was too late. I could have been back to work sooner; if someone had just said, 'You need to go here' or rung me up and said, 'Look, we knew you were on the Tube', but I had to do everything myself.

Also, the 7 July Assistance Centre put on a meeting, which you probably heard about, which was on the 17th floor, and that is where I met Rachel from King's Cross United (KCU), and that has been a lifeline as well. I met them probably in September or October, before I even had my psychologist sessions. They have been a massive help to me, knowing that other people are going through what I was going through. I couldn't believe that it was set up by survivors; I thought it was a Government thing or something like that – that they had set it up – but actually the survivors had done it themselves, which I think is great, but it shouldn't have been set up by survivors. They have just been a lifeline; if I didn't have them and sought help myself, God knows where I would be right now, really.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Why don't you think it should be set up by survivors?

Amy: Just because I think we have done everything ourselves and the fact that we were just left. Survivors took it upon themselves to set up a group on their own, with no help from anybody. They have backgrounds in the media, or something like that, but I just think the Government or the bodies should have done something sooner. I feel they have just sat back and haven't even acknowledged that there are survivors. Yes, they have acknowledged the bereaved – to me, they have – but not the survivors. I haven't had a letter from Tony Blair saying 'I am sorry'. I have had one from Tessa Jowell (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport), but that was after meeting you guys at the London Assembly. The fact that they haven't said sorry – it wasn't their fault, but acknowledge that, 'Yes, it has happened to you and we will do anything in our

power to make it better for you, if there is anything...’ – do you know what I mean? I just feel that we have had to do everything ourselves. I have had to go to see a psychologist myself. No one has rung me up and said, ‘How are you doing? We want you to come in for an assessment’, like the hospital, or anything like that. It’s just an ongoing battle of doing everything yourself when you weren’t in the right state of mind to do it yourself. That’s how I see it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What do you think the benefit of the FAC was, apart from the Cruse counsellor, or what do you think it could have been?

Amy: They have been good to a point where I have been once or twice to see them, which is fair enough, but they weren’t able to point me in the right direction for me to get help. Yes, they did have counsellors there, but Cruse is for bereavement and I didn’t lose anybody. All she said to me was, ‘Yes, I know, I understand’, but you don’t understand – you weren’t there. Do you know what I mean? I just felt there and then they could have had psychologists, but people who have dealt with a trauma – not Cruse – and that knew how to deal with people that had post-traumatic stress or the symptoms, not bereavement counsellors. That is why, when we went there, and there were bereavement counsellors there, we thought, ‘Well, it must be for the bereaved’, but we just talked to them anyway. They had liaison officers, but I didn’t need one there, really, because I wasn’t liaising with the police or anything. No one had died, from my point of view.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did they ever take a statement from you – the police?

Amy: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You have had your own letter from Tessa Jowell, so your address, you said, wasn’t lost.

Amy: No; it hasn’t been lost, I don’t think. The police took it as I got on the bus, and then they got my details again at the hospital. That is obviously how they contacted me – the police – to give a statement. When I went to the 7 July Assistance Centre, I gave them my details then. I am sure I did. They must have done, because they have been in contact with me ever since. They even ring me, ‘How are you doing?’ blah blah blah, which I think is great. I haven’t been back since we were on that 17th floor because, for starters, we were on the 17th floor, and I didn’t think it was set up properly. Also, when we went to the flat, they had a meeting for survivors, but also bereaved families were there.

There was this woman there and she started crying and we asked, ‘Why are you crying?’, and she said, ‘I lost my daughter on the bus’. We thought, ‘What do we say to you?’ Obviously, we are devastated, but we feel guilty then. There was another girl there whose aunty died on the King’s Cross Tube, and I was just sat there thinking, ‘Oh my God; I don’t know what to say to you’. All of us – I went with a couple from KCU and we were just sat there thinking, ‘What are we supposed to say to you?’ They shouldn’t have done that at all. I don’t really want to mingle with the bereaved, to be honest with you. Obviously, I feel guilty – I have lots of guilt and stuff like that. Do you understand what I mean? I cannot sit and listen –

Richard Barnes (Chair): The issues are different.

Amy: The issues are very different – very different.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you think the issues are different between yourselves and those who were severely or physically injured?

Amy: Yes, I do. They are still alive and, yes, they were maimed and stuff, but they still have the same issues that we have, I think. I think they were probably better cared for than we were, definitely, because they had to go to hospital and stayed there for a long time. I know a couple of the people who were injured who are in KCU and they have survived. We talk to them all the time, which is great, so I don't think there is that big a difference, but I do think there is a massive difference between losing someone that day and actually surviving, definitely. You just don't know what to say to that person. The lady that lost her auntie, she wanted to speak to someone who was in the first carriage, to see whether she saw her auntie or something. You just don't want to put yourself in that position or anything like that. That was awful that they had obviously not thought – which they have now, because they don't do that anymore – to put us in that situation in the first place. They should have realised, you know?

Richard Barnes (Chair): They should have. Did you go to the memorial service?

Amy: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were you invited directly? How did you know about it?

Amy: I was invited directly, yes, from the (Department for) Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), because I haven't been lost exactly. Yes, I was invited. I didn't think the memorial did it justice, though. I thought it was just a publicity stunt, to be perfectly honest with you. They never said any of the dead's names; the Queen didn't speak like they did at September 11; the survivors and whoever I have spoken to were sat right at the back, but the politicians and whoever else were sat at the front. I just think that is ridiculous; we should have been sat at the front – we were actually on that Tube. They will never get on a Tube, yet they were sat right at the front. That just really annoyed me – the whole thing, to be honest with you.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What would you like to see on the anniversary?

Amy: I don't know, to be honest; I haven't really thought about it. I know what we are planning on doing; KCU is going up to a hill or something and sending off balloons, having a picnic and then going to the pub, like we always do. I don't know; I haven't really thought about it, to be honest with you. We have all heard, through the grapevine, that they are using some of the carriages that were hit on the day, and someone was saying that we should use carriage one – some of the bits – to make a memorial or something like that, which I think is a good idea.

Richard Barnes (Chair): To have a physical thing.

Amy: Yes, definitely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You make it sound as though KCU have been very supportive and very helpful.

Amy: Definitely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You must be grateful that it is there.

Amy: God, yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is it better run by survivors or by an institution?

Amy: I think it is a bit of both, because the fact that they are running it and when people first started to go on there, especially at the memorial time, there were a lot of jibes going on the website and the people that had set it up were getting a lot of flak and stuff like that, so I think that's a bad thing, because they are survivors – they are grieving. I mean not grieving, but they are basically in our situation, but because a lot of people at that time didn't realise that it was survivors who had set it up, when new members come on, they were saying, 'Well, I didn't get a ticket'. Rachel and Jane and everyone had to go about and they have done so much; they have contacted you guys, they have contacted the DCMS to get more tickets. They have done so much; they run the whole site. They have a whole media strategy, as you know, so fair enough, the institutions don't know how we feel, but they could deal with that side of it, instead of survivors having to deal with it, because they have their own problems to deal with. They are going through the motions, just like us. That is why I feel that someone from above should have started it up. Yes, there could be people like us to say, 'Yes, we will do that; no, we won't do that'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So you would slowly take it over?

Amy: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about work now? You said they have been very supportive.

Amy: Yes. I went back in January part-time, and I'm still part-time, as in I don't do the morning rush, so I go in at 11.00 and finish at 17.00. That will change soon, I know, but I just have to deal with that when I get to it, I suppose. I just get the bus, because I am fine on a bus now, but I do get on the Tube sometimes, but it's very hard.

Richard Barnes (Chair): If there was one or a couple of things with the aftercare that ought to be different, what do you think they might be?

Amy: Check-ups for all of us. I know a lot of people are moaning about chest infections and it still hasn't gone since the day. I find I am short of breath a lot more than I used to be.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are you taking...?

Amy: Yes, I have an inhaler. I don't have an asthma specialist, but I have spoken to my doctor and she has given me an inhaler and stuff like that. She said just to keep monitoring it and stuff. There's a lot, actually, but I cannot remember. Do you have any of my notes that I sent?

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): You talked about the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

Amy: Did I?

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): Yes, and the fact that you had heard that they were doing some follow-up.

Amy: Yes; they are doing a follow-up. They have emailed us.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): I think you said they hadn't been in touch with you.

Amy: They have just emailed the site, basically, saying that they want volunteers to come forward so they can monitor us, but I personally think that should have been done straight away – monitoring us every couple of months – because God knows what we breathed in down there. That is what scares me and scares a lot of people, especially now that they are having problems with their chests and everything. I know September 11 was totally different, as in how long it went on for, but there are reports that have come out now that firefighters are dying every month or so, or whatever, and that scares all of us a lot to think what we breathed in down there for so long. I was down there for a good 45 minutes just constantly breathing this stuff in, and still we haven't heard what it was. I haven't read anything about what it was.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So the first contact you had from them was about filling in this questionnaire about how you are now.

Amy: I haven't done it, but it's on the website, if I want to do it, which I will do, but the fact that I, again, if I want help, have to do it myself, when I would prefer people to say, 'Right, you were on the Tube, so we need to give you aftercare as best as possible', instead of me having to find it all. I don't feel good; I am going to go off and worry to my GP and have to fill in a form again. The amount of forms I have filled in is ridiculous.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about a local hospital? Have you been to any of those?

Amy: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It has all been GP-based?

Amy: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And Charlotte Street, obviously.

Amy: Yes. Royal London hasn't contacted me, which I thought they might do. They did a check on me when I was in there, but they said everything was fine. A lot of people were tested for poisoning and I wasn't tested at all, which was quite worrying. Obviously, I'm not poisoned, but it would be nice to have had the full works.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): You mentioned that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) had paid out to you and you had some positive things to say about them.

Amy: Yes, CICA have been great. I put my form in, in November, and got my reward in March, which was nice. Also, the London Bombings (Relief Charitable Fund) (LBRCF) have given me a bit as well, and they have also sent me another cheque, which was nice

as well, but I know a lot of people that have applied to CICA. What they have been saying about filling in forms, I've never had to do that, so it feels a bit conflicting in what they are doing. They are doing it to some but not to others.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They came to you, did they?

Amy: No; I went to them.

Richard Barnes (Chair): But the LBRCF?

Amy: I went to them.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was their form pretty straightforward?

Amy: Their form was brilliant; it was just two sheets. Obviously, they knew what had happened – just my details. They wanted sick notes etc, but with the CICA form, it asked 'who hurt you?' and stuff like that. I know it is their form that you have to fill in, which is fair enough, but they could have probably done it a bit better. Asking us 'who hurt you?' was like 'I don't know – it was a bomber'. 'Did he live next door to you or did he live near you?' It was just things like that that are ridiculous.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you know if everybody got that form?

Amy: Everyone gets that particular form, and then obviously I don't know how they do it criteria-wise, but because I was off work for six months, that was stated and backed up, but people that went back to work the next day don't seem to be getting anything, which is ridiculous. They obviously felt fine, and now they don't. It should be the same for everybody.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And it is a long time to have these matters as well.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): There was one other thing you mentioned when we met, which was about your manager not understanding what was going on.

Amy: Yes; my HR has been fantastic – it's just my boss. He has no clue about anything and he is just horrible. I do think, if anything good could come of this – I am lucky; I have a good HR; she has been on courses about trauma, etc – managers or HR should all go on some sort of course to deal with trauma or to deal with your employees like that, because he has no clue whatsoever. I have had problems with him before, because I had a death in my family and I was fine for two weeks and then, after six weeks, I crashed and went to see a counsellor and he was absolutely awful. I do think they need to go on some sort of training because they can make your life worse. That's why I didn't go back to work as well, purely because of him. I did it once before and knew I had to see it out and get time off and do it properly, because otherwise I would have been worse.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you feel you are in a much better place now?

Amy: Definitely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Will you slowly withdraw from the support network?

Amy: I don't want to. I don't use it every day; I don't email – hardly ever. I read it and we meet up, and I have made really good friends out of it as well. It's like we have known each other for years. We talk about everything; it's not just about what happened on the 7th. It's just amazing – the bonds that we have formed – so, no, I will never leave there, I don't think.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You have an experience in common.

Amy: Definitely. There are still people out there now who are coming on and who are where I was then, and it is sad to see that they haven't got help or anything. One of them didn't even have a statement taken, and she still hasn't got a statement taken – the police didn't even know she existed. She hasn't been to them and she can't claim compensation because she doesn't have a police statement and they don't know of her and stuff like that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That seems to be the trigger for everything. It was one of our triggers, to be quite honest. It's establishing the bona fide individuals. Could that be easier?

Amy: The identification process?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes.

Amy: I know KCU get a lot of bogus people saying 'I was on the Tube' or whatever, but you know exactly who was on the Tube because of the experience that you have together. Yes, I do think it could be made easier. All this stuff about data protection and stuff like that – if they have given it to you first-hand, like the FAC, and they are saying, 'We couldn't pass it on to the 7 July (Assistance Centre), I don't get that, because you are the same people. That's ridiculous.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is certainly an issue for a number of people, but you didn't have that problem.

Amy: I didn't; I was quite lucky to have that at all. They have kept my details – definitely they have. I have everything; I have the newsletters that they are starting to send out, I have all the correspondence from the DCMS.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You have heard about the next meeting.

Amy: The Tessa Jowell one?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes.

Amy: Yes; I am going to that.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): When you were talking about the occasion when the survivors and bereaved families were together, that wasn't the meeting on the 17th floor, was it?

Amy: No; that was another one.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Is there anything you want to tell us about that? We just refer to it as the meeting on the 17th floor.

Amy: I think that just says it all.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It tells us a hell of a lot. Is there anything that we should know about how well or how badly that was conducted?

Amy: Obviously, they got our details from us giving it to them, which is fine, but there were some people from the bus, but there was only one person there. He came and talked to us in the end. It was just like 'this is a free for all – get into groups of where you were, but you just take it how you want to take it'. That's how their attitude was.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It was kind of 'come together and let us see what happens'?

Amy: What happens – yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): A group thing.

Amy: Yes; a group thing. Fair enough, you were split up into your own category, as it were – King's Cross, Edgware (Road) or whatever – and there were more from King's Cross than the others, definitely – there were loads of us – but it was just really weird. For starters, we were on the 17th floor – you know all the story about 'if the fire alarm rings, it's real, and you have to walk down the stairs', and I just thought 'Oh my God', but you like the view. 'Look at the view' – that is what they said. Apart from that, obviously it has never happened before and they don't really know what to do in this situation and, hopefully, when it does happen again, they will know how to do it better.

With the issue with the data, they should easily be able to just hand it over because we gave it to them and it should go to the 7 July (Assistance Centre); they are the same people. Just like with the police: if they knew we were there, if they have a statement, I can understand, but they could ring us and ask, 'Do you mind if we pass your details on?'

Richard Barnes (Chair): They could ask you at the time, couldn't they?

Amy: Of course – exactly.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Tick the box.

Amy: They could do that straight away and I bet everyone would say 'yes'. Even people out in the sticks; I know people who have come from Cambridgeshire. They have nothing out there. They are just stuck – they only have KCU, so imagine the people that have been lost, who haven't given their statements, who just walked off that day, like that woman that helped me. I would love to meet her and say 'thank you', but I don't know – they won't give me any information.

Richard Barnes (Chair): There is certainly a difference outside the M25, that we have come across.

Amy: Definitely; especially with CICA claims as well, for some reason. There's a girl who lives in Cambridge and they are just giving her a hard time, saying 'because you haven't had the proper treatment, you have to go through counselling before you are allowed to apply' or something like that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that to demonstrate some form of injury?

Amy: Maybe, yes. Some people are stubborn or haven't got to that point of 'I need help' yet, or they are too scared to ask for help. It's been eight months, nine months and people think you should forget about it. You will never forget it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Has that been the difficult part of coping?

Amy: That has been hard for me, yes. Going back to work, they say, 'Oh, I wish I was off for six months watching *Trisha*.' Yes – be stuck on a Tube that was blown up, watching *Trisha* for six months – no, I don't think so. I know there have been documentaries and stuff like that, but people don't understand – and will never understand – what we have been through. Have a little compassion. Yes, it has been eight months on, and now it's going to be a year soon, and we still have to relive it every day. There is always something in the newspaper about it – an interview or whatever.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Can I ask you, I think you said you were in the fourth carriage but that you got off the train through the third. Why was that? Were the doors to your carriage stuck?

Amy: I'm not sure about our carriage – I'm not 100 per cent sure – but we were split, so half of us went this way, which was into carriage three, and then I'm not sure where they got off at the back of our carriage. I'm not 100 per cent sure on that, to be honest with you. I haven't found anyone from my carriage on KCU, which is quite annoying.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Because you were roughly in the middle, weren't you, in your carriage?

Amy: Yes. No one has come forward on KCU who was in the fourth, so I am quite frustrated. Everyone has their partners and they have seen each other on the carriage, but it's quite frustrating for me because I can't share my experiences with someone who was actually in my carriage, if you know what I mean.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You walked back up the tracks – you didn't go past the affected carriages?

Amy: No, thank God – that is all I say: 'Thank God'.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): One of the things we haven't talked about is the LBRCF. I was just going to ask you if you have had any contact with them.

Amy: Yes; I got a cheque from them.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): What did you think of them?

Amy: They were easy to deal with, nice people. They sent me a lovely letter and stuff like that, 'Sorry you were affected', and then they have sent me another cheque as well, for a lot more money, and they said 'You come into this criteria and we hope this finds you in the best of health and progress for the future', which I thought was very nice. I was very shocked when I got it. It just happened to turn up one day. When I opened it, I thought 'Oh my God'. It is nice, though – definitely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Who told you about them?

Amy: It was on KCU, and then I went onto their website. I went onto their website when they had that criteria 'if you have been off work since' so and so, so I thought I might as well try, and they gave it to me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then the second one just came, as it happens.

Amy: It just came. I thought that was fine, that was great, and then they just sent me another lot of money, which was really nice.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You were in the loop.

Amy: I was.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much indeed – it has been very helpful.

Amy: No problem. It is nice to be listened to – definitely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you feel like you were not before now?

Amy: Yes, definitely. I wasn't listened to, as in no one contacted us. Even when you had the public one, there were a lot of suggestions that could be made to make it safer or whatever. Yes, they had police on for the week after, but then, after that, you don't really see them. Even the bendy buses now are absolutely awful to get on. I have to get one every day and I absolutely hate it, because you don't know who is getting off and who is getting on. The fact that they need to listen to people who survived something like this – they need to listen to us because it will happen again. I just think they definitely need to listen and the fact that they aren't doing a public enquiry is disgusting as well, but I won't go into that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We are not a substitute for a public enquiry, but we will be following up the recommendations that we have received. Some will have budget implications, but we recognise that. It cannot just be left. Thank you very much indeed.

Amy: No problem.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It has been an enormous help to us to put everything into a real context.

Amy: Thanks for listening.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): We have heard a lot of very commonsense points made, have we not?

Richard Barnes (Chair): You are the only people who went through it from beginning to end.

Amy: Unfortunately. I don't say that I am glad, but meeting everyone that I have has made me a stronger person – definitely – which I am glad about.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It has made you a taller person.

Amy: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much for coming in.

(ends)

7 July Review Committee

18 April 2006

Transcript of Meeting with Carol

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which of the four incidents were you involved in?

Carol: I was in the King’s Cross Tube.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you want to talk us through it?

Carol: I got on the Tube at Turnpike Lane, and I remember it being an extremely busy day, extremely busy – one of the busiest I have ever seen, actually. We were all sort of shoving on the train – nothing untoward, just standing up until we got to King’s Cross. Interestingly enough, I noticed a gentleman get on – who I did describe to the police, but I am not sure if it was him or not – and I remember thinking of getting off at King’s Cross because it was so busy, but I stayed on. We went into the tunnel. I don’t remember how long it was, but the bomb went off, and I knew it was a bomb straight away. I instantly knew it was a bomb. It wasn’t the noise – no noise at all – just force, sheer force. I must have lost consciousness for a little while; I’m not sure, but I think it was only a matter of a minute, or maybe two. The next thing I remember was being on the floor and thinking, okay; I had come round a bit. I looked up and down initially for fire; I wasn’t sure if there was going to be fire. Then, I tried to get up and I realised I had lost my leg; I was stuck under debris. I realised I couldn’t get up, realised I lost my leg, and at that point I put a tourniquet on my leg with my cardigan belt because I knew I was losing lots of blood.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are you a nurse?

Carol: I am an operating department practitioner, which is a similar role but only in the theatre, so that is why I knew to do that. There was a lot of screaming going on, I remember telling everyone to calm down and be quiet, that help would come – I didn’t have any doubt about that at all. I wasn’t scared, for me it wasn’t traumatic at all. That was very strange; a very bizarre thing. There wasn’t any pain; nothing at all really. There was a girl who was trapped underneath me and we had a conversation. I couldn’t get off her; I was trying to, but I couldn’t get off her. We held hands and comforted each other. I found out later, after I was pulled out, that she died. The next thing, and it must have been about half an hour... Actually, before that a gentleman had said that he was going to get help. I assume he was the driver because there was no one else on there at that time. The next thing I knew the doctor came on board and prioritised me straight away. He said hello to us – by that time, I knew the girl’s name and she knew mine – and then he went up the end. I could feel myself going, and I must have fallen forward because he said, ‘Carol, are you with us?’ and I sort of grunted at him – I remember grunting and thinking, ‘That doesn’t sound very good’. He instructed police officers to pull me out, and I was carried out. They carried me – I think there were seven or eight of them in all, in succession, carrying me out to Russell Square. We went up in the lift.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that on a stretcher?

Carol: No, a blanket. They had to keep stopping and laying me down on the tracks, and then lifting me back up because it was very awkward for them to carry me. Then we went up in the lift to Russell Square, and I was laid on the concourse. I remember looking across to one of the doctors I work with, saying, ‘It’s Carol; it’s Carol!’ I remember seeing her face, and then I passed out. That is what I remember from that. I think I remember a couple of little bits that are in the back of my head.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You were conscious that it was a doctor from where you work?

Carol: Absolutely. I could see their faces throughout; I knew exactly who it was. I probably thought at that point that I was safe and that it would be okay; I could let go, if you like, from trying to maintain consciousness for that length of time, not knowing how long you are going to be there. I knew it was the doctors I worked with.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You passed out on the concourse. When did you come to? In hospital?

Carol: I was resuscitated at Russell Square and I was put on the first ambulance that came. This is all information that I learned.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you know how long it was?

Carol: I am approximating with my times from what I know. I know the bomb went off at 08.50, and I know that it was probably 20 past or 25 past when I was taken out. Then it took 15 minutes to take me up, and I was actually in the hospital at 09.50, and I was in theatre at 10.00. 09.50 is an accurate time because it is written down in the paperwork and 10.00 is accurate, too.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which hospital was it?

Carol: University College London Hospital (UCLH). Apparently I was semi-conscious; I have no idea other than a few little things in the back of my head. I have no idea what is true and what isn’t; at that point, you don’t.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They had given you a happy pill and you do not care what they...

Carol: At that point of passing out and losing that much blood, your consciousness levels aren’t enough for you to give an accurate description. Up to that point, I remember it very clearly, but I am sure it is very different to what other people have said, as well. We all think we are very clear on that, and actually it’s interesting when we all get together and say stuff. ‘Did that happen?’

Richard Barnes (Chair): What is interesting is the different hospitals that people went to from Russell Square. Some went to St Thomas’s.

Carol: UCLH had just opened, and they only had five intensive care beds as far as I know. At the time, the intensive care wasn’t open; we were their first patients, as far as I am aware, so they didn’t have the resources, I don’t think. I know my hospital took a few in their intensive care before they transferred them out, as well.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that the field hospital? It's not an acute hospital, is it?

Carol: No, it's not an acute hospital. As far as I know, they did extremely well, to be honest.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then what happened?

Carol: I was in intensive care for two weeks. I remember the last parts, the last few days, but before that I have written accounts; my family wrote accounts of what happened, and I have been told what happened by the doctors. I was in and out of consciousness, having lots of hallucinations, and lots of things that went hand in hand with intensive care. Then I woke up. The day I was transferred from intensive care was 21 July, which was the second attack, which I was awake for; they closed UCLH because a gun ran into the hospital. That wasn't a pleasant experience, either.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I can imagine it wasn't. Did you go to the high dependency unit (HDU) then?

Carol: No, they actually kept me in intensive care for a few more days. Because the hospital wasn't open, they didn't have huge facilities there, so I was taken to the acute admissions unit, and I was there for about two-and-a-half weeks. They were fantastic there, absolutely brilliant.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What type of support did you get whilst you were in there?

Carol: I had amazing support; they were fantastic, absolutely amazing. The family liaison officers (FLO's) – there were two of them working at UCLH – were amazing. My family couldn't have lived without them, they say, and the services from UCLH were outstanding, from my point of view, as well. They were very informative, they told us what was going on the whole time, and their care was amazing. They kept me away from everyone and protected us all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Protected you?

Carol: Protected us from the press. As far as I am aware, not one of the five that were in UCLH was known to the press, which is outstanding, as far as I am concerned, especially compared to where I work. They protected everyone from coming in and out of the hospital so much. From my point of view, they were amazing and their care was brilliant.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The protection and making sure who was who when they came to visit wasn't intrusive on your family?

Carol: Not at all, no. I think my family understood. Initially, at the beginning, and this is one point, I came into UCLH as an unknown female. Bear in mind that I was just treated by doctors I work with, and all it says in the policemen's notebooks is, 'My name is Carol and I'm an asthmatic. My name is Carol and I'm an asthmatic' continuously – about 10 pages' worth. That is all I kept saying. My name didn't get through. Although my work hospital knew that I was there, my family didn't. My boyfriend trawled the streets and all through the hospitals trying to find me, and then did it again, and couldn't find me. They weren't releasing any unknown females or anything, which I

can understand. They didn’t find me until about eleven o’clock at night. By that point, I think they thought I was dead.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did they find you, or did the system find them?

Carol: The system didn’t find me or them. The reason they found me is that they actually phoned my work and asked, ‘Have you seen Carol today?’ and they said, ‘Gosh, don’t you know? She’s in UCLH’. When my boyfriend went back to the hospital, they still wouldn’t admit that I was in there. He said, ‘I know she’s in here because I’ve been told she’s in here by the hospital she works for’. He had a photograph of me on his phone, although I looked nothing like it. The police eventually came down and they were able to make sure...

Richard Barnes (Chair): To make sure that he wasn’t...

Carol: In some respects, it’s very bad, but in some respects, at the end of the day, the wrong person didn’t get through.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did he then tell your mum and dad, or your family?

Carol: He phoned them and said he found me, and then they were on their way at that point. Initially, they thought I would be helping, so they thought I wouldn’t be able to get through because of the job that I do. They were looking out for me on the telly trying to find me rushing around helping because they knew all the people from the hospital where I work were helping. It wasn’t until five o’clock that they started to think this was really... I think my boyfriend knew that I would have got in touch somehow.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you give your name at any stage? Were you in a fit state?

Carol: I didn’t give my surname, but I gave my first name the whole time.

Richard Barnes (Chair): To the doctors, to people that knew you?

Carol: Yes. They knew me already, but it was up to the point of passing out. The police officers knew my name. I didn’t give my surname, apparently. I remember saying, ‘My name is Carol’, but I know if I had said my surname, they would have written it down. Like I said, the doctors that work with me were there, and everyone in the theatres knew who I was. They knew that I had been injured because the word had spread. Everyone knew that I was there; no one from there phoned my family, either, which is a fault I have raised with them.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Did your boyfriend or your family try to phone the Casualty Bureau? Who did they try to contact?

Carol: They phoned the emergency number that was given many, many, many times. I wish I had brought one of them with me. They couldn’t get through, initially. They did get through; they just took the details and they were asking questions about what I was wearing and things. I think my family got through before my boyfriend got through, so they then had to ring him and ask what I was wearing, although he didn’t know what I was wearing. That kind of thing. They didn’t have any information, but probably what didn’t help either was that I ended up with someone’s Oyster card in my back pocket

that wasn't mine, and we have a vague idea how it got there. Someone put a coat around me, apparently, on the Tube. It must have dropped out and someone must have thought that it was mine and picked it up. She was blond, and they kept looking at me for ages in intensive care trying to work out if I was the right person – if this was me. They were looking at it and said, 'No, it's not her'. They checked and eventually realised it wasn't me and they scrubbed her off the list.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): What did the Casualty Bureau tell your family? Did they say, 'Try again in two hours', or what?

Carol: They said they would get in contact with them, as far as I am aware. If they had any information, they would contact them, and the hospitals weren't answering any of their telephones. That is why my family initially couldn't get through to my hospital because they weren't answering telephones.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is if you could get through anyway.

Carol: Absolutely. I believe they were told that they would call back if they had any information, which is understandable, considering the amount of people.

Richard Barnes (Chair): At what point did the FLO's get involved?

Carol: Right at the beginning. I don't know what time they arrived at the hospital, but they were there before my family, and I believe they had been there most of the afternoon, but I am not 100% sure on that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): At what point did they get involved with you? Obviously, after intensive care.

Carol: No, in intensive care. They were there every single day.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You weren't kept under then?

Carol: Yes I was but, towards the end, I wasn't. I was more awake and aware that they were there. They were there the whole time. They used to come in at least once a day, but mainly twice, and the two of them would come in all the time, not always together, either, but separately.

Richard Barnes (Chair): When you came to and could talk to them, did they want to interview you, or were they there as a support mechanism?

Carol: They were there as a complete support – no pressure was given for me to interview. In fact, I don't think it was mentioned until I went downstairs to the ward, and then they did mention it to me. They just said, 'When you're ready, let us know and we will arrange it, but only when you're ready'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So they didn't interview you?

Carol: No, they didn't. It was two separate officers.

Richard Barnes (Chair): From SO13?

Carol: I don’t know where they were from, actually. I am not 100% sure.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It wasn’t the FLO’s –

Carol: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They were doing the investigation?

Carol: No. The FLO’s were actually SO19*, I think. I think so. One of them definitely is. They had nothing to do with the interview at all; they weren’t even there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are they still in contact with you?

Carol: I have had Christmas cards and phone calls and things like that from one of them; the other lady, I don’t. She veered off towards the end because she was taken back to her other responsibilities, but one of the officers in particular, she keeps in contact with me and I have her number. I can ring her anytime. I have both of their contact details, actually. There’s no issue. She said if I wanted to contact her, then I can. The last contact I actually had was Christmas.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So it was a good process?

Carol: Absolutely. They were a fantastic support and they were such nice people as well. The support was there. They were very informative. They gave us everything we needed to know. In fact, they probably gave us more than a lot of people received, from what I gather. They picked my family up from the train station, they dropped them off, they arranged for cars, they arranged for public transport for my dad to come down – he was somewhere else and they arranged for that. Everything – nothing was a problem, and it was all paid for and arranged and there was never any issue with anything. They were great. My family loved them to bits. They think they are amazing. They are absolutely amazing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about the other support mechanisms, like the Family Assistance Centre (FAC)? Did your family go there at all?

Carol: My mum and my boyfriend went to the first; they had some kind of meeting or a big open day or something on a Sunday. There was something. It wasn’t where it is now; it was where it was based initially.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): The Royal Horticultural Halls.

Carol: Yes, and they had a big open area where you could go and talk to London Transport about getting your transport fares back and about solicitor’s things and help and information – everything was there. They went down to that and got a lot of information from that, but I don’t think they found it particularly useful, because they had already had all the information from the police officers, because they were so good.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Because you were in the system.

* Metropolitan Police Central Operations Specialist Firearms Command, or CO19, formerly known as SO19

Carol: I was in the system. I couldn’t fail not to be in the system – I was already there. The FAC have always kept in touch with me. They always write to me and invite me to their meetings every month.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Has it changed names to the...?

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): 7 July Assistance Centre.

Carol: Yes. Those people have kept in touch all the time as well. They are a fantastic group who a lot of them volunteer their time and efforts to helping people like me so I am extremely grateful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We have heard evidence from other people where they thought they had got into the system. They gave their name, but it got lost and it wasn’t passed on. Has that happened to you?

Carol: It hasn’t happened to me, in my opinion, but I think sometimes you have to be a bit proactive in things as well. If you want help, there are lots of things out there and I was given information. It is advertised everywhere, so you can get information if you need it. If I hadn’t got in the system, I would have phoned – absolutely. I wouldn’t have sat worrying about it, I would have google searched the information, but then we are all different. Also from what I gather many people have rung many times so they must be frustrated about that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you had any psychological support?

Carol: I’ve had lots of offers of support, but I’ve never needed it. I had an assessment when I was at UCLH, before I left. They gave me a psychological assessment and I went back to see the doctor once after I left. I had an offer of Victim Support; Victim Support was amazing, as well. They came to see me, actually, in intensive care, as far as I know, and to see my family. I met up with them – a gentleman from there – a few times and then I decided it wasn’t what I needed. Since then, I have had offers where I go to my limb-fitting centre. They have given me offers of psychological support. I have actually had a psychological assessment from them too, because they were worried about me, which led to nothing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It allayed their fears.

Carol: It did, yes. I was happy, so I would go along with whatever they wanted. It didn’t worry me. I can have counselling there – it’s not an issue. So I have had all that support from them.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How well has the limb fitting gone?

Carol: Fantastic. Brilliant. They are amazing; they are really supportive. Their physio is fantastic. She is a limb physio specialist, so I have the best care there and the prosthetists and doctors are also great.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which one do you go to?

Carol: Stanmore. Sometimes it’s a bit busy there, but you don’t always have... I’m usually supposed to have two appointments, but I sometimes only get one, but I’m not

so worried about it now. Initially, at the beginning, there was huge support from the doctors there. Again, everything was fine. The only issue they had there was a slight issue with cost, as with every NHS place, but I’m a bit more aware of it, because of where I work, and I know there are ways you can apply for equipment if you have special circumstances although you don’t always get it as we all know. They are really good.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about support groups – have you joined any of those?

Carol: No. I joined this King’s Cross United (KCU) – they have a website – and I do read what’s on there but I personally don’t find them useful and I think they make each other worse, from what they say, psychologically. I don’t think it’s very good for me to be part of that.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It is fair enough if you just have a different take on it.

Carol: Absolutely. I have a completely different take on it. Like I said, from what I read... they get a lot out of speaking to each other and they are very good for each other and I shouldn’t criticise that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We need to understand: should the state help support groups, trigger them, or how they should evolve? People have differing views on this matter.

Carol: My personal view is that one person complains about one thing, and someone else says, ‘Yes, I felt that’ and ‘Yes, me too’ and, from something quite small, it creates a huge problem. In a situation like this there is a lot of anger. Like I said, the people who use this website – most of them, from what I gather – are not injured people. They are people who walked off the train, who have completely different experiences to the people who were injured. There is a lot of anger and resentment towards the Government and practices, where I don’t have any of that. I see things very, very differently, and I think it’s a very bad thing for me personally to be involved in. But, it is good for sources of information definitely. That is a good thing, having that source of information about ‘Cosmopolitan wants to write a story’, and if you want to, you ring the number and you go and do that and for information relating to memorials and stuff. For things like that, it’s hugely useful, but I personally don’t feel that they are moving on, and I don’t have those feelings, so I don’t find it very useful for me, but as I keep saying we are all different and have all had very different experiences.

Richard Barnes (Chair): If it is any comfort to you, you’re not alone in that. There is a marked difference between the severely injured and the traumatised.

Carol: Absolutely. I got off that train and I am severely injured, but you can’t change it. There is nothing you can do, so move on and try the best you can, whereas there is a lot of negativity from their side, which isn’t something I need to be involved in, in my own personal view.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you felt that your employers have been supportive?

Carol: They have been amazing; they are amazingly supportive. There is no pressure to do anything. I could have gone back when I wanted to; I could have done what hours I wanted. I don’t have to do anything that I don’t want to do. There have been times

when I have been back and I have had to go home or I have had to ring up sick and say, ‘Sorry, I can’t come in’, and I feel bad for doing that, but there is no pressure at all on me. They are great, and their support network is there too, from that side of things as well. If I wanted a psychological assessment now, I could have it there, with counselling and all sorts of things that are offered to me, which is a standard thing. It’s not just for me, but they have a good back-to-work programme system there as well.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that due to that particular hospital?

Carol: Yes – it is particular to them. They were the first people I worked with in London, and I haven’t had that kind of support network from any other employer I have worked for, to be honest. But I started 10 years ago and then I had a couple of years out travelling and then I came to London, so things have probably changed in a lot of places where I have worked as the years have gone on anyway, so they could just be as good. However I have had huge support from the other hospitals I used to work with since this incident. They all got in touch with me and have fully supportive and sending me lots of messages.

Richard Barnes (Chair): May I ask how you get to work?

Carol: I drive. I wouldn’t do it any other way – I can’t. I don’t have any interest in getting on the Tube. I don’t need to put myself through that. I have a car through the Motability scheme. Only for this year, apparently. I’m not particularly happy about that. An amputee is considered a higher rate. Part of your allowance is care for Motability and movement.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you have to be high rate to get Motability?

Carol: You have to be high rate, whereas an amputee, once you start walking more and more, they don’t class you as a high rate; therefore, they will take the car away. So I’m not very happy about that because, if they take my car away, I won’t be able to get to work, because I can’t. I won’t travel on public transport anymore, which is a shame, because I used to with no problem at all. I didn’t have a problem with it at all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you had any contact from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)?

Carol: Yes, I have. They have written to me a few times. I have a pile of letters at home from all sorts of people. I am trying to think. I think the first contact with them was probably about St Paul’s Cathedral.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They wrote to you?

Carol: They wrote to me and asked me if I wanted to go. In fact, I got more tickets from them as well. They were great. Then I got a video sent through of the event, and then they wrote to me recently and asked me if I wanted to attend the meeting with Tessa Jowell (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) in May. They asked me if I wanted to attend that. They have been fine. Again, the letter was dated 22 March, and it ‘must be a coincidence’. I have no thoughts about that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You’re not into that.

Carol: I’m not; it’s a letter. The offer is there to go and see, so I’m not very political like that. Yes, there are political things that go on all the time and, if you let yourself get caught up, then maybe you should be a politician, but I’m not really interested. I have the opportunity to do it and I will probably go along. I have said I will go along and sit and listen. I will probably listen more than anything, just out of interest. Things that I may have to say are for me personally as an individual or as an amputee specifically not necessarily for everyone.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I get the impression your family lives outside London.

Carol: Yes, they do.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was there any support provided locally for them?

Carol: Yes, there was. My mum had Victim Support. They live in Kent. My mum was offered Victim Support, and my whole family were, actually.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So they must have been notified from Victim Support in London.

Carol: From here, yes, they were.

Richard Barnes (Chair): To the local one.

Carol: Yes – that is right.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And they then got in touch with them in Kent.

Carol: Yes. I’m not 100% sure, but my mum had a FLO in Kent. One of the local police officers got in touch – the FLO from here got in touch with my mum’s local police officer and picked her up from the station to take her to and from.

Richard Barnes (Chair): She was picked up at both ends?

Carol: Yes, my dad would drive – because my family is separated – and my dad would have had the same offer, but he wouldn’t have taken it. My mum said she found that extremely useful. She had Victim Support from them, as well. Then, she was passed on to her GP, I think. My mum actually has post-traumatic stress. My mum’s mum died last year as well.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Your grandmother?

Carol: My grandmother died. As I came out of hospital, she went in and then she died. My mum wasn’t particularly well, but she’s getting there. The support they had was great.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about local hospital support?

Carol: I haven’t needed to go. I live in Crouch End. My general practitioner (GP) is amazing. Again, all great things; I haven’t had a bad experience.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That matters as well.

Carol: I haven't had a bad experience. My GP is amazing. They have been so supportive. I can just ring them for absolutely anything. They all know me – all the receptionists know me. They are all fantastic. I just ring and I get an appointment straightaway, they come and see me; initially, in the first stages, they came to see me and they would keep in contact. When I wasn't in contact with them, they would phone and find out how I was. They are amazing. He has referred me for certain other things that have arisen since – things that weren't picked up in hospital. I have had huge support. I find that, as soon as someone knows you have been involved and severely injured in an incident, I suppose this is where the difference is between non-injured and injured comes in.

As soon as they know that I have been severely injured, there seems to be a huge sympathy for that and an understanding of the need. They were there straight away with their services. My GP is amazing – he really is fantastic. He doesn't give me everything I want, which is great as well, as I know – it's a good GP service. It is, 'Yes, you need this, but, no, maybe you should look at alternative things for this' – for aches and pains that have happened since. They won't just refer you back to the hospitals; he would rather try to deal with it in other ways as well, which is great, which I know is really good, otherwise you would be in for surgery every five minutes of the day. The appointments, initially, were quite intense, but I wanted to go home. When I was in UCLH, we taught my boyfriend how to do sterile dressings and gloves and things, so I could go home.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How has he coped?

Carol: He has been fantastic – no problems at all. He loved putting gloves on and dressing my wounds, being able to help when and where he could. He just wanted to help me as much as he could. He has been amazingly supportive and really fantastic. His work was hugely supportive for him, as well. He had months off work – two and a half months, I think. The same sort of time as me; I came home and he was home a week, then went back to work.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Does he work for a state institution?

Carol: He works for a council, environmental health. But someone else who works there who had a close relative in the same hospital as me didn't have that support. It just seemed to be my boyfriend's team that were extremely good and his managers were extremely supportive of him. They still are, actually. He had to ring up the other day; he didn't want to leave me because I had a very bad day and he just phoned in and said, 'I don't want to leave Carol', and they said 'fine, not a problem.'

Richard Barnes (Chair): You make it sound hit and miss.

Carol: It was for us. Obviously, you don't know the conversations that have happened between these two people, but my boyfriend had spoken to him, and he hadn't had that support and was made to take annual leave, rather than having compassionate leave. I think he got the standard compassionate leave, and then he was made to take annual leave. His relative was very, very sick and needed a lot more support than anyone – than me. He was, like I said, made to take holidays, which was a shame. He would be going to hospital, going back to work, going back to hospital, and I think he found it very exhausting. I don't know the conversations that have happened about

that, and you don’t know what has happened previously. You don’t know if he has had six months off previously or something. But as far as I am aware he hadn’t.

Richard Barnes (Chair): If there was one thing you would like to improve or change with the aftercare, what would it be? You seem to have had an amazing story.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Aftercare being from the moment after it happened.

Carol: It’s very hard. I have had conversations with people from the emergency services as well, and the police officers – the Metropolitan Police officers – who carried me. I am in touch with them and we have these conversations. One of the biggest things for me is that my name wasn’t carried through, and I was saying it constantly. This was my name. That wasn’t carried through. I know, in emergency services, that your name isn’t the most important thing in a situation like that, when you have 200 casualties, but that was important to me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It could have been a tag.

Carol: It could have been. Someone could have had a marker pen and just written ‘Carol’ across my head. It’s difficult, like I have said, and I know it’s difficult, because I know, if it had been the other way round and if I had been helping, I am sure I would have been saying, ‘Well, it’s really hard to do that’. But it was an important thing that my family could have found me a lot sooner. The point was I was resuscitated at the Tube station and then I was taken to hospital, but I could have died in hospital three hours later, and in that three hours, my family could have been informed and they could have been there by then. Maybe not, but it would have been ‘We have a Carol who is x age’ or whatever, so it would have been quicker to find me. Like I said, I don’t know what you can do about that in that kind of situation.

Other than that, I think the only thing that I have is that the care that I receive with my limb, for example, is down to what the NHS can afford with regards to the type of limb itself. They are very good generally and I’m not complaining about the people in particular, but their budget doesn’t allow for me to have the best of that. I understand that there are people born without limbs and they need them, and there are variations – they have to do it for everyone – but obviously that is a frustration from my point. Apart from that, I have really had no bad experience.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Clearly, there are other medical issues which can arise from having been in the dust and the smoke and the grime and whatever else. Have the Health Protection Agency (HPA) or anybody else been in touch about what you might have breathed in or what you were involved in?

Carol: No, I haven’t been told anything about what I might have breathed in. I am very aware of what I may have breathed in. I was informed by UCLH, before I left hospital, about the potential of having HIV, and I was offered a test. It’s a very small chance – extremely small – all in all, with everything that was down there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do they test simply because of the blood and whatever – bodily fluids, let us call it?

Carol: That they said that? I think there was a potential that, if you have an explosion, something could go into you very quickly. But, like I said, a very, very small chance. As

soon as HIV leaves the body, it's dies anyway. The girl underneath me, we were probably bleeding into each other as well, because we had open wounds, one on top of each other, so that was why.

Richard Barnes (Chair): But how about lungs or anything like that?

Carol: No. In intensive care, I had severe lung problems, but as far as I am aware, there was nothing about long-term effects, I don't know.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Do you think you should have been given advice about that, or anything should have gone to your GP?

Carol: I think I am more concerned about the effects later on in life.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): That is really what I am thinking of.

Carol: Absolutely, because I don't know what's down there. They closed one of the Tube stations the other day to remove asbestos from the walls, and you think, 'If there was asbestos there and King's Cross is the deepest Tube, are you telling me there's none down there?' Obviously, that is a concern, and the smoke was thick, black smoke and so we couldn't see very far. Obviously, you don't know what that bomb was and things like that, so yes, definitely, that's a concern.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It is helpful for us to be able to raise this with you, because we can tell that you can deal with it. We have had a number of people where we have just felt we don't want to add to their worries.

Carol: No, I am fine. Please ask me anything – I have no problem with answering anything. Again, the difference between me and someone who wasn't injured is the fact that they walked out. I had tubes and drips and drains, so they were able to try to clear a lot of what was in my lungs out, so others may have still a lot of that inside. I can understand where their concern for that is, definitely, and it does concern me that, later on in life, there is nothing I am going to be able to do about that. I don't like to think about this but, with Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) claims, I cannot claim for asbestos ruining my lungs 20 years later. It's not going to happen.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you done a CICA claim?

Carol: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you find them?

Carol: I don't deal with them, my solicitor does.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You will be advising everyone to get a solicitor.

Carol: I do; I do advise everyone to get a solicitor. I'm lucky though; don't get me wrong; if I had to pay for it, I wouldn't be able to afford it. Obviously, there was a whole group of solicitors from the Law Society who did pro bono work for seriously injured patients. However there are a lot of people who do not have that service and will not be getting that kind of advice. I consider myself lucky to have that available to me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you get in touch with them?

Carol: The FLO’s gave us the information. I think the 7 July Assistance Centre sent some information after as well. I have had people who I’ve met who have been seriously injured and they have been telling me, and I have said, ‘Get in touch with a solicitor’ and given them the number and handed out the number myself, because my solicitor is fantastic – absolutely brilliant.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Does it help to take all that process?

Carol: I don’t have to deal with it. He has brought up things up that I would never know about my particular case. He also applied to the bar pro bono, and we now have a barrister and a QC working for us, for advice only, so we don’t pay for that either, which is fantastic. See what I mean about having a good story to tell? I have no complaints – I am very lucky and well looked after.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): What was your advice when you spoke in Amsterdam?

Carol: I told my story and just said that, basically the reason they are doing their jobs is to save the likes of me and the public. If the people here hadn’t done their jobs properly, I would have died – there is no question. If the policemen hadn’t come into that Tube station – if they had come five minutes later – I probably would have been dead or died on the way out. I wouldn’t have survived. My advice was, ‘Think of me next time you are in a situation like that and know that you are doing a worthwhile job and you are saving people like me. It could be your family’ and that kind of thing really; just a storytelling thing and just saying how wonderful the police and emergency services were here.

I was just saying about their bravery, because they don’t have to do the things that they did. I think that is a lack of understanding as well here, in this country, that people believe that just because you are a police officer or fireman, you should go straight in to this tunnel and pull people out. I know that that isn’t the case – it’s safety first, especially if they thought there was a secondary device, and they did think there was, but they still carried on. They ultimately saved my life completely, and the doctor and everybody else, obviously.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are you suggesting that they treat it as individuals rather than dealing with an incident?

Carol: Who?

Richard Barnes (Chair): The responders, which could be the police.

Carol: Should treat people as individuals? No, that isn’t what I am saying at all but of course everyone should be treated as individuals. What I am saying is that we should treat them as individuals and realise that they aren’t just under this hat that the police have. They are human beings who have families and they don’t have to do those things. The fact that we believe that people should run into burning buildings, just to save someone, when they are in uniform, I don’t believe that’s true. Like I said, it’s safety first and you don’t want another 20 casualties on your hands, so that’s why they

don’t do it. I think people should have a bit more respect for people not going in there. Like I said, there are a lot of people who said, ‘There were police hanging around and all this fire service hanging around’ – they had to assess the situation first. When you think about it, probably the bomb squad should have gone in first and checked that it was all safe before they went in, and they didn’t. These people just ran in and saved us. They are amazing people.

Dale Langford (Committee Administrator): Did you have any dealings with the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund (LBRCF)?

Carol: I did. I had wonderful stories about them. They are amazing guys and girls. Emma, I think the lady’s name is, who I dealt with. The money that has come from there has just been superb, and stuff I couldn’t dream of – money that I couldn’t dream of, that I have never seen before in my life. It has come in extremely useful in my situation. They were very helpful indeed.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you approach them or did they approach you?

Carol: The forms were given to me. I received my first cheque while I was still in hospital. The forms were given to me in hospital by either my FLO or when my family went to the Assistance Centre that day. I think we got both, actually; I think we got two lots of forms.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You make it sound like you had one lot of money before you even applied for it.

Carol: No; we literally sent the form off while I was in hospital – it was something to do. We signed the form, sent it off and, within less than a week, we had the money. It was unbelievable. We sent it and it was straight away – the first, initial payment, which was great.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And the CICA award drags on.

Carol: Yes, that drags on. I had my first amount. Because of the injuries that I have, they gave me the money for my leg, because there is no question about the money for losing a leg. As for the other injuries, because things are ongoing with my hospital care, it’s very difficult to make a decision about what is going to be more than the other. My solicitor has dealt with a lot of the stuff that I haven’t had to deal with, so I have been very lucky, but it drags on as well because of timings; by the time he sends me a letter and I send it back. Like I said, they have given me that initial payment for my leg, anyway, which is, again, a lot of money, so I am very financially secure, to be honest – very lucky indeed.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You are an amazingly articulate lady.

Carol: Thank you. I am very confident. I would like to think that, even if I wasn’t injured, I wouldn’t have reacted in that way, but you don’t know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did they give you a tracheotomy as well?

Carol: I am going in for surgery on that on Monday, actually, to tidy it up a little.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Where did they do that – at the station?

Carol: No in ITU. They are also taking a few bits of shrapnel out. Actually, that’s a concern – big shrapnel. You don’t know what it is. It’s not very nice, not knowing whether it is some kind of bone stuck in your arm or whether it is a bit of Tube seat.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I won’t ask where from.

Carol: From my leg. It’s quite funny actually, looking at it, thinking, ‘What is that?’ and then realising that it has a bit of yellow and a bit of white on it where it’s plastic from the workings around the tube. It’s quite amusing to me. I am alive and the girl who was underneath me died. If they had taken her out first she might be the one sitting here talking to you, so I am very, very grateful. Like I said, the anger that has been directed isn’t me. I don’t like to be angry about it – there’s no point. The guy is dead. If he was alive, it might be a different person sitting here, an angry one.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It has opened my eyes. Those who were injured, they outwardly seem to be on the path to recovery much quicker than those who were further away.

Carol: I cannot wait to be back to normal – well, as normal as you can be with my injuries. I think the reality is, is that you can’t go through an incident like this without having certain factors that are going to affect your life. For me, forcing yourself onto the Tube isn’t a really good idea as well. People say ‘If you want to get on the Tube, we will support you’, and it is almost like, ‘Should I get on the Tube?’ You think, ‘Actually, I think if I get on the Tube, I’m just going to traumatise myself’. It isn’t something that I think is a good thing for me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you so much for coming in.

Carol: Not a problem. I hope it has done some good.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It has; it is very important to hear different perspectives and that it is not all negative.

Carol: That’s why I’m here, and I wish I had had the guts to come on that day. I knew if I said what I just said now, I would have been on the front page of every single paper in London and I just thought I don’t need to be there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That’s why we set up the alternative.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): It has equal weight. In terms of the Committee’s report, what you have said today has equal weight to what was said in the public meeting.

Carol: Absolutely. But I just didn’t feel the need to... I wish I had been able to do that, because I think it would have been good for other people to hear that this isn’t how we all necessarily feel about things but, like I said, people are different. I hope there will be good things highlighted, as well as bad. Actually, that is one complaint I have – the fire service were missed out of the St Paul’s Cathedral memorial. They were there, but they were missed out of the candles that went round the hall. A police officer carried one and a paramedic and someone else, but the fire service were just

almost completely missing. Once we realised – it took a little while for us to realise, but then we realised, ‘Gosh, the fire service were just completely missed out’, so that wasn’t very good.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What do you want to happen on the 7 July commemoration day?

Carol: I am meeting up with other amputees in the evening. We have a little group of us who know each other. In the morning, my family and I will probably go to lay flowers at Russell Square and hopefully meet with the family of the girl who died. Apart from that, it would be nice to have a memorial somewhere but I think that these memorial things should be left to the relatives of the people who died. It’s not about me it’s about those who died – I don’t think it should be my decision.

Richard Barnes (Chair): When did you sling your stick?

Carol: December.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you so much for coming in.

Carol: It was really lovely to meet you.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Good luck.

(ends)

7 July Review Committee

11 April 2006

Transcript of Private Meeting: George

Richard Barnes (Chair): You watched us on the 23rd (March)?

George: I did, and I thought it was excellent. It was about three hours. I knew it was long, but it was well worth the wait to watch it. I was very impressed. I knew a number of the King's Cross people on there, because we are all members of King's Cross United. Yes, it was very impressive.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You obviously thought it was worthwhile. Is that what prompted you to get in touch yourself?

George: Yes, if I am honest. I knew that this was being put on. It did cross my mind to come along, not necessarily to speak. I am angry, if I am honest, but that's another story.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's all part of the same story, George.

George: Yes. I got on at Turnpike Lane, Piccadilly Line. I originally went down the stairs to get on the train. I thought, 'That's all I want.' There must have been, I don't know, 100 people there. They had stopped people going through the barriers. I thought I would go back upstairs; there is a little café around the corner, and I will get a cup of tea. I went back upstairs. In 15 years, I have never done this: I got to the top of the stairs, and for some unknown reason, I turned around, I went back down the stairs, and they let me through. I said to myself, 'There you go. They let you through.'

Richard Barnes (Chair): This is because of overcrowding?

George: Yes, that and apparently, as I have now found out, it was delayed. There had been a number of delays – signal problems, the usual. I thought, 'Okay, we got through.' The train came in. We all got on it. I wouldn't say it was packed, but there were a good few people on it, and I was standing. I got on the first carriage, the second set of double doors on the platform side. There was a young lady, who was where I would normally try to get. When it starts to get packed, if you're standing, you all manoeuvre to a certain position; because you can't sit, you manoeuvre, which is what I do. I thought, 'If this young lady moves, that is where I am going to go.' You're out of the way of people coming on and getting off, when it is getting packed.

At every successive station we went through, they are all starting to come on. As I say, there was this delay anyway, so we are now filling up. I am still standing. We got to King's Cross. I am thinking to myself, 'Well, there is going to be another load of people who are going to force their way on, because that is what they do.' This young lady who was standing where I eventually was, that was the best move she ever made, because she got off at King's Cross. I thought, 'Fantastic,' so I moved into that position. I thought, 'I only have two stops. Get out at Holborn. I could survive this – not a problem.'

I'm out of the way, doors open and another dozen force their way on, including Jermaine Lindsay. I now know that he was approximately one metre to my left but, between me and him, there must have been – I don't know – 30 people, 40 people, but by now it is packed solid. I'm up against the glass partition, with my back to the double doors, facing the other double doors. The doors open, another dozen force their way on. I thought, 'That is all I want, but it is only two stops.' The doors shut. The timeframe now – other people may say different, but I'm only going from how I lived it – it was approximately 12 seconds, 12-15 seconds, and then this almighty bang.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The Tube had pulled out, had it?

George: The Tube was moving. The doors shut; we started to pull into the tunnel. It was approximately 12-15 seconds. I'm led to believe – again, it is all later research, people I have spoken to since – the end carriage was only about 50 metres from the end of King's Cross. This almighty bang. I said, 'What the effing hell's that?' In this millisecond, from the time that went, there was this bright, orange light opposite, and I'm facing the double doors, with my back to the doors on the platform side. In that millisecond, it went from a bright orange to nothing. What the hell was that? Of course, audibly I hear a lot – screaming, praying. We now know that 25 people around me were just outright killed; another 25 people were seriously injured.

My first reaction was – I knew where I was in relation to the carriage, and I knew I was on the first carriage – I thought, 'We have hit a train.' My first thought was, 'We have hit a train; the driver is dead' I can't see anything. It's pandemonium; there is black smoke pouring in and I'm having a hell of a job to breathe anyway. I'm thinking, all in these seconds, 'This isn't good. This isn't good, because, if this is followed by fire, or more dense smoke, you're not getting out of this, George.' I had literally written myself off; I felt this is where it ends. 'You're not getting out of this.' I couldn't see. I had never experienced anything like that before. I can't talk for other carriages but, in the first carriage, you could see nothing.

Then somebody said, 'Has anybody got a torch?' I thought, 'That is fair enough.' He said, 'Get your mobile.' What is the point of getting a mobile phone out? Then, apparently, the modern phone, if you open them up, they have quite a bright light. All you see is a beam about half an inch in diameter. You couldn't see the hand that was holding that light; you couldn't see the arm; you certainly couldn't see the person that was holding it. They soon put them away, because it wasn't having any effect at all.

There was this, I assume it was a West Indian lady because she was praying very loudly. There were people screaming. There were people saying, 'Get the doors open. We will smash the doors.' Somebody tried to get the door open where I had my back up against, but they soon gave up because I think the pressure was still on the actual door mechanism, and they gave up. They did get it slightly open; there was a slight change to the air that was coming in, and then they gave up. I couldn't see them. Nobody spoke to me; I did not speak to them, because I couldn't see anybody. For me, that was one of my problems. You could audibly hear a lot, but visually, you saw nothing.

After about – again the timeframe may be different – I do not know, four or five minutes, it did seem to calm down a bit. Even the lady who was praying, she calmed down a bit. There was obviously moaning going on – a lot of moaning. Then, somebody said, in a very commanding voice, 'Right, the driver has said...' When he mentioned this word 'driver' my spirits were lifted, because up to that point I thought I

was a goner anyway. I thought we had hit another train. If we had hit another train, we all know how far between the driver and the front of his cab is. If we hit another train, he is dead; he is finished. We no longer have guards, so we have no guard, no driver, you're stuck down in the tunnel, you have this black smoke pouring in, what do you do? When this guy said 'the driver said', I thought, 'The driver is alive' I managed to work that out. Maybe two or three minutes after that, this same guy said, 'Right, we're now going to walk through the driver's cab, on to the track, and we're going to walk to Russell Square.'

He said, 'We're now going to walk.' I knew where I was in relation to the cab; I knew it was approximately 10 metres between me and the driver's cab. I knew I had to put one step, two step – bearing in mind that I'm standing – a sharp right, and I now know I'm in between the passengers. I couldn't see anything. I didn't know what I was standing on, because I still at that time didn't know what had happened. I just thought we had hit another train, and that was it, and I started to walk. I don't think I stood on anybody, but hopefully I didn't. It was only until I got about a metre from the inner door that the driver probably opened up that I saw this light. I thought, 'That is the first bit of light I have seen since the bomb went off.'

I went through the door. There were two drivers that day. I think it was the driver and the co-driver. One was on his way to the depot. He helped me down on to the track. There was this guy behind me, who had completely lost it; he was completely traumatised, freaked out, unbelievable. He was all over the place. He couldn't stand up. Bearing in mind we now have to walk between the live rail and the rail on the left, although we had been told that the power had been turned off. I said to this guy, 'Look, hang on to the back of my coat. We are going to live; we are going to get out of this.' The fact that they turned the tunnel lights on was fantastic because, coming from that hellhole with no lights and not really pleasant to breathe it all in, into the tunnel, I thought, 'I'll have some of this. This is fantastic – lights, no smoke.'

Richard Barnes (Chair): The emergency lights came on after you got out of the Tube?

George: At one point they came on, I don't know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They weren't on all the time?

George: No. There were no emergency lights, nothing, in the first carriage. The lights I'm talking about are the tunnel lights.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I realise that.

George: There was never ever, in the first carriage, any emergency light, because the whole lot blew. There was nothing; there were no lights of any description at any time once the bomb blew. The only lights I ever saw were when that door was opened, and I reached about a metre from the door, and I thought, 'Ah, there are some lights.' As I stepped out, I was helped out on to the track, the lights either side of the tunnel were on. I thought, 'Fantastic.' That in itself was a massive boost; I was really pleased about that.

This guy, as I say, had completely lost it. I said, 'Look, mate, hold on to the back of my coat,' because he couldn't stand up, 'Hang on to my coat.' Due to the nature of the way we were walking, between the live rail and the other rail, you couldn't have him by

the side of you. Had I been able to, I would have put my arm around him, and somebody else would have done. You couldn't do that. I said, 'Hang on to my coat, and we are going to walk. We are going to get out of here. We are alive, and we are going to walk to Russell Square.' That's what we did. There were about 20 people, I suppose, that I could see walking in an orderly fashion – all very English, really – everybody with their own thoughts. There was no panic at that point, other than this poor guy who was moaning and groaning. Even he had sort of toned it down; other than that, it was very orderly. I thought to myself, 'This is all very English, isn't it?' It's a silly thing to go through your mind – very surreal.

We are walking up the track. I don't know; it took 15-20 minutes. Again, time was a very strange thing that day. This guy was hanging on to me. Every now and again he would drop his grip. There was a guy behind him who picked him up, and he grabbed my coat again. We got to Russell Square, and we saw the station come into view, which was on our left. There were three Underground guys there with the fluorescent things on. They were helping us up on to the platform. This guy, obviously they helped him up. I left him with those people, because there wasn't much that I could do. I suppose I was in a certain amount of shock myself.

In 15 years, I have never been to Russell Square – never. I have never got off, got on, never used it at all. I looked up, and there was a sign that says 'the lift'. I thought, 'Right, lift.' I walked round to my left, pressed the button; the lift came down. There was another West Indian lady – I don't know, she looked 25 or 30s – I don't think I spoke to her a lot, but we got in the lift, went up and the lift doors opened. It is very, very narrow. I don't know if you've ever been to Russell Square Underground. It's worth a visit. I came out of the lift, threw a left. It's not even as wide as from there to that wall [20 feet]. As you come out of the lift, it's not even that wide. You have the ticket machines there, but it is very narrow.

I came out. I looked around. There were about 20 people there, maybe 25. Injuries, but there didn't appear to be anything serious at that point – walking wounded. There was a young lady sitting on the floor; her knee was bleeding, and she had completely lost it; she was very traumatised, on her mobile screaming at her husband – screaming at somebody. I walked round the corner; there were other people there sitting down, walking around in a bit of a daze, I suppose. At some point, I can't remember what point it was after I had come out of the lift, but at some point, they were rushing in these dozen shrink-wrapped bottles of water. Unwrapping them, 'Do you want water?' I took a bottle, and I shared it with some other young lady.

Again, at some point, I don't know what the timeframe was, a young woman, who she was I don't know – she wasn't in uniform – said, 'Are you okay?' I said, 'I know I have something in the back of my neck.' When whatever it was happened, I thought a fluorescent light tube had blown. Not in my experience does that happen – a fluorescent light tube blown – it's a silly thing to go through your mind. I knew that something had hit me at the back of my neck, because I put my hand on my neck. Although I couldn't see it, I could feel there was blood. I said, 'I know there is something at the back of my neck.' She looked at it and said, 'Yes, you have got some glass in your neck.' She did take that out. She said, 'It appears to be superficial.' Then she went off. Again, the timeframe when this other guy came up to us, no uniform, who it was I don't know – I think he may have been a policeman because he had an A4 notepad – and said, 'I would like to take your details, please.' I gave him my details – name, telephone, usual things. He then went off.

What was being bandied around by other passengers who were around – I spoke to someone and said, 'Do you know what happened down there?' 'That person over there said it was a power surge.' I said, 'Oh, right.' Again, I think I had realised by then that we hadn't hit another train, because I had actually walked out through the front of the cab, so it wasn't that, which I was pleased about. Other people had said, 'I think something dropped off the train, and it hit the tunnel wall, and that is what caused the problem.' Then I saw this guy standing over just to the left of the lifts. For some reason, I thought he was the driver, because he had a green, fluorescent jacket on. I thought he was the driver, so I went up to this guy, and said, 'Excuse me,' I said, 'but are you a driver?' He said, 'Yes I'm actually a driver.' He said, 'I was on the train that you just came off.' I said, 'Oh.' He said, 'I'm not the driver of the train. I'm on my way to the depot. The driver of the train is still down there.' I said, 'Oh right. I have been told it was a power surge.' His words to me were, 'No, never was that a power surge. I have been involved with power surges, and with power surges you never lose the emergency lights, to start with. I just spoke to somebody and they said there had been incidents all over London – Aldgate.' I can't remember whether he mentioned Tavistock Square at the time; he may have done, but I can't remember. He then said that, 'I have just spoken to somebody who has come back from the front carriage, where you have just come from, and he said, "It's carnage down there."' In my understanding of the English language, you don't lose that word lightly. He said, 'It's absolute carnage.'

I'm still trying to take it all in. For me, for that day, I have said it a number of times, it is a very surreal experience. It is almost as if I'm up here watching it all unfold. Even now, sometimes I think, 'Was I actually there?' Obviously I was, but that is how I respond to it.

I thought, 'Oh, right.' I'm now still standing by the lifts just to the left of this. I just happened to look up and I saw these people coming out, and they had this stretcher. I thought, 'Somebody has been injured.' I thought, 'They are going to go past me, go round, and put them in an ambulance.' They brought them round, and I thought, 'What are you bringing them round here for? Surely you're going to go out the front.' There has to be an ambulance, but there didn't appear to be any ambulances. They brought them out and they put them right down in front of me – the first one.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This is on the floor?

George: On the floor – right in front of me. I'm standing up by the wall. I look down, and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It could have been male or female, black, white; it could have been anything; it was just black. The first thing I noticed was that the legs had gone. From the knees down, there were no legs. They had feeds into them and they were trying to do things. I'm saying to myself, 'I can't believe what I'm seeing.' Then about, not even two minutes, it might have been a minute, I looked up, and then another one on a stretcher and they put that one down by the side. There was no leg on one side, ankle blown on the other one. Again, all black – you wouldn't know what they were.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that because of the dust and the smoke?

George: Yes – just all black. Again, there was a third one they put down in the same area. That one, ankle blown – no ankle. I thought, 'Well, this is all a bit out of my experience, quite frankly.' I could not believe what I was seeing. I thought, 'This is

ridiculous. The world's gone barmy.' By this time, we had had the news that there were other things that had gone on. By this time, there were people running in and out, and it had all been taped off outside. I thought, 'I've had enough of this. I'm off.'

I went out, and there was a uniformed policeman standing outside. I went up to this guy and said, 'Look, can I leave here?' He said, 'Have they taken your details?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Are you all right?' I said, 'I'm all right, but you want to look at some of the people in there. You want to look at them. They're not all right. Can I go?' He said, 'Yes.' I went. I wandered off down the road and, by this time, there were TV crews, photographers and people. I just wanted to get home.

I had, prior to this, managed to speak to my wife. This was round about 09.20, 09.30, whatever time it was we eventually got out. I got through to her on my mobile. I spoke to my firm and said that there had been an incident and I would not be coming to work. They were very understanding. They had not heard anything. I did try again later on that morning, prior to leaving the station, at about 09.50, but you couldn't. I'm on O2 and that went. I thought, 'Fair enough. I spoke to the wife, spoke to the firm; I'm covered from those points of views, and I wandered off.' I thought, 'I'm off now.'

I don't know what time it was when I left; it was certainly before 11.00. It was maybe 10.45; I don't know. I wandered off down the road and thought I could get a bus and go home. I knew the Underground wouldn't be running. I wandered off down the road. I didn't really know where I was going; I just kept walking. I saw this woman standing outside this building; I think she was having a cigarette break. I went up to her and said, 'Excuse me, love, but can you tell me where I can get a bus?' She said, 'Are you all right?' 'Yes. There has been some kind of incident at the Underground. I just want to get a bus and get home.' She said, 'I tell you what, why don't you come with me and we'll have a cup of tea?' I thought, 'Yes, I wouldn't mind a cup of tea. I'm a bit dry.'

We went down into the basement area. This turned out to be The (Royal) National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) in Judd Street. They were fantastic. I went down into the basement. There were already at least a dozen ladies there; apparently they all worked for a women's magazine in Soho, but they were told by the police to get off the road, get into any building anywhere, which is what they did. I started talking to them, and had a cup of tea. Then this other lady came up to me with the original lady, and said, 'This is Jane. She is our first-aid lady. She wanted to look at you, to examine you.' They took me off for first aid. She said, 'Right, you have glass behind your ear; you have glass in your head.' I said, 'I knew I had something in the back of my neck, but I wasn't aware of the rest of it.' She got the glass out – again, thankfully it was superficial.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was it bleeding?

George: Yes, it was bleeding, but I wasn't aware of that. She got all that out. By this time, another guy had come into the room. She said, 'This is –' I don't know what his name was, 'would you go with him?' She said, 'We have had a whip-round; we have got you some shampoo.' I thought, 'What have you got shampoo for?' 'Would you like to go with this guy, and he will take you to our shower room? You can have a shower.' I walked off down to the shower room, walked into the room. As I went into the room, the first thing I saw was this mirror. I looked in this mirror. My God, I honestly never felt I looked like I obviously did, because I was just black, from my bald hair right the way down, which was obviously why people were looking at me strangely. I honestly

didn't feel I wasn't any different to what I was when I got on at Turnpike Lane. I must have seen people at Russell Square who were the same as me, but I hadn't taken it in. I don't know whether that part of the brain had shut down – I'm on another level – I don't know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The policeman had just let you wander off looking like that?

George: Obviously. I don't know. I just said, 'Can I go? I've had enough. I want to go.' Maybe he felt in my voice it was the best thing. I don't know. I don't blame him at all for that. Maybe he should have kept me there; I don't know. He may have been aware there were no ambulances.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I was going to ask about the ambulances.

George: No ambulances.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You saw the TV crews?

George: I saw TV crews – certainly at least two with the satellite dishes.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): This was before the bus bomb?

George: I don't know. I don't know whether that was before the bomb.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It was really quite quick all of this. It must have felt like time was standing still.

George: It may have been after the Tavistock Square bomb. That driver, whether he mentioned Tavistock Square – he said there were incidents at Liverpool Street/Aldgate. Whether he mentioned Tavistock Square, I wouldn't swear to that. No, I wouldn't swear to that. He may have done, but I wouldn't swear that he did actually say that. I don't even know whether he mentioned a bomb. I might have worked that out in my mind. I had now realised we hadn't hit another train, because that was what my primary thought was, for at least three or four minutes, that we were goners anyway – we had hit a train; we weren't getting out. I realised, because I had walked through the driver's cab, that that wasn't that. At that point, for some reason, I didn't think it was a bomb. That may be because for some years we haven't had bombs in London. We have had bombs for the last 30 years. No, I don't think I did. Yes, so whether that was before Tavistock or after, I don't know. All I know is that there were no ambulances.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The other thing I want to look at: you said that the people clearly had very severe injuries. You said they had lines into them; were they drip lines?

George: The first person, whoever it was, male or female, had some kind of a line in them. People were obviously harassed. They were certainly under a hell of a lot of pressure; I worked that out.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You wouldn't know who put those lines in?

George: No. I got the feeling – again, I'm a member of King's Cross United; we found out a lot of the information through various sources – that that was done in the actual carriage, but I wouldn't swear to that, and I wouldn't presuppose that that was the case.

All I know is that when they came out of that lift – and as I say, between the lift exit and where I was standing was a matter of yards, of metres – when they put them down, I'm almost certain – I can't speak for the other two – I'm almost certain that first person had some kind of a feed, a drip or something. What that was I have no idea; I'm not a medical person; I have no idea. They had something coming out of them somewhere.

There were certainly no ambulances. At some point – again, before I left Russell Square – a group of us were led out of Russell Square into a hotel to the right. We went in there, I think mainly to use the loos. I think that there were so many of us that the hotel owners, or managers were getting a bit overpowered. When we used the loos – there were some in a very small reception area – they were getting so overpowered by it all, that we all started to troop out again. We went back into the station. That must have been before they started to bring the bodies up. It wasn't long after that I left. Once I saw that, I thought, 'No, this is all getting out of my...' I couldn't cope with that. It was getting ridiculous.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What happened after you had been to the RNIB, and you had a wash?

George: They were fantastic. They really were great. I didn't have a shower; I literally took my coat off, took my shirt off. They had the shower here, and I got the spray. I was there for about four or five minutes just watching it all come off. I felt a hundred times better. I felt fantastic. When I went back to reception, they were great. They said, 'Right, do you want another cup of tea?' which I think I had. 'Do you want a sandwich?' I had a sandwich. They then said, 'If you'd like to go round to our main lounge area, there is a big TV set there; sit there with your cup of tea. We are going to wait there; we have been advised by the police to stay in the building until they give us the all-clear.' I sat with these other ladies watching it all unfold. I think I might have seen Tavistock Square, whether that was live or a recording of it, but I did see the results of that. I saw it all unfold – what they knew of it, what they knew of what I had just been through. They had more information on Aldgate and on the bus than they did on what happened to me. Everybody seemed to go to King's Cross, but the main problem was, as far as I was concerned, at Russell Square.

I was there until about 16.00 or 16.30. One of the ladies came round to the group of us who were watching TV. They said, 'The police have just spoken to us, and they said that they feel it is now safe to leave wherever it is you are, whatever building you're in, and try to make your way home or wherever you want to go.' They said that obviously the Piccadilly Line wouldn't be running; there would be no buses running in zone 1; but they thought that the British Rail was running, and there were buses in zone 2. I had been talking to this lady. I think she said her husband was coming to meet her. She said, 'We are going to walk to Euston, because we are going to get a train from Euston.' I said, 'I will walk with you. I'm going to walk to Camden Town, because I come from North London.'

I walked to Camden Town. By this time, the sun was out, and I was so grateful to be alive, and I ought to be on the move. As far as I was concerned, I would just keep walking. I walked with this young lady and her husband to Euston Square. She should have got on the train there. I thought, 'I will walk to Camden Town,' which I did. By this time, it has to be about 16.45 or 16.50, and there were hundreds of people walking. I just kept walking. I may or may not have tried the mobile – I can't remember – at that point. I don't think I did.

I got to Camden Town. The buses were running, definitely running, but you couldn't get on them. By this time, there were hundreds, if not thousands, of people who were walking, but then I was all right to walk. I got to Camden Town, kept looking, couldn't get a bus, so had to keep walking. There was a garage just outside Camden Town, and I was pretty hungry now, because I hadn't really eaten anything. I don't normally have a breakfast; I normally have a late breakfast or early lunch, so I hadn't really eaten anything. I had had a sandwich, but I was hungry. I thought, 'I will call in to the garage and I will get a sandwich,' and I got a sandwich. I sat down on a little wall outside. The sun was out, and I thought, 'This isn't bad; it isn't bad at all.'

I thought, 'What I will do is I will ring one of my work colleagues.' I rang her. I couldn't get through on the work number. I wondered why that was. Maybe she rang me. Anyway, the mobile was now working; O2 was now working; this was about 16.50, 17.00. She said to me, 'Where are you?' I said where I was. I said, 'Where are you?' She said, 'I am home.' She lives in Welwyn Garden City. I said, 'What happened there?' She said, 'What happened was, round about 13.30, 14.00, it had all unfolded, the company said, "You had all better go, because you're all going to have a problem getting home."' She was lucky because her husband picked her up in the car and away they went. I thought that O2 is back up, so that is something.

After I left the garage, I kept walking. Before I got to Holloway, I thought, 'I think I'll go into a pub. I think I'll have a drink to settle my nerves.' I had a drink. I was there for about half an hour, three quarters, and I rang home to tell my wife what the situation was. I was going to get home whatever way I could do it, whether I walked or whatever. I'll just keep walking. She was at my daughter's, who lives in Edmonton. I said, 'I will ring you when I'm a bit nearer home.' I had the drink, came out of there, then got a bus. I did manage to get a bus at Holloway. I thought, 'I will get on the bus and go to Finsbury Park.' It's on the way home. I got to Finsbury Park, and I thought, 'I'll have a cup of tea. I want to use the loos,' so I go in there, got my cup of tea, sat down and a young lady is sitting near me. I felt sorry for this girl, because we got talking about the day. She said, 'I've just come in – first day in London.' A Polish girl – I thought, 'That's a good start, isn't it?' her first day in London. I said, 'It's not always like this; it's just one of those things.' She seemed to take it all right, but I thought, 'Dear me. That's a good start, isn't it?'

I got on the bus after I left there. I got to Edmonton and went to my daughter's where the family was. They were obviously pleased to see me. The phone didn't stop ringing; I had people from all over the world. I have relatives all over America, Australia, Canada; they had all seen it on the news. My sister-in-law, she is psychic anyway, but she said she knew that I was on there. She said, 'I had a strong feeling you were on that train.' I said, 'Yes, I was on it.' I was very lucky, very lucky. That was about 20.30 when I got there. I got on the train round about 08.30 that morning, and got home, after quite a full day – to put it mildly.

Richard Barnes (Chair): At what point did you get medical assistance?

George: Other than the initial one at Russell Square, and the more detailed one by the first-aid lady at Judd Street, I never. My wife said to me the same day, and certainly the following day, 'Are you going to go to the doctors?' I said, 'No.' It is probably the wrong word to use, but I was in such a euphoric state that I had lived through what I had lived through, and I had seen the results, sadly, that people were seriously injured,

and there were 25 people who were around me who sadly never got out again, never made it, that I had shut it down. I couldn't really confide in my wife, because she is a world worrier, and I didn't want to put that load on her. I knew that my grandson had taken it very badly; I didn't want to add to his distress, so I shut that part of it down.

I literally forced my way back on the Tube – it was a forced way back on. I had to go back, because I'm 63; my job is 95 per cent on the Underground. I knew, if I didn't go back on the Tuesday – I found it strange that I had booked Friday and the Monday off as holiday – I knew, if I didn't go back, I would never go back. Had I been 30 years younger, I would have jacked the whole lot of it in; I would never, ever go back on the Underground. I would have just changed direction to a job that didn't involve using the Underground. You have to face the situation as it is. If I had gone back to the company and said, 'Look, I can't use the Underground anymore,' in all fairness, they would have said, 'We are in a bit of a situation here. If you can't use the Underground – you can't use a car in Central London; you can't park anywhere to start with –' in all fairness, they would have said, 'We can't really carry on with you.'

I faced the situation as it was so, yes, I forced my way back on, and it was very hard – very, very hard. That first day – I have never had hyperventilation, but not only could I hear my heart, I could sort of literally, physically see it beating. I'm at Seven Sisters, because they put a shuttle service in place, and I walked down those steps and I thought, 'Do I want to do this? Do I really want to do this?' If someone had been with me and said 'no', I would have said, 'Let's go. I'm off. I'm not going down there.' I knew I had to do it; it was a double-edged sword, because I had had an appointment at St John's Wood, at 10.00, and I hate missing appointments anyway. It was a two-edged sword; I had to go back at some point. The company had been very good; if I had said to the company 'Can I have a month off?' they would have said, 'Yes. Have a month,' maybe more, I don't know; they are a very good company. I had to look at it from the way it was – my own personal circumstances. Yes, that day was very hard. I was looking at everybody who was the least Asian or, in my case, West Indian, because he was a West Indian convert; he wasn't an Asian man. You think, 'That man with the rucksack – he's looking a bit strange, a bit suspicious.' That day was very hard, and the following weeks, progressively. It's not too bad now.

I'm having counselling now, because I broke down in February at my daughter's – just a combination of what I had shut down.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Can we come to that? You gave your name and address to somebody with a clipboard?

George: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did anybody get in touch with you?

George: Yes. I'm not sure when it was; the police will be able to tell you. I think it was round about August/September, but I might be out with that. I haven't written down anywhere the actual date that they came. Anyway, I was at work, the mobile rang and it was my wife. She said, 'We have had some policemen from SO13.' Straightaway I had made the connection.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is the anti-terrorist branch?

George: Yes. I said, 'Did they want to take a statement.' By this time, I had known that people had given statements. She said, 'Yes.' The sergeant said he would like to speak. I said, 'When does he want to?' He said, 'Whatever time is convenient to you – evening, day, weekend, anytime.' I said, 'Okay, give me the number and I will give him a call.' I can't remember whether I rang him then or the following day, but I rang him at some point. He was a very nice guy. I said, 'Look, I have nothing on tomorrow morning.' I'm very flexible with my work. I said I would meet him at home.

He came about 10.00. It was the sergeant and another guy. 'Excuse me,' I said, 'but where did you get my details from, because I only ever remember giving them to one person?' I never went to the hospital, like a lot of people did; I never went to my own doctor like a lot of people did. I said, 'Did you get them from that guy who was at Russell Square with the notepad?' He said, 'Yes.' I don't remember what he said, whether he was a policeman, or who he was. I can't remember. He got the details from this person, whoever that person was. He certainly wasn't in uniform. I gave the interview to him and to the other guy. I thought we would only be here an hour. Two and a half hours later... I have never given a statement for any reason. I looked at this other guy, and I thought, 'This poor guy is doing it in longhand.' I said, 'I don't want to tell you your job, but won't your employers give you a tape recorder?' 'No,' he says, 'it all has to be done in longhand.' I thought, 'You earn your money, don't you?' Six foolscap pages at the end of it all.

That was the first time I broke down, because they wanted to know exactly the full story from the word go. When I got to when the bomb went, I had never remembered that. It all happened in a millisecond. He, at the end of it, said, 'Are you getting counselling?' I said I wasn't; I didn't feel like I needed it. In my mind, and what I had seen and heard of the poor souls who had lost their lives, the poor souls who had lost limbs – burns, unbelievable trauma – what am I moaning about? You go down this guilt trip and feel – I don't feel I'm worthy to take up people's time. That was how I looked at it, and probably to a certain extent I still do, but less so now, because my counsellor has been fantastic, and she has got me sorted out there. At the time, in a way, you're not really taking it all in; you are, but you're not. You're making these assumptions and you're coming to conclusions to be able to cope with it, and that's what I did. I thought, 'Why should I be complaining and moaning and groaning when I look round and see what other people have lived through?'

The initial contact, the only contact I had with any kind of authority, was whoever that person was. I never went to hospital; I never went to the doctors. The only time I went to the doctors was back in February time when I broke down. I went to the doctors initially; he examined my ears, because I had this – I can never say the word – tinnitus – slight tinnitus at night. Fortunately, my eardrums weren't blown, because I was near enough for it to have happened, but I do suffer with earwax. The doctor said, 'That's the only time you will be thankful for earwax. Had you not had earwax, you would have probably lost your eardrums.'

Richard Barnes (Chair): The police officer from SO13 asked if you were getting counselling. Did they suggest anywhere to go?

George: He did. He gave me some details. Did I learn that from him or not? Again, at that time, even after breaking down, even at that time, I was still in a kind of denial. I didn't really want to confide in my wife. Certainly, I have since, and that has been fantastic. That has worked out very well but, because my wife is a world worrier, to load

that on to her, what I had experienced that day, would have, in my mind, made not only her life not very pleasant, it would have made my life, on top of what I had already experienced, not very pleasant as well. I shut that down.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you get in touch with counselling?

George: I had seen an Independent Television News (ITN) report at about October time, 18.30 at night, and Rachel was on there. My ears pricked up; she mentioned 7 July. She was saying that not only was she on the Tube, she was in the first carriage where I was. She then said she had set this website up. Prior to that, I hadn’t seen anything anywhere. I have to be honest, I’m not sure whether at that time I had actually looked on the internet; I may or may not have done. I hadn’t seen anything in the news media prior to that, and I had been very aware of anything to do with 7 July, particularly the King’s Cross Piccadilly Line. Straight away I thought, ‘That is for me.’ I think that night I got on to the information site. I said, ‘Look, I was on that one.’ They replied almost within an hour or so – it was all run by volunteers. They said, ‘We have to make some checks to make sure you are bona fide.’ Sadly, they have had people, in the early days, who have said they were on that, but they weren’t; they were reporters just wanting to get information. They came back; they said, ‘We’ve verified you.’ They had contact with the police and they said, ‘Yes, you were on that, and we will invite you to become a member,’ which subsequently I did. That has been fantastic; it has been one of the best things to come out of it, if you can put it that way.

When I had the breakdown – that might have been before; no, that must have been after, because I wouldn’t have been that particularly interested. One of the ladies on there, she had been in contact with the 7 July Assistance Centre, and she said she had had very good understanding from the people there. Bearing in mind I know what was said at the main Assembly meetings, and I take that on board, that was their experience; that was in the early days. I never even went near a hospital or doctor for six or seven months. I can’t speak for their experiences; those were their experiences. My experience was very, very positive. I got that information from one of the ladies who had had a very good experience; she gave me the telephone number, which I duly rang.

I spoke to Jo – one of the ladies there, who was fantastic. I went through my story; she was very, very understanding; there was a lot of empathy there. She said, ‘Yes, if you want, I do feel that you need some kind of counselling.’ I said, ‘My doctor has said the same, and my wife has been saying it from basically the day after.’ There were various signs in the previous six months that I should have picked up on but didn’t. I think that within three to four days she had fixed me up with a counsellor. I meet her once a week and have been seeing her for the last couple of months. That has been fantastic. It has been very, very good.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You started that in February?

George: Yes, it must have been February time. Yes, the middle part of February I think. I have been seeing my counsellor once a week, every Wednesday, for an hour. That has been really good, because, even now my wife is more aware of what I went through that day, because after I spoke to my counsellor I said I had literally shut it all down – that was the reason I broke down at my daughter’s; it all came to a head – even she said the fact that I had now confided what had happened... She said to me, ‘Although you told me you had been on the train,’ because in her eyes there was a sort of lack of reaction to it –

Richard Barnes (Chair): Because you were relatively uninjured?

George: Yes. The glass in my neck, ear and head was thankfully superficial. I had said I was okay, and in my mind I was okay. Having seen and experienced what I had, I just felt so euphoric that I had got out of it in one piece. The fact that I had managed to, with the encouragement of my counsellor, speak to my wife – her reaction was fantastic. I'm thinking all doom and gloom. I thought, 'Oh God, she isn't going to be able to cope with it.' I'm not going to be able to cope with it. The fact that she did and has, and she now understands more, is fantastic. That's all through the counselling. I had an issue with my grandson, which by and large I think I have that sorted out now. He really went through a bad point. He watched it unfold on the news. He is five, and we are very close.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It had an impact on him?

George: Yes. I can't speak too highly of the 7 July Assistance Centre. I know there was a name change, which I'm sure will be addressed.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, it went from the Family Assistance Centre.

George: I can't speak for, sadly, what went on with my fellow passengers. I can only speak from my own experience, and it has been very positive, and continues to be so. I will pass that on to anybody who I come into contact with that it is a place to go, that they have done me proud. I can't fault them one iota.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you think they should have contacted you earlier, rather than you having to find them?

George: The only way they would have had a point of contact would have been through the contact I had with the SO13 guys who came round to interview me. On a similar vein, to do with that, a month after, when they opened up the Piccadilly Line, I did my own little pilgrimage to Russell Square. I thought I want to go back, go down into the tunnel, just to have my own little time there, go back up the stairs and sign the condolence book, which I did. Literally, I went there, and I met one of the three guys who helped us up on to the platform. That was fantastic. I have lost my train of thought.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Should people have contacted you?

George: Sorry, yes. I spoke to them at Russell Square, and all the information that they had, had all gone. The only point of contact anybody in officialdom would have had would be at Russell Square, who I assume was a policeman in plain clothes. Who it was, I have no idea.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then SO13 contacted you, but there was no follow-up from any other agency?

George: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Until you got in touch with them?

George: Yes. There was no other contact from anybody else other than that initial contact where I gave my statement. I then heard through the internet, again through King's Cross United – where most the information comes from, I must admit – that they were putting on this November memorial. I thought I'd like to go to that. I even had to ring up about that. They didn't even contact me about that. Again, that thread runs through – again, I can only speak for the fellow passengers on the King's Cross United site: some were contacted; some weren't; some were contacted more than once; some were contacted just the once. Had I not got in contact with the number I was given through the King's Cross United site, I doubt I would have got tickets or a ticket. I wanted to go to that. I thought, 'Nobody from officialdom had contacted me,' and subsequently they didn't, because it all came through my own efforts through King's Cross United, which is a common thread that runs through all of it. That was really a positive time for me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You found the supporters' group very helpful? You know we spoke to some of them?

George: Yes, I saw four of them on there. I know all those people. I know all of them, and I know a lot more. One of the threads that runs through all of this is, that day, for everybody, no matter where they were, whatever carriage they were in, we all experienced a horrendous event. It was an unfinished journey. Somebody, we now know it was a guy who decided to blow himself up and everybody else around him, had decided to break that journey.

I've met a girl who was literally that near to me [gestures distance of one foot]; I wouldn't know her from Eve. When you use the Underground every day, you all jockey for position. You read your book; you read your paper; you don't really take it in. That lady who got off at King's Cross, she was about 25-30, a blond lady; I wouldn't know her if you had a line-up now. You don't really take that much notice of people. The fact that, when that bomb blew, prior to it going, I'm standing like this and I have my bag on the floor. You force your way on. When it blew, I had in my mind, 'There is nobody here.' I didn't, but had I put my hand out, I don't think I would have touched anybody, because I don't think there was anybody there. They were on the floor or blown up.

I have met people, at least six people I'm in contact with, who were in the first carriage – obviously including Rachel. I met a Spanish lady. She went back to Spain. I'm in contact with her on the internet, on the messenger service – a lovely lady, but she just couldn't cope. She just freaked and went back. I'm in contact with a Turkish guy from the website using the messenger service. That contact, when you're in that situation or have been in that situation, is fantastic. I don't know how it could be duplicated in any kind of official way. The only way I think, sadly, if this thing happens again – which personally I think it will, but let's hope it doesn't – is that you could basically appeal to people, whatever that atrocity is, so that there is an amount of money put to one side to enable them to set up something that has been done on a purely voluntary basis by people who were personally involved. I don't know how it could be done in any official capacity.

I'm not saying that the counselling that I'm getting is done away with – no way. They are completely separate; in a way they're the same. That's a contradictory term. In a way they're the same, but they're completely different. I know most of those people that I'm in contact with have at some point, and still are having various levels of

counselling. I'm having counselling, but other people are having trauma counselling; they are on drugs and God knows what. Thankfully I'm not at that point. I don't think I will be; I think this counselling has really got me sorted out. I have the odd flashback, but even that is diminishing. There are people there that are having various deep levels of trauma and everything else, and physical problems.

For any kind of future situation, God forbid, I don't think it could be set up along the King's Cross United lines in any kind of official way. The very nature is non-official; it is voluntary by the people who were personally involved. We were very, very fortunate; we have a lot of professional people. That in itself shows through. To my knowledge, we have a barrister, we have a solicitor, we have lecturers. We have one guy there – I shouldn't really laugh about it. I met him at one of our monthly meetings at the pub. I said, 'I understand you're a lecturer. What do you lecture in?' He said, 'Anti-terrorism.' I said, 'That's a bit of a first-hand experience for you, isn't it?' I think he gives his lectures now in a slightly different way – probably more positive. He said he had been lecturing in anti-terrorism for a long, long time.

That was a very interesting time. The fact that you can meet people, eight months down the line, who don't make comments that have been made to people on the King's Cross United site, either work colleagues or in some cases family members, where they have said, 'Look, that was eight months ago. Get over it.' Maybe if the position was reversed, maybe I would do it. I would like to think I wouldn't, but maybe I would 'It was eight months ago. What are you moaning about? What's the problem?' Sadly, you have to live through that to experience it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Would you have expected more contact from officialdom?

George: Had I, the first day, or the day after, taken my wife's good advice, which I didn't, and gone to my own doctor, he may or may not have said, 'I think you need counselling,' after he looked at my ears and I physically seemed to be okay. Then if I still hadn't heard from anyone, I would have thought, 'My doctor has my details. Has he passed it on to anybody? Is there a central internet site?' I don't know. I hadn't done any of that: I hadn't gone to hospital on the day; I didn't go to a doctor's the following day; I didn't go to a doctor's until six or seven months down the road.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And you had just wandered off?

George: I wandered off. Sadly, hundreds of others wandered off. The sad thing is there was anything between 800-900 people, they reckon, on that train. It was one of the most packed trains I have ever been on. They picked the right day to do it. How many people are out there, metaphorically speaking, wandering around? Probably hundreds. We are getting new people – I met another two people, last week at a pub meeting. A young lady was in the, was it fifth, sixth carriage? She had only just found out about it. The relief – and she put this on the site – that she had been able to talk to people who had gone through the same experience and, for whatever reason, she had got no kind of official response.

On a certain level, as I have already said, the King's Cross United, doesn't really bear any kind of official – can you see where I'm coming from? It is a unique set-up, but, as I understand it, there is nowhere else in the world where they have had this sort of thing happen. It is unbelievable. I can't overemphasise how beneficial it has been to me personally, and the fact that other people, I'm sure, would say the same. I get a lot

from it, from other people's experiences, and they are getting experiences, hopefully, from my experience.

Having said that, I don't say that in these pub evenings we spend the night counselling one another. We don't. It's not like that; counselling isn't what we do. What it is – people say, 'Oh, were you the woman that was screaming, "What's going on here? Why are you doing this?"'; 'Were you the woman that gave me that handkerchief?' Generally people are in carriages where they could actually see what was going on. For a long time, one of the girls, ladies, she was in the fourth or fifth carriage, was the only one on the King's Cross site that we knew of that was in that particular carriage. She had met someone a couple of weeks ago. That was fantastic; she had met someone who was a contact. It was another part of the jigsaw. That in itself was fantastic; it was really fantastic.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Are there any other lessons you think need to be learned from the day?

George: I did mention it when I spoke earlier; I will bring it up – the very fact we don't have guards. I know that is a no-no because of money; I realise that. That initial time when I thought, 'This is it. You're finished. You're gone, George,' I knew there was no guard. There used to be one in the fourth or fifth carriage. I can't remember now; it was so long ago. It certainly would have been a great help to those poor souls in the second carriage right down to the sixth. Certainly if we had hit another train, the driver is gone. In my mind, I said, 'The driver is gone. We have no guard. That is it.'

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): That was because, as well as the physical thing, you felt kind of abandoned with no contact?

George: When you're in a situation – you're in one of the deepest parts of the Underground system – you have that much between the tunnel and the door [gestures about 4 inches]. I have used that line for 15 years. I knew that, when that explosion went, which in my mind was we had hit another train, I knew the driver was gone, no guards – that is a fact of life and has been for some considerable time – you're finished. I remember saying to myself, 'This is it, George. This is where it all ends. You're not getting out of this. You're finished.' I'm thinking to myself, 'It is a matter of time, because this smoke is going to get a lot worse, and it was bad then.' If it's followed by fire, which very often it is, you're definitely gone. You're gone; you're finished. That was going on in my mind for maybe two or three minutes. All this screaming, crying, praying.

It would be fantastic if you could get guards back, because, in that situation, had we hit another train, at least we would have some contact with officialdom, even if, as we now know, I think the radios were blown out. That may or may not have been the case; I don't know, but that was my view. At least that guard: a) he has got some kind of contact; b) as I understand it, if the power is still on, I think they have jump leads which can take the power off. That may or may not be true. At least you have another contact with officialdom.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Someone to take control?

George: Yes. At that moment, when that blew, for those two or three minutes. I'm sure I'm not alone, because everybody I spoke to said, 'Where's the driver? What's

happening?' Not necessarily like me that they felt they had hit a train, because that was just my own personal view, but the communication wasn't there. The only communication I got was from, I strongly believe – I have to find out at some point – that it was the second driver, that he made a verbal, not through intercom, a verbal, very loud, very much in control, announcement, which I was very thankful for. When he said, 'the driver has said', that is when I made that mental note: 'the driver has said'; that means he's alive. Whether, at that point, I thought, 'If he's alive, we are very lucky, if we hit another train,' whether I made that connection, I don't know. The fact that he said that –

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was reassuring?

George: Was unbelievably reassuring.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you think you should have been allowed to just wander off given you were covered in soot, dust or whatever?

George: I'm now talking about what actually happened that day. This caught people so much on the hop. We are being told, constantly told, the past good few years, that there is training for these things; I have seen it on TV – these events. When it actually happened, I honestly think it caught everybody, from the foot soldiers up to the generals, everybody was caught on the hop. All the things that were put in place came out in that fantastic meeting you had. I never knew about that so-called emergency number. Is that common knowledge? I don't know. It certainly didn't work on the day.

That day, as I say, I can only talk from my personal experience of what happened at Russell Square; King's Cross might have been a different story, but at Russell Square I think it caught everybody so much by surprise. The fact that there were no ambulances to take people away. Had there been ambulances, had there been ready ambulances, when I got to that point, they wouldn't have been putting people down in front of me, so that point wouldn't have evolved. It may well have been that had somebody said, 'I think we ought to look at you. We ought to take you down to the hospital. Here is an ambulance to get in,' I would definitely have gone. Because there were no ambulances, because nobody at that point – and I'm not having a go against the police because, like all the emergency services, they did fantastically – but they were let down. Somewhere along the line, the system collapsed; it just went awry. Everything seemed to go to King's Cross, because everybody was under the impression that that was where the major problem was. Sadly it wasn't; it was at Russell Square. Russell Square, as I said, it's very small – I couldn't believe how small Russell Square is. As I say, it would pay you to have a walk down there. I couldn't believe how small an area it is.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's steps and a lift, isn't it?

George: Yes. They were all coming out of the lifts. You come round, and you have the ticket machines, and you can then see the street. It's quite narrow. Had that happened at King's Cross, and they'd brought the people out, even if there had been no ambulances, they wouldn't have come anywhere near, hopefully, anybody who had come off those trains; they would have been kept away. They had no alternative. There were no ambulances. They were trying to get these people – I assume to save their lives. They had to put them down, I'm assuming, to go back down again. I now know they were down there for another two hours. I know people, at least three people down there for two and a half hours. I know people that were just blown off their feet

into people who were already dead behind them. I didn't see any of that; audibly, I heard a lot, but visually, I saw nothing.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Can I ask you about – you said that after you heard somebody say 'the driver said', and then you got off the train? Somebody said, 'The power is off on the live rails.'

George: Yes.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Was this just what people were saying? How did you hear this? This was the other driver?

George: That was the co-driver. The actual driver himself, who in my mind is a hero anyway, but I know he has had enough publicity; he has done a hell of a lot down there that has never got into the public eye. I know what he did down there. He stayed down there for some considerable time helping out the people on that carriage, the front carriage. Now, I'm almost certain, but I don't know, that it was the co-driver on his way to the depot, who I spoke to later on at Russell Square. I'm sure it was him who said, 'The driver has said,' and that is when I made that connection, 'that when the power is off, we are now going to walk through the front of his cab on to the track. We are all going to walk to Russell Square.' That statement was fantastic: a) the driver is alive. I thought, 'Fantastic – someone in authority is still with us'; b) whoever that person was – I didn't know at the time there were two drivers; thankfully there were - had made this statement, 'when the power is off'. Again, the timeframe between him saying that and the next statement, I'm not sure. It might have been two or three minutes; it might have been five; I don't know. This same guy said, 'Right, the power is now off. We are now going to walk through the front of the driver's cab.' I again made that mental note; I'm still savvy enough to take that in.

I move over – I'm up by the double doors and there is a glass partition up there. I knew, I can't see anything still, I just have to take a sharp right, still can't see anything, I now know that there were bodies everywhere, but anyway, I just started to walk. It was only when I got to about a metre from where the inner door had been opened, I could see a light. I thought, 'That's something good.' I got there, and there was the driver and the co-driver. They helped us down on to the track. I was surprised how many lights were down there; I had never seen that. They are spaced along the wall on both sides. I thought, 'Christ, it's like Blackpool Illuminations compared to inside.' That was fantastic. Who turned them on – central control, the driver, I have no idea. Getting back to the original statement: no, I'm almost certain it was the same guy in his very commanding voice – very to a point – 'we are now going to walk'. That was fantastic.

Richard Barnes (Chair): When you walked up, you didn't meet anybody coming the other way?

George: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The first time you saw paramedics or other people was on the platform?

George: Yes. I didn't see paramedics for some considerable time after we were at Russell Square.

Richard Barnes (Chair): London Underground (LU) people?

George: My first point of contact with officialdom, other than the two drivers, was when we were being helped up on to the platform at Russell Square, there were three LU people with the fluorescent jackets on them, and they were helping everybody up, physically, helping them up on to the platform. The poor guy who I helped along the tunnel, I now know that he had a lump of metal in his foot – that is why he was screaming; he couldn't walk, but I didn't know at the time. My first point of officialdom was the three LU staff, but I don't know what level of authority they were.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They were Underground were they?

George: They were definitely Underground. There were no paramedics or any kind of medical assistance at that point on the platform.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You have talked about the ambulance service; you have talked about the police. Did you at any time see the fire service?

George: No. I'm almost certain I didn't see anything of the fire service. No. Certainly, I don't remember seeing any, when I left Russell Square. The thing that stuck out more in my mind, were these flipping satellite dishes with TV crews who came all of a sudden. They were there very sharp. They were there. I thought to myself, 'Gordon Bennett', there were at least two of those I saw.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They got there quickly.

George: There were obviously people being held back who I assume were reporters. I don't think I could be doing with all that. I just wanted to get home; I'd had enough. Obviously, I'd made a mental note that there had obviously been people there who wanted to get hold of people who were involved, but I just didn't want to know. No, I don't remember seeing any fire service. I know the other driver, when I spoke to him, who mentioned it was carnage down there – he was the other driver, I know that – I'm sure he said, 'The paramedics have said,' they have just come back and that it was carnage. I'm sure he used that word 'paramedics'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You don't know if it was doctors or nurses from Great Ormond Street or anything like that?

George: No. To be honest, I certainly wouldn't know who these people were. They may or may not have been. As I say, the lady that had originally looked at my neck, who she was I've no idea. The guy who took my details, who he was, I've no idea. They were all in plain clothes. No, to be honest, I wouldn't know who the people were at all – not at all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you, George. Is there anything that you think we ought to touch back on, Sally (Hamwee)?

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): No. It is a very vivid story.

Richard Barnes (Chair): George, I don't know how to thank you for coming in and helping us.

George: I'm just thankful to the Chair and Janet (Hughes) of course for the initial contact. We have been allowed to actually get somebody in officialdom to listen. Up until this point, or the original point obviously, certainly from central government, we just feel the message has been, 'Go away,' – it's just been pushed under the carpet as if it doesn't matter.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Did you get a letter from the DCMS last month?

George: From Tessa Jowell?

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Yes.

George: Yes, I was one of the fortunate ones with her signature stamped. I'm sure she didn't sign it. I was one of the lucky ones, because there were a number on the site that didn't get the signature, and some haven't got it at all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): There are three levels, are there – no letter, without a signature and with a signature? Forgive my laughing.

George: You have to laugh otherwise you wouldn't. I know that bureaucracy is an age-old thing; I have realised all that goes with that, but there seemed to be an unbelievable breakdown in what you would think was obvious communication, which is what this is all about. That is a point that was made a lot better than what I have by my fellow passengers, because we were very blessed that we got professional people.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They were very articulate.

George: They were able to use the internet; they have contacts. As I say, we have at least, that I'm aware of, one barrister, one solicitor; professional people that have done this all off their own backs with no funding from anywhere. There is somebody out there that is getting a nice salary. What are they doing for it? It has all had to be done via people who were involved. They are trying to hold down jobs with all the stresses and trauma. We are all suffering at various levels – some physical and trauma. I'm in contact with people with both. I was lucky.

Richard Barnes (Chair): There was evidence given about a meeting on the 17th floor of a building. Were you involved in that?

George: No, that was before my time, because at that time I'm still in denial. Again, as I say, even in November 2005, that was three or four months down the road, I still – I only gave my details to SO13, nowhere else – had to again, through the King's Cross United site find out, 'Do you realise that they are going to put on a memorial service?' 'I would love to go and see that. I would like to go and do that,' but I had to make my own enquiries. They then contacted me, but they didn't contact me initially.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They are obviously not sharing information, are they?

George: The lack of shared information is unbelievable. The terrible thing about it is that the only shared information comes from a website set up by people who were personally involved, on top of everything else they have to put up with, because they weren't getting it from officialdom.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We will certainly look at that.

George: The very fact that we have been able to do this, I would like to thank all of you – fantastic.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We hope to get the report published by the end of May/beginning of June.

George: Fantastic. I look forward to it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We will make sure you get a copy.

George: You have my details? I will give them to you in triplicate.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I promise you we won't lose them.

George: You have to laugh really, because it all gets a bit heavy if you don't. I appreciate it.

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

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Thanks so much.

George: Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

[ends]

7 July Review Committee

13 April 2006

Transcript of meeting with Gill and Joe

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you find the hearing on reflection and all the rest of it?

Joe: That's an interesting question. I'm very glad I did it and I was delighted with the immediate response, which I thought has been incredibly useful. I thought the London Ambulance Service (LAS) response and what they proposed was very well considered.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you got a copy?

Joe: Yes. We have been kept very well informed. We are very well looked after by your staff here, which is fantastic. I thought the proposals the LAS put forward seemed very reasonable. I thought that was a very mature response from a public body that had been quite severely criticised. I was glad to hear that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) had responded, although the details are non-specific, aren't they?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, but at least they have reacted.

Joe: of course, like everybody else, we are laughing at the coincidence of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) sending us the letter dated the day before the testimony.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Yes. I suggested we should put in a Freedom of Information Act request asking for the print-out from the computer showing the date it was actually composed.

Joe: That would be a very good idea.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We were shown that letter the day before yesterday. What did you think of it?

Joe: We were talking about this before we came here. I suspect there will be a kind of caucus meeting beforehand. That's my suspicion, because I think most people agreed they will respond to the invitation because having wanted one, even it arrives nine months late, it would seem churlish not to respond to it, so people will go. I hope everyone will be very polite to the Secretary of State (Tessa Jowell). But people will feel unwilling to impart information to her that they feel should be imparted at a more public forum. We are also very concerned that at no point does the Government use this as an excuse to say they have consulted with survivors and so forth.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That was our reaction.

Joe: I think that would be deeply inappropriate. Consequently, I don't think she will get everything out of the meeting that she hopes to. That would be my feeling.

Richard Barnes (Chair): One of the things that we were very conscious about was the way in which we organised your attendance on 23 March. I have seen the additional information which was put there with the letter. How appropriate do you find that? Sorry to use such a formal question.

Joe: The additional information?

Richard Barnes (Chair): How to get there, parking, etc.

Joe: I hadn't even noticed that, but Gill had.

Gill: I had, although it just made me smile because I don't feel angry about anything like that. I just think it's typical, because there's not an understanding. There's a complete void, but I'm hoping that by even sending a letter to say we would like to meet you and talk about this shows willing to reduce the void that there is between us. So I won't be too damning, but of course it highlights just in that one sweep of saying these are the Tube stations, here is how to get here, here is how to find us, there is no parking – that says it all really. That is all that needed to be said to show they have no idea.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): A failure to put themselves in the shoes of the recipient.

Gill: Yes.

Joe: They don't know who we are; it is very clear. They claim to speak and to have acted on our behalf but they actually don't know who we are.

Gill: That's okay, because I think all of us operate with a degree of ignorance about a range of subjects, and I'm hoping that this is a step towards eradicating some of the ignorance.

Joe: I am just going to re-read the travel instructions but I suspect their advice about access is on the fringes of legality under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Richard Barnes (Chair): We certainly did agree it from our point of view. I know the amount of time, effort and consultation that we did with a whole range of people as to how we should organise the 23rd – or Janet (Hughes) should organise the 23rd – to make sure everything went properly and smoothly.

Joe: Both for that day and today, the organisation has been fantastic.

Gill: I am sure it wasn't deliberate, but even you asking me today 'Are you all right in the lift?' highlights again an understanding that perhaps I don't want to be in a confined space. I just thought that is very interesting because I haven't been asked that before anywhere, and partly my own fault because I'm not a very good disabled person, so to speak, in a sentence, so you want to make things easier for other people and you go along and say 'I'm fine. I'm fine with that, don't worry', so it was very nice to be asked. It showed a degree of understanding that, exactly as we have just said, the lack of which was highlighted in the letter from Tessa Jowell, purely by saying here are all the Tube stations you can use to come to visit me.

Joe: The one thing I forgot to do was to tell Janet (Hughes) about the level of Gill's disability and I was very impressed this morning when a car turned up that was wheelchair-accessible. We didn't actually need that, but it was the fact it had been thought about, and we would have needed it a few months ago.

It was very interesting that, generally, the experience we have had of having to re-learn London from a perspective of disability is that some institutions or organisations have actually learned quite a lot now. For instance, some of the train companies are very good, but other places, of course, still lag behind quite badly. Our experience of City Hall has been a very positive one in that respect, for which we are grateful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Thank you very much for coming today.

Gill: I am hoping that I can make a contribution of sorts because I didn't walk out of the carriage, because I didn't witness things on a ticket barrier or a platform, because I didn't have a relationship with the ambulance people, and for all intents and purposes, the moment someone said 'priority one' to me, that is it, except for vague little bits. But it's important for me to say that however haphazard and makeshift it was, whatever went wrong that day, went right for me, because I am here, and I am here literally by the skin of my teeth, so to speak. It was the decisions made by a few that changed the course of my life and/or possible death that day.

I have been lucky enough to meet those people, so I guess from my part there is a certain clouding of how I feel about the communications that day because there is a face to the person and there is now a relationship with that person and I have a greater understanding of how they felt. When we have talked about the plans and the protocols of how one plans for this, it terrified me to think that there is such a thing in place I believe, which was 'no one up, no one down' and everything gets sealed off because it could be a chemical attack or whatever.

Of course, for someone like me that doesn't bode well and speaking to some of the British Transport Police (BTP) they said they made a decision at Russell Square that morning to say 'No, we are going down.' In terms of what I have now learnt from the hospital that I had possibly about four minutes left of blood in me, that is a big decision to have made, because we are going down to the minutes that I wouldn't have lasted much longer. So, in terms of planning and talking to them I have a real sense of 'How do you plan for chaos?' I am sure that you can get enough of a structure in place but within that structure, you are always going to have, as you do on the battlefield and anywhere, the decisions of a few that change the course of that day or the operation. That is why certain people are put in certain jobs because they have that unique ability to make, hopefully, the right decisions when pushed. I think there is probably an element for that, and I think I would be a great advocate for saying that one size doesn't fit all and there needs to be flexibility in a plan.

Shifting a way forward from that, I think it's very sad there is a sense that it is inevitable there will be another attack, and that in some ways we were anticipating the attack in the first place; that we all live in a state of 'Well, it's bound to happen.' The only thing for me is that you're never going to be the person caught up in it, that I'm going to be the person I read about, and you think 'Oh that is terrible. What can we do about this? The injustice.' Suddenly I am that person and I feel a real sense of 'What have we all learned from this, as a country, as a city', and as much as I praise the 'getting on with' the next day, I guess there is a greater part of me that feels I really wish everyone would

stop and just say 'Actually, we aren't going to tolerate this any more. We aren't going to live in a state of saying 'Well, yes, it's going to happen again. We need to have a better plan in place for the next time.' It's horrific, but I sense that that's probably a very realistic approach. It's sad. I just felt it was somehow necessary had we balanced these things going forward to say that yes, there is a sort of safety net in place, so to speak, but the greater plan should be how we can learn and understand to get ourselves in a position where we're not faced with this as our every-day lives.

Moving on from that day, because as I said, I am there in the train, and it's really about passengers talking to each other about the support you're getting from within and then the decisions of a brave few on that day to enter a carriage to get you out. There were no stretchers. The funny thing is me remembering, and it is in my police statement that I said 'I felt that my rescue was quite unprofessional, but that is fine' because I knew I wasn't in a stretcher. There was a lot of fumbling around and I said 'I don't think they are actually professional rescuers, but it's all right because I think they did a good job anyway.' Now, finding out in hindsight, it's quite funny that I was put into a coat, then moved into a blanket and then taken up that way.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was this by one of the Underground workers or coppers, or both?

Gill: BTP and MPS in the tunnel. Initially, it was coats from the deceased in the train because they had to get me into something.

Joe: Sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, but it's a strange thing, and I don't know if it's been mentioned before in any of your testimonies, but as far as I know, all the Fire Brigade officers in attendance went to King's Cross. The police had told us they didn't see a single Fire Brigade officer at Russell Square, which I think is clearly another quite serious lapse in communication.

Gill: Yes, and the confusion about the majority of people coming out of King's Cross. As an aside, even I have a funny sense of the King's Cross United group because, for me, it is very much about Russell Square, rather than King's Cross.

That is how I was rescued. It wasn't a slick operation and Joe and I have laughed since because of course one does think that if you are in these situations and you live in a major world city, and especially coming from wee Adelaide, Australia and here I am in London, that I am going to be whisked into this marvellous ambulance, that is almost like a surgery on wheels and they will be performing these fantastic things to me en route to this wonderful theatre. Of course, finding out that wasn't quite the case that day did break my heart every so slightly. One likes to think you are a bit special.

Joe: There was an open day at St Thomas's Hospital when Gill was first starting to get mobile and they had a full emergency response ambulance on display. Gill got so excited about it, and we then had to break the news to her that she had come in in some ropey old thing from Essex, as far as we know.

Gill: With no blood and just the minimum of fluid left on it.

Joe: It was probably used to escort senior citizens to and from hospital appointments or something.

Gill: From what we can understand it was a volunteer crew.

Richard Barnes (Chair): In your testimony you talked about this volunteer ambulance. Was it St John (Ambulance Service) or a passenger transport unit?

Joe: That's what we think from the only evidence we have. Gill has tried to talk to LAS people but no one yet has been able to give us that much detail. I think like everybody else we just have an obsessive fascination with trying to reconstruct what happened for ourselves.

Gill: More importantly, for me I think it's a burning desire to thank everyone to their face and say 'Thank you so much for whatever you did because I am here.' I think that's vital considering the amount of chaos that day and for the weight that must be on people's shoulders thinking 'I had to make a decision. I didn't know what to do.' I need to say to them 'You made the right decision because I am here. Thank you' and then let's all move on.

Joe: A Great Ormond Street nurse, who says that she accompanied Gill to St Thomas's in the ambulance, is quite confused about what happened on the day. I think the emergency services as well everybody else were experiencing trauma by then. The rescuers were as traumatised as the people they were rescuing. She thinks that it was an ambulance that had driven in from another county. Her guess was that it was from the Essex fringes of Greater London, so it was only volunteer in the sense that it was a regular ambulance crew who thought 'sod it' and had driven into Central London. That is the possible reason why we went to St Thomas's because they didn't know Central London very well.

Gill: But once again, it's those sorts of errors that we believe – and it's very hard to make direct connections of what the truth is – led to what saved my life, once again, by going to St Thomas's because they had very few critically ill casualties that day and so they had the time. They resuscitated me for 17 minutes and apparently there is a 15-minute cut-off and if I had been in a busier hospital that would have been it because they wouldn't have had the luxury of that time to spend with me. There was a sense that I was their patient that day. They were almost lined up that day waiting for the onslaught and suddenly here comes Gill, probably in an ambulance that's a bit rickety with the wheels falling off, and it's like 'Great, here she is.' Once again, that has all played in my favour on that day, right down to having a top vascular surgeon who was able to look at my injuries and save the knees because that's the surgery he does, so once again, luck played a hand for me that day. If I had gone to another hospital it would have been more likely than not a very different case.

Joe: Equally, the testimony of a bereaved family might be that all those things were bad luck for them.

Gill: Yes, this is it.

Joe: We can't rely on good luck in situations like that.

Gill: No, this is it. This is the hard thing: How do you plan for anything like this successfully? If it were a slicker operation would that then have led to me not being here, or I would have amputations above the knee, or whatever. We don't know. All we

know is what has happened has worked in my favour because I am here and I am as mobile as they could make me.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Did you pick up from talking to the nurse or anybody else whether the ambulance crew had any radio or telephone contact with anybody?

Joe: It's quite unlikely. As I say, she was quite confused about her testimony. It's very interesting, and you have probably experienced this yourself, but making our enquiries we feel it's almost like the police trying to investigate a criminal thing where actually everyone's testimonies slightly overlap. All the stories we have heard from people we know were there and performed outstanding acts can't all fit into the same narrative, as it were, but I suspect that's quite reasonable. Anyway, she suggested that she was trying to direct the ambulance crew, so obviously they weren't being instructed by a dispatcher, as far as I can tell.

Gill: Also, because all the roads were blocked off, they didn't know where they were going.

Joe: After the Tavistock Square bomb went off then obviously that area was in gridlock. I don't know how they got any ambulances out of Russell Square after that moment. It's interesting that one of the other very seriously injured people at St Thomas's had come from Tavistock Square, so they actually dispatched ambulances from both sites to St Thomas's.

Gill: It was worrying that this particular nurse was saying that she came up and went out to Russell Square and there were no ambulances, and there I was and it was sort of the panic of what they should do with me because there was no one there. Then this crew turn up and it was just like 'Can you take her?' and off we went.

Joe: It was her who told us, as I mentioned in my testimony before, that the ambulance had been to a previous site and so whatever medical supplies it carried had already been exhausted, at Aldgate I think it was.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We have heard testimony from other survivors that when they reached the top of Russell Square that people were brought up on blankets and put on the floor because there were no ambulances around. That wouldn't have been you though, would it?

Joe: The way the nurse told us, we don't know whether the lateness of the ambulances would have made any difference to Gill because we know how long it took to get off the train and we know they had to work very hard to stabilise her in the ticket hall. It's at that point, after they had finally stabilised her, they didn't know how to get her onto a trolley because they knew she had serious back injuries but they didn't want to investigate. When they finally stabilised her sufficiently to put her onto a trolley then they wheeled her out into the street and at that point all the ambulances that had been in attendance had already gone, so having done all this work they suddenly realised 'Oh shit, there are no ambulances anymore', and I think that caused a moment's panic.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Who were the 'they' doing the work?

Joe: This was the nurse and there was a volunteer doctor from the National Hospital.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Are these people who had just come running out?

Gill: Yes.

Joe: You have probably heard this also, but they told us that there was a senior paramedic at Russell Square who had some degree of control over what happened in the ticket hall. The doctor who resuscitated Gill at Russell Square describes making a snap decision. She was just walking past. She said it was a very difficult decision for her to make. She felt very nervous. She could see that there was carnage and she walked over to this paramedic and asked what she could do. She said the paramedic grabbed her, and in the kind of hierarchy of the health service, paramedics don't grab doctors, and just took her to Gill and said 'There is your first priority' so she spent the rest of the time helping with her husband, who is an anaesthetist, who intubated Gill.

Gill: That was handy, wasn't it?

Joe: It's a great bit of serendipity that Russell Square is surrounded by nurses' hostels and hospitals.

Gill: There is also the size of Russell Square. I had never consciously been to Russell Square before, so when I went back I couldn't quite believe how small it was. I thought that was another gift because thank God it wasn't Waterloo and we were just left somewhere and people have no trace of where you are; it's right there, you can't miss bodies and things sitting there, so it was very manageable. So once again, if it's going to happen, Russell Square is a good place for it to happen, I guess.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Clearly, the medical process has coped with it extraordinarily well. What about Casualty Bureau and places like that, which you would begin to contact knowing that you were on a Tube somewhere? How did that work? I know it took you hours to get through because we have your testimony.

Gill: I had my work, but no one could register me because all the phone lines were engaged. I think trying to register me as potentially missing had been going on for most of the afternoon.

Joe: Just trying to find out what was happening...

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you have any forms of ID in the Tube?

Gill: I was admitted to St Thomas's as 'one unknown' and I remained 'one unknown' on my wristband until after surgery when they brought me round, we went through the alphabet and I just blinked at each letter of my name and that is when they rang the police, I went onto the database and there I was.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which would be some hours after the incident itself.

Gill: About 9 o'clock.

Joe: The police arrived to contact me at our home between 9 and 9.30pm.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This was when you had finished your blinking.

Gill: Yes. I'm a slow blinker, for the record! Sorry, this isn't meant to be a comedy, is it? It's a very serious thing.

Joe: I think the failing of the Casualty Bureau emergency number contributed to that length of time. There is absolutely no reason why it should have taken them that long.

Gill: Apparently, my work had four secretaries on the case, speed-dialling and re-dialling.

Joe: As were our friends who were sitting at home.

Gill: My friends were doing it; everybody was trying to register me that day. When they finally came to get Joe it really was a dash to get to me before I passed away because they weren't holding up much hope at that stage. Subsequently, because apparently I had been dead, or my heart had stopped for a period of up to 29 minutes, so they were more than convinced that I had suffered significant brain damage, so that was then the second blow delivered to Joe of 'If she does survive, it's more likely than not she will be in a vegetative stage.'

Joe: We try to tell her she isn't, but...!

Gill: Thank you everyone for humouring me. They had never heard the accent. 'We didn't realise how bad it was! It's the saddest thing we have ever seen!' Anyhow, that makes us laugh, doesn't it?

Joe: Yes.

Gill: If it's all right with you, for the moment, I'd also like to look at what has happened afterwards while I have a train of thought about what's happened afterwards and the support mechanisms. It's struck me quite strongly how there are so many different groups, and that you can't really cater for everybody. If we put the bereaved in one basket, and I have no idea how they feel about anything, but then you start to look at the survivors, and the July 7 Family Assistance Centre and all these sorts of fantastic things, thank goodness they even exist. How do we then start to look at because there is a difference between those who were at the different Tube stations or on the bus, there is a difference between Russell Square and King's Cross, and between those who went out the back of the train and those who were delivered through the front, those who lost one leg and those who lost two? It starts to become these different little groups. There is even a bonding that happens from hospital to hospital, so people who might have been in different Tubes that all went to the same hospital have a relationship.

Joe: The rehab centres as well.

Gill: The rehab centres. Those who are angry about compensation have another body. There are all these separate little groups that start to form naturally that support each other, and I think that's right. That can't be enforced, but it's then nice perhaps to have a structure that allows it to happen organically so that there's something like a centre, where people can just go and meet and have coffee. They can be there. Maybe it could turn into some – for lack of a better word – memorial. I think a memorial was the wrong thing, but something like a living presence; an iconic something. Somewhere where you might go to have lunch and I might see Ian there, or whoever, and it is a nice

place to have a lunch. I think those are the sorts of things you can't really manage because it's just a natural thing we've all started to do. You find each other. It would be nice if there was a structure where you could find each other if you haven't already met, but more often than not you meet naturally.

Joe: The problem with that are the kind of fragmented groupings that have resulted from that. The press, Whitehall and Westminster are always looking for representatives, and of course, it makes their life easier if there is just one person or one group they can talk to. For instance, obviously King's Cross United has emerged as a very powerful presence.

Gill: But we don't feel it's representative of me, for example.

Joe: There are quite a lot of people who wouldn't criticise it at all but who don't feel that it represents them particularly well.

Gill: Yes.

Joe: One of the interesting things about King's Cross United is that all but a very small handful of the 100-odd members were people who weren't injured. They had suffered emotional and psychological trauma, but no physical trauma.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We certainly noticed the difference.

Joe: The survivors from Russell Square who we have become closest to, and a number of them are now amongst our close friends, who were all injured to a various extent in carriage one, many of them have sampled King's Cross United and in the end have decided it's not quite for them and have pulled back slightly, including the Tube driver of the Russell Square Tube. We do know that, of course, the press will always use King's Cross United as their first point of contact and that's natural. It's laziness on their part, but that's sort of inevitable.

Gill: I think it's also so very difficult to manage the degrees of bitterness and anger and where that anger is directed. If you come out of this, once again, luckily not bitter or angry about anything, but rather thinking 'I would like to use the donation of my legs for a better cause. What does this mean now if I am here, then what does that mean? What does my life mean and how can we effectively make some progress to saying this will never happen again?' The channelling of what I feel is more towards that rather than worrying about anything to do with blame.

Joe: The other thing we feel in common with other people is that some organisations, support groups and groupings of people, is that in a sense they are almost holding people back. There are some people who are still struggling to get beyond the day itself. We have found most in common with people who don't want to forget, although they are very happy to talk about it. We still find it cathartic and useful to talk about it especially to people who will listen and might help us and help the future, but we are focused on the future. It's not forgetting, but also it's not being held on that Tube train at ten to nine on 7 July.

Gill: I think a public inquiry is necessary for many larger reasons as well. For me, sitting here, this could be anyone of us at the table now, and I think that is a point that needs to be implanted into everybody every day to say actually sometimes it's not about life

and death; sometimes there is a bit in the middle where you would never think of continuing life without legs. It is something we would never think about, and death almost isn't about me, it is about the people that you leave behind that are affected by that, but being disabled is your own struggle, and included with those who are with you. It is something we would never think about. I think it's good to make those reminders to the general public, and whether there is a connection to war, or whether it's about governments, it's not about that; it's about what we can all do to say that's enough.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that what you would hope to come out of a public inquiry?

Gill: Yes. I would hope that we would all have a degree of greater understanding of why these things happen in the first place. My instinct is that there is no direct correlation between invasion of Iraq and blowing up – no direct... I think there are contributing factors, indeed a great contributing factor, but I don't know. How do I know the truth? I don't know. I think it deserves all of us to understand because when you do understand perhaps there is a greater chance of us doing something about it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I think we will be making no comment whatever on whether there should be a public inquiry or not; that is for others to deal with and campaign for in many ways.

Gill: Yes, absolutely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Our role is to learn what we can improve and how we can make sure that if it happens again that more people are looked after better across the piece?

Joe: In response to that, I would argue that one reasonable conclusion is that there must be formal mechanisms for hearing evidence and testimony and a Royal Commission, a public inquiry, or an independent inquiry sometimes is the only feasible way of doing that. It's interesting that this narrative has been written without any reference to anybody who was there as a civilian presence on 7 July. Frankly, it's bizarre.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I think it finished last Friday.

Gill: There is also something about scale which I think is very interesting about 7 July and from learning from it, which is that it's an incredibly small-scale piece of what happened. There were very few dead, very few injured and very few critically injured, and I think that in itself offers a fantastic example of being able to speak to everyone intimately and ask 'What is your experience? What do you think could be done differently?'

Richard Barnes (Chair): To wrap up what you said about support, you are saying it shouldn't be institutionalised but they should facilitate it happening.

Gill: Yes, that's it. That's how I would feel.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Something we discussed the other day between ourselves was about whether it would be helpful to have advice as to what different forms support groups might take?

Gill: Absolutely.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Then if you wanted to formalise it, you would have models that other people have gone through to show what you can do.

Joe: Yes.

Gill: Yes, absolutely. That also fits in with the types of support for injuries that people may have. We spent two and half months in hospital, so that is a longer period of time than perhaps someone who was there for a week. I think the hospitals could do with some support as well in terms of how they have a space for people if it was on a larger scale and how people can come together there and whether they are well equipped.

Joe: We formed our own little community of survivors at St Thomas's. Some were from Russell Square, some were from Tavistock Square. It was a mixture of people. In a sense, the hospital informally facilitated that on the level of a nurse saying that so and so was down the corridor and would we want to meet or would they contact the families.

Gill: It is very much the decisions of individuals. I think for those individuals it's great for them to feel that they may have a back-up, so there is a structure where it is all right for them to make introductions rather than think about whether they are doing the right thing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you go to the Family Assistance Centre at all, and then the July 7 one, whatever that was called?

Gill: I've never been there.

Joe: As I think I said last time, I don't have any criticisms of the 7 July Family Assistance Centre, beyond the fact that it happened too early to be of use to Gill. It was only 10 minutes' walk from St Thomas's Hospital, but if you are lying in a bed being intubated it is no use. Indeed, all the kinds of things like trauma support need to kick in later. It all happens too early. In terms of trauma itself, I think people aren't even aware of trauma for a much longer period and, indeed, there is some medical evidence that trauma as a physical phenomenon often doesn't kick in until up to six or nine months after the event itself. So there was a lot of support offered to us early that was of no use to us. It was not that it wasn't offered, but just that it was offered to us at the wrong time.

On the other hand, I used it on a number of occasions. The police used it to hold the first big public meeting, and I think I talked about this last time, at which they made the slightly unfortunate mistake of inviting survivors and the bereaved to the same meeting.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Different issues.

Joe: Absolutely different issues. Anecdotally, although sadly I think I said that I thought that lesson had been well learnt in this case that on every subsequent occasion, including visits to Russell Square that were organised by the police, the bereaved and the survivors were separated out. We have just been invited to a function at Highgrove, which is very nice, except we know the bereaved families have been invited as well, so it might be a bit strange on the day. It will be the first time since that first public meeting

that I will have had contact with the families of the bereaved, and Gill, of course, has never had any contact with families of the bereaved.

The Family Assistance Centre did some very useful and practical things for us. Gill's family from Australia had never been in London before and the High Commission sorted them out lots of stuff, but the Family Assistance Centre sorted them out with first-class travel warrants on South West Trains, which were fantastic, and they organised our *pro bono* legal support – rather we organised it with the assistance of the Family Assistance Centre. On a small scale they gave us enormously useful, practical support.

One of the things that slightly scared me about the public event last time is some of that criticism that came out about the 7 July Family Assistance Centre. I think they may have made mistakes and they will obviously be learning from that, but I don't think they were useless in the way that some people have represented them. I think it was better that they were there than not. They weren't completely without purpose.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This was the first time any centre like that has been set up anywhere in Europe, so it was a vertical learning curve.

Joe: I think we need to go and learn from countries like Australia where, partly because of Bali and so forth, that sort of stuff is part of the natural system; there are support mechanisms that just kick in. I suspect there are other places where that's also true, so there are probably other places they could learn from about how to do it. But I think the fact that it is there is a good thing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do I understand it's going to come under the MPS should it happen again? There was some change.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Manager, GLA): There was some change but I don't think it was the Family Assistance Centre. I think the idea was that it would be the reception centre, not the Family Assistance Centre.

Gill: From a communication and information point of view also, we seem to have a greater deal of communication with the more seriously injured.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that because you are part of the system?

Joe: Yes. We have been

Gill: Yes. We have met other survivors who were perhaps in the hospital for that afternoon and have slipped out of the system, but in a way they feel angrier, more aggrieved. They are the people who were using the 7 July Family Assistance Centre and perhaps had more of a beef to say 'I didn't know about this. I didn't know about that' because they weren't in the system so much.

Joe: What we've learnt about the health service generally also applies to other levels of support. As far as I can tell, in the health service, if you have a minor injury and go to Accident and Emergency (A&E) it is sometimes not a pleasant experience, but if you are as severely injured as Gill was then it works very well.

Gill: I couldn't praise it more, and the aftercare.

Joe: We have no significant criticisms of our healthcare whatsoever. At St Thomas's the physical fabric of the building is appalling. It's like a terrible environment, but the clinical management is fantastic. We now find it very difficult to read stories about how appalling the health service is because that's not our experience of it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about the Family Liaison Officers (FLOs)?

Gill: Fantastic.

Joe: Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant.

Gill: They continue to be so also.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you still have them?

Gill: Yes.

Joe: They are not working for us formally.

Gill: They have now become friends.

Joe: We are still in contact with them.

Gill: As you can get a sense of, we have sort of almost been making these mugs saying 'A Gill isn't just for 7 July, she's for life.'

Joe: I think the FLO system, as I think I said last time, as far as we understand, came out of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and it's evidence that the MPS has really got its act together. I think we were particularly fortunate in that we were given two FLOs. I'm not entirely sure why.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that one each or so that you have 24-hour cover?

Joe: I think they were probably allocated on the assumption that Gill was shortly going to become deceased. I think that was probably the reason for the allocation. If they had known Gill was going to be severely injured and survive we probably wouldn't have had two. We're not complaining. By chance, they were both Sapphire officers who deal with extreme rape cases, so they were both highly trained in interpersonal skills and they were both experienced chaperones. It was very easy and comfortable to work with them.

Gill: I was expecting them to ask questions. I think the unique position of being told you have been in a bomb is extraordinary. You think 'A bomb? Are you sure?' 'Yes, that's what has happened.' To be able to have a FLO there, someone who is the police but you feel in a way that they are looking after you and caring for you, you are able to ask questions and have information sent back. They were thorough with all the information they got for us, everything.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Apart from sitting and talking to you, what else did they do for you?

Joe: They did much more than that. The FLOs were the people who came to collect me on that night. That was their first job.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): They had sent people right from then?

Gill: Yes.

Joe: They were given the job and the first part of the job was to find the partner. They knew Gill had a partner.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): You said before they knew there was a 'you', but they did not know who you were.

Joe: Yes. They didn't know who I was. Exactly. They were very professional at that moment. You can imagine it was the weirdest car journey I have ever taken and hope I ever will take with them from North London to south of the River. We were essentially racing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was it a blue light?

Joe: No, because unfortunately being plain-clothes Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers they used pool cars so they don't have 'nee-naws', which always disappointed us. It wasn't until we were taken out by the anti-terrorist squad that we had a 'nee-naw'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So you've had your ride?

Gill: That's the first thing I asked.

Richard Barnes (Chair): 'Blues and twos.'

Joe: They use the crappiest kind of pool cars. The sort of thing you would get if you went to Budget Rentacar. But they were there from that moment onwards. They were fantastic on the night. They took me to the hospital. I know there was a lot of criticism of very serious protocols at emergency scenes. My experience was that there are really unfortunate protocols at hospitals. They had to process us through the police officers at St Thomas's, who then had to process us through the medical teams and the intensive care ward where Gill was by that point. I can't tell you the figure exactly, but it took somewhere up to 40 minutes from arriving at St Thomas's before I could get to Gill's bedside. It was a deeply frustrating experience.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Even though you were with police who could verify you.

Joe: We were kept waiting in two different waiting rooms for quite long periods of time while the protocols were gone through, and as far as I can see there was no need for it. In the end, the officer at the hospital, who was also an FLO from Battersea, I said to her 'Look, if Gill dies while I am sitting in a waiting room I'm going to be fucking pissed off.' She said 'You're probably right' and went off and then it got a little speedier. It could easily have happened. If Gill had died that night it could easily have happened while I was in the hospital but not at her bedside, which would have been unfortunate. I can't see any reason. The only obvious logical delay was that the medical team waited until they had assembled themselves because they were determined to brief me very fully

before they allowed me to the bedside because obviously I was going to see Gill in a condition that they couldn't describe to me. How could you describe to anyone what your partner looks like after they have been blown up?

Gill: They thought I was a 60-year old Spanish woman at one stage, didn't they?

Joe: Yes.

Gill: That's how bad I was.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that because of the soot?

Gill: Yes, and the fluids blow up and I looked quite...

Joe: Another survivor, a young woman, who I think you are going to receive a written testimony from, was admitted as an Asian male. She's a young white woman.

Gill: They didn't know what sex. The haematologist who came to see me in the ward, because they were pumping me full of blood, said that she burst into tears and said 'I didn't even know what you were. You were just a body. I didn't even know if you were male or female.' They're all scratching their heads. They can't believe that I'm here.

Joe: That communication at the hospital was unfortunate actually. But the FLOs remained with me the whole time. I had a friend with me, just to help me. They not only looked after me. Basically, I never left the hospital. Once I arrived there, that was it, I didn't go home for two and half months, nor did Gill obviously. They took my friend home. After that they ferried people, family members, to and from the hospital. They were very resourceful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was this the FLOs?

Joe: The FLOs.

Gill: They went to pick up my brother from the airport as well.

Joe: No, the High Commission did that, but the FLOs gave people lifts back to Heathrow.

Gill: That's it. They sort of became one of the family almost, in a way.

Joe: They looked after my daughter. The police did find it funny that my daughter was up in Gleneagles at the time, presumably throwing rocks at policemen, and the police themselves did find it funny that a day later they were ferrying her around London in patrol cars.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did she react?

Joe: It was the first time in her life that she had been on the inside of a police car for benign purposes. They were incredibly good and remained intensely professional but compassionate, and not professional in a kind of cold and detached way. They became very implicated in our case.

Gill: They took my statement.

Joe: They were very careful to shield Gill from other branches of the police as well. They were terribly afraid about big geezer macho SO13 officers coming in and doing their job in a kind of insensitive way. We talked to other people whose experience with the FLOs was very positive as well and said that was the level of support they gave; it was above and beyond any kind of job description.

Gill: We could also contact other people through the FLO network. For instance, in the early stages I had a real desire to meet the wife of Jermaine Lindsay, who was the bomber. It ended up not happening but that was something the FLOs were dealing with.

Joe: They facilitated our meetings with emergency service workers at Russell Square who we wanted to meet. There was obviously a problem that they didn't want anyone to meet until the statements had been taken because they didn't want the evidence to be contaminated, but as soon as the police statements had been taken they facilitated our meetings with people.

Gill: They found another bilateral amputee for me to talk to.

Joe: That's right.

Richard Barnes (Chair): From 7 July?

Gill: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Another bilateral.

Gill: Yes. My greatest thing, as I guess we can all imagine in this room, was 'Hang on a moment, how can you tell me I am going to walk when clearly there are no legs here? I need to see somebody that does this miraculous thing.' I said this to our FLO and they said 'We will sort it' because the hospital was a little bit guarded. Of course, I didn't understand then but I do now. The hospital's view on this was that every amputee is different and they don't want you to meet someone that limps like this because you might not necessarily do that. You might have two limps, or you might do that; they don't know.

Joe: They also thought it was too early, which it was actually.

Gill: The FLOs sorted that out.

Joe: Gill is pig-headed though!

Gill: Yes, determined.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What about the health service and fitting the prosthesis?

Gill: It's exemplary. Amazing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Where did you go? Roehampton?

Gill: No, Stanmore.

Joe: All the early stuff was actually at St Thomas's.

Gill: I just think how wonderful it is that we have a system like this. This is my second iteration of prosthetic legs. I am at rehab at Stanmore twice a week. They pick me up and take me there. I do my rehab and they take me back. It's unbelievable. Exemplary. I have nothing to complain about. It's fantastic. Incredible.

Joe: The prosthetic services and the physio services talk about something which you could call the 'Heather Mills Syndrome', which is actually slightly counter-productive in that she has helped to encourage this impression that the popular press have taken up that the National Health Service (NHS) prosthetic service is crap, and they kind of give you wooden pegs like pirates or something.

Richard Barnes (Chair): In the health service?

Joe: Yes, exactly.

Gill: We have laughed about this extensively with the prosthetic team: I have been given the best that they could possibly give me with budget and time, but the feet that I have are called Elite Feet and they are 'to help you get a sports-life balance'. That is what it says on the box. I just roared with laughter and said 'Oh my God, that is the last thing I bloody want! I don't want a sports-life balance. Take those things away!' Of course, I made the prosthetic doctor laugh because the moment I had them on I was pretending that I couldn't stop running and I wanted him to make them stop and all this sort of palaver. It just shows how wonderful the system is that it's there and it provides. They said they took a lot of things into account: obviously it is 7 July; my age; and that it's both legs, so they have been able to fast-track a lot of things and approve the best that they possibly can under the NHS. It's just remarkable.

Joe: You don't commonly get young women with bilateral amputations. It is very unusual. Bilateral amputations are rare in themselves, but most people who have lost a leg are young men off motorbikes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Or indeed middle-aged men off motorbikes.

Joe: Indeed, but predominantly the people they treat are motorcycle couriers or older people who are diabetics and smokers. Those are the kind of normal groups, so Gill just didn't fit the profile.

We are aware that at every stage of our treatment and rehabilitation everybody made an extra special effort because it was 7 July and we know that actually our experience might have been very different if Gill had received these injuries in another way, which could easily have happened.

Richard Barnes (Chair): But we can only deal with the bit that we are dealing with.

Gill: Absolutely.

Joe: We're not complaining about that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Looking back, what do you think could be improved? What would you change?

Gill: Support for the people that have had to make decisions on that day and I think top-down support for a flexibility in protocols so that they can feel covered that they aren't going to have their 'super' saying 'How dare you have made that decision' or God forbid, if any of the guys that entered the Tube suffered horrific diseases through being in that tunnel later down the track, that they are not ultimately responsible and carry that guilt. I guess top-down support for them, but equally how there could be better equipment on stations and a little more than just sticky plasters.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is something that has come through very strongly, and a way of talking to people.

Gill: Yes. It doesn't have to be elaborate systems. Even just the breathing apparatus for anything that happened down there you could imagine; it doesn't have to be a terrorist bomb, it could be anything, but just having a range of equipment that would help anyone going down a tunnel.

Joe: You heard the story about the locked first-aid kit that had nothing in it on the Circle Line, but on the deep-level Tubes they don't even have an empty first aid box, they have no first-aid box.

Gill: But on one level, how fantastic that we have been living in a system that doesn't have these things because obviously we don't have them because we have never required them; because there's no demand and you only supply a demand. So, on one level, isn't it wonderful that here we are in 2005 and 2006 and there are no first-aid things in a Tube system? Marvellous, wonderful – because there's been no need.

But now that we have seen that there's a need, or a potential need. It could be anything. What happens if I was about to give birth? What if there are all these other situations, positive situations, that do require first aid that's not on hand? Even with all the health and safety officers that are allocated in businesses, it would be wonderful if there were people who were perhaps more highly trained that were actually Tube workers who could feel okay because they have done a bit more than first aid and know what they are doing and can respond in a very calm manner.

As I said, my experience is that the people who did deal with me were amazing and did react very calmly. I was talking to the train driver last night and we talked about this thing of there not being any choices: you're in that situation and you don't really have a choice. The choice is not to run away; you do have to stand there and be counted for and do what you can do. I think it would be marvellous to have some help and cover for those sorts of people.

Joe: There is one issue of Tube safety. I know that Tube safety isn't necessarily within the strict remit of your inquiry.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's certainly something we will be passing comment on.

Joe: There is one issue about it that completely confused me that was highlighted in the public testimonies last month. I don't understand why Tube doors are stuck on locked when there has been an accident. Of course, on overground railways the system

is the doors must always be unlocked when a train stops because under the circumstances they need to be. It has been part of railway safety since the 19th century when trains used to catch on fire that locked doors are inadmissible. Of course, in taxis they lock when it is moving and unlock as soon as it stops. I don't understand why people would be trapped on a Tube train by the doors. You have heard so many testimonies about people trying to force the doors open. I have to say that the people who tried to force the doors open on the Piccadilly Line were obviously wasting their time because any fool would know that the tunnel is about a foot away from the doors.

Gill: I think the greatest thing really is speed, isn't it? Anything that can allow people to get to a situation faster and have equipment faster is the name of the game. It's speed.

Joe: The cab communications were clearly inadequate as well. The driver said that the first thing he did, of course, was to try to contact his line controller, and all communications had been lost from the train.

Gill: In terms of preparation, we have laughed because I think straight after 7 July, and even with 9/11 to a degree there were all these marketable sorts of things like 'Always carry a torch. Always carry one of these.' From first-hand experience, it doesn't matter whether you have a torch or not. There's no self-preparation that you can have, and you're either blown up or you're not blown up. There were various things that saved me that day which were random things. For instance, I had a scarf on and I don't normally wear scarves.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that used as a tourniquet?

Gill: Yes. It's those sorts of things that you can't prepare. It's how you have enough at your disposal to be able to make a difference to people who desperately need it at that point in time other than scrapping around and saying 'We haven't got any bandages. We have nothing.'

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was it passengers that put on your tourniquet?

Gill: No, I did it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You did it? They are tough in the outback, aren't they?

Gill: Yes, exactly. The surgeon said to me once he had found out I was Australian it all started to make sense – 'no worries, don't need my legs, still got my arms, you know.' Even the Tube driver said to me last night that he was bewildered for ages because he could see the extent of what had happened to me and he said that I was so calm and matter of fact saying 'Yes, it's fine. No, it's fine. Yes. Uhum. Yes.' Someone was trying to talk to me, saying 'What's your name and where do you work?' I was a bit like 'Excuse me, I am concentrating here' because I knew exactly how much blood I was losing and thought I would slow everything down because if I panicked I would be pumping it all out down here. So I thought I would slow right down, concentrate on something else and sit there and wait, and that is exactly what happened. He was laughing with me last night and said he had never seen anything like that.

There was a woman who was paralysed at the base of me who said that she also found this quite amusing because she stared up, transfixed on my face, and she thought 'She

looks like she knows what she is doing' so that is why she looked at me because she obviously thought I had experience of these things. It's good to have been of some help to someone at that moment.

Joe: I am sure the Tube driver hasn't come forward. He's not like that, but he is absolutely an unsung hero of the day. As you probably know, there were two drivers on the train: one had just got on because he was taking a ride to work and he led the first cohort of 'walking wounded' off the train, but the actual driver of that train went into the carriage, administered what first aid he could, helped a number of injured passengers to the platform, then went back and helped more people and did an awful lot of work. I know he won't come forward.

By the way, anecdotally, his account of the way in which he was treated by London Underground is also exemplary. They have behaved in a very proper fashion to him. I think people always assume that organisations don't treat people very well under those circumstances but London Underground have behaved very well towards him.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We have heard testimonies from a lot of people who have lost jobs or had difficulty with jobs and it is nice to know institutions that got it right.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): One of the comments which impressed us very early was Tim O'Toole (Managing Director, London Underground), who summed it up, on several occasions actually in public, as: 'Invest in technology but do not rely on it; invest in your people and rely on them.'

Gill: He sent us a card for our wedding.

Joe: Tim O'Toole sent a telegram on behalf of London Underground.

Gill: Just lovely.

Joe: Which was a very small touch, but it was very good.

Gill: Not even knowing how we felt about the Underground. I just thought that was fantastic.

Joe: It was a nice touch.

Gill: Very personable and lovely.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Can I ask you about something quite different? Last time, you mentioned the *pro bono* legal help that you had had. Can you tell us how that happened?

Joe: As far as I understand, there's a syndicate of solicitors. I think it's particularly true of American-based multi-national firms of solicitors because in America obviously *pro bono* work is virtually statutory and all practices do it as a component of their work. According to our solicitor that's starting to happen in London to a degree but it is still essentially something they offer rather than something that they do in any kind of mandatory fashion. They also have a self-interest in that. I think it is to do with the rise in compensation culture but also because of the rise of electronic media and so forth, and solicitors say get less experience of being in court now and of doing things

other than very specialist legal tasks. They see it as a simple human resource opportunity.

The solicitor who helps us is also working on behalf of people in Guantánamo Bay, so she has taken on two very significant human rights' cases in a sense. Indeed, her own firm are proposing her for an award which is given out for *pro bono* work and she is being proposed by her own firm on the basis of the work she has done for us and for Guantánamo Bay.

As far as I understand it, the syndicate made themselves available to the Family Assistance Centre, and when my brother-in-law went to the Family Assistance Centre on our behalf to ask about it, a chain of events was put into place. We were given the number. They didn't contact us. It was up to us to contact them, which we did very early on. It's worked like clockwork.

The solicitor has worked tirelessly on our behalf. There has been absolutely no limit on what her remit is or on the amount of time she will spend. Her remit seems to be that whatever we need done for us she will do. However long it takes, she will commit that time.

Gill: Even the menial sort of tasks, like the form-filling. It's wonderful.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It has extended to administrative stuff as well?

Joe: Yes, and it seems bizarre to have someone who I imagine is being paid about hundred times more than I am filling out rather stupid forms.

Gill: Both us were in this strange sort of bubble, and filling in any sort of form was a task one too many.

Joe: It was even finding out what forms you had to fill in.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We heard that in the other evidence.

Joe: There is no help at the moment in finding out what you have to do. You have to learn an entirely new system. Also, rather like so many things in your life, once you've learnt how to do it the information isn't useful again because it's not information you then transfer to somebody else because we hope this is the only time we will be doing this. It would be so easy to have a small team of people who absolutely know the system.

Obviously, it does involve quite complex negotiations: obviously with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), the hospital occupational therapy (OT) facilities, your borough social services and their OT services, and with the 'blue badge' people. By the way, Transport for London (TfL) has been absolutely crap about that. Of course, you know that we can apply for 100% exemption from the Congestion Charge. So far we have made two requests for the form, which we have to fill in and we haven't even seen the form. We had a printer problem at home – a classic story at home – but it just seemed much easier to phone them up. In fact, the first time I emailed them and they have no record of the email, despite the fact that I have a record of the email being sent and received. I then phoned them and we still haven't received anything.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is this Capita or TfL?

Joe: If it's 'Crapita' then it's obviously quite understandable, isn't it?

Richard Barnes (Chair): We can't really comment formally on that, but I would agree with you.

Joe: It's exactly the question I asked myself last night. If it is them then I can understand it. You are contacted via the TfL website, so it's not clear whether you are talking to TfL staff.

Gill: On the *pro bono* work once again, I would be interested to know how different it is for the varying degrees of injury. In a way, it's been quite self-explanatory to say 'This person doesn't have legs' so great, you are fast-tracked through. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has been wonderful and exemplary, because being me, of course I would fill in a form and say that I don't need this or that, and I will learn how to do that myself. For the DWP to ring me up and say that that wasn't the way I should fill the form in, and that I needed to say...

Joe: Basically, 'I am lying in bed dribbling.'

Gill: That's it, in the nicest possible way, and I found that quite amazing that all of that was there.

Joe: It's quite funny. You need a conspiracy between a Government department and yourself to countermand their own useless application system. They are complicit with you in trying to make the system work for you, because it obviously doesn't work for them or for you.

Gill: To be honest, I am surprised how people get away with it with the amount of proving that we needed to do.

Joe: The CICA form really does need addressing because it is so general.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That has been made very clear.

Joe: There are ridiculous things: for instance, in theory we should have had a photographer to photograph Gill's injuries. That is kind of obtrusive if your injuries are as serious as Gill's are, but having a letter from a surgeon saying that he has chopped your legs would normally be sufficient proof that you don't have legs anymore. In fact, the funny thing is the solicitor had a brilliant idea and said there was a photograph in the *Daily Telegraph* of Gill without her legs and asked if that would do. They thought about it and then said all right, so they're using the *Daily Telegraph* as the evidence that Gill received some injuries.

She's struggling to fill in the forms. The mandatory section was fine, and we've received an interim payment. That's fantastic, and it's been brilliant, but with the discretionary section of the form, neither we nor our caseworker at the CICA really understand it very well. We're all making it up as we go along.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you ever apply to the Mayoral fund?

Joe: That was all sorted for us and it has been incredibly prompt and very generous.

Gill: Fantastic. Not a complaint on any side.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you apply to it or did they come to you?

Joe: I can't remember the system, but, again, the solicitor was on hand to do it all. She has a close relationship with the caseworker for the Mayor's fund (London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund) and the caseworker for the CICA, so everything is being filtered through her. I can't imagine how many hours of work that has saved us, apart from the fact that obviously she would do these things twice as quickly as us, they still took her a long time, and when one thinks what her hourly rate must be.

Gill: Once again, people who have grievances with this sort of process, maybe they haven't had that wonderful work.

Joe: We met people who had received far less injuries than Gill, but we have been quite privileged in that respect.

Gill: Absolutely.

Joe: We seem to have been on a level that very few other people got to in terms of the amount of support that has been offered to us, which is totally appropriate of course.

Richard Barnes (Chair): There are those, with respect, with a physical injury but clearly not the psychological injury and there are others who have had no physical injury but their psychological and trauma injuries are just horrendous.

Joe: There is a sort of bad taste joke amongst some survivors that the further away from the bomb you were the more traumatised you seemed to be.

Gill: For instance: 'I was on my way to King's Cross station' or 'I was in Birmingham travelling towards King's Cross.'

Richard Barnes (Chair): We have certainly been approached by 'fakers', I think would be the only word, wanting to give evidence.

Gill: That's it. Wonderful, bless them.

Joe: The other thing is that the support has expanded to meet our needs. We had one or two issues with Gill's employers who didn't seem to understand the DDA very well, despite the fact they are a Government-funded organisation, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) which draws up most of the...

Gill: Plus the DCMS now.

Joe: – rules about disability and they clearly didn't understand them. We understood more from our own acquired knowledge than they did as professional human resources people. Their employment section immediately kicked in to support us. In the end, they didn't have to do anything because as soon as we breathed the name of the solicitors suddenly everybody instantly acquired a new knowledge of DDA and

everything went very smoothly after that. Again, that was the kind of power that we had that other people haven't necessarily had.

Gill: It's quite a privileged position.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Plus you are reasonably well-known, aren't you?

Gill: Well, not for 7 July, sadly.

Richard Barnes (Chair): For a glorious wedding and all the rest of it and your sheer glorious fortitude.

Gill: Yes, but I think we have just been very, very, very fortunate in our care through the whole thing. It's difficult to fault anything, through all the blunders, through everything. I think we are also big enough to realise that this hasn't happened before and we are all trying to find our way together to make something work for both sides of the system, for us as users and for someone as a supplier. I am never willing to say 'That was shit' because it is nice to be able to say to people 'How about that?' 'That's a good idea, let's try it that way.' Everything seems to have worked. As I said, I think it's because of the degree of the injuries that we have had this amazing support from the NHS through to the *pro bono* from the solicitors to everything. It's just fabulous. I couldn't want for anything.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is there anything else you think we should cover?

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): I don't think so.

Joe: The only thing I wanted to say is that in looking at the public testimony in retrospect, of course we knew at the time, as far as I remember, most people who gave testimony gave a mixture of criticism of certain aspects of the emergency plan but praise for individuals, but we always knew that the popular press would pull out the criticisms and ignore the praise. Although I agree, as Janet (Hughes) said before this meeting, that the press coverage was reasonably responsible on that day, and I think that is true, nonetheless there is a sort of impression given that 7 July survivors have become quite a 'whingey', bolshy lot. I wouldn't withdraw any of my criticisms of the Government. Gill does not share them.

Gill: No, I don't.

Joe: She's not bothered about that, but I still feel very angry about the lack of Government response. I wouldn't withdraw any of my criticisms of some of the failures of leadership of the emergency services. At the same time, I think it is really necessary to reaffirm that quite a lot went well on the day.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): We are very aware of this and of getting the tone right.

Gill: Despite the lack of whatever.

Joe: Indeed, and for me, that makes the absolutely appalling response of the Government even more ridiculous in that they have lost golden opportunities for themselves. I think they've shot themselves in the foot, to be honest.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Some of the issues have been clearly highlighted, aren't new. I first asked the Mayor about communications in the deep tunnels in May 2001. I was involved in some negotiations, but we are no further forward really.

Joe: The MPS still don't have radios that work underground, do they?

Richard Barnes (Chair): No, and that includes St James's Park (Underground station) which is immediately opposite New Scotland Yard.

Joe: The MPS' radios are still not compatible with the BTP's, although of course the BTP are being absorbed in the next couple of years. When the City of London Police (CLP) and the BTP go into the MPS I bet it will be five years before anything coordinates properly, and I am sure there will still be a degree of inter-service rivalry as well, which is very clear. I don't know if you have experienced this, but the MPS and the BTP view each other with a great deal of suspicion, unfairly so, I think.

Gill: It's been hard for us as a kind of conduit for trying to bring them together.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is there anything you want to add? I know you could go on for hours.

Joe: There is one other issue that clearly the record system has been appalling. Again, we are lucky. We didn't realise about other people's experiences. We've been in the system from day one so we've never been overlooked in anything, but it's clear that compiling lists of people who were implicated has been appalling.

The Tube driver makes the point that his testimony was rather a valid and important one because he had technical knowledge but also remained conscious and uninjured; even his ears weren't damaged because he was protected in his cab. He has very clear memories of the interior of the carriage, where people were and what happened to them and so forth. He gave a police statement early on that was subsequently lost and only turned up recently, which was difficult for him because he couldn't make a CICA claim because of course the CICA said they had no record of him being registered with the police. You think 'Ah, that would be a problem' if the driver of the sodding train has been lost in the system. I know you have heard a lot of people who keep getting their names onto lists that are then subsequently lost. In these days of databases, this seems very strange.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then you get this strange interpretation of what is and isn't data protection, and what is or isn't confidential in patient terms. We will certainly be making a recommendation that this has to be looked at in extraordinary circumstances. You can't say this is the narrow rule.

Gill: The reason I worried before about even coming was because I felt so positive about things that you worry that that will be a lack of contribution.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): No, it is a contribution. It is a contribution in itself because we want to say certain things went very well, but it is also a contribution because it then throws into starker relief the things which didn't go so well.

Gill: Okay. That was my only concern.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It really does contribute. We often say to people that scrutiny doesn't just mean saying that something didn't work or criticising things; there is a positive side to it as well.

Joe: Frankly, it would be bizarre if the emergency plan completely failed, given the amount of work, effort and rehearsal that has gone into and clearly everything won't go right either.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's clear that there is a massive contrast between you, who were sucked into the system, and from the minute you left that carriage you were a body going through the system.

Gill: Even as a 'one unknown'. I have powder and soap that was given to me from St Thomas's with a label 'one unknown', so I have all my kit as a 'one unknown'. The way I was looked after as a 'nobody' was exemplary. That is powerful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then there are others who were incredibly traumatised who didn't get sucked into the system. For instance, the guy who walked out having come off the train, doesn't know what to do and goes home and watches the news. Was it Rachel who gave her name and address eight times?

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): 12 times.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It was lost each time. For instance, the DCMS didn't even have a proper list.

Joe: They should consider sending letters headed 'the Emergency Response Unit' or whatever the unit at the DCMS is called – that would be a misnomer. There was a letter inviting us to the 1 November ceremony. I don't know how much testimony you had about that, but that was a farcical event, I'm afraid to say.

Richard Barnes (Chair): As far as the survivors were concerned?

Joe: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We, 'the great, the good, and the ugly', were there.

Joe: I know. We were shoved in a transept where I could see very little on tip-toe and Gill could see nothing. We felt like we were shoved in a corner.

Gill: But once again, I didn't feel that was for me. That was for families of the bereaved.

Joe: We went along for the bereaved, and we were hoping they were treated better, but anecdotally we even heard there were families of the bereaved who weren't placed very well at the ceremony. I must say, when I saw Peter Hendy (Commissioner, TfL; formerly Managing Director, London Buses) being interviewed and saying how fantastic it was and that he was put in the front-row as a recognition of how important people... I thought, well that's nice for you, good, but we weren't.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I know the Members of Parliament (MPs) who had lost someone in their constituency were all invited, but then survivors from there are considerably more.

Joe: That's right, so why didn't those MPs simply write to the people in their constituencies?

Richard Barnes (Chair): They wouldn't have necessarily known who they were because of patient confidentiality. They would know the dead, but with the survivors I think it may have been patient confidentiality. I don't know, I am dreaming of the reasons.

Gill: But from my point of view none of that has mattered. I know it matters to Joe but it doesn't matter to me.

Joe: The letter from the DCMS inviting us to the 1 November ceremony was headed something like the 'Disaster Response Unit' or something. A great response!

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you go to this famous meeting on the 17th floor?

Joe: No, we didn't even know about. It was obviously something where we fell out of the net that day, or we may have seen it and not registered it. I don't know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I don't even know when it happened.

Joe: I had a vague memory of something that somebody must have told me about but I had completely forgotten about its existence until the testimonies. I don't think we were invited to any meeting at the DCMS, were we? I really don't think we were.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I don't even know whether you were still in hospital.

Dale Langford (Committee Administrator, GLA): I think it was relatively early on, certainly in the first three months.

Gill: We didn't get out until late September.

Joe: I studiously went along to anything I could do, partly because I felt I was representing Gill, so I suspect I would have chosen to go had I heard about it. I can only think we didn't know about it.

[ends]

7 July Review Committee

13 April 2006

Transcript of meeting with Ian

Richard Barnes (Chair): Let's establish where you were. You were on the Edgware Road train?

Ian: No, I was on the King's Cross; I was in the first carriage where it went off at Russell Square. It's always a bit vague, but I was maybe three to four feet away from where it happened, and I picked up various different injuries which, thankfully, are out of sight. So I was fairly close to what happened. I spent a week or two in hospital and had a series of operations that naturally follow that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That has all worked out well, or is working out?

Ian: Yes, there are a few permanent things which, as I say, hopefully are out of sight, but it's got a lot better in the last nine months, or whatever it has been.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Who provided you with the first assistance?

Ian: What basically happened was that I was unconscious for quite a while down there, so by the time I came round, anyone who could get out had got out, so you were pretty much on your own – you are on your own as in no one else is 'fit to help'. The first assistance was from the train driver, who quite remarkably was waiting at the front of his cab. What you actually look for in these circumstances is someone who can tell you what to do; even if it is a basic 'stay here' or 'move there', you just need guidance because you are a bit all over the place, as you can imagine. Having worked my way over to him, he said, 'Walk down the track towards Russell Square. I can't really overestimate the importance of someone being there because you don't know what to do. Logically, say if you were hit today, you would think, 'Well, obviously you would walk down the track', but whether you would have actually done that without someone actually telling you to do it, I'm not sure. I was always quite grateful to the Tube driver.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We have heard people say that just trying to get out of the Tube, because they didn't know whether the rails were still live.

Ian: He did point out, quite astonishingly, that he wasn't sure whether they (the rails) were still live or not and that the important thing was not to touch them. If you ever stand on an Underground station and you actually look down, you notice how near they are together. If someone said to you, 'Walk down a dark tunnel –' and the emergency lights were on – but, 'walk down a relatively dark tunnel...'

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): When you have just come round from being unconscious.

Ian: Yes, and you can't really hear anything, you can barely see anything, and you are aware that there is blood everywhere coming of you, you would just say to them, 'Don't be ridiculous', but actually, at the time I needed someone who I perceived to be in authority. If he says, 'Walk down there', you walk down there; you just do it. I actually

quite clearly remember just walking down the track thinking, 'Don't hit either side because you'll die if you do'. It's amazing what the threat of that does to your head. It's actually a reflection of one's state of mind: if that's what someone tells you to do, no matter who it was, if there was someone who was calm and said, 'Just keep walking'...

The second bit of communication was a guy running in the opposite direction towards the train. He did stop very temporarily and said, 'Are you okay?' I just said to him, 'There are people dying in there, so you go; I'll be okay'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you know who he was?

Ian: No. I think he had a luminous top on – possibly yellow, certainly luminous because I could see him from a distance. He was great because he just said, 'Are you okay?' and realised that I wasn't okay, but I was...

Richard Barnes (Chair): Staggering?

Ian: Yes. My priority was to get him back to the train, and I do remember saying to him, 'How far do I have to go?' because when you walk down a dark tunnel, it's a long and winding road with no end, and he just said, 'Just go round the corner and you'll see light'. It's actually quite reassuring when people say things like that. I'm sure they don't realise the part they play, but even those words of reassurance that it's not far to go now mean quite a lot because you're just dripping with blood all over you and you just want to get somewhere where you can get out.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then you arrived at Russell Square station?

Ian: Yes, you arrive at Russell Square where there were people waiting to lift you up. Again, it makes a huge difference that there are people waiting there. I think that other than those who were very, very seriously injured and had to be carried out, I would imagine I was the last walking wounded out of there because, as I say, when I came round, without meaning to paint the scene in unnecessarily gory way, all it is body parts. My main recollection of coming round was numerous body parts. Your mind goes into autopilot with logic and the first thing is, 'Can you stand up?', and 'to stand up I need legs; have I still got any legs any more?' There's not much panic. When I put my hand down and you just feel half a body on you – that's what I literally woke up to. So, seeing four or five normal people about to come into Russell Square was a huge relief: there was light, there were people and there was quiet because of the screaming that you are leaving behind that's quite a relief. Those four or five people actually had quite an essential role to play. They sort of lifted me up. They didn't say a lot to me, other than, 'Do you think you can make it to the lift?' I said, 'How far is it?' and they said, 'Just down there'. Looking back, someone should have come into the lift with me or at least taken me there.

I made it to the lift and I got up to the top of Russell Square. I don't remember it being particularly busy because I think what had happened, by putting the pieces together, was that those who could get out, had got out by then; they had gone. There was clearly something kicking off, but it wasn't pandemonium at that point. Have you been to Russell Square? It's quite small. It's not big. I went to the far side, and I then became aware that I virtually had nothing on because everything had been blown off; everything sort of stuck to you. My first thought, being in the modern world, was 'Does

my mobile still work?' because I have to try to speak to my mum and dad. I went to the very far side and I leant across on the wall, and I called mum and dad. I couldn't really hear them because my hearing had gone, but my message was something like, 'There has been a bomb'. People ask how you know there was a bomb, but you have seen enough bombs in the Middle East and from Israel and all these kinds of places in the world to know what the inside of a bombed, contained space looks like. A woman came over and she said, 'You have to get off the phone and you have to lie down. You are hurt'. The weird thing is that up to that point, I don't really feel hurt, and then it hits me suddenly that I was struggling to breathe, and I looked down and saw blood pouring off and skin hanging off and my whole hand is burnt. She said, 'Just put the phone down and lie down'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that the point at which you first got first aid, if that is the right word?

Ian: Well, she laid me down, she put a blanket over me and she said, 'We're going to get someone to you as soon as possible'. What you are then aware of, relatively soon, is that there are more people coming up; the station is beginning to fill up, there is a bit of panic, and there was someone with a camera outside, with one of those big lenses.

Richard Barnes (Chair): A TV camera?

Ian: No, a photo camera. I remember looking to my left and I quickly looked away and thought 'this isn't for me' and I just glanced away from him. I looked down at myself and realised again that all my clothes were destroyed. I also realised how black you are – you are actually black with soot and blood that was pouring from my whole left side. Adrenaline actually gets you to the stage where you don't feel it until the adrenaline kicks out, and then suddenly there is pain, you are now struggling to breathe and everything else. You are also then aware of a far bigger crowd at the station. Suddenly it's filling up; suddenly something isn't right and everyone around you is also covered in soot – dark black. She laid me down, but I don't remember at that point getting first aid. A lady on her way to a near-by nurses conference came in and I remember she shouted at someone, 'Get him oxygen' – I must have been a real picture. She said, 'Make sure he can breathe' because I was struggling. Actually the reason I was struggling was because I had been by the double doors and once the double doors gave way, I got blown back against the tunnel, and as I did so my chest got heavily hit, so it was very bruised.

Richard Barnes (Chair): So, you were almost blown out of the carriage?

Ian: I was; I was blown out and then back in. There are electric cables running along the tunnel, and that is what I hit. I was blown out and then I was electrocuted, and I was just thrown around the carriage like a frisbee, quite frankly; you are semi-conscious, semi-unconscious, and you go with it. I can only imagine it's like you've been electrocuted. That's what happens; you're just out of control. There was a lot of burn and blood down the whole left side from that, and so I think she saw that well before I saw that, if that makes sense. She said, 'You've got serious problems and you've just got to lie down. You're losing blood and you seem to be struggling to breathe'. She gave me an oxygen mask very quickly, which I am never convinced worked. That was the first first-aid, the oxygen mask.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you have any idea how long afterwards this was? I recognise it probably seemed like years.

Ian: It did feel like years. I would guess it was somewhere about half an hour; that's pure speculation. One thing I would point out, of course, was that she was going to a nurses' conference coincidentally. Now, the question would be: what happens if she wasn't there? There was no official first aid person there who could cope with this. And the stuff like blankets – they didn't seem to come from the station. I remember they said, 'Open your mouth', and, again, you actually do as you are told. You do as you are told; if someone tells you to do something, you do it. She said, 'Open your mouth', and they just poured water down to try to get a bit of movement there. But, where did they get the water from? They got water from the Tesco over the road. What would have happened if there hadn't have been a Tesco over the road? What if it was closed? There are a million things. I think that I had a good experience, but through circumstance rather than planning, if that makes sense. It just happened there was a nurses' conference, a Tesco across the road, and people coming up from houses with blankets – all this kind of stuff.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is where the blankets came from?

Ian: I believe so. My perception is that there weren't blankets there; I believe they got them from somewhere because initially people were putting jackets and that kind of stuff just to try to cover people up. That nurse, whoever she is, realised you have to give him oxygen, you have to give him water, and she said to me, 'You have to keep talking; you just have to keep alive.' Logically, that is quite a scary thought, and so you just keep rattling on about anything. When she left me, because other people who were really badly hurt were coming up, she then got a policewoman and said, 'Stay by him. Keep him talking. It doesn't matter what you're saying; just hold his hand or whatever you want'. You're just aware that the area was getting busier and busier.. It was horribly busy, but I don't remember people just wandering around. I do remember there was an announcement – of course, your hearing was gone, so all you hear is muffled; you don't know what anyone is saying – they said, 'Can anyone who isn't injured or medical, please leave.' I said to this policewoman, 'What did they just say?' and she had to shout back. I don't know what would have happened if there hadn't had by chance a nurses' conference and by chance had a Tesco. The first doctor, I remember, seemed to be a specialist doctor, but, again, I don't know, and maybe someone can help me out here, I don't think he was called to the scene. I think again he was part of the conference.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was this the HEMS (Helicopter Emergency Medical Service) doctor?

Ian: It was an Israeli guy. They may have been called in; I don't know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): By that time he might have come from Great Ormond Street, as well.

Ian: Yes. I mean, don't forget that you are going in and out of consciousness, you can't really see anything, and your head is all over, so your recollection of who people are is quite blurred. He cut all my remaining clothes off and he very quickly did a thing of chest, burn, foot, hand, face, problem. He gave me a wrist band, which I wish I had kept, which meant 'Priority Two'. I said, 'What does that mean?' and they explained it

quite clearly that there were very seriously injured people and they were giving those priority one, and that I was coming in as priority two. What appeared to be an absolute age, I know you have seen all these guys, but I think it was two hours, I would have thought, before an ambulance arrived, and I am estimating.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That chimes with what other people are saying.

Ian: I can't tell you how long it seemed. The problem with a burn is that a burn exposed to wind hurts because it wasn't covered; there was just a blanket, and it's agony, and you're sitting there in absolute agony. The whole atmosphere changed after Tavistock happened. Then we were told that there were bombs going off over London and the ambulances couldn't come that quickly because they were being called all over the place. That was actually explained to you then and there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You were told that?

Ian: Yes. And do you know, we accepted it.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Did you pick up from anywhere or from afterwards how oxygen came to be available?

Ian: I think it came from the nurse; she got it. I don't remember there being anything particularly specific there. You have to remember that the volume of people coming up was quite big, and there were also people who were uninjured. Unless I have this wrong, my understanding is that the only people that ended up at Russell Square were in that first carriage because to get to Russell Square from the second carriage you had to walk past everyone. That just was not going to happen. Every single person who was coming up was deeply shocked by what they had just seen; no one escaped seeing something. It was all relative, but there was a problem. What you had were two girls who came up in the lift with me who were totally full of soot and just crying and crying and crying; they were shaking. You have all these people who are too traumatised to go anywhere, who aren't necessarily injured, but who are so understandably shaken up by it that it confuses the whole thing of who is who because you are just surrounded by a mess, in reality. Where the oxygen came from, I don't know; I always had the impression that that nurse was the one who was walking around with a small oxygen thing, and she was definitely in control of it because she said to me, 'I've got to give it to someone else now, and this is why you have to keep talking. If you're struggling to breathe, put your hand up and I'll come back with it'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It could have been one of the field hospital girls from Great Ormond Street.

Ian: I would like to meet her – I have met loads and loads of people – but I have never met her. It is a real shame because there was another nurse from Great Ormond Street who was also there. My memory is not so good, and I have met her, and she doesn't know who the person was, either. She said she just looked after me from beginning to end. You almost just want to say, 'Hey, it worked out okay'.

The weird thing was that as the guys who were seriously injured were being brought up, it was such an appalling thing to happen, as you can imagine, for anybody, given the state they were in, that the second person to look after me after the nurse, who had gone off somewhere else, was a policewoman. She looked and she just went, 'Oh my

God' as more people were coming up. I got the impression, and you are very sensitive to stuff, that she was almost like, "I can't do this". That's in no way a criticism - one thing she did do is she said – you're lying here, you've got Russell Square here and the road there – 'Don't look right', and she was saying that because what was coming up was so – you could hear the screaming – it was just so gruesome. I was just very thankful. It's a bit like kids: if you say, 'Don't play with matches', they're going to play with matches, but for once I just didn't look. She said just don't do it to yourself.

The third person to look after me was someone who, again, I have never met, who was covered in soot from head to toe, so I can only imagine had been on the Tube. She said, 'I'll stay with him'. She did the one thing that you would want someone to do and just held my hand. That is what you want: you just want physical contact from someone to say, it's okay. All I remember while slipping in and out of consciousness was watching her cross – she had a cross on – and just watching, mesmerised by the cross going back and forwards as you are sitting, waiting. Other people I have spoken to have said the same thing: you just focus on something. We were just talking rubbish, to be honest, but that wait was a long, long time. But, I accepted that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Could you talk at that stage?

Ian: I couldn't really hear.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did anyone ask you who you were?

Ian: They asked my name, but I think they asked my name out of friendliness, trying to get conversation going. I don't remember someone saying, who are you, what do you do, or anything like that. I remember saying to someone, 'Who are you? I'm so-and-so', but the emphasis was always to keep me talking.

My mum phoned, amazingly, quite early on – it was probably at 10.10, just before the mobiles for whatever reason went. The policeman answered it, and she said, 'Can I speak to him', because I had phoned her earlier on and she said, 'I need to speak to him'. The policeman said, 'He won't be able to hear anything, so there's no point'. She said, 'Can you just tell him I know and I'm coming', and so on. He shouted that at me and I was like, okay. It's an interesting situation, you know. I was okay with him saying that to mum (that was virtually deaf at that stage). You don't know – it's always very hard – what do these people do? I mean, they're suddenly caught in these situations. I don't want to turn this into 'everyone got it wrong' because I don't think everyone did get it wrong by any stretch of the imagination at all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): No, that's really coming through very clear.

Ian: You are just lying there, waiting and waiting.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then an ambulance took you to...?

Ian: There was a bit of a panic before then. I was getting more and more impatient because the burn was hurting even more. The other thing that freaked me out was that as I looked down, I couldn't see my foot – I just saw blood pouring down. Every time I looked down, I saw more blood coming out, and they eventually secured a cloth to stop the blood coming out. There was huge pain from this foot, and I was getting pretty

concerned that the longer it went without being seen to, the worse it was becoming because of all this blood pouring out. I was getting more and more impatient.

They then made another announcement, and I said to someone, 'What's the announcement?' and the announcement was that they thought that there may be a second bomb and, if possible, could we move people up the forecourt. I think this was just after the bus had gone off. The bus changed everything; from an atmosphere where we don't know what's going on, it was very clear now what happened. I got absolutely panicky, and that's the first time and only time of absolute fear. I remember thinking, 'You know, if there's a second bomb up here, then I'm probably gone because I don't have the energy to fight this again. I can't walk'. I started screaming and they very quickly came up and gave me a very quick injection and said, 'This will make you feel better'. It was a bit like something out of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* – 'you'll be all right once you've had this'. They just give this injection and you go from very low to very high, and I couldn't stop rabbiting away about the meaning of life. I very clearly remember feeling absolute panic; absolute 'Now I'm dead. I've survived the first one in a pretty terrible way, but this is it, and I'm going to go with it'.

If we are here to talk about communication, was it particularly wise to make that announcement? I don't know. This is hindsight: if there had been a second bomb and they hadn't cleared someone, and then someone said, 'Why the hell didn't you announce to everybody to get out?' It's just not that easy; nothing is black and white except the panic, certainly for me, of 'This is it', and they said, 'Calm down'. I literally was in a panic attack; it was out of control screaming.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did your injection help?

Ian: Yes, absolutely. I was sky high by the end of that. It's interesting because they don't have time to ask questions; they don't have time to ask if you are allergic to anything: 'Quickly, just sort this guy out'. I would also imagine that the last thing you need there is panic, and someone going berserk is causing panic. An ambulance eventually came – and it *was* eventually – and I was still on a bit of a high. I asked what hospital we are going to, and they said St Thomas', which I didn't even know, but that was fine. I remembered some weird details; they said it was going to be quite bumpy because we were going to go very fast and to just stay with it. Again, they gave my oxygen. They said, 'Don't take this oxygen mask off'. The only thing I remember asking was, 'Please can you phone my mum and dad and just tell them where I'm going', because at least they would have the awareness of what was going on.

When they get to St Thomas', the ambulance people won't leave you until you've seen someone, and I remember thinking, 'How long is it going to be before someone sees me?' – all these weird things go through your mind. You have no idea about the point of what just happened, as in the impact of what has happened. You learn about it afterwards of things like the hospital being cleared, but at this point you just don't know. We got into St Thomas's and I was seen immediately; I mean, I was just shot right through. I saw a doctor who was great, and we went through everything in much more detail than before and I was quite inquisitive. He did the greatest thing ever, to be honest: he said, 'You're going to go for an x-ray, and it's going to hurt and it's going to be uncomfortable, but go with it because we need every angle we can get, certainly on the chest. Keep your oxygen mask on when you're in there and I'll call everyone who needs to know'. He also looked into my ears and despite my questions, wouldn't commit to what would happen to my hearing. He was really shouting because I couldn't

hear anything, and he said, 'Who do you want me to phone?' That was great because my worry was always that no one else knows, and suddenly he's taken that whole pressure away, and now someone else takes it over, and that was really important. I said, 'Can you phone my mum and dad, and can you phone work?' He spent 20 minutes on the phone to mum and dad explaining it, telling them where we were, etc. It's pretty important because then you know you don't have to worry about that anymore.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The doctor did that himself?

Ian: Yes, while I was going through the x-ray. The doctor was quite honest about stuff, and you appreciate honesty. The one big thing, and we will probably move on to it, in the hospital is that you might be all over the place, but you're not an idiot; you still understand stuff. The doctor was just being very honest when I came back. He had the x-rays within two minutes and he said, 'There's something not quite right with your chest. We don't know what it is yet but we'll keep it closely monitored'. He looked and said, 'There's real problems with your hearing, and your foot, we're going to operate in the morning because we can see there's something not right with your foot'. I said, 'Why can't you operate tonight?' He said very clearly and very logically, 'Because we're getting people in who have lost arms and have lost legs, and that's what we're going to do tonight. We don't know, but we don't think you're going to lose anything like that. You might have problems in other ways' and you accept it. I promise you: you absolutely accept it. He said that my mum and dad were on the way, and I just felt good because, you know, that's okay.

I ended up at St Thomas' in the high dependency unit (HDU), as they call it. I was looking over the River Thames, and that whole night is actually taken up with a realisation of just where you are and a lack of understanding, I think is the honest answer, of how one minute you are going to work and the next minute... You have vivid memories of that night. Say I need to go to the toilet, three or four people carrying you in and you just think, 'This morning I was going to work and now this is where I've got to'. It's a bit like *Casualty* where they literally pin up your whole heart, and every time there is a missed beat or anything like that, the machine starts – you know, one of those – you just watch this machine.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did your mum and dad get to the hospital? The Tube was off, and the buses.

Ian: The thing is, Dad had driven to Russell Square, because once they'd realised that Russell Square was where it was happening, he was on his way there. He couldn't get anywhere near it, naturally; he was one of the guys who ended up in a hotel because mobiles had gone down. He ended up in a hotel and phoned home and everyone else from a payphone because he couldn't use a mobile. Then, he actually came to quite a good decision that he was best off at home because there's a landline at home. Eventually, they both drove up via the South Bank; thankfully, they are both from London so they've got a fairly good geography of how to circumnavigate London. They just crossed the river as early as they could and came. Obviously St Thomas' is on the south side and everything had happened on that side. I do know that it took Dad about 45 minutes to get in that night to St Thomas'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): From?

Ian: No 45 minutes from when he arrived at St Thomas' to actually getting to me. It was a long, long time. I don't know what you are supposed to do about that – there were people on the door, ensuring on the right people could get in.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You are not the first to talk about that.

Ian: The delay that happened, evidently, was a press problem. The first thing they said to me, actually – I am just going to do it chronologically so that I don't forget anything – was, 'Do you want royalty/politicians to come and see you?' I didn't mind that, but I said that I didn't want a video camera following them around; this is pretty private. They said, 'Fine; we'll relay that', and I didn't hear anything about it afterwards. I'm almost fairly convinced that if I said, yes, do it, they would have come with a video camera, but if you say no to the video camera, you don't get to see anyone. That's not out of a particular desire to see royalty, but I find it quite an astonishing state of affairs if my suspicions are accurate, that you can't do it unless it's videoed. Anyway, there was a queue of people before dad, and the first person was just asking if so-and-so was here; they were just looking for people. There were only two people on the door; in fact, I think there was one person on the door and one wandered off somewhere, and there was this huge slowness of trying to get people through.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They were stopping people at the door before they even got in to the hospital?

Ian: Absolutely. But, I don't think there were many people at the door. I think there were one or two, and I can confirm this – I don't know if it's too late to do that – if you would be interested in how many people were at the door, but I thought there were two, and he said one just disappeared somewhere, and you were left with one person. There were some very worried/panicked people trying to get in – not so much in Dad's case because he knew I was okay, he knew where I was and spoke to the doctor, but if he didn't know where I was and he was going around hospitals trying to find people and there is a 45-minute wait...

Richard Barnes (Chair): That could be at a number of hospitals.

Ian: Absolutely, and what are you going to do? You are going to go mad. You could get violent. I don't know, but there's going to be a reaction to it. It took him 45 to 50 minutes to get up to see me. The people in the queue in front were a mother, a father and what looked like a daughter looking for their son who was there, apparently; they were saying he was still breathing the last time I spoke to him – there's a terrible story connected to it. I don't know what you do about that because on the one hand you have the press who were trying to get in, and on the other hand, God forbid if something far more serious had happened, you can't delay people at the door; it just can't happen. But eventually he got in. What St Thomas' were very good at for me was they asked me very early on, what's your date of birth, and so on; I said there's not much point asking people. If you ask my friends what my date of birth is, they won't know. I said, 'Just tell me who the people are. Ask for their names, and I'll tell you if I know them or not', and they did that throughout. For the whole 10-day period I was there, there was a regular, 'So-and-so is here'. It's also worth pointing out that mum arrived at St Thomas earlier than dad and she walked straight in so it obviously took time to arrange people being on the door.

Richard Barnes (Chair): A proper filter process?

Ian: Yes, I was always told who was waiting for me. St Thomas' were fine, generally. St Thomas' is split between those who worked there full time, who were out of this world, and those who worked there on an interim basis – temporary people.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Agency people?

Ian: Yes. Locums, who were probably not quite as on the ball. St Thomas' generally were good, but I think there were various things that they didn't get right. One of them was that they suddenly announced that I had a counsellor coming to see me, which was fine. I didn't mind that; in fact, I was really quite looking forward to it. But she just didn't know what she was doing, quite frankly. I don't mean it horrendously, but this is a very unique experience, and she was speaking very slowly and very deliberately and taking ages to say each word. I just remember thinking, 'I don't agree with what you're saying'. I'm sure you've heard this from other people. When something like this happens, your whole life is opened up to the world; your privacy is gone, you can't do a lot with yourself, and you can't move for yourself, but you still have a brain and you still know what's going on. But she talked to me as if I were a five-year-old. I said to her, or to someone there, 'Is there anybody else here who was on the train because I'd like to meet them if there are, and if they're happy to meet me.' 'I don't think that's a good idea; it's still early days'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They were taking the decision for you?

Ian: Yes, but other people asked that, as well, who were there and got a fairly similar response. I don't think it's fair or reasonable to stop people doing that. If that's what people want to do, then let them do it. If it doesn't work then so be it, but if people want that then let them do it. But I just think treating people as if they are idiots produces frustration. You're frustrated enough, believe me, as it is; you don't need it to be compounded by people taking decisions out of your hands. Even if they had told me, 'Look, the other people don't want to see anybody else', I would have accepted that more than, 'Actually, we don't think that's a good idea'.

They were very good with the vast number of people that kept on coming up. You had huge numbers coming up, and also because of the global nature of the event, people were quite shocked they knew someone in there. St Thomas' was very good with that, but I was very disappointed that I ended up with a 'counsellor' who I just found useless, quite frankly. I kept making excuses like, 'So-and-so is coming in five minutes'; you just keep shoving them off until they get the message. Since I have been out one of the best things that I have done is to talk to other people. I'm not saying that I have talked to everybody, but I have talked in groups, I have talked to individuals, and other people who were there who understand. The hospital counsellor couldn't possibly comprehend like other people who were there could.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you seen any other counsellors since you left?

Ian: Yes, I started of seeing a new guys (not related to the person at St Thomas') regularly, but I don't need it so much now, so it's less. I did find the counselling aspect the most disappointing of everything that happened at St Thomas'. I also think that there were the usual NHS problems, which is just part of the NHS, it would seem. I was in a chest unit because they were most worried about my chest for two or three days, and then it became apparent that actually it was just heavily bruised; it was so bruised

that you couldn't put a top on it. I had nothing on from the waist up because just touching it was agony. Going to bed at night, you couldn't put a sheet on; you just laid on top of it because the slightest touch was just... It was awful, because when people came to shake hands or something, I was like, 'I can't' because it hurt that much.

However, despite the pain, it soon became apparent that my burns were actually more serious. I couldn't move to a burns unit because they didn't have space in the burns unit, so I was stuck in a heart unit. The burns people had to walk over to see me. Does that matter? They were using very specialised bandages on that burn – it was a very deep burn, as far down as the bone, so it was just flaking away – and one day they ran out; they just didn't have any in the heart unit, which is understandable and so they said they were just going to go and get some from the burns unit, but the burns unit is a good 15- to 20-minute walk. By the time you walk back it has been an hour, and it just was killing and killing with normal bandages because a burn – again, I've said this before – anything like wind against it hurts. There is that frustration that if you were in the right unit, that wouldn't happen because they would just pick it up and put it back on. I was in the wrong unit, and every day I was told that tomorrow I was moving, but you realise that tomorrow never came in the end, somehow, and you never move.

You also have to remember that when I came in to St Thomas', the first question they asked was what colour I was because you are so covered in soot from head to toe that they have no way of distinguishing anything, even what actual natural colour you are. You think that's a ridiculous question, but you don't realise what's happened to you. I know that sounds silly. Another thing is because I was electrocuted – my hair was quite long at the time – and it was all out and up. I was pulling chunks out of it. They were quite good like that: 'Don't worry what you look like'. The nurses were good; I can't overplay how good these guys were. Sometimes you get very frustrated; you can't sleep at night and you want a sleeping tablet, and they give you a sleeping tablet. You very quickly realise who the good guys and the bad guys are, who to ask for sleeping tablets and who not to ask. You're quite sharp about who to play the system with. Generally speaking, they were good. The counsellor was disappointing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): When you moved, you went home?

Ian: Yes, but the people there were good. They understood and they were very much like, after a week, it's probably time to start thinking about going home.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How long were you there?

Ian: Eight nights. I had eight nights there. In the end, you want to go home, but it takes you a long time to want to go home because you look out across the river and you feel terribly, terribly unsafe other than in hospital. This is your only safe place because the world is now a terribly, terribly dangerous place. You almost don't want to go home because of a mental thing rather than a physical thing. I think one of the reasons they wanted me to go home was because I was in the wrong unit, quite honestly. I didn't mind going home, but you have to go home when you're ready. I remember one of the nurses saying to my mum for two days, 'As soon as we can get him patched up, we need to get him home and in bed', and she said, 'No, he stays here until he wants to go home' – not a couple of years, but he stays here until he feels he can deal with going home

Richard Barnes (Chair): After all the treatment, eight or nine days, you went home?

Ian: Yes

Richard Barnes (Chair): What contact did the organisations have with you afterwards?

Ian: When I got back home, the 7 July Assistance Centre I remember was quite quick to contact me, and also from the Mayor's charity, the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund – they were excellent.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did they approach you? You didn't approach them?

Ian: They wrote to me. I went to the 7 July Assistance Centre. The London charity fund, if I was guessing, approached me. I don't remember approaching them. I have no recollection of ever approaching them, so I'm thinking that perhaps they...

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were there others who were injured in the hospital who might have said...

Ian: I think it was through the hospital they contacted me. I don't ever remember ringing anyone up and saying, 'This is who I am'. The 7 July Assistance Centre has come in for a lot of criticism from some people, and good stuff from other people. I have to say, I found nothing but good.

One of the problems you have is that you leave hospital and you can't walk and you can't hear, so you're still feeling pretty frustrated with life. I went there (to the Assistance Centre), and they had people from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) there; they had someone from Victim Support there. There was a policewoman called Annette who was really good; she just helped. People were saying they asked for security checks and they found it impersonal, but what do you want them to do? People have to realise that this was a bit unprecedented. Yes, we all thought something might happen, but no one knew it was going to happen like this, and people did their best. I was on their 'contact list'; I know there have been problems with lists, but I had always been on their list. When I went there, they were good; there was an email support group, a 7/7 email support group. They told me the next day I would get an email about it, and the next day I did. They rang me up once every three months to ask if I was okay. The only thing they didn't quite get right was that they offered a 24-hour counselling service that didn't appear to exist, certainly not at night, and I don't think it existed during the day. I think once at seven in the evening I rang and they said, 'Oh, we'll take your details and we'll call you back'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And they never did?

Ian: I think I probably said, 'Don't worry about it', but that was frustrating: don't advertise what you don't have. But, the actual centre, when you get there, and it was much bigger than I think it is now because it's a shrunken version.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What help did CICA give you?

Ian: Poor, I have to say. Firstly, you contact them. You download the form from the computer.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Let me take you back. You said when you went to the 7 July Assistance Centre?

Ian: There was a CICA guy who was there.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What did he do?

Ian: He explained it to me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): No more than that?

Ian: No, but what he suggested was that, if I was struggling to fill out the form, the guy from victim support could fill out the form with me. He wasn't bad, this guy, but the CICA en masse I found a bit of a disappointing experience. I didn't find that guy particularly disappointing; I found what he was telling me was ridiculous. Maybe that's just the message he had. Sometimes you're just given a message of how it is, so I don't think that's an individual thing, i.e. you can't blame him personally. He was okay, and he explained it to me very coherently. He gave me the address and the phone number and the website.

Richard Barnes (Chair): He didn't say, 'Here's the form and this is what you have to fill out'?

Ian: I think what happened was that I printed the form out and I went there with the form. I went there with the form and I expected to fill the form out then and there, and that didn't happen. He explained in significant detail how it worked; what he didn't say was how to fill out the form. A form is fairly self-explanatory, but they do this in a ridiculous way. The reason I say it's ridiculous is because it said things like, 'Did you see the person who perpetrated the crime before?' No, it was a packed Underground train. 'Did you speak to him?' No, he blew up. 'Would you give evidence against him in court?' Yes, but he blew up. 'Did you see him going away from the crime?' No, he blew up. You just think, this is ridiculous, and it's a huge form. Have you seen it?

Richard Barnes (Chair): No, but we can download one.

Ian: Download one; it's 20 or 30 pages of absolute nonsense, to be honest. I have to contrast this with your guys, the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund, who from beginning to end were out of this world. They said, 'Fill out the form; it's two or three pages. We're sorry to ask you to do this, but we need basic details. Give us the names of the doctors you're seeing; we'll contact the doctors'. They said often it takes a long time for medical reports, so they would phone them if need be. I can't tell you the difference that makes, and you compare and contrast it with the bureaucratic CICA and it's leagues apart.

This isn't a money issue – I don't want it to come across like that – but what are the injuries that I have? Permanent hearing loss on both sides, permanent tinnitus, burning down the whole left side, fracture on the foot, and so on, so four or five different things. For the top thing that happened, for the biggest 'injury' – everything is given a cost. For example, if you lose a leg, you get £55,000. My first question would be,

where exactly does that figure come from? Who on earth decides that figure? It may be the right figure and it may be the wrong figure – I don't know – but there's no explanation of where it comes from; you just see it on a piece of paper. It's a list of injuries with a figure next to it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And you tick it?

Ian: You look at it and you try to work it out because there are so many different things – it's about 40 pages and you try to work out what one fits you. For the first injury, you get 100%. For example, loss of both hearing might be £10,000 – I don't know – so you would get £10,000. But, for the next injury, which could be a broken leg, which you only get £8,000 for, you only get 30% of the second one, and for the third injury you only get 15%, and that is it because you can't claim for more than three injuries. That's how it works.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): One of the things that people have said to us is that admin help to fill in the form would be very useful. Are you saying that you need the expert help to know which to put as the number-one injury?

Ian: No, because they decide that for you. I didn't really have a problem filling out the form, other than it just took me a long time to do it. What I had a huge problem with was the way it was done. If someone could just explain to me why they do it in that way – 100%, 30% and 15% – I would be fascinated to hear it. I'm not saying this as in, 'Are they going to pay me enough?'; I'm saying it as in that the principle of it is absurd.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You know as well as I do people who have lost both of their legs.

Ian: It speaks for itself. You contrast this to the London Charitable Fund and it's leagues apart. If any lessons can be learned out of this, it is CICA learning about how these guys do it because from the CICA you get standard, printed letters which are in this old-fashioned way – it is a small thing – but it's the way they present their letters; it's like on a typewriter. You have to ring them and you can't get through to them properly, or, 'No, he's not in today', or 'He's at lunch'.

I'll give you an example. My hearing guy works from Harley Street and from a NHS Hospital; those are the two places he practises. When I gave the address of where he was, I gave the Harley Street one because I thought if it goes to a hospital – post goes missing where I work, and I am sure where you work; it's much better to go to a private office. They sent it off to Harley Street, he fills it out, and he says, 'This is going to be a succession of operations; I don't know where this is going to lead to'. They wrote back to him maybe two months later and said, 'Where are you now?' But they didn't write back to him at Harley Street, they wrote back to him at the NHS Hospital and, of course, then it went missing. I had to phone them up and say, 'Why haven't you contacted my hearing guy?' and they said, 'We have; we sent it to the NHS Hospital'. I said, 'Why, having been told he's at Harley Street, did you send it there?' They said, 'We don't know – if you want it sent to Harley St then your doctor has to call us and tell us' – all this despite the fact that their initial letter was sent there. It's a frustrating circular, boring conversation, but it's an example of the kind of thing – the injured have to chase CICA.

The other thing is that they won't pay out until they know the full extent. Now, this tinnitus, we don't know. At the moment they think it's fairly severe, but in 18 months' time it could go down to mild. The CICA eventually put it down as 'mild' and said if you don't like it, appeal. I just can't be bothered to appeal. I can't be bothered to go through yet another bureaucratic process. 'If you want to put it down as 'mild' but we don't know' was my final view on it – I don't have the energy anymore to fight'. I don't want to wait 18 months either, because I need it to fund things to get better. In the end, as I said, you just give up. You think, 'Forget it; do it your way'. It's not a financial issue. I keep saying that, but it isn't.

Richard Barnes (Chair): No. With the survivors, no one has mentioned that it's a financial issue.

Ian: No, it isn't. It's a process issue. That's what I'm trying to have you see. Your guys, the charity, obviously...

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): They got advice from the Red Cross when they set it up, and a lot of work went into it over a very short period. The Red Cross gave help as to how to set it up.

Ian: Absolutely faultless, honestly, from beginning to end. Again, I'm talking about the process. The process of that, even from doing two- to three-page forms to the better communications to the newsletter saying this is what we are doing, which was fine; it wasn't too much

Richard Barnes (Chair): Newsletter from whom?

Ian: From the charity. They send you a newsletter.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's an ongoing process?

Ian: Yes, but I think it's finished now, or coming to an end.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were you allocated a family liaison officer from the police?

Ian: No. I don't remember that being asked for. I don't remember having that conversation.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You would have known because it would have been ongoing; some of them are still having them.

Ian: No, we didn't have that at all. The police did my statement very early on and were quite good. It was a very long, drawn out thing, other than – I can raise this here; I had forgotten this – I kept asking for a copy of my statement, which I thought I was entitled to. It was my statement, I signed it, and I wanted a copy of it, but I have never received a copy of my statement. I've been told it has been posted to me; it's going to be dropped in to me. 'This is unheard of; no one has ever asked for their statement before'. I can't believe that people sign things and don't ask for copies of it. To me, it was a police statement, and I have never got it. I just gave up on it, but for me it was important to have my police statement. That was the statement I gave about 7 July. I don't know why there's a problem in getting people's statements.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Would you want us to raise that with them?

Ian: I would. I would really love someone to raise that for me because I would like a copy of my statement.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We can try.

Ian: I don't think it's an unreasonable question that if you make a police statement, you get a copy of it. I don't understand why that's a national security issue.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We will raise that issue if we can help.

Ian: I would appreciate that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you live within Greater London?

Ian: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's a Metropolitan Police issue, anyway. Obviously some people were from Hertfordshire, Surrey or wherever.

Ian: The police were a bit odd because they put a note through my door one day quite soon afterwards. I also had the press after me a little bit.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Let's deal with the police bit first.

Ian: It's related; sorry. The press were keen to speak to me and were putting notes through my door at home. The reason I'm bringing this in is because the police then put a note through my door, saying, 'Please ring PC whatever his name is on this number re: operation...' I don't even remember what they call it. I remember thinking, 'This is just a press ploy'. I asked Mum to ring them up and see what they wanted; she rang them and it was a genuine police thing. To put on a scrappy piece of paper a note through the door with no heading or anything...

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is clumsy.

Ian: It's clumsy and thoughtless; it was to do a swab to identify people who were down there because even people who survived obviously lost body parts, and they were just trying to do that. That's okay; it's a worthwhile thing to do, but to put a note through the door like that... To be honest, they are lucky I rang them back because I was getting so many of these things that it was just intuition that this one might just be serious.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you find the press intrusive?

Ian: I was very protective about people knowing who I was, and very careful with the media thing; I did one media thing, and that was on the radio. I was adamant that I wanted to listen to it beforehand, picking a proper radio station at the right time to go out. I haven't really wanted the whole press thing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is fair.

Ian: I feel that what happens with the press is if you open the door slightly, you might have a problem, but if you keep the door firmly shut you don't really have an issue.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about support groups and support from others?

Ian: We did our own support group, as you are aware, for the King's Cross guys. It's beneficial in many ways, but there's no one in it who has any experience running a support group before, and the idea of any support group should be to get people to a stage where they don't need a support group anymore. In the same way the aim of therapy is to move people to a stage whereby they no longer require it. The danger is that a support group can be very well intended, very helpful and achieve great stuff, but it probably could achieve more if there was someone there to give advice on how to run a support group and what it's supposed to do. What you have in something like this is a few people, perhaps, getting together at the beginning – and then you reach out, speak to other people, and five months on, someone who doesn't feel their story has been heard joins the support group. What then happens is that the people at the beginning are *x* amount down the road, collectively. People come in five months on and they are much further back. That's understandable because they haven't had the support group that you've had. You then have almost a split in the support group in that people are at different stages. Everyone, including myself, has done their best to manage that, but we have had no guidance and no help; it was by chance that one member knew how to set up a web group for example. If you don't have that person in the group, then nobody knows how to do it, and why would they know how to do it? We as the group, I think, are in a good position where, God forbid if this happens again, we could say, 'If you wish to do this, this is the way you do it. These are the good things that came out of our group and these are the things that maybe you can learn from'.

We have had no official support group that I am aware of, other than the 7 July Assistance Centre, trying to get people together. I haven't been to those meetings, but I am sure that you have heard about them through other people, and I gather they haven't been an overwhelming success.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you been invited to the next one, or the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)?

Ian: Yes. The support group thing we have done on our own, but if we had had professional guidance and leadership as to how you do it – I mean, you are talking about very, very traumatised people looking to this as their support mechanism.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Should the institutions help facilitate, or should it be the people involved who actually run it and keep it going?

Ian: Absolutely. The initial people who set it up, three or four of us, would have happily welcomed guidance around what you should do. For example, we had to work out on our how to do security checks to ensure only people who were on the train had access to the group. We did it ourselves, but it would have been beneficial to know how to organise such a thing, i.e. someone saying 'this is how you keep it off Google, and this is what you do if people join in later on etc'. Disaster Action has been pretty good; the people who run Disaster Action were very helpful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you know Disaster Action?

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): I know the name, but I didn't know of any involvement in this.

Ian: I just rang them up one day when I was feeling a bit low, and they were helpful talking me through stuff.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): Let me just quickly tell you who they are. They are a non-governmental organisation that was set up initially – a long time ago, actually, after the Aberfan disaster – and over the years since then, more people have joined who have been directly affected by disasters. They run it in order to provide advice for people who are now affected by disasters, so they produce guidance materials, they give advice, and they advised us on setting up the 23 March meeting. They are really helpful people, and they are all people who have been affected by disasters themselves. I think that is it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Very practical.

Ian: Generally, we were unique because there hadn't been an on-line support group like us before. That is okay, but there are just ways guidance could have been given. They didn't need to be intrusive; they didn't need to be involved in it, but they can still give guidance about how to do it. We received nothing. We have been effective, but maybe we could have been even more effective and maybe we could have done better things if we had had professional guidance.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What is also clear is that a lot of people are still outside the loop, or outside the net.

Ian: Still outside the loop, and a lot of people maybe don't get out of it what they want to get out of it. I don't know. I'm trying to be balanced by saying the good things that I think that group has done because I think it has, but I am also saying that maybe we could have done even more if someone had helped us on our way and just given a bit of guidance because you're talking about very, very seriously traumatised people. You're not talking about people who have had a minor event. The people you have met, you have seen. If they're joining a support group, it's because they thought they were going to get support from it, and so it has to be done right.

Richard Barnes (Chair): And everybody has?

Ian: Everybody has, indeed, but more by luck than judgment in that we knew what we were doing, but there's no trained therapist in that group; there's no one who has ever done this before. If we had the support and guidance of maybe somebody, I think maybe we could achieve greater things.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you get invited to the memorial service?

Ian: Yes, I did. Well, I kind of got invited. I basically heard about it in the press. That was the first thing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You were not contacted?

Ian: I wasn't contacted initially. We heard about in the press, which was fine. What we heard in the press, or what I heard in the press, was that they were doing a memorial

service on 1 November at St Paul's. They were thinking about inviting the families of the suicide bombers along, which was reported widely in the press – speculation or otherwise. The families of the bereaved would get tickets, and the rest would go into a public ballot. That was the first time I had heard that this is what they were going to do. Being the sort of difficult sod that I probably am, I wrote to my MP and said, 'I don't agree with this; I don't agree with that. Why should it go to a public ballot?' I understood that the bereaved had to go – absolutely, but I felt that the injured people almost just had to apply with everybody else and take their chances. I wrote to them and said that I would also like tickets, if possible, without taking them away from anybody else, for my parents because I felt it was a recognition of their day, as well as my day, to be quite honest. My MP wrote back and said, 'They're not going to invite the families of the suicide bombers. At the moment they are talking to the bereaved people, but you are going to have at least two tickets'. That is all well and good, and eventually I ended up with four and we all managed to go as a crowd. I don't know this, but what would have happened if I hadn't made a fuss and written to my MP? I don't know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You would not have been invited?

Ian: I may have been invited, but I would have gone through our support group because they had obviously rung up and got a mass of tickets. I don't know if you are aware of that, but the support group had 20-odd tickets and it was a matter of, 'Who wants to go?' 'Yeah, I want to go.' 'Right; we'll ask for that amount of tickets?' and we got them all. I would have gone through that method, but, nevertheless...

Richard Barnes (Chair): You would not have got four?

Ian: I wouldn't have got four, and I was a bit disappointed that I had to read about it in the media before I knew anything about it. Some people had come up to me and asked if I was going, and I said I didn't know. I didn't know anything about it.

I also have four things to say about 1 November. I don't know if it has anything to do with this, but why they couldn't read out the names of the 52 people who died is still beyond me to this day. I just think that is grossly insensitive not to do that. Secondly, random people got a videotape of it, and random people didn't. I didn't, but I know people who did.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Of the service?

Ian: Yes. About two weeks later, five people from our group said they got a video of it.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Where from?

Ian: The Government.

Richard Barnes (Chair): From the DCMS?

Ian: Yes. They wrote and said, 'We hope you got something out of the service. Please keep this with our regards' sort of thing. We all thought we would get them, and we never got them. I don't know why those people did and we didn't. What eventually

happened was that I taped it and asked people who wanted a tape of it, and we did our own tapes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That's not the point, is it?

Ian: It's not the point. I'd like to know why those people did and others didn't. If I'd got one, I would be raising the same point; it's not the case of 'I want the videotape'; it's a case of 'What on earth is going on here?'

There were two other things I found bizarre. I was relatively near the front, and, again, I think I was near the front because I had shouted loudest and made a fuss. I don't know if you have had this come up previously, and I don't want to speak for anybody else at all, but other people who probably were very deserving of being very near the front were miles away at the back. I don't know how they did the seating arrangement, but whoever did it didn't think about it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I assume that was the DCMS.

Janet Hughes: It was; the DCMS organised it.

Ian: I'm not trying to speak for anyone else, but I found the seating arrangement quite a bizarre thing. Finally, after the ceremony, the Queen met the bereaved families on the steps at St Paul's, which is the right thing to do of course. However, she didn't meet any of the injured there at all. I don't think it would have been below the Queen of England to meet people who were injured that day; I think she chose not to, which was her choice. It's a question.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I would have thought she, like the rest of us – Sally (Hamwee) is alternate chair of the Assembly; you get told what to do, don't you?

Ian: I am sure it's not her. I am sure she is told to go see people who are...

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): You do, but somebody is making judgments about what is appropriate and not, which is something a lot of people have said to us, not necessarily over this, but not putting themselves into our place.

Ian: Absolutely.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Would you have wanted to stand on the steps of St Paul's?

Ian: Maybe I am just being naive, but why do you have to do it in front of video cameras? That would be the point I was raising earlier. Why do Royalty/Politicians have to be filmed coming to St Thomas'? It's all the same issue.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): They did actually manage a marquee, did they not?

Ian: Yes, and I was in there. You see, there was a big problem on the day because (Tony) Blair (Prime Minister) probably wondered what people were going to say to him, given the height of the feelings, so he was in a bit of an unfortunate position, as well. He did go to the marquee, and he did go to the crypt, and I certainly saw him in the crypt. He was there, and Tessa (Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) was there, as well. People were coming up to him and, if they wished to, were talking

to him for an unofficially allocated period of time. What I mean by that is that you couldn't speak to him that long because everyone else wanted to talk to him, so it was very much, 'are you back at work, now', and thank you very much. It was the same conversation over and over again. I think it was token gestures.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That's down to style, isn't it?

Ian: I think it was just a token gesture to put the Prime Minister somewhere where there was no allocated time. People feel they are getting their five minutes, or two minutes, or whatever they were allowed, and then they move on to the next person. I wasn't having a go at him personally; I was just saying that the actual system was almost like a queuing system: meet Tony Blair here at two o'clock. It was that, and then move on. If he wanted to speak to people, invite them to Downing Street. Maybe even do it where there are no press cameras, so there can't be any suggestion of it somehow being a PR exercise – is that really expecting too much?

Richard Barnes (Chair): It was like a book signing?

Ian: That's exactly what someone compared it to. If the Prime Minister wants to meet people, then don't do it at 1 November, but write to the people you want to see, and see them.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you been invited to the next DCMS meeting?

Ian: I have been invited to Tessa's (Jowell) one. I only ask, but the timing of it is somewhat strange, given that you guys had your thing on the Thursday, and there was a letter that was written two days before but arrived three days after. You have probably heard this a million times.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Everybody is somewhat...

Ian: Bemused.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, I think that's a nice word for it.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): It is the polite word.

Ian: It's just a very strange situation. I just think that...

Richard Barnes (Chair): So long afterwards, why now?

Ian: Yes; I leave it to other people, as I am sure they have, to talk about the impact of Government and what they have done. I haven't had anything from the Government officially whatsoever other than the letter from Tessa (Jowell) saying, 'I'm the Government minister' nine months after July. The reasons for that are probably linked to policy and everything else. The reality is, has there been no official contact from the Government nine months after other than the Tessa Jowell letter, which was crassly written, quite frankly. Did you see the instructions for how to get there?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, we thought they were not entirely appropriate.

Janet Hughes: Are you talking about the paragraph which said, 'The nearest Tube station is'?

Ian: Yes, and there's limited parking, but the nearest Tube and bus are... Who writes that? It is very, very thoughtless. There has been, in my opinion, a disassociation from the Government towards the people who were injured, or involved, on 7 July. Why they are doing this now, I don't know, but I suspect it was linked to your hearing on Thursday and what was coming out of there in the headlines.

Richard Barnes (Chair): At least they can say they have spoken to you.

Ian: In my opinion it is just ticking a box.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes. What was missing from your process? What should have been there, or would you have liked to have seen practically?

Ian: The first thing I would have liked to have seen is an organised effort to get a support group together. I keep going on about this, but that is really important to me. I take nothing away from the Met Police who actually did set up a generic website; I thought that was a good effort, to be honest. If I just go through it bit by bit, a two-hour wait for ambulances is an absurdly long time.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is the sort of thing we are looking into.

Ian: There have been issues, not by me, about equipment on ambulances, but I don't know what was going on there. St Thomas' is actually a fair way from Russell Square. It didn't matter in my case, but the distance you had to travel might have mattered in other cases. I think providing a counsellor in hospital is a good concept – you have to get the right person; get someone who specialises.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was it inappropriate?

Ian: I don't think it would have been inappropriate if she had been specialising in that kind of thing, but she just seemed to be the hospital counsellor and covered everything. Jack of all trades but master of none, perhaps.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You haven't been to the Trauma Centre or anything like that?

Ian: The only official place I went to was the 7 July Assistance Centre – I concept I felt that worked; I think it was a good place to go to. It was great for everyone I know who actually went there; they said it was good. There have been numerous issues with addresses going missing and people being on different lists, and that needs to be looked at. Don't advertise 24-hour counselling if you don't provide it; that is just going to anger people, quite frankly.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This was the answering machine, was it?

Ian: Yes, it's ridiculous. When they say to me I have to ring back in the morning and they will take a note of my name, well, the morning might be too late. I'm not trying to be overdramatic; it wasn't my instance, but who knows? The police I thought were fine, but wouldn't play ball when I asked for a copy of the statement, and were secretive and

just didn't tell the truth about it, quite frankly. I thought that the reaction from the Government... Well, there hasn't really been a reaction, and I found that Tony Blair, the idea that, 'Here's your chance to speak to the Prime Minister', was the wrong time on 1 November with too many people around and it wasn't in private. Don't just tick the box and say you've done it, because you haven't really done it. I thought the reaction from the Royal Family if they were going to get involved was that they would do it if it has video cameras. Well, then don't bother doing it. Do not underestimate, in my opinion, the difference it would have made if someone had come to see me, or had written to me, and said, 'We are interested'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Even 'total strangers'? Prince Charles, I assume, is a stranger.

Ian: If they had said, 'We'd like to come; we'd like to speak to you and see you', I would have done it, and it would have made a difference to me. Instead, it was 1 November and because you were quite badly injured you can get a ticket to the marquee. Not everyone got to the marquee; I was the only person in our group to get there, and you queue up like everybody else like at a book signing. That's not doing it properly. Then, you get a letter from Tessa (Jowell) after nine months on coincidental timing, and it's great because we can all get the Tube there. Well done, Tessa! It's bizarre. I thought it was strange.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You seem to have recovered remarkably well.

Ian: Have I?

Richard Barnes (Chair): I can't see or hear your tinnitus or anything like that. In going through the testimonies, it seems that those who were more severely hurt are better supported by the people who employ them. If you have a clear physical injury, then employers seem to be far more supportive. We have certainly met a lot of people, as you will have done in your group, who have lost their jobs, been demoted, or sidestepped, almost.

Ian: Yes. What makes a huge difference is who you work for. If you work for a really big company, they tend to look after you better than if you work for a much smaller company. Obviously, I was off for quite a few months and the company I work for could afford to carry on. If you work at a company of only four people and one person is taken out for a huge length of time, it's a huge problem for them. Almost the bigger company you work for, the more protected you are. I agree with can't be seen or on occasion easily explained. I think that may be the issue.

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

[ends]

7 July Review Committee

11 April 2006

Transcript of Private Meeting: Gary

Gary: I brought some pictures here to show you where I sat that day. It makes it more lifelike. That is my seat; that is where I was sitting on the bus. I was the last one who wasn't taken away.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This is the back of the bus?

Gary: That is the back of it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is everybody behind you?

Gary: Yes. The floor went completely up to my seat, and I'm in mid-air with a strand of flooring remaining, keeping me from falling from the upstairs seats. I looked behind me and everybody and all the seats had vanished. I just went into flight mode. I just stuck my foot out and launched myself off. I hit the side of the bus on the way down onto the pavement.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You jumped out?

Gary: I was told I was in "Flight mode", you know. I just got out of Baker Street that day, due to the announcements made by LUL of the supposed power surge on the track. It was about 09.00. We didn't get round to Tavistock Square until 09.46, when it went off.

Richard Barnes (Chair): 09.46 – 09.47.

Gary: It was just so congested. You are just looking out, and all the police, the ambulances that weren't going anywhere; they were stuck in the gridlock. When I have been at King's Cross at other times, you see the ambulances, quite often in difficulties; they just cannot move; the roads aren't wide enough. They have to move, but where do you move to when no road space is free?

Richard Barnes (Chair): You were on the bus, and you could see congestion and ambulances trying to get to King's Cross?

Gary: Yes. They were trying to go that way. We were stationary for a lot of the time, and so were the emergency services. Even the police motorbikes had a bit of difficulty. They were the only ones able to weave in and out.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): When you say you were stationary, you mean this was before the explosion or after?

Gary: Whilst going there for extended periods, and at the time it went off, we were stationary as well.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You arrived in Tavistock Square, and the explosion happened. As you explained to us, you jumped off the bus. What happened to you then? Did somebody pick you up?

Gary: I jumped down and I was just screaming. It is funny, because I couldn't hear anything. It was like somebody had got you and stuck you at the bottom of a swimming pool. You are so disorientated. All my clothes were hanging off me where they had all shredded. It blew the top of my shoe off – a heavy-stitched leather shoe. Then this fellow put his head up behind a parked car and said, 'Get down. Get down.' I got down, but I was in the front of the EC Harris building, (and I think they ought to have a special mention in this report for the help they provided that day to all the injured), then somebody came to the door then and got me in the safety of their building.

When in the building, one of the young managers there, a smartly dressed young man, helped look after me and organise arrangements. Then two or three girls came in, and they started to help too, as well as looking after the other injured arriving outside, which I was being informed about. What kind souls they were.

I was the only one in this small room. They had got some first-aid things there as well, that they were looking after me with. When I went out, the foyer was packed – full of people bandaged up and on trolleys and everything. They were making phone calls to my work, to my wife and everything. Eventually, a doctor did come in, but I was there for at least an hour – I cannot remember exactly how long.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were there other passengers taken there as well?

Gary: Yes. The foyer was full, but I had gone further than the foyer; I had gone into this separate area, you see, I was the first to arrive.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then what happened? Did anybody from the ambulance service or the police –?

Gary: They looked at me, and they were taking other people. I was the seventh person, Gary-Seven.

Richard Barnes (Chair): When you were at the café or whatever you call it at EC Harris, did anybody take your name and address or did the police approach you?

Gary: They might have done but it was a long time afterwards. No one seemed to know what was going on. They might have done, but it was at least an hour.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then you were taken to the Royal Free as Gary-Seven?

Gary: Yes. I didn't know at that stage that I was Gary-Seven. It was only when I saw my records afterwards that I say, 'That says Gary-Seven.'

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): You were taken by ambulance?

Gary: By ambulance, yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did the hospital provide you with the support mechanisms? Did you go to the Family Assistance Centre at any time afterwards?

Gary: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Can I take you back to the Square? Did you see the emergency services arrive?

Gary: Somebody came in the room all dressed up in uniforms, and then they went out again, and said they have other people to look after, before they could take me to hospital, who were more seriously injured.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did there seem to be a delay? Did they seem to be prompt? Was it a quick service, do you think?

Gary: No; I was there at least an hour; I had to wait at least an hour. An hour is a long time, but the office workers were attending to me and doing their best, making cups of tea and just being wonderful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Absolutely. That was before paramedics or anybody came to see you, was it, as far as you can remember?

Gary: Something like that, yes. They saw me and then I was still waiting.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Now, you come from Your GP is where you went for help, and he referred you to the medical processes, did he, in?

Gary: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was that quick or did you have to wait a long time for an appointment?

Gary: My main problem is my ears. I went back to the Royal Free. It was fairly quick.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What we are trying to do with the Committee is to improve services, to learn the lessons of – not what led up to 7 July, that other people can look at – but how we can improve the response of the emergency services, the medics, indeed, local authorities. Were there any lessons that you think should emerge that we should be aware of?

Gary: How do you get the things through that sort of traffic? Do they go up on the pavement? Can they go along the pavement? Can people go on the pavement to pull over? How could you facilitate that?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Just getting the services there?

Gary: The road was gridlocked. The kerbs are high. Are the pavements wide enough to take an ambulance, or should a response be a narrow vehicle that is able to get through gridlocked traffic?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Was it the gridlock that caused the delay?

Gary: Yes – the gridlock, and all the managers were at a meeting.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): They were in Millwall.

Gary: I don't know whether that had anything to do with it, but it's just the gridlock – everybody coming out of Euston flooding the road with people. Eventually they got that green and white tape across the road.

Richard Barnes (Chair): To cordon it off.

Gary: On Euston Road there, and cordoned it off. That was just before it went off.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Since you were in the hospital... How long were you in there for?

Gary: A week. I had debridement of my wounds. I had two anaesthetics and went under. They cleaned my wounds and my leg and my arm.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This is on your legs where you had got blast –

Gary: It is all grit. It is hard to remove as well – these tiny little things under your skin; you cannot get rid of them very easily.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Who has been in touch with you since you were discharged from hospital?

Gary: It was mainly my GP, really, Dr, who I get on with. He has really taken over my care.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)?

Gary: Yes, they have written to me recently about the meeting on 24 May.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is very recent?

Gary: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that the first time you have heard from them?

Gary: Also when we went to St Paul's. That's the letter, isn't it? 'Dear Gary... from Tessa Jowell (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport)'. It was very moving at St Paul's.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You have had sparse contact from the DCMS. How about anybody else to follow up to make sure that you are getting the right medical help?

Gary: I have just been back to the Royal Free, and they say my wounds will heal in time, now that they are closed up and everything. They didn't want to see me further as they were satisfied with my progress. I have separate arrangements for my hearing problems, which are ongoing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Local generally is handy?

Gary: It worked well for me.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): When you were in hospital or afterwards, did anybody give you any information about the Family Assistance Centre, which was what it was called at first? Did that ever cross your radar even?

Gary: I'm not sure, I can't remember.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about the Traumatic Stress Clinic in Charlotte Street? Did they tell you about that, because it must have affected you, what you saw and went through?

Gary: It's my GP again, you see. My GP used a local body for assistance.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You have a particularly good GP?

Gary: I think he is a very good GP, yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It's a bit luck of the draw, isn't it?

Gary: I did ask – my wife asked particularly for him. You don't really feel like going back to London after such an event.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You mentioned the St Paul's service - did they invite you or did you ask for a ticket?

Gary: They invited me. I went with people from work. It was part of the recovery process.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You went with people from work?

Gary: Yes. I didn't want to risk bringing my the family up to London.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you feel that you got all the support that you needed?

Gary: Yes.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Would it have helped you if a support group had been set up of the people who were on the bus? Some people want that and some don't.

Gary: Not necessarily, not in London.

Richard Barnes (Chair): There should be services more local?

Gary: Yes. The service should be coordinated locally.

Richard Barnes (Chair): To where people live?

Gary: That is what happened with me, and that is what worked with me, especially in view of what we are talking about. It's the journey into London, isn't it? Who wants that repeated after you have been through this?

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about meeting other survivors and talking to them?

Gary: I haven't really met any of them, no

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): You said that when you went into EC Harris, into the offices, they phoned your family for you and they phoned work?

Gary: Yes, they were brilliant.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): They used landlines and they helped you with all that.

Gary: Yes. They did a fantastic job; they really did. They should get some commendation for that, from the government. There were so many people in there as well. They were flooded with injured people that day.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about your family? How have they coped?

Gary: All right, I think. It's difficult to say really.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is why I'm asking.

Gary: It is difficult to say.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Has your wife had any support?

Gary: No

Richard Barnes (Chair): Through your GP or whatever?

Gary: No. It hasn't reached that sort of degree.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): When did the police talk to you?

Gary: Every night the police came in.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were you dealt with well by the police when they came to see you in the hospital?

Gary: Yes. I gave a statement, a 17-page statement, over several days.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were you assigned a family liaison officer?

Gary: I don't think so.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You would know because that is ongoing.

Gary: No. No one has come to see me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): When you were in hospital, the murder squad came to talk to you?

Gary: Every night someone would come in, just to check on me, and, during the day, to take the statement.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The interview wasn't done in private then?

Gary: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Out on the main ward?

Gary: Out on the main ward, yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did you find that difficult?

Gary: No.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That was okay?

Gary: Yes. I suppose I could have asked, if I wanted to go private.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Then no further contact with them after you were discharged?

Gary: No, nothing from the police – only when the local officer came just before Christmas. Then she came round again about my bag.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This was a briefcase, was it?

Gary: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Maybe they needed your bag for forensic investigation or whatever else, because they learn a lot from a small piece of evidence.

Gary: I was pleased I got it back. It was all cleaned up; everything was super-clean and in little polythene bags and everything.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Forensic investigation.

Gary: My newspaper, my magazine and all that from the date. It's weird.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How about work? Have they been supportive?

Gary: I have a great boss – very supportive

Richard Barnes (Chair): So they have been supportive through the whole thing?

Gary: Yes, very supportive, and positive.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I think I have asked all the questions I need to ask to get the picture of what happened to you and the processes afterwards.

Gary: All that time – 45 minutes to get there, all gridlocked, going nowhere.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Could I just check on one thing? Because you were taken into an office off the street, were you aware of what was happening and what medical help there was for the other people who were on the bus?

Gary: Not really. I was totally isolated. They had TV screens on, but then they didn't give much detailed information either.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): The reason that I ask that was you had one particular experience. I was interested to know how much you were able to observe of what else went on.

Gary: I didn't observe at all. I was totally isolated in this room with those other people who looked after me at the time, with very limited hearing ability.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): That was probably the best place to be.

Gary: I was staggered when I left, the whole foyer of the building was full with people on trolleys and things like that, all bandaged up.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It is a very traumatic experience – very traumatic. Thank you very much.

Gary: Thanks for inviting me to attend.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): We are very grateful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It helps us to understand what happened.

ADDENDUM:

The only thing I would like to add is that I support our military personnel, but wish they would be withdrawn from all Islamic countries, and regret that no inquiry has been made into the events of that day, by our own Government.

Gary, 26 April 2006

7 July Review Committee

18 April 2006

Transcript of meeting with M

Richard Barnes (Chair): How are you doing?

M: Not very good. Not very good at all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Do you want to tell us what happened?

M: I was in Tavistock Square on the morning of 7 July. I'm not normally in Tavistock Square because I work in another part of London, and so I normally go nowhere near it, but I had a meeting in South London that morning, and I was trying to get on the Piccadilly Line. We know why I couldn't. I was originally caught up as I was leaving Euston Square on my way to King's Cross; that was when the first bomb went off. We were evacuated from the train at Euston Square station after what seemed like an eternity, herded onto buses, and I found myself in front of the number 30. That morning I faced two events, really, although only one actual explosion because I was nowhere near the King's Cross site, although I was heading that way.

Richard Barnes (Chair): When they stopped the Tube, did they tell you why? They just said, 'We're stopping the train. Get off here'?

M: No one knew what was going on. It was an emergency stop we had only just started leaving the station. It was an emergency stop. I fell and injured myself on the train originally – just bruising; nothing major.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It was a dead stop?

M: Yes. I was on the train for ages; I wouldn't even like to try to guess for how long. It seemed like hours – I don't think it was. Obviously, it wasn't, but it seemed that way. The driver didn't seem to know what was going on; nobody did. We were ushered back onto Euston Road. I know the trains were very, very packed that morning.

Richard Barnes (Chair): A lot of people have said that.

M: Looking back on it, it seemed unusually packed. It was quite extraordinary because it is never normally that busy, although from time to time it is, but not like it was that morning. I don't know whether that is just my perception of it now, maybe.

Richard Barnes (Chair): A lot people have said that, particularly on those routes.

M: I got into Euston at about half past eight in the morning. I am grateful that I smoke because I knew I had a long journey ahead of me and I actually stopped for a cup of coffee and a cigarette before I took the journey.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were you going west?

M: No, I was going to go into King's Cross and then up through Russell Square. I have spent a lot of time thinking about this: if I didn't have that coffee and cigarette, would I have been on the Piccadilly Line because I was literally not far behind it? I know this sounds very strange, but part of me wishes that I was, rather than in the Square. I have spoken to a lot of people from the Piccadilly Line, and they didn't see very much; yes, they were very frightened, but they didn't see the carnage as much as people in the Square seemed to see.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You then got on the bus?

M: I was on the bus in front of the number 30.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They followed each other, I assume?

M: Pretty much. I think everyone had been re-routed, from what I can work out. I know we just started leaving Tavistock Square when there was a very strange noise. It wasn't like a bang; it was like a muffled whooshing sound almost, but then the bus was very packed, and I was on the one in front. Being sort of enclosed, I didn't hear – I saw, but I didn't really hear it very loudly. There was a mass exodus off of our bus, as things were still coming to the ground and bits were flying everywhere. The only thing I do remember is the carnage and everything as it hit the floor. I remember looking at the bus, and I remember initially thinking, 'What was a sightseeing bus doing there?' because that is actually what it looked like. From the front, that is what it looked like; it didn't look like a London bus. Now I know why, but it didn't look that way to me. It looked like one of those that has the roof off. It wasn't until I actually saw the blood, and the smells, that I thought something is really wrong here and not right. It sounds almost ridiculous to say it, but it was just such a surreal thing; I still have trouble explaining it. I can see things in my head, but I just can't find the words to describe it. You will have to forgive me if I stumble over things.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You are not alone, let me assure you. It is almost needing a reality check.

M: I suppose it is. I remember coming around the front of the bus that I was on to the other side of the road because I thought I must get away from this. I don't remember a huge amount of what happened after that, other than I know there were a lot of people leaving the Square very quickly. No one seemed to know where they were going or what was going on. I think my plan was to try to get back to Euston to go home because I knew I didn't want to be there. Not knowing that part of London, I didn't know how close to Euston I actually was. I had no idea how close I was to Euston station and I wandered. I think it was probably 15 or 20 minutes until I actually came across Euston station and to find it was all shut. There was nothing running whatsoever.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You just wandered on?

M: Yes. No one stopped me, there was no one, there was nothing. There were people running left, right and centre. I remember there was a load of doctors who came out of the British Medical Association (BMA) building, and directly from outside the offices where the bus went up, as well. No one seemed to challenge anybody that was running away. I guess I was in the Square for maybe five minutes or so; maybe ten. I remember hearing sirens. A woman had asked me for help, and I couldn't help her; I don't know

what made me function that day. This is one thing I have been extremely guilty about. I felt really guilty that I didn't help her. I feel like I should have stopped to help. When people rushed off the bus I was on, I got pushed over and I had several people tread on my hand. I had already had an injury to my hand, anyway. I was in a lot of pain from my hand. I don't know. I honestly don't know. I really don't remember a huge amount more after this, but I know I walked – we have actually tried to calculate this – 28 miles that day. From Tavistock Square, I ended up walking out past the BBC studios at Shepherd's Bush, out towards the North Circular Road. I had no idea where I was going; all I knew is that I wanted to get out of London. I did try to stop a taxi, but no taxis would stop. I didn't have any money on me, anyway.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You wandered around, basically.

M: I wandered, yes, in a daze.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I assume that eventually you got home.

M: About nine o'clock that night.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Walking?

M: No, not walking. I tried to contact people, but couldn't get a signal on the phone, couldn't get out anywhere. I managed to get one or two phone calls out, I think, to relatives to tell them I was all right. They managed to get a hold of my wife, who couldn't get hold of me back. It wasn't until I reached somewhere like Chesham, I think, that I was able to use the phone again.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How did you get to Chesham?

M: I walked, and then I actually caught a local bus service from Chesham to Aylesbury. My wife picked me up from Aylesbury.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You did do well. When did you start getting help?

M: Probably not until about October or September.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Let's try to fill the gap, shall we?

M: I actually had two weeks' holiday planned from the Saturday because we were due to move house, so I was off for the two weeks, although I was called back in of all days on the 21st, so I got stranded in London again on the 21st, which was nerve-wracking, really. It was actually my family that had noticed that I wasn't myself, I think is probably the best way to describe it. I wasn't sleeping, I was hardly eating – this was about three or four weeks afterwards – and they said that I ought to go and see the general practitioner (GP), which I did, and I absolutely floored him. He has since told me that. He was quite unprepared for that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Unprepared for what, a survivor?

M: A survivor, yes, because being out in, even though we are a commuting town, it just floored him a) that I had been going for a month, and b) that

he had got one, basically. He put me in touch with Victim Support and I started out in counselling with Victim Support.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Locally?

M: Locally, yes, in the town where I live. I got a counsellor coming out to my home. She has since told me that she rather rapidly worked out that this was way beyond her and there wasn't an awful lot she could do, other than just trying to support me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): She was a bereavement counsellor?

M: Yes. She was a crimes one. She very gently suggested I go back to my GP to see what he could suggest, which I did. It wasn't until the NHS Trauma Response contacted me in December.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did they contact you because Victim Support had been in touch with them?

M: No. What had happened was I had witnessed something on my journey home, which is about the only thing I can remember from that walk very clearly. I don't know what time of day it was – it must have been around midday. I was in Ealing Broadway, which is as far as I had managed to walk at that point, and somebody had asked me if I knew what was going on because they didn't know why the Tubes had stopped. I still remember very, very clearly that I said there had been some explosions in central London. A young Asian man turned around, literally punched the air and said 'Yes!' and had a very nasty grin on his face and promptly walked off. I did actually phone the terrorist hotline to let them know this. I think that is where I got picked up in the system because it was only when I had spoken to, I think, one of the policemen at Scotland Yard and they asked me what I was doing out there when I worked in a different part of London. It was only when I started to tell him that he said, 'You were actually in Tavistock Square?'

Richard Barnes (Chair): How soon after Ealing Broadway – did you ring him on the mobile later?

M: No, I rang when I was at home. It was about three or four days later, I think. I had been debating about whether or not to ring them or whether or not it was something. To be honest, my head was filled with so many other things that I didn't know whether I was upside down, straight up or inside out at that point.

The Scotland Yard officer suggested that I go to the Family Assistance Centre (FAC), which I thought was very odd at the time because I thought, 'I'm not bereaved. Why would I want to go there?' because it didn't add up that that was what that was for. It wasn't until he actually started explaining what it was that, I have to say, I reluctantly went. I happened to go, I think, the day before they closed because it was just down the road from Scotland Yard at the time. They took all my details, which I have since found out they lost. I had no idea until about a month ago that the Family Assistance Centre had actually become the 7 July Assistance Centre because they never contacted me or notified me about anything, and they were supposed to be sending me...

Richard Barnes (Chair): March this year?

M: Yes. It wasn't until about a month ago, and it was one of the other survivors who told me. I re-contacted them, told them that I had originally given my details and they asked if they could have them again. I said fine, and gave them again. They were supposed to send me a welcome pack but never did.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did they call it a welcome pack?

M: I don't know; that is the name I have given it. It was some support pack or something, I think it was. I don't think they used the word 'welcome'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I hope not. They can't be that bad.

M: No, I don't think it was. I still haven't heard anything, and other survivors were saying, 'Ring them again. You must ring them again; they keep losing people's details'. I rang them again I think about two weeks ago – just before I met with Janet (Hughes), actually – and spoke to a lovely old lady, and she took my details again. They were again supposed to be sending me this letter and this information, which I never got. The only letter I have had from them was a letter I got last Friday inviting me to a victim support evening that was held five days before the letter arrived, on 11 April.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You mentioned the Trauma Centre. I presume that's the one in Charlotte Street?

M: Charlotte Street was where the NHS trauma unit did my initial assessment.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You attended that?

M: Yes, I did. The NHS trauma unit had got hold of me by then by letter. I think they were just on a sloop to find out how everyone was and what was going on. They got my details from Scotland Yard.

Richard Barnes (Chair): After you had given a statement to the police officers, you were in the police loop, anyway.

M: Yes. They originally contacted me in December because they wanted me to phone. They had given me this questionnaire and I got a rather panicked response from them, I think. I guess I figured quite highly on the scores for something. I couldn't go in December because I was actually awaiting surgery.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is this the one that was damaged in the process?

M: Yes. We waited until after I had the operation done and I went in the beginning of January to see them. That was when they actually diagnosed me with post-traumatic stress and organised for me to see the psychiatrist at Barts.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You saw the Trauma Centre in January?

M: I saw the Trauma Centre at the beginning of January, and I started seeing the psychologist, I think, at the end of January/beginning of February regularly every week since then, but that was the first point at which I had any kind of support or help.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Has it been useful?

M: Yes, he has; I cannot fault him. I do feel that I'm left hanging in between the visits, however, and I don't feel confident enough to call on the support centre because they have lost details. What makes me think they are going to be of any help? I'm rather cynical of them at the moment, I'm afraid. My GP put me on antidepressants and sleeping tablets to help back in November, which I'm still on now. There's no timescale for those.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You mentioned the survivors who were giving you advice to get in touch with doctors. How did you get in touch with them?

M: My psychologist had said to me that he felt it would be very useful for me to try to contact other survivors.

Richard Barnes (Chair): This was the guy in February?

M: This is the guy I am seeing now. This was in March, I think, when I had been going a few times. He suggested that it would be really helpful to meet other people and share experiences because at least they would have some understanding of what it is I am going through. I wasn't given a number or anything. He suggested I did a Google search on the internet for them. I could find nothing, absolutely nothing at all; all I found was BBC news feeds or newspaper feeds from last July. I think it was after some very clever, resourceful searching on my part that I actually came across this blog link or something for the King's Cross United group. I contacted Rachel from there, and she was very supportive and said that they were actually having an evening meeting in a few weeks' time and said, 'Why don't you come because we'd love to see you, even though you're not from the King's Cross site. We'd love to see you'. That was the first time I met anyone from that day, really.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You must have felt alone for quite some months.

M: I still do.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that because you live in

M: I think it is partly because I am in I feel it is because there hasn't been any coordination at all from anybody. I have actually spoken to only one other survivor by email - one other person from the Square, which I find incredible because the Square was packed. I can't believe I only came across one person. My GP doesn't really know what to do with me; he just keeps prescribing the tablets and keeps telling me to go to the psychologist. I just feel there has been no support whatsoever for me; I am just left in limbo.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Has he referred you to any local hospitals?

M: No. I got referred to the local mental health team, which I found rather insulting, to be honest. My marriage suffered and my wife and I are now actually separating because it is just such a surreal problem. I don't blame my wife; I must be hell to live with. That's all I can say. I just feel I have been left in the middle of nowhere. I feel literally like I am stuck in the middle of a swamp and I don't know how to get out of it. I have used this analogy a few times: I actually feel like a car after a nuclear explosion that just can't function. The electrics are off; there's no gas in the tank. It's just there.

It knows what it should be doing, but it just has no means with which to do it. Does that make sense? It's not a broken machine; it's just a machine that can't function.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Does this mean you're not at work at the moment:

M: I am at work at the moment, but just about. I was doing a PhD, but I had to suspend that. I have virtually no social life. I can't stand being in crowds anymore. Getting to work is problematic at best, but I wanted to have something I could at least focus on just to try to keep going. Do you understand?

Richard Barnes (Chair): How do you get to see the psychologist?

M: It's an evening appointment; I do it after work, so it's on the train.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is it almost empty?

M: Yes. I'm not too much in trouble with Tubes. I get antsy when they stop in the middle of a tunnel or when it's very, very packed. It's buses I can't do. That takes me on to something else completely; that takes me on to the parts where I start getting very angry. I feel very insulted by the Mayor – perhaps I shouldn't say this here.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The Mayor here?

M: Yes. Or, whoever it was that decided to keep the number 30 as the number 30. I think it should have been renumbered without anybody knowing, just renumbered. Every time that – and I know I'm not alone in this – every time you see that bus, and it is one of the most popular routes; it goes past Euston every day. I see it every day. It serves as a reminder, and a very painful reminder. It might be keeping the spirit of something else alive, but it certainly isn't helping the people who were there that day, particularly when you see the bus that replaced it and it is so clearly obvious which one it is. It is the one that is new; it is the one that is different. That I find very painful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): What else raises anger?

M: The lack of support. The indifference by people. I have often thought that I wish I had been physically injured that day because at least then people would be able to see something. They see you, and they think, 'He's all right', and actually I'm not all right. I'm struggling. I'm struggling very badly, and I'm not doing a very good job of it, but people don't see that; they don't see what's on the inside. They just think you should pick yourself up and get on with it. I'm talking about people in the NHS – perhaps I shouldn't say that, either. I work in the NHS, and they are as ignorant to all this as everybody else is. You can understand it in a way because what happened, really, was so bizarre. I just think – I don't know – perhaps we should be more understanding about it.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We can make recommendations, but we don't have a magic wand.

M: No, I know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): You seem to have slipped through the net, partially because you didn't ring, or whatever.

M: I shouldn't have needed to.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I'm not criticising you.

M: I know. Sorry. Police were there fairly quickly; the emergency services were there fairly quickly that day. They should have cordoned that place off; they should have contained people and moved them into the Square or something, but nothing like that happened.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Were they there before you wandered off?

M: I think so. From what I can remember, I think so. I remember hearing the sirens. Whether they were actually there or approaching there, I can't tell you. I'm sorry; I really wish I could be more accurate about that day. I was disoriented by the day, anyway. There just seemed to be nothing. There were police on foot, I think; I wouldn't like to say that for certain, but I think there were. I know the doctors were coming out of the BMA building. There should have been something. I don't know what, but something.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They were going to the buses?

M: I was coming from the bus in front of it, so I was in the vicinity. I had blood on my face – not much, but I got some, and not mine I hasten to add, thankfully. It isn't difficult to spot someone who is in shock. It really isn't that difficult. I'm not blaming them; they came out and were helping, and most of them hadn't practised for years, but no one tried to stop anyone wandering off. God knows how many people must be wandering around who might not even have attempted to contact someone. Maybe they don't feel they had to. That I find very unnerving. Someone might be wandering around really having had no support whatsoever. At least I have had some.

Richard Barnes (Chair): How closely are you in contact with King's Cross United?

M: I know members of them. I can email certain members of them. They invite me from time to time to their pub evenings. I talk to several of them via email fairly regularly, so I do have contact with them.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Have you gained any impression of whether the treatment or support for people within the M25 is different to those outside the M25?

M: Yes, very much. People outside the M25 have just been left. Certainly I would doubt very much that anybody where I live would have even any clue as to where I was or what even I am going through. It isn't something that you bring up in every day conversation; it isn't something that is talked about. It happened in London and doesn't affect us. Yet, I think probably 60-65 per cent of where I live is commutable. You see the commuters on the trains in the morning; I know most of them were caught up in it, but no one says anything or talks about it. There is no support that has been given.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Did the police come and interview you at home?

M: No, it was done over the telephone. It was done over the telephone twice.

Richard Barnes (Chair): They got your home contact details?

M: I gave them my contact details when I contacted the terrorist hotline. I did have a very long conversation with the first detective constable (DC), who was extremely helpful; I'm not sure what happened to him. I think I was told he had been reassigned, or something, and I was given another one, but I couldn't even tell you his name. I found him the most unhelpful police officer I think I have ever come across. He came across – and that is the only one I am going to describe, because I don't know who he was – he came across as, 'This is only a small piece of information; I'm not really interested'.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is that because he was from the anti-terrorist hotline? They didn't say, 'Try ringing this number because you need help'?

M: No. Not really. They put me in touch with the FAC. I must admit, when I went, I actually thought, 'great, someone who can help'. Nothing. They gave me a family liaison officer who took all the details and said, 'There's a website. I'll get you a username and password. We'll get some information sent to you. We'll make sure that this is done and that is done'. Nothing. I never got anything. I feel really let down by the system; I feel very hurt by the system.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Is that the family liaison officer and the Centre itself who have lost your details?

M: I think she passed it on to the unit because I never heard from her again.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Would you have found it helpful if there was a survivor group for Tavistock Square had been set up?

M: Yes, I would. I have been searching since my psychologist actually recommended it. I have been searching really hard and looking for other survivors from the Square. I have managed to contact one person from Australia and we email. I have never met her or spoken to her; we just emailed. That is the only person I have come across from the Square. She is in contact with a couple of others and now is actually quite angry that I am here, and no one has thought to actually link me up with other people. It's such a simple thing; it's such a simple process. This isn't rocket science here; just get something going. No groups have been formed unless they have been formed themselves. I have since learned that King's Cross was quite a unique one because they were all trapped for long on the train that they all started talking amongst themselves and started saying, 'Here's my number', or whatever it was. From the Square, we were just left to disappear. I just feel they wanted us to disappear, in some ways.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, even the bus driver walked off.

M: I have actually met him because he and I shared the same psychologist, but I haven't spoken to him in depth. It has just been passing comments. However, I do know that he's very angry. In answer to your question, yes, it would have been lovely to have some kind of group, even if it was just a telephone group. It doesn't even need to be face to face, just someone. I have listened to the people from King's Cross and yes, while I can now actually empathise with their feelings, because the feelings are the same, the circumstances are very different. None of the people I met seemed to see the

carnage that I saw. It's like contacting this person in Australia; I haven't spoken to anyone who had seen the same things until her.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Is it that which you found the most traumatic?

M: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): I can't imagine what it is like, to be honest with you.

M: Is it hard. It is hard.

Richard Barnes (Chair): If it should happen again, what would you like us to make sure is in place?

M: I have given this a lot of thought. I did actually make a list, but I left it at home. My memory is a mess. My memory is just shot to pieces from this. I'm looking at it from a very different perspective, I guess, than a lot of people would. I see things that you would think should be there, but weren't. I happen to agree with something I heard someone say, and I think it's a fantastic idea, and why don't we do it. It wouldn't address it if it happened tomorrow, but it would if it was in a few years' time. Start teaching basic first aid as part of the National Curriculum in schools. Get everybody trained to at least know what 'A', 'B', 'C' means. Make it a legal requirement that vehicles have to have a first aid kit, regardless of the vehicle. Make it an MOT requirement or something similar so that vehicle, if it's caught up in somewhere like that, that there is something there that could be used. Have a requirement list of what should be in that box and, if need be, instructions on how to use the stuff if people don't know how to use it.

As for being left in the lurch, I mean, this is the 21st century; it's not the 19th century. We have computers; don't these computers back the information up? When you give these details, in my job if I lost data like that, it would be a sackable offence. It would honestly be a sackable offence if I lost data because it's unprofessional. That's a failure on a duty of care. Also, with assistance, I have thought about this one really hard. My Victim Support counsellor, because I really couldn't function for some time afterwards; I couldn't face paying bills, I couldn't do anything. Everything was a mess, and I still haven't recovered from it, I hasten to add. She suggested contacting the Mayor's Relief Fund. I couldn't get any help from it because I didn't go to hospital that day, and because I had an injury from before, my injury wasn't necessarily directly related, although it was indirectly related because it was made worse, I have no way of actually getting any help. What would have been useful would have been to have some kind of intermediary person who could say, 'Okay, let's look at what your bills are and what you're supposed to be paying. Let's see how we can sort this out for you'. Not take it over, but just someone to say, 'We need to do this, this and this'. That is all; just something simple, some kind of help someone official to act on your behalf. I don't want a handout; I don't want money from people. I earn money. I can pay things. But because I had just moved house, all that had to be re-set up. I couldn't do it. I'm still being chased by the local council, and I have told them that I am a recovering survivor from the London bombings, and they aren't interested; they don't care. You still have to pay it; tough. There should be something; there should be some kind of alerting system or some kind of central register through which you can let local councils know or people who are in that area who are recovering from this and just give them an idea of what it is we are going through. Until this all happened, I had no idea what shock really

was – I had no idea, and yet I'd looked after people who were clearly in shock. I had no idea, and I don't think the general person does. My wife doesn't even know, which is part of the problem that we've had, and yet we have had no help whatsoever because this is unique. This is absolutely unique. They are lost. They don't know what to suggest. If someone like my wife can't even understand what I am going through, how can someone who doesn't know me? Why couldn't we have learnt lessons from somewhere like September 11? Why couldn't those lessons be made available?¹

The other thing that I am so angry about and feel so hurt about, and this is no offence meant to any of you, is the response from Tony Blair about it being a waste of time having a public inquiry, and that what is going to happen is that they are going to have this narrative. I appreciate that we have something – I am grateful that we have this; at least a voice can be heard.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We are not part of the Governmental structure.

M: I know you aren't; I know that, and I appreciate that.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): We cannot substitute for a public inquiry.

M: If they can do a high profile, really expensive public inquiry for one rich banker, and yet they can't do it for something as catastrophic as 7 July, what kind of message does that send? I feel like they just don't care, and I know I'm not alone with that one. It's highly insulting. We are talking about commuters from that day. These are people who actually help keep London afloat – financially, economically, educationally. You have just been left.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That has come across very strongly.

M: That is so incensing. What was I saying about my soapbox?

Richard Barnes (Chair): It has been very helpful. How often are you seeing the psychologist?

M: At the moment it's once a fortnight. It was weekly, but we just dropped it to once a fortnight.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is NHS provided?

M: Yes, it is. I originally had night-time flashbacks; I didn't have daytime ones, which apparently are harder to come to terms with because you can't rationalise them and they are basically dreams. We are both very thankful that they have actually started moving into the daytime, which is more problematic in some ways, but less in others because it means at least that I am starting to sleep properly.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Other than the interviews you had by telephone, have you had any other contact by the police at all?

M: No. The first DC did suggest some kind of photo identification thing for this guy I saw in Ealing Broadway; I could describe him perfectly. In fact, his image will never go

¹ See additional note by M at end of transcript

away. He suggested that I saw some photographs when I went to the FAC, but that didn't happen. The second guy I spoke to, I have to say, just seemed like it was too much effort.

Richard Barnes (Chair): The local police haven't been in touch?

M: No, I've had no contact from local police at all. None whatsoever.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): What about the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)? Have you had a letter inviting you to the meeting?

M: No. I found out about this meeting only last night from other survivors. I have had nothing at all. I know it is sometime in May, but other than that, I don't know anything at all.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Just to recap, it was your doctor that got you the support from Barts? Your GP?

M: Yes, I think so. I am a bit confused, actually, as to where they actually came from. I'm not sure if it was my GP or if it was from Scotland Yard. I have the letter at home and I can look it up.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): That was the Traumatic Stress Clinic?

M: Yes. I have a feeling it was the details from Scotland Yard, I think, rather than my GP. I'm pretty certain that is where it came from. The Traumatic Stress Clinic is where I had the initial assessment. They referred me from there to Barts and to the psycho-trauma unit, or whatever it is.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It is fairly clear that parts of the system are not talking to other parts of the system.

M: No. That is why I said, to be honest, I feel like I am stuck in the middle of the swamp on my own; I am stuck in the swamp and I cannot get out. Someone has at least thrown me a rope, and that was the psychologist. Other than that, there is no other help – there is no other help at all. I have gone from being very financially independent to owing God knows how much money left, right and centre now, which I am trying to pick up the pieces on, purely because they aren't interested. The people that want the bills paid aren't interested, and rightly so; they have a business to run. But it would have been helpful if they could have said, 'Okay, we realise that this is just a bad time at the moment. Could you provide some kind of evidence to say you were there just to demonstrate?' That would have helped or they could get in touch with my psychologist. He would happily do it, or my GP. Then, just to say, 'Let's try to hang back a bit here and try to work something out, just to help you and get you through this rough part' because it's only for however long it is going to be. It's not difficult. But, nothing.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That is a very helpful message. M, thank you so much for coming in. I can appreciate how difficult it has been.

M: I have been nervous about this for a week now.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We are not ogres.

M: I realise that now, and actually other people that have been have said the same thing, you will be pleased to know. They have found it very helpful.

Richard Barnes (Chair): It has certainly been very helpful for us.

M: I think what was more stressful was when my psychologist said that it was going to be a big step for me.

Richard Barnes (Chair): To come here?

M: Yes.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Yes, but you survived it.

M: If I can survive Tavistock Square, I think I can survive almost anything now.

Richard Barnes (Chair): There are you, then. Nothing can be as bad as that.

M: Having survived physically, yes; mentally, I don't know.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): Well, you are travelling into work.

M: I haven't been on a bus since. I can't face a bus.

Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair): That sounds to me completely sensible.

M: Thank you very much. There is one more thing I would like to say: if they knew where these poisonous messages were being spread, they should have done something about them beforehand. If they knew, and apparently they did know that these people were spreading these poisonous messages, then do something. If you have these mosques where this is going on, and they know these kinds of teachers, shut them down. That isn't freedom of speech; if anything, that is the opposite. That isn't freedom of speech; that is curtailing others' freedom of speech.

Richard Barnes (Chair): We are looking at the lessons from the reaction, not the lead up to it.

M: These messages were said quite a lot afterwards. It was like the guy with the hook – what was his name?

Richard Barnes (Chair): Abu Hamza.

M: He was parading around afterwards, extolling what had happened. That isn't freedom of speech; that is actually making things worse because that is rubbing other people's noses in it. This is what I am talking about, not necessarily leading up to it. Now, we can prevent things from happening in such a catastrophic way by looking at that.

Richard Barnes (Chair): That investigative area, I think, of 52 murders and four suicides, is something the police have to look at. It is an aspect of what is ongoing that

is beyond our competence. I mean that in as much as what we can be delegated to do. It has been a long process to get here, but we will share our report on 5 June. We are trying to make it relevant to all places and not just London. Improved political response and aftercare: that is our objective.

M: There have been a lot of questions have been asked about holding something on 7 July this year. I am hoping something is, but, again, I don't know.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Who would officially tell you?

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): It was included in the letter that was sent out from Tessa Jowell's (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) office about these meetings.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Which you didn't receive and just learned about?

M: That's right.

M: The person I am in contact with in Australia actually emailed me last night to say that she and several others, because apparently there were a lot of Australians on that bus, who have gone home because they can't face living here anymore asked me if I knew. Because I lived here, she assumed that I would know better if there was going to be something because they can get help from the Australian government, but they need to know something is going on.

Richard Barnes (Chair): In order to get here to attend them?

M: Yes, so they are even more in the dark than we are.

Janet Hughes (Scrutiny Officer): This might be helpful to you: the people who would know the answer are the Assistance Centre.

Richard Barnes (Chair): If we learn, we will make that sure you know. There must be hundreds of people who are in a similar situation to yourself.

M: I would imagine; the Square was packed.

Richard Barnes (Chair): Not just the Square; the Tube, as well. Thank you very much.

(ends)

Additional note:

I also think that there should be some kind of back up telephone network that can be used in emergencies like this, particularly on the tubes. The phone companies make an absolute fortune through mobile sales and you would think that they would address capacity and demand as a basic priority, otherwise what's the point in selling all these communication devices?

M, 2 May 2006

Letter from parents of passenger killed on King's Cross/Russell Square train

Dear Janet (Hughes, Senior Scrutiny Manager)

With reference to our phone conversation, my questions are as follows:

1. Why was the phone helpline on a premium rate, and there were no information updates from the helpline. Whenever we phoned the helpline, we were told they would get in touch. They never did.
2. Sammy was found alive and gave her name, Samantha _____, to her rescuer, and he then passed her on to the emergency staff in the ticket hall of Russell Square, where she died.
3. When we were phoning every hospital in London, it came to one and we asked if there was a Mr Lee _____ or a Samantha _____ and they said there was a Miss Samantha _____ and they would find out more details for us. When she came back she said she was mistaken. If a person is found alive there needs to be a way of transferring their name with the person, ie: plaster, pen, anything. As this mistake built up our hopes so much.
4. It then took until 16 July to be notified of her identification.
5. We were never asked if we could or would like to see her or be with her.
6. We do not know where her body was kept. Was it in every way being looked after humanly and with respect?
7. We came to London because Lee had been identified and was in intensive care at the London Royal, and we were able to stay at their hostel. But Sammy's sister, her only living relative, had nowhere. It was only that Lee's boss got a hotel for us that they then had. So there was nowhere for people to go.

We thank you very much for letting us view our questions and thank you for your kindness.

Yours sincerely,

Mr B R and Mrs L J _____.

Steven – Survivor Testimony

I was in London from the 4th to the 11th of July at the New Designers graduate product design exhibition in Islington, I had just finished my degree and this was an opportunity to show our work to industry. Wednesday was awards day, no one at our university won anything, so the next morning we decided we needed a break.

On Thursday, five of us decided to get up early to go to Tate Modern, before the design exhibition at 11am so we got the circle line tube from Barbican (near the student halls we were staying at) up to King's Cross at 8.22. We then went to get the Piccadilly line southbound, we got to the platform and waited about 4 people from the edge. It was about 8.40. There was an announcement of a fire drill on the southern part of the Northern Line, I checked my map, it didn't affect our route. The platform was packed, so much so that there were constant announcements for people to back away from the edge as the train might hit them.

A train came through and we tried to push on, as one of us did, but there were 5 of us so we couldn't make it so we got the next one, about 8 minutes later. I had to force myself between other people, it was the busiest tube train I'd ever been on. I got on the first door of the second carriage, with my back against the internal door to the first carriage. We began to move.

We'd been out drinking the night before. I turned round to my friend Mark and said something like, "Good job you don't feel sick..." At this point I was looking into the first carriage, it was packed, and swaying as we went down the tunnel. In the time it took me to turn my head back round, about 1 minute down the tunnel, it happened.

It's hard to explain it because lots of things happened at the same time, within a split second there was a massive 'metallic' bang which sounded like we'd hit a train at top speed and we stopped instantly, I couldn't see anything because there was a blast of yellow light filled with glass screening my vision all around me. The glass window against the back of my head had shattered, along with the frame and flew past my head horizontally. I remember this moment so vividly as the light was so bright I couldn't see anything except for glass and lots of debris within the flash. Then silence and total blackness for maybe a second. I thought this was death, everything around me was gone and there was a strong rush of air passing over me, which was the wave of debris and smoke passing over me. Sounds strange but I felt like I was flying. The blast had bent me over and I was slumping towards the floor, I was losing consciousness. At one point I think I was unconscious.

I came round when my friend Andy grabbed me and picked me up, only when he touched me did I know I wasn't dead. He gave me a massive bear hug and said "You're all right mate!" He later told me he thought he had only moments to live. My neck, shoulder and chest was wet, I knew I was bleeding but not how bad it was. I was shouting "...fuck, fuck, fuck..." nobody heard me, many were screaming, those that were not were shouting for calm. People calmed down, people were asking if I was ok, I was saying "I'm cut pretty bad, there's a lot of blood." A stranger felt the back of my head to see where it was coming from. Part of the door, or something from the front carriage had come through the door and gashed my head from one side to the other, about 4-5 inches long, my skull was visible. I asked Andy for his jumper for my head, and wrapped it round my head. I looked around and could only see a few people because of the darkness and smoke. The emergency light was on, but didn't do much

because the smoke was so thick and still pumping through the window, filling the rest of the train. Then I realised smoke equals fire. I internally and very calmly said these exact words to myself:

“This is it, your worst nightmare, you are going to burn to death.”

My heart rate slowed down and I slowed down breathing, I guess it's a survival instinct to prevent me breathing more smoke than I have to and prevent panic.

People were asking anyone with a phone to try and get a signal, I got mine out, even though it was useless, it was 8.52. We were trying to calm everyone down eventually our carriage went eerily quiet. The carriages behind were panicking, the one in front was silent, our carriage was eerily calm. I couldn't see anything through the carriage door which hit me, it was pitch black, it wasn't there any more. I peered in through the window, I thought it was just the blackness of the dark which meant I couldn't see the full carriage, no, they just weren't there anymore. I could see a man standing against the left rear of carriage one, my friend Mark was shining his phone through the window, trying to talk to him and the few people we could see, he never answered, he never moved. Either he was in shock, or was dead and propped in the corner. Course I didn't realise this, there was no reason to believe a bomb went off the other side of that door.

After about 10 minutes we had heard nothing and it was getting really hot down there. By this time I knew it wasn't a fire, just dust, which stank, it smelt like chemicals. People had their mouths covered by clothes to block the smoke out, for some reason I didn't. I thought to myself “There's only so much air in here.” I shouted at people to open the side doors. The walls of the tunnel were only a hands length from the train, there was no way to get out. Frustrated, I shouted that there must be an emergency door we can get out at the back. Someone pointed out to me that the tracks would be live. There was a flash, someone was taking pictures with their camera phone. Everyone swore at him. A man to my right was calling for a fire extinguisher, people had a go at him. The buzzer on the intercom would go off every few minutes and everyone would shout for silence, we would for silence from the first carriage, even though it was silent in there. But the speaker would only crackle, and no message came through. After every failed message, people panicked again. Every few minutes a woman's screams would come from the first carriage, I will never forget them. There were heavy bangs coming from both ends of the train, we thought the tunnel was collapsing.

Mark tried to force the door behind us open to get the people out, he told them to stand back so he could kick it through, but couldn't, it was buckled in towards us and jammed shut, the top half was blown through and scattered on the floor. It was so dark it was impossible to see what was happening in there, I could see part of the roof hanging down, which prevented us going through the window. Mark had been talking to the people the other side of the door, holding a woman's hand through the door and reassuring them. A massive rush of air came through the train as if another train was coming down the tunnel and someone screamed out that it would hit us, I waited for the crash, I considered grabbing a man next to me, but it just faded away. They must have been clearing the tunnel to get us out.

After about half an hour people started to move down from in front of us, as I got to the end of my carriage, I looked back and 5 injured people got out of the carriage behind (the first one) then nobody else. We walked down through our carriage, as I did, the tube manager from Kings Cross came past us, I walked into the 3rd carriage, the first

doors and windows were broken as the train had hit and rubbed the tunnel wall. I got out the 3rd side doors of the 3rd carriage onto the track and down a side tunnel as we had stopped at a "Y" junction.

I looked back at the train, it was forced against the wall, and the sides were scraped. I recall seeing a form on the floor, I later realised this was a dead body, with mangled and missing legs. There was a queue on the right and injured people were told to go to the left. I waited for someone to go past; they had a bloodied face, which looked more like a pizza than a face, he was unrecognizable. I followed a woman whose lower back was badly lacerated, slashed from one side to the other, she was having trouble walking, we walked on the tracks for about 5 minutes and scrambled up onto the platform.

I was directed up to the top of Kings Cross station, I got on the escalator. Another train was being evacuated from the platform we boarded on. These people were staring at me, expressionless. I was shouting, "What are they looking at, why are they looking at me?!" I didn't know my face was completely black from the smoke and my face and clothes were covered in blood. The still looked. I got to the ticket barrier and started mouthing off about the "F*ck*ng underground, checking our tickets after this!" The gates were open. The paramedics were just going down, someone dropped a pallet of water off in the station, I ripped the polythene off and started handing the bottles out. I then sat on the pallet. I tried to go outside but someone in the street was hassling me, asking me what was going on, I said I didn't know, I thought we had hit a train. I phoned my University tutor to let him know we had been in a crash and would be late. It was now 9.40, I had been trapped underground waiting to die for 35 minutes. I waited in the ticket room on the floor to go to hospital. I phoned home and let my parents know I was ok, and I had been in a train crash. Someone came over to me and started pouring water over my face to get the soot off, it didn't work. He taped a massive wad of tissues over my head wound, it was sodden in a minute, eventually someone came along and bandaged it, they labelled me 'Priority 3'. Andy went into severe shock and began shaking uncontrollably, he said he was losing feeling in his arms. There was a woman next to me whose forearms were shredded. A press man came up to me and asked if I wanted to do a piece, I said yes, he went away. Eventually, I was led outside, I was one of the last who could walk to leave Kings Cross, here I saw one of the worst things, a man in a suit, his back covered in lumps of other peoples flesh and sheets of burnt skin. Only now did I realize how bad the situation was. I asked a cop what had happened and he said one word: "bombs".

I waited and got on a bus, we waited for half an hour, I was on the phone to my dad who was updating me, obviously we couldn't move because by now the bus bomb had gone off. Nobody on the bus knew what had actually happened, as I was the only person who had a phone signal I was relaying what my dad was telling me to everyone. They looked back at me shocked a young man behind me asked, "Why would they bomb us?" I replied "Olympics".

Eventually we moved and I went to Royal London Hospital, I was led into the paediatric unit, into a corridor and onto a bed. They thought I had a broken skull, after checking it I didn't. I kept apologising for covering their sheets in black soot. One of the doctors asked where I was, I said "Piccadilly Line, 2nd carriage." She looked shocked, at this point it was believed the bomb was in the 2nd carriage. They kept cutting chunks of now solid bloody glass filled hair from my head. Having the glass pulled from under my scalp and the stitches were one of the most painful things I've ever been through. All the back of my head, my ears and my neck was sprayed with glass from the window and was

bleeding, as well as the long large cut, probably caused by a flying piece of metal. They checked my blood pressure and lungs, all clear. I put my hands in my pockets, each one was half filled with safety glass. I was more annoyed that the canteen was shut than I'd been in a bomb explosion. I was pumped with adrenalin that lasted till the Monday after. I left the hospital.

I flagged down a cab, he wanted £45 to Angel. I was covered in blood and debris, and he still wanted to rip us off! We walked back for 2 hours in the rain to Islington, we had no idea which way we were going, asking everyone for directions, we ended up going via Hackney! Everyone was staring at me and a few people were taking pictures of me on camera phones. I asked a shopkeeper for the way to Islington, he said "Are you ok? You look like you've been in a bomb." All I could think to say was, "I was." He was very apologetic.

We carried on and got to where I now know is Hackney, it's not our fault, everyone, policemen and public told us the wrong way. I asked a group of 5 road workers, they were asking if I was ok, before I knew it I had an audience of 15 people all wanting to know what happened in that train. As I carried on walking people were looking at me, they just knew where I had been, several people 'crossed' their chests with their hands when they saw me.

I didn't care that it took me 2 hours in the rain, I was out and I was alive. We went past the Business Design Centre in Islington, there was now a security barrier that wasn't there yesterday, they just let me through. Everyone from my Uni' was waiting to see if I was ok, we went in and everyone was hugging me and crying, my friends Mark and Nick who didn't go to hospital and we lost in the Kings Cross evacuation didn't really want to look at me, they had already showered and didn't want reminding of it all. I got back and had a shower, I couldn't wash my hair as I didn't want to risk touching the wound. I made the mistake of taking a hot shower, this washed the smell into my skin and stank of explosives for days, or maybe it was just up my nose and in my lungs. The inside of my nose was caked with dirt, as were my ears, the back of my throat had clumps of soot stuck to it when I looked in the mirror. Andy and Sam washed my hair for me, more and more hair and glass, it just kept coming and coming.

About 8.00pm I went for a walk with my friend Alan, we went to the Gherkin. I just looked at it, what the hell had happened? I couldn't face sleeping on my own that night, 3 of us shared one tiny room. I asked to leave the light on. I couldn't sleep for hours, when I did I dreamt I was stood in a train in the dark, and everyone had disappeared. I woke up at 6ish after about 30 mins sleep.

(Steven – survivor testimony continued)

Recommendations

Fire fighting equipment: fire extinguishers and fire blankets at least at one point in each carriage. Even more essential as sprinklers can't be used on electric trains, and deep level tube trains have only two definite escape routes, a fire cuts this down to one. It is essential to fight it quickly before it draws air down the train/tunnel and suffocates passengers. There is a real risk of fire from an incendiary bomb attack.

Clearer emergency information. If it was there I didn't see it, it needs to be clearer. Bear in mind the train was so busy and dark it was impossible to see the sides of the train for any "what to do in an emergency" signage. Possibly illuminated signs, or a pre-recorded

audio instruction to get around the problems of the dark. This message would need to be relayed in every carriage due to people having tinnitus. This message should encourage people to check all available escape routes, this would make sure any injured people were found.

Hand operated door opening mechanisms. Fire hammers for windows, if they were there, again I didn't see them in the dark and they need to be made more visible.

Medical kit including high power torch.

Radio communication on the train suitable for deep level tube, and with its own power supply independent from the train. Information is essential, when in shock people freeze and can't make rational decisions, people need to know what to do, even if it is to remain on the train and wait. If there is a risk of a secondary or multiple bomb attack, a message has to be got to passengers to get out of the train and that the tracks are not live. There may be many bombs, not just two, people need to be evacuated as soon as possible after the first incident. Having a radio to do this removes the need to risk emergency services.

Emergency services need to be equipped with the right kit to analyse the risks. It is unfair to expect them to go into an unknown situation knowing they may be running into a biological/chemical/radioactive or secondary bomb attack (although many did). They need the equipment there on the ground and can't rely on someone in a remote control room.

Many people panicked, if someone had a heart attack they would have been without a defibrillator for up to 45 minutes and almost certainly died whether there was an emergency or not. There has to be access to this equipment, preferable one unit per train, or at the very least one at every platform/station.

A decision has to be made at every point on the network which direction people will be taken in, it can't be left up to the people there at the time of the incident. There were many staff at Kings Cross who were first aid trained and had basic medical kit bags, they coped very well. I was rarely without medical attention as soon as I got off the train, from several station workers, a fireman and managers. The bigger the station the more available staff, first aiders and help. Proximity to hospitals should be considered.

A member of station staff or police should prevent people from leaving the station. I was able to walk onto the street covered in blood and a head injury, public told me to go back. Two of my friends were able to leave the station without giving details even though they were as close as me to the bomb, they could have information essential to the investigation which would be lost, the police can't afford to let people leave the scene.

The use of buses to get hundreds of minor injured people to hospital worked very well. This meant many people were transported without tying up other resources. The London bus network should be made aware how massively helpful this is and be notified of an incident so a small number of buses can be directed to the scene and used to transport hundreds of walking wounded. I can't stress how well this worked.

Emily – survivor testimony

I was on the Kings Cross train on 7th July and give the following testimony:

1. As soon as the bomb went off our carriage went completely dark, we could not see a thing and most people were using their mobile phones for light. I think we need some emergency lights throughout the whole of the train.
2. We all felt so helpless, we were just waiting for the driver to tell us what to do but we never made contact with him.
3. We thought there was a fire as there was so much smoke coming through. We did not know whether to close the air vents or to leave them open. I think some safety instructions need to be available on the trains (where the adverts usually are) with clear instructions as to what to do in an emergency.
4. It was only through the kind instructions of the lady who held my hand throughout our ordeal that I had any idea of what to do. Luckily she worked for St Johns Ambulance, she gave me tissues to cover my nose and mouth as we were coughing up thick black stuff which was also running out of our noses. She also told me to put my jacket over my head and to stay low. Perhaps you need to make these instructions available to passengers in an emergency.
5. There should be some breathing apparatus on board the train in case it happens again and even some first aid kits under the seats.
6. There needs to be a way of being able to make contact with someone, we assumed the train driver was dead as he didn't make contact with us. We waited for help, we was expecting someone to bang on the window and tell us it would be ok and that there wasn't a fire. That was the main concern, if there was smoke, there must be a fire on its way, burning down the tunnel towards us. If people had known there was no fire (through someone making contact with us) the situation could have been a lot calmer. I think the most important thing that needs to be recognised is us not having contact with anyone. Not long after the bomb went off, we all tried to stay quiet to hear for help, all we could hear were the screams from the other carriages, to our horror we then heard a train, thinking it was coming towards us people were screaming there was a train coming towards us and that no one knew we was down there. That was the scariest part of it (apart from thinking I was going to burn alive) not knowing whether anyone was aware of what had happened to us and not knowing if help was on its way.
7. We need to be able to break the glass if something like this happens again (after the bombings, I started carrying a hammer with me, I had to get back on the trains to go to work and knowing that I had something with me that would break the glass if I needed to, was a real comfort to me, I do not carry my hammer with me anymore as I was told by a police officer I could get into trouble). It seems the doors will only open about an inch when forced, the glass was almost impossible to break. I still to this day do not know how the two brave men from my carriage managed to smash the glass. Why would the connecting doors not open!!!!
8. We managed to escape, luckily two men helped me down as it was a huge drop from the train to the track and we walked back through the tunnel and ended up

- coming out onto the opposite platform. I came out around 35 minutes after the explosion, why was there no one down there helping us? The firefighters were just coming down to the platform and two LU workers helped me from the track to the platform.
9. I started handing out water when I got to the top because I thought many others worse off than me would need it (the water was in huge plastic packages and was hard to get out). There did not seem to be anyone there to take charge. I had enough I couldn't help these people anymore, I needed to help myself.
 10. When I got outside there was one police officer just standing there, I guess he was pretty confused like us all. I shouted at him asking why there weren't any ambulances and that there were hundreds of people injured underground. He said there had been another incident at Liverpool Street and I said to him it was a terrorist attack wasn't it and he seemed to think so too.
 11. No one took charge and that's what we needed, someone to tell us where to go and what to do. We were too dazed and too shocked to make decisions. We were left to look after each other which wasn't a bad thing as I found strength in helping others but none of us were really in any fit state to be wondering around Kings Cross trying to work out what to do next. For around 2 hours I was just standing around being told to wait in the ticket hall, being told to go to York Way where the McDonalds was open and where casualties were being treated (which was not the case).
 12. Eventually we were told to board the buses that would take us to hospital. We were outside Kings Cross station on a bus for over an hour. My dad called me (he new id been on the train that exploded and wanted to know how I was) I told him I was on the top deck of a double decker bus waiting to go to hospital. He told me to get off the bus as a bus had just exploded. There was fear and panic in all of us hearing that bombs were going off all around London, at one point we were sitting on the bus and people were getting told there had been over 7 explosions in London. I think the police should have explained that the buses had been checked and were safe and also it was wrong to leave us hanging around. I knew being in London was dangerous and I wanted to get out of there as quick as possible.
 13. I cannot praise the emergency service enough they were very sympathetic and understanding. After around 4 hours of being in hospital an ambulance took around 6 of us home for which I was very grateful.
 14. I did have contact with Victims Support after and they called me on several occasions but all I wanted was to make contact with other survivors which proved very difficult. I only found out about KingsCrossUnited through a police officer called Tony Moore. I feel it is absolutely vital for survivors to be in contact with each other, if it wasn't for my fellow passengers giving me the help and support I need and still need today, I am not sure where I would be.

Hannah – written testimony, 20 April 2006

I felt that I wanted to contribute something if lessons are to be learnt from July 7th. I think all of us who were involved in events on 7th July would hope that lessons can and will be learned.

I, and probably others, feel insulted that no-one has asked us for our input before. If lessons really are to be learnt, taken on board and changes implemented from our experiences on that day, and in our aftercare, then we should be involved. Every one of us should be asked about our experiences, after all, nobody knows better than us about our negative and positive experiences.

My first point is that I only found out about the review committee by accident, third hand, passed on from someone else who also found out about it by chance. If feedback or testimonies are genuinely wanted as to our experiences and this is an opportunity for us to give that, why were we not made aware of this? This was not communicated to us. The survivors did not receive letters from the review committee informing us about this, nor did the 7th July assistance send us letters informing us of this. There are lists of the survivors which the DCMS has, which the 7th July assistance centre has and which the police have. I understand that there are issues to do with privacy and an error with a database but surely we could and should have been made aware of the Review Committee meeting on 23rd March. I don't think many people knew about it, or know that we can submit written material until 21st April.

On 7th July I boarded the Victoria Line at Walthamstow Central at around 8.10am. I left the train at Finsbury Park and crossed over to the Piccadilly Line platform. The platform was really crowded and the information board said that the next train wasn't due for another 9 minutes. An announcer said this was due to an earlier electrical problem or signal failure.

When the train arrived I got on and due to the 9 minutes or so that it took for the train to come (usually in rush hour there's a train every 2 or 3 minutes) the train was packed. It was one of the busiest underground trains I had been on in a very long time. As we stopped at the stations the doors opened and the platforms were packed but no more people could really fit on. At Kings Cross there was a big changeover – people swarmed off and then a huge number of people swarmed on to replace them.

I was standing in Carriage 1 facing the direction of travel when the explosion happened a couple of minutes after leaving Kings Cross station.

The blast happened completely unexpectedly and I felt myself falling in the darkness. It felt I was getting smaller and smaller and it felt like I was disappearing in a black hole. When I came round I was lying on top of the seats. It was dark and I couldn't hear properly or work out what was going on. My first thoughts were that I had been electrocuted as it had felt like electricity going through me. The air was thick with soot and smoke and I realised I couldn't breathe. I gradually began to discern noises of people screaming and shouting. I heard whom I think was the driver say for people to stay calm and he was going to inform people and help would come. Someone was praying and saying we were all going to die. Someone else was trying to calm people down and then he suddenly started screaming that he'd lost his leg. It dawned on me at

this point that it was a bomb as I doubted that electricity would be able to do this kind of damage, nor even a derailment. I think I was in and out of consciousness as the next thing I remember is the carriage being emptier.

After a while I remember someone saying if anyone else could leave the carriage by themselves, could they try to do so.

At that point other passengers trampled on my head and body trying to vacate the train. This was understandable as I was probably invisible, merging into the seats, and the passengers wanted to get out of that carriage. After they had left it was a much calmer atmosphere. It was incredibly hot and the air was still thick which made it very difficult to breathe.

I was paralysed and there was a big window on top of my legs but I could hear the man who had lost his leg and he was being looked after by a woman. I could vaguely feel the presence of people but I didn't know if there were any other survivors at that point.

After what seemed like around an hour, I could feel someone squeezing my toes. This meant that there was someone else alive near my feet, closer to the where the bomb had gone off. Also this meant the feeling was starting to come back in my feet. After a while the person stopped squeezing my toes.

Some time later I tried to get the window off me again and in the process rolled onto the floor.

I then saw a woman on the seat to my left who had a severe injury to one of her legs. The bottom of her leg was shredded and the shin bone was sticking out. Her foot was still attached but only just. I couldn't see her other leg.

Underneath me on the floor I could feel bodies but I couldn't move to get off them. I could still only move my head and my left arm. There were body parts around me but I wasn't able to identify them. I realised then that there were only 4 of us left alive.

It was like you would imagine hell to be if you were religious.

All sorts of things ran through my mind: why was no-one coming to rescue us? Why was it taking so long? Were they just going to leave us there? Would we gradually wither away? Would we just be sealed in the tunnel?

I knew the authorities knew that we were there as the driver had told us they knew and were on their way. I kept thinking maybe they had changed their minds. Maybe they knew something that we didn't.

Eventually paramedics entered the carriage with torches. They gave us priority numbers. The woman on the seats was number 1, I was number 2 and the man who'd lost a leg was number 3. Then they went away again. After a while people were there again but I don't recall if they were police or paramedics. They carried me out of the carriage, someone carrying me underneath the arms and someone carrying me by my legs. I was then laid on the track and a policeman gave me a fireman's lift through the tunnel. As soon as I was put vertical blood started pouring out of my nose and mouth. The man carried me and we kept stopping for rests. I was screaming in agony and I felt sure I had a back injury. It seemed like miles and that we would never get out of the tunnel.

Finally we were in the ticket hall and I could feel fresh air. I was laid down on the floor and a nurse came and put me on a drip straight away (she had street clothes on, not a nursing uniform). I think the policeman went back down to help rescue the other passengers.

There was a security alert and I was picked up and taken out of the ticket hall and a little way down the street. I began to shake and was really cold as it had started to rain and the pavement was freezing cold underneath me. Someone found a blanket and put over me. Someone told me it was 11.20am.

People were really doing their best to help – I think it was a combination of nurses who had rushed to the scene to help and ordinary passers-by, perhaps people who live in the houses and flats around Russell Square. They were great although I couldn't speak to express any gratitude at the time. I waited and someone waited with me although I don't know who she was. A medical person came to monitor me at regular intervals.

Finally an ambulance arrived. I was put onto a stretcher from the ambulance and put inside. I remember the ambulance drivers didn't know where they were going. One of the ambulance crew was in the back with me and he tried to direct the driver as we crashed over speed bumps and tried to find the correct way. We finally got to A & E. I later learnt that I was at St Thomas' Hospital.

The A & E staff were superb and there was a flurry of people cutting off my clothes, and trying to talk to me to ascertain my injuries. I had x-rays and was later put in the High Dependency Unit and put on drips and morphine. The staff in the High Dependency Unit were superb too and I was monitored closely.

St Thomas' Hospital later made many mistakes in my care, some of which they have admitted to but that are too lengthy to go into here.

After my experience at St Thomas' Hospital I do have several suggestions.

I feel it would be a good idea if each patient, having survived an ordeal of such magnitude, be given a liaison nurse or someone at the hospital who checks that they are fit to be discharged, that they have follow-up appointments and if there are any other problems they may have. I know these are basic steps that should be taken in any patients care (although they were not in mine) but if there was a liaison nurse assigned to a patient, this would ensure people do not slip through the net but get proper follow-up care.

This person would also be able to assist the patient in the future with any related problems, appointments, mental health issues etc. Even for the non-severely injured, the recovery process is very long-term, the longevity of which many of the survivors are still coming to terms with.

Bombings obviously bring about specific severe injuries but also other injuries that are perhaps not so apparent, such as internal injuries or nerve damage. I therefore think it's crucial to monitor patients over a long period of time and not only whilst they are inpatients at the hospital.

There must be many medical specialists in Northern Ireland that have dealt with bomb injuries and they may be able to provide valuable information or assistance should such an incident happen again.

The 7th July Assistance Centre was a great idea, set up very quickly and kindly staffed by many volunteers. They were however, powerless to help in many cases. I was released from St Thomas' Hospital with no follow-up appointments at all. I still knew something was wrong that hadn't been diagnosed and phoned the assistance centre for help. I was at my wits end, in chronic pain and I wanted to know how I could go about seeing someone at St Thomas' again. No-one could really help me with this. I spoke to the centre many times but they were unable to contact St Thomas' and get me seen by someone. One kind nursing volunteer took up my case but all he could do was write to my GP asking if he would be able to refer me to my local hospital as an urgent case. This did happen and I was finally going to have a neurology appointment in October.

We ended up paying for a private neurology appointment, something which neither my family nor myself wanted to do out of principal but I couldn't go on in chronic pain until October. The neurologist diagnosed nerve damage, put me on specific medication and recommended an MRI scan.

We tried again to get back in the system at St Thomas' Hospital and we eventually succeeded after many frustrating phone calls. I was finally seen by someone at St Thomas' on 1st August who then referred me to a spinal surgeon, who then organised for an MRI scan. It wasn't until 30th August that I was diagnosed with broken vertebrae and spinal cord damage.

We also struggled to get an ear appointment that I was meant to have 4 – 6 weeks after 7th July. Even though it was on my medical records, no-one had organised this. This again took many frustrating phone calls and even my GP intervening to finally get an appointment on 7th October.

If a liaison-type nurse had been in place, this would not have happened.

When one has survived a huge event like a bombing, it is obviously a frustrating experience to spend days on the phone to try to access adequate follow-up care. If I had not had the support of my family to help me do this I do not think I would have been able to cope. Only when the physical factors were in some way dealt with could I even begin to deal with the mental side of this traumatic event.

I was sent contact details for mental health care should I need it. I contacted the mental health team in November and after an assessment was referred to the Trauma screening team within a couple of weeks.

The psychological help I have received has been fantastic and I have been seen almost weekly by a psychologist since December. I have nothing but praise for the organisation and care that has gone into this element of my recovery.

The London Bombings Charitable Relief Fund set up by the Mayor's Office was also superb. The fact that they were able to provide interim payments easily and very quickly was a god-send.

Written submissions by individuals

The legal firms offering their services for free is a very generous act and I am extremely grateful to them for their ongoing support to assist us with any claims.

The police that have dealt with me, in terms of taking witness statements, return of property etc have all been kind and sensitive and I am also indebted to the policeman for getting me out of the carriage.

Other questions I would like to raise are:

Why did it take so long for our rescue from Russell Square?

Could lives have been saved if the emergency response was quicker?

Why are there no first aid kits or stretchers on the tube trains or at the stations (surely this is necessary if a passenger gets injured or is taken ill at any time)?

I hope the information that comes out in the review committee's findings highlights the need for a public inquiry.

I have only talked about my own experiences here, not that of others. Everyone involved in 7th July has had different experiences and everyone has positive as well as negative comments to make which is why I think it is essential to get our feedback. Thank you for the opportunity to enable me to give it.

Hannah

Melanie – written testimony, 23 March 2006

I was on the bombed Aldgate train in the same carriage, about 5 feet from the Michael, the person who gave testimony at the public hearing today.

He was very affected by the blast and was upset and disorientated. Although we were both walking wounded he asked me to hold his hand and leave the carriage and train together. I would have preferred to stay with someone else who was badly injured but Michael pleaded with me to go with him. We walked along the track, to the platform and up the stairs to the ticket hall together - me holding his hand as he had requested. When we got to the ticket hall we saw the first emergency personnel - fire brigade officers. The only official we had seen in the tunnel was a London Transport man with a torch and another LT man at the back of the train, helping us down the steps on to the track.

I asked the fire officers why they weren't in the tunnel freeing those people we had seen and heard trapped, dying and screaming in pain. They said they were not allowed to go down to the train because of the possibility of there being another bomb. I was still holding Michael's hand at this point. It is apparent that his recollection of this conversation was very different.

I do think that this is important to contact you as Michael's testimony gives the impression that the fire officers were reluctant to attend to the dying and injured. To give you some idea of Michael's state of mind at this time, he was very upset and asked me to call his girlfriend on his mobile phone as he was incapable of speaking to her. I did this before I called my own family to let them know that although I was injured I was actually safe.

I had considered coming to the hearing today but had assumed that it was purely for people who had been seriously injured. When I saw an excerpt of Michael's testimony on the BBC website this afternoon and on the news tonight I felt that I had to email to say that his recollection may not be wholly accurate. I think the emergency services had a new and unknown circumstance to deal with. I realised as I looked in to the bombed carriage that this was most likely the work of a suicide bomber and although the fire officers' answer was upsetting I could understand they had to follow the lead of the police. To say that the fire officer avoided our gaze is mistaken. Considering Michael's state of mind at the time I am not surprised that he has maybe misrecalled this point.

Whilst I cannot comment on those people who were not treated in hospital, my experience at the Royal London was as good as it could be in the circumstances. I had breathing problems and glass imbedded in my scalp and hair. I was triaged and after about 1 hour waiting, during which time I was offered tea by WRVS, I was seen by one doctor and then by another more senior one. I was told to be careful to pick the glass out of my hair under the shower and not to rub to embed it into my head further. I was told to go to my GP the next day for treatment for my lungs, which were damaged by the smoke inhalation. After I was treated I was told to go to the canteen and give my details to the police officers. The next evening I was telephoned at home by a detective from Scotland Yard requesting to come and interview me that weekend. I arranged child-care for my baby and the detective came to interview me at my house on Sunday morning.

I have dealt with this event on my own with the support of family and friends. I was referred to a clinical psychologist by my company GP, to whom I had been referred after a month of really not coping. I am continuing to see the psychologist and gradually building up to a normal working week. I am the only person I know at my office who was involved in this event and that has been very isolating. I finally filled in a NHS trauma questionnaire last week and received a call today offering whatever assistance I needed.

I did contact the July Assistance Centre for the first time last week. I called following receipt of a letter from the Metropolitan Police and I also thought it might be a good idea to make some contact.. I was told very abruptly that I had called the wrong number and I really should have called another number that had not been supplied in the letter. I was made to feel that the mistake in the letter was my fault and the contact left me in tears. I was asked for my name and told I was on their database so I was surprised at the unhelpful and unfriendly reception I received. I can sympathise with other survivors testimony in this respect.

I have also contacted the London Bombings Charitable Relief Fund recently. They were a complete contrast to the Assistance Centre. They were helpful, friendly and very supportive.

I thought that the emergency services did the best they could in the circumstances and whilst many lessons can and should be learned from this horrific day I do not think they should be criticised unjustly.

Jonathan - written testimony

I was on the Circle Line carriage behind the one that was bombed near Aldgate on 7 July. I was showered with glass, covered in soot and slightly injured – literally a few scratches to the back of my neck – and was treated at the Royal London Hospital. I hope the following reflections are useful for the GLA's review.

I was surprised the police did not do more to take names and addresses of those involved. They advised people to stay but most people, particularly those not directly affected by the blast, left Aldgate soon after exiting the station. The trauma of what they had seen or experienced probably manifested itself later on, several days on in my case, yet they would have had no contact from the police or other organisation to see how they were doing.

Following on from this, the police may have wanted to check clothing for bomb fragments. They asked me about this when I gave a statement several days later but by then the clothes I wore that day had been washed or thrown away. I appreciate the immediate focus of the emergency services was the safety of everyone involved but I would have thought taking a name and contact number (even using a Dictaphone?) would be possible. It is hard to imagine the police allowing witnesses to a major traffic accident walk away.

The NHS staff on the day were magnificent. The only oversight seemed to be a lack of blankets as it was unseasonably cold. Some were later found and also used to treat shock. However, although I appreciated the subsequent NHS follow up, 4 or 5 months after the event is just too long.

On the bus from Aldgate to the hospital, a WPC accompanied us on the top deck while a paramedic led the way on a motorbike and directed traffic. It soon transpired that the WPC and paramedic should have swapped places!

Communication of the commemoration service was poor. I would have liked to attend but inferred from the media that it was for bereaved relatives. However, I know from talking to fellow survivors since then that this was not so.

In the days afterwards, the praise for the emergency services was absolutely right but I thought the London Underground staff were overlooked even though they were first on the scene. I was pleased to see them recognised in the honours list but senior political figures could have praised them more in the days after the bombs.

I tried to e-mail London Underground via its website, to thank the staff on duty at Aldgate that day, but found this very difficult to do. In the end, I had to contact them through the complaints facility but point out it was not a complaint.

Finally, I am sure that everyone was frustrated at losing access to the mobile phone network. I now understand why this happened but more could have been done to explain this rather than worry about more sinister explanations.

Jonathan

Kathy – written testimony (see also transcript of private interview)

I would like to preface my comments with an expression of gratitude to all those who were involved in the rescue on 7th July and those who have supported me since, without whom I might not be alive today and certainly would not have recovered so well. Any criticisms I make should not be taken as applying to individuals personally, but to the processes and systems within which they work, and I hope that my comments on what went well and what did not, will make a positive contribution to the evaluation of the response to the events of 7th July.

Recording Names

One of the communications problems I encountered was that my name seemed to get lost between my being put in the ambulance and getting to hospital. While I was on the tube train waiting to be taken off I was helped by two transport engineers who took my husband's name and the name of the company where he works. One of them decided on his own initiative to ring my husband from a pay phone, tell him I was injured and still on the Edgware Road train, and that I would probably be taken to St Mary's Hospital.

By the time they got me out of the train I was suffering from the effects of a collapsed lung and shock and was finding it difficult to speak at all, but when one of the engineers asked me again for my name, I managed, with a lot of effort, to spell it for him, and he wrote it down while I was being transferred to the ambulance. I was determined that my identity should not be lost. But when my husband checked the lists of admissions at St Mary's, he could not find my name. It was only after a couple of hours of repeated checking that he wondered whether a name on the list which bore almost no resemblance to ours could possibly be me. And it turned out that it was. It was particularly frustrating that it had taken so long to identify me after the engineer had gone to so much trouble to find out my name (and also to inform my husband, saving him a long search round the London hospitals), and I had tried so hard to get the spelling across accurately.

I read of two or three other cases where people were unconscious and unidentified for days while their relatives were desperately looking for them, even though in one case at least, the woman's name had been known by the paramedics before she was taken off the train.

I realised that loss of identity was probably a particular problem with women, who tend to carry their personal items in a handbag, which can easily become separated from them in an incident like that, where things were flung around by the blast. There were also so many people and bags that it would have been impossible to know what belonged to whom. It was easier to identify men, who tend to carry their personal items like wallets in a trouser or jacket pocket.

I would suggest that in a major incident like that where there are large numbers of casualties being taken to many different hospitals, the emergency services try to identify people with serious injuries while they are still conscious and write their names on tags tied to their person, so that there is little likelihood of their identity being lost in transit.

Police Liaison Services

While I was in St Mary's Hospital there were two police officers assigned to the hospital to offer assistance to the injured and their families. They told me that it was the first time they had had the same officers doing that job every day rather than a rota. This system worked very well, I thought, for the following reasons:

My husband and I soon got to know the two officers so that we did not have to explain to different people every day what my injuries were, which incident I had been involved in, etc.

We knew who they were, which was a help to me at a time when I was very frail, and I knew I could trust that the people they introduced me to were genuine, e.g. the police officer who was to take my statement, Victim Support staff, etc.

We ourselves needed very little help from them, but when we did (e.g. asking about getting my property back) it made things much easier to have someone we knew as a point of first contact.

I hope the police would consider a similar arrangement should there ever be another large scale incident like 7th July.

Likewise I found it very helpful, once I was out of hospital, to be assigned a Family Liaison Officer through whom communications could be channelled and who we could approach when we needed information or advice. The only hitch was that for some reason I was assigned two FLOs, one of whom worked locally (and was my usual contact) and the other worked the other side of the county. When the local officer moved jobs there was a misunderstanding about who was to carry on the role of FLO – they each thought the other was doing it – and I had the impression that they were perhaps not clear for how long they might need to act as channels of information, even if I myself did not need regular support or contact with them.

Psychological Support services

I am aware from what was said by some of those who spoke at the public meeting on 23 March that many people affected by the bombings found themselves “out of the loop” when it came to follow-up by health services and psychological support services. For me, as one of those seriously injured, there was actually duplication to begin with in the psychological follow-up. Both St Mary's and the Traumatic Stress Clinic were monitoring my progress to begin with, St Mary's by phone and the Traumatic Stress Clinic by postal questionnaire. While I very much appreciated the effort being put into tracking my psychological recovery, there seemed to be a lack of clarity about who was taking responsibility for the follow-up, and from my point of view a lack of clarity about what types of psychological support might be available and how to access them.

Now, nine months after the bombings it finally seems clear that there are two main types of support available:

- i) Assessment and treatment by clinical psychologists for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, mainly via the traumatic Stress Clinic
- ii) Counselling, which can be arranged via the 7th July Assistance Centre. Available on the client's request rather than on the specific diagnosis of PTSD.

With hindsight it would have been helpful to those involved in the bombings if the types of support and how to access them could have been agreed by the agencies involved and made clear from the start.

My own experience is that I have been assessed by St Mary's Clinical Health Department, who then decided that they should be leaving all follow-up and treatment to the Traumatic Stress Clinic. They in turn assessed me and decided that the limited range of stress symptoms I had did not qualify for a diagnosis of PTSD and suggested I consider contacting the 7th July Assistance Centre to arrange counselling for a few particular issues which concerned me. I understand that the kind of programmes offered by the Traumatic Stress Clinic would probably not be appropriate, but being passed on from one agency to another has in itself been a stressful experience and I feel unable to start again with yet another person, another agency.

As I mentioned, some of the follow-up was done by phone (St Mary's) and some by postal questionnaire (Traumatic Stress Clinic). Both were asking the same kind of questions, but I found the telephone contact preferable, as I was able to have a proper discussion about my progress, rather than being limited to the tick box answers of the questionnaire. I appreciate that the Traumatic Stress Clinic is using its questionnaire just as a screening tool to identify the people who may benefit most from treatment, but from my point of view as the person responding, a personal contact and brief discussion over the phone was much more satisfactory.

Kathy

J W P – written testimony

I was in the eastbound Circle tube into which the Edgware Road bomb blew from the westbound train.

I purchased a ticket at Bayswater station at 0842 and boarded a Circle line train almost immediately. We stopped at Paddington, but before reaching Edgware Road, there was an incredible noise, blackout, rapid deceleration of the train and billowing grey smoke that came towards me in slow motion. Believing it was a head-on train crash, I was initially focused on calculating whether I could avoid the mass of metal which was surely coming towards me in the smoke. The train came to a halt and the grey smoke passed through the carriage with no train behind it.

With smoke billowing in and memories of tunnel disasters where smoke inhalation caused the majority of deaths, I believed that my chances of survival were not good. Initially there was a lot of screaming – mainly male from the predominantly corporate filled carriage. One lady asked if there was anyone with mobile reception – no one had this. I then asked if anyone could see an emergency button in the carriage – this was also a negative. After a few more minutes, I said that we had to move down the carriage to the end of the train, away from the smoke. My fellow passengers stated that we had to wait for an announcement about what to do. I retorted that the person responsible for such announcements may be dead.

At one stage the smoke seemed extremely suffocating and we started to move down the carriage. We had moved less ½ the carriage when we got the message that we could go no further as those at the back were frightened of exiting onto the tracks as they were probably live plus there was the risk of tube services still running.

I did not cry or get upset because within me was the belief that such emotion would use more oxygen. Everyone in the carriage had by that stage realised that remaining calm was half the battle of surviving. There was a lot going on around me and I totally shut myself off to this – my way of coping mentally. I remember requests for anyone with medical knowledge being sent down the carriage and also for water. I remember the counting down of someone's pulse until they died and seeing lots of body parts in the adjacent carriage – which was beyond recognition.

I thought that I was going to die and wrote a farewell message to my 9 year old daughter.

For the first half of the time we were trapped we received two announcements by London Transport apologising for the delay in service and stating to listen for more announcements. To this day, I believe that the person making these must have been in shock as the messages were entirely inappropriate.

We then received our first sensible announcement that paramedics were going to be entering the train. I believe that this would have been 35-40 minutes after the bomb had exploded. We were told that an evacuation of the train would be taking place by carriage from the front and that we were all going to get out OK. This was the first assurance we had in all the time of being trapped.

The paramedics came through and after a while we were evacuated in a very orderly manner. I asked one of the London Transport staff what had happened and he said a

bomb. I am forever grateful that I did not know this beforehand, unlike some of the males who were aware of the bomb resin in the smoke.

With each step came the belief that I was going to get through it. The walk down the tracks was surreal. With each step I realised that I had survived. My phone rang with an incoming call from the person I had been supposed to meet as soon as mobile service was available – it was 0942 as detailed on my international phone bill. At 0944 I called my best friend – I was at the front of Edgware station at that stage.

I am one of the very lucky ones. A few scratches, hearing loss and smoke inhalation were my only physical scars.

My injuries are psychological. Being trapped with no information as to what was going on has had a major impact on my life. I can no longer cope with uncertainty. I cannot use lifts due to the fear of helplessness should anything occur. I can no longer be in dark unfamiliar places and I still startle very easily. Eight months later, helicopters and sirens immediately take me back to that day.

I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I had to change jobs. I now only work 4 days a week on a contract that finishes in December. There was a period of many months where I did not want any contact with the outside world. I was so frightened at night that only installing a back to base monitored alarm system on every door and window made me feel safe.

I have not suffered survivor guilt but I do feel a need to speak out for those who I believe died due to not receiving medical assistance in a timely manner. My brother tells me that it is unfair to expect rescue workers to go into a situation where there was the potential for another bomb to explode. I accept this.

HOWEVER...if we had been made aware of the nature of the incident, informed that the tube service was suspended and that the lines were not live, we could have made our own decision to evacuate the train. I am not good with medical conditions, but I would personally have helped those who needed it down the tracks to receive quicker medical attention.

Summary:

I hope that this Committee can make recommendations as to how communication to survivors could be improved. In similar situations survivors should be able to be responsible for starting their own rescue. More than the actual explosion and seeing human carnage, it is the 50+ minutes trapped underground that has had the most psychological damage and a profound impact on my life.

Michael – written testimony

I was travelling on a Circle Line (anticlockwise) train. The train pulled out of Edgware Road Station and had travelled a short distance when there was a loud thud noise and immediately several windows shattered.

I was travelling in the front carriage of the train and was seated in the second bay back from the front of the train. I was in a right hand seat (if looking towards the front of the train). I was showered with glass particles but did not receive any cuts. The air was full of fairly thick black smoke and there were concerns but not alarm amongst the other passengers.

In the front carriage most of the passengers had been seated but I recall that upon leaving Edgware Road Station there was not more than 6 standing in the door bay areas of this carriage. After a short time the driver opened his door into the carriage but could not get it fully open. I realised that a cover in the floor of the carriage had lifted proud of the frame and was preventing the drivers door from opening further. I therefore lifted the panel out of its frame to allow the driver to open his door fully. This meant that there was now effectively a hole in the floor where the panel had been but another passenger replaced the panel in its frame a little while later to prevent passengers falling through the hole.

The air cleared quite quickly. The lights in our carriage were not working but light from a train which has stopped alongside our train on the clockwise line meant that we were not in complete darkness. The driver told us that he would prepare to evacuate the train through his cab and out onto the track at the front of the train. He then opened the door in the front of his cab and placed the emergency ladder in position ready for us to evacuate. He left his cab and went down the emergency ladder so that he could direct passengers after they climbed down the ladder. He gave instructions that passengers should avoid treading on or touching any rail and proceed down the side of the bombed train towards Edgware Road Station. At that time the driver said that explosions could have been caused by faulty traction motors. The door adjacent to the ladder kept on swinging nearly shut. I therefore decided to remain in the drivers cab and hold the doors open so that the other passengers could concentrate on climbing carefully down the ladder. Several passengers seemed apprehensive about going onto the track and I reassured them that only the dull raised rails carried electrical current and that the shiny rails should not present any danger.

At this stage I was unaware as to the true cause of the explosion and was also unaware of exactly where in the train the explosion had taken place. The flow of passengers stopped and I concluded that passengers in carriages other than the front one might be unaware that there was an evacuation route available.

I therefore decided to walk back into the second carriage. Although there was light shining in at window level the carriage below waist level shrouded in darkness. I quickly became aware that there numbers of seriously injured people some on seats and some on the floor. There were also others tending to the injured. I decided that the driver needed to be informed immediately of the situation.

I therefore walked to the front of the train and down the ladder to speak to the driver. I emphasised that urgent medical attention was needed for the injured which were nearly

all in the second carriage of the train and mentioned that the explosion appeared to me to be a bomb and he nodded.

I then walked back into the bombed carriage to see if any of those assisting the injured needed me to help them. However all I could do was to try to provide a bit more light by illuminating the front display of my mobile phone. I felt unable to assist further as shock was beginning to affect me and I could feel myself becoming more agitated. I therefore walked back to the driver to find out if paramedics were coming soon. He could not tell me when they would be coming. I stayed with the drivers for some time and to try and ease my anxiety conversed with him about work etc.

It is very difficult to give an accurate estimate of the time of the time that all this took, however it certainly appeared to me that medical assistance was not forthcoming as speedily as I would have expected. The delay caused me much anguish because the obvious needs of the injured were not being met.

During the passage of this time I had gone back into the front carriage of the damaged train. Looking across the undamaged clockwise train I saw that I took to be paramedics (with their distinctive yellow clothing) walking through the (clockwise) train on the adjacent track. I then called into the bombed carriage 'the paramedics are coming' and decided that I would go back onto the track and meet the first paramedic as he climbed down the emergency ladder which had been put on the rear of the clockwise train. I did this and met the first paramedic. I led him into the bombed carriage and was aware that he was followed by a lady doctor and some more paramedics.

I became aware of a figure lying very still on the floor of the bombed carriage and asked a paramedic to check the pulse. There was no pulse. I could feel myself becoming even more upset and agitated. I therefore walked to the front of the train and had a further conversation with the driver and mentioned that I had left some personal possessions in the damaged carriage but I felt unable to go back into the bombed carriage.

I then became aware that some Underground employees had arrived and were standing on the track. I wanted to be evacuated though the undamaged (clockwise) train on the adjacent track because I did not want to walk to close the injured and dead passengers. However the door to cab had been closed and I could not open it. I approached an underground worker and he was able to open the door and this I walked up the ladder and onto the train. Surprisingly after all the time I had been there I found that this undamaged train was still full of passengers but that they were just beginning to be asked to move along through the train. I stood back because I still felt upset but the person who was organising the evacuation realised (by my appearance) that I had been a passenger on the bombed train and that I was still upset. He therefore allocated a lady underground worker to stay with me until I had been evacuated from the train. I was guided out of the train and up the stairs to Edgware Road station entrance. I was shown the entrance to the Marks & Spencer store and informed that there would be medical assistance within the M&S store. I went in but very shortly afterwards we were all directed to leave M&S and walk across the main road (Edgware Road) and into the London Metropole Hotel. Here we were invited to wait in the main coffee lounge area. Subsequently I gave a brief statement to the Metropolitan Police & also had a brief medical examination by a doctor which allocated me DELAYED PRIORITY 3 and was timed at 11.10.

Very shortly after this I left the hotel, as I needed to contact both family and work colleagues.

Several days afterwards I had to give a statement to the Metropolitan Police but was disappointed that they were unable to show me an accurate diagram of the layout of the train when questioning me about where I had been travelling on the train.

Subsequently I have made use of the 7th July Assistance Centre and I consider that this is a valuable resource which remains available on an ongoing basis for all those affected by the events of the day. I am currently making use of the counselling provided by the Assistance Centre.

Views and information submitted to 7July@london.gov.uk

I am one of the survivors of the bombing of the Aldgate train. I was badly injured, spent 2 months in the Royal London Hospital, both legs amputated below my knees, ongoing physio and rehab with prostheses.

I have read the committee's paper inviting input from those affected by the bombings. I would say that the majority of the survivors, especially those injured and hospitalised, will not be able to comment on any aspect of communications on 7 July; I did not have any concept of time immediately after the blast and during my rescue.

Once on the surface, I was quickly transferred by ambulance to hospital. As you can appreciate, it was a great relief to be out of the tunnel and receiving medical attention; at that stage my impression was that the rescue and emergency services were functioning effectively.

Post rescue, the quality of my care was excellent. I received the best medical care I could wish for, support services, e.g. trauma team, psych counselling, chaplain, etc., were readily available when required.

The police family liaison officers merit particular mention. As a non-Londoner (I had travelled to London for the day on business) my liaison officer was a huge benefit: Helping to arrange transport for visiting family. Providing information on missing property. Progressing investigations and taking statements in a sympathetic way. Providing information on compensation and assistance available. The list is long and nothing was too much trouble; this is a side of the police that is rarely seen and is a credit to the force.

Andy

I have recounted my experiences of the day to people in person but have not yet put my experiences down in writing which I'd like to do now.

I was on a Hammersmith and City line train having boarded at Upton Park where I live and aiming to get off at Hammersmith where I used to work. My train had just left Aldgate East station when I heard a huge explosion which shook the windows of our train. The lights dimmed and came back on again and the train came to a stand-still. I immediately opened my eyes (I was trying to nap on the train as I usually do in the mornings) and sat at the edge of my seat and gasped, holding my hand to my mouth at the same time. I knew immediately that it must have been a bomb. Shortly afterwards though, the train driver told us that a fuse had blown (whatever that meant) and I was reassured by that. I thought ok there's been some sort of technical fault somewhere and something has exploded. A few minutes later, since the train was close to the station we heard sirens, this made me wonder, but still I thought maybe the fuse exploding has caused some damage and the emergency services were coming to fix it. I didn't really know what to think. Since our train was not really affected we were all very calm in the carriage and we talked to each other (well I didn't since I am a quiet person). Two chaps beside me got to know each other and got on very well. Time passed and people began to use their fancy mobile phones to get information about what was going on (they usually had to move around the carriage a bit to get a signal but since

we were close to Aldgate East station it wasn't too much of a problem for most). I remember someone reading from their phone the words: "walking wounded" and "explosion" and I thought that it had to be a bomb but we all remained calm. After all it could have been an electrical explosion or a gas explosion or perhaps I was just convinced to believe that by one of the guys sitting next to me who suggested it could be a gas or electrical explosion. The train driver occasionally gave us reassuring messages. At some point I rang my wife at home who was oblivious to the events taking place. I told her to watch the news and that I was ok. There was a LU worker sitting in the same carriage as us and at some point during all this she knocked on the train driver's door (I was in the first carriage of the train) and was let in. After some time the driver said that there had 'been a serious incident in central London' and he seemed shaken when he came out of his room with the woman holding him. As soon as they left police officers in glow-in-the-dark yellow jackets came in to evacuate us carriage by carriage starting from the carriage at the end (they came to the front of the train first to find a ladder from the little room the driver sits in). My carriage was evacuated last, except for a pregnant lady, who to her credit remained very calm, who was taken off the train when the police came to find a ladder. It was about 10:30 - 11:00 when we finally got out of the train and walked on the tracks (keeping to the sleepers as advised), up the ramp and onto the platform of Aldgate East station where we were given a bottle of mineral water and told to leave the station (there seemed to be two exits and I didn't know which to take so I just followed whoever was in front of me). A minibus was waiting outside for us and it took us on a short journey out of the area. When we got off the minibus I rang my boss at work who was in and told him where I was and that I could not take the tube to get into work but I would take the bus. I also asked if everyone was fine. He said it seemed so and regarding the bus option that the buses weren't running either. He said he'd been following the news. I said that I'd give work a miss for a day and he didn't have to much of a problem with that. Some streets in Aldgate East were cordoned off but I managed to walk to Whitechapel and then on to Stepney Green and Mile End, called my wife again and topped up my mobile phone from a shop on the way. I finally got onto a number 25 bus and got off as it approached Upton Park (I can't remember if I walked the rest of the shortish distance home or took another bus but given that I tend not to have any patience for buses when it comes to journeys that can be done on foot I probably walked). I got home and hugged my wife. I was glad to be safe but very deeply sorry and sad for those that lost their lives. I'm glad the pregnant lady was fine. I just wish it had never happened. I spent the rest of the day watching the news. My eyes were fixed on the television (which is a change for me since I don't get many opportunities to watch TV). That morning I kissed my wife goodbye while she stood at the end of our street to see me off as she always does (unless she's angry with me) and walked off. I came back after walking a few paces I had forgotten to take something (I can't for the life of me remember what it was but I can ask my wife to see if she does), I went in the house again and must have retrieved the thing left behind and went to Upton Park station. The train that got bombed to my mind must have been in front of the train that I was on and it scares me to think that had I not gone back to the house that day, although I wouldn't have taken a Circle line train from Liverpool Street to Aldgate, I could have been even closer to the explosion.

Sachin

I understand that you are looking for comments regarding the 7th July bombings in respect of looking at any improvements that could be made by the emergency services etc.

I would very much like to offer my observations as someone who was 1 carriage away from the bomb on the Aldgate train.

I distinctly remember the feeling that overwhelmed me when I caught a glimpse of a policeman at the door to the train. By then about 40 minutes had passed since the explosion, we had experienced lights out and then on again, a carriage full of smoke with no ventilation, we sat on the floor, ended up covered in soot and broken glass, could hear people crying out for help. My feelings went from panic and fear to calm and coping and myself and those around me seemed to adopt the British stiff upper lip stance on the whole incident. As soon as I saw that policeman I exhaled which seemed like the first time I'd done that since the explosion. I never realised the impact of the sight of a policeman could have on me and I felt so relieved that I was going to be ok. Of course, at that point, I was still in a train, in a tunnel and the doors wouldn't open but there was a policeman so that all didn't matter and we were all saved. This might sound dramatic but that is truly how I felt at that time.

The police soon established that the doors wouldn't open and that we would have to be led out of the back of the train. We were told to stay still and calm as they were going to lead the injured off first. As this happened the full impact of what we had been involved in sunk in. Still trying to remain calm and helping those around me I slowly walked to the back of the train where again Underground staff and police were there to help us off and along the tunnel. The route out was past the devastated carriage which presented to us a scene out of a 999 programme although unfortunately we all knew that this was for real. The emergency services were already in the bombed carriage and unfortunately we passed by the injured and the dead. In front of me the sight was of the light of Aldgate station with a number of paramedics, firemen with cutting equipment etc walking the opposite direction towards the carriage. There were people along the track telling us to mind our step and assisting our walk out, continually talking to us and reassuring us that they were there. We were helped out of the station and given bottles of water - a small touch that was so gratefully received and I remember thinking that these bottles were cold and I wonder where they had all come from !? On leaving the station it seemed that the world had changed. All this fuss, all these people, it was a most overwhelming sight I've ever seen but the feeling that will remain with me was the complete and utter confidence I had in all the people around me. The emergency services and transport staff all had a job to do and were all doing it. Everything was calm and organised and methodical. The various levels of injuries were being treated as if these paramedics treated people on the pavement every day. We were being told where to go and what to do and everyone calmly obeyed. I remember saying to a friend if a policeman had told me to go and jump in the Thames I would have done so, such was the confidence they instilled by their professionalism and their complete unfazed control of the situation.

I gave my details to a policeman and then proceeded to walk to where my husband was having a breakfast meeting by Bank. In there we sat and watched the news unfold and felt very safe in the knowledge that we were told to stay where we are so we did. Because of my situation I sat glued to the TV with my mobile phone in the other hand letting friends and relatives know that I was ok. Life in London went on that day, at the venue we were at business lunches continued and whilst that does have something to do with the resolve of the nation it also has a lot to do with the continual updates on TV and the advice that was being given out that continually reassured Londoners that everything was under control so 'carry on'.

I have friends that work at local hospitals - Whipps Cross and King George's in Ilford – and on talking to them I was amazed at the knock on effect of the emergency services and staff at these kind of hospitals the 7th July had. Everyone had a job to do and a purpose and everyone knew exactly what to do whether they were directly involved or as in my friends cases covering other patients and reducing the workload. What a fantastic response and how grateful we should all be that these procedures are in place.

In the weeks afterwards the sight of police or community officers and even armed police were extremely reassuring on the streets and stations of London and I certainly welcomed their presence. The attempted bombings 2 weeks later had a much greater impact on me than I thought. By then I was back on public transport and thought I had overcome any fears that I may have but I was wrong - I hadn't. However the continual presence was such a comfort to me and I'm sure many other Londoners trying to return to normality.

I was visited by an anti-terrorist squad officer at home on the second Sunday after the bombings and once again cannot praise him enough. Not only in his treatment of me in taking my statement in a professional and yet personal way, leaving no detail undocumented but just in his sheer dedication to his job and his duty which you couldn't help but notice during his visit. It was a Sunday afternoon, he had a wife and children and hadn't seen them since the 7th July but he was off to another 2 interviews because that is what he does.

To think, we had a number of police in Scotland for the G8 summit and yet the police and the other emergency services covered 4 major incidents in London and in my view they didn't just cope with it they handled it a manner that we should all be very proud of and that undoubtedly saved lives.

I cannot praise the services enough and I honestly believe that their ability to respond and act in such an effective way saved lives and ensured calm in a city that had been attacked by cowards and terrorists.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any further comments.

Louise

I am extremely fortunate that I was not injured and I have no lasting effects from the bomb at Edgware Road of which I am aware. I recognise that may change but I do not feel the need to seek help right now.

As to communications, I have a little to offer.

Communication by train and LUL staff was good, given the circumstances and shock. The messages were few but we knew what they intended and we were off the train really quite quickly.

I was able to leave Edgware Rd station after the bomb without any attempt to record my presence. I spoke to a police officer who had no idea if I should leave my name with anyone. Others were busy with the injured and distressed. So I left.

I spent the day in the Quaker centre at Euston largely because I could not get to Kings Cross to get a train home. There was no information available at the centre (but they do a reasonable lunch and were very kind).

After lunch I walked to Finsbury Park to try to get a train. Still no information about transport from police in the street and no obvious other source until I got to a BR station where the staff were very helpful. I followed the labels and maps on bus stops to find my way.

I was completely unable to contact my family as mobile networks were down or completely congested. If I had, my wife could have informed me about travel from the TV news bulletins that were continuous and/or the internet. I had little interest in the details of the actual incidents as I knew I would hear the news at home eventually. I just wanted to know what transport was running and from where. I was very relieved that BR trains were running from Finsbury Park. Given the potential for chaos, that was an achievement.

After the event I contacted the police, not because of any appeal (was there one?) but because the news of the bomb at Edgware Road consistently gave the wrong time for the explosion and I wanted to be sure the police had a more reasonable estimate.

I received a letter from the police last week about ongoing support. Must admit I took little notice.

Peter

A journey to work – Thursday 7 July 2005

This began as an ordinary day with the alarm at 6.20am reminding me that London was my destination to attend discussions on the launch of a new teacher training qualification at the headquarters of City and Guilds. Breakfast over with I left by car for the short journey to Reading to park and walk along the towpath to the station where I boarded the 7.57 to Paddington. On arrival I rang my wife to gloat that as I was early I was having a coffee at Costa's before going on to Farringdon Station for the short walk to Giltspur Street.

As I descended the stairs to the underground along with so many others I had no idea how my life and those of others was about to change. The first train eastbound was for Edgware road only so I waited for the second train in 4 minutes. It arrived and was crowded, so much the norm for this time of the day. No seats I held onto the ceiling bars and the train left.

Half a minute later there was the loudest bang I have ever heard and our train came to a halt immediately, all lights went out and people fell forward to the floor with the abrupt braking. At the same time there was the sound of showering glass, metal scraping and the carriage began to fill with acrid smoke and dust. I was frightened for my life in a way I have never before felt, my heart was in my mouth and all around me was great panic.

In just a few seconds the train tannoy asked people to remain calm and to open the windows between carriages to allow air into the carriage. This further increased the

black atmosphere and allowed me to hear the screams of those opposite where I stood; they had been at the heart of the explosion. This sound goes very deep into your mind and triggered a response in me to get to them and begin to help to do what I could to save lives. I moved to the doorway with 2 other men and we saw a man trying to get into our train from the track, he was covered from head to foot in blood. I asked him if I could check his leg for damage as he had somehow got his foot into a narrow gap between the double doors.

In checking his leg it became very clear we were caught up in something very frightening and potentially life threatening to many. I told him to move back into his carriage as we needed to break the glass in the door to gain access. We tried to use the fire extinguisher for this but it bounced off the glass but we did find a metal bar in a storage cupboard and having herded people away from the area smashed the window and I climbed out into the darkness of the track and the bombed out train.

It is both very painful and incredible to even think of describing the low lit scene that I entered at this moment. At no time was I thinking about me or my own safety as people were dead or dying and I had to do whatever I could to relieve their pain and suffering. The scars that this act of mine created in me could not have been any different. I care too much for life itself to ever hesitate to preserve the lives of those around me. To retell in detail so much suffering may well be important as part of the forensic leads needed to help re-construct what happened but it is extremely painful to keep re-living this time each and every night since the 7 July 2005.

Why am I driven to write this down at all? Is it some aspect of cleansing my mind of the horror in the vain hope that having said it all I will start to rebuild my life? Can it be helpful to others to see that an ordinary man can offer so much to others especially when it really matters? The ripples of pain go across not only my immediate family but far wider to the families across the entire world. Disbelief that it ever happened is cut short each day as the enormity of the psychological battle rages in my mind and destroys sleep so much needed to restore good health.

I feel no anger towards any one person; no hatred towards those who carried out this terrible act but only great shock that life is so easily taken from us under such awful circumstances. It goes to the very core of me and those around me. It challenges love, happiness and future planning of every day.

Without hesitation I helped a man to sit down, lean back and hold tightly the split above his eye to stem the flow of blood. There was still much crying and screaming but still hardly any light to see what I could do. A man was lying on the seat already dead in a pool of his own blood. No amount of first aid training was going to help him. The next victim I found in front of me on the floor and I noticed he had no shirt on as the force of the blast had torn clothing away. His left leg was badly torn and another man asked me what he could do to help. I said tie this tie higher up his leg and tighter than you ever have before to reduce the loss of blood.

My next experience was to respond to a man saying over and over again 'stay with us mate, stay with us. Help him please this man is dying.' What I saw was a man half in and half out of the train where the floor should have been, alive, breathing but in great distress. I told him my name and asked his but he did and could not respond. I climbed out of the remains of the carriage onto the track and the emergency lights had now come on in the tunnel. Did I think about the electricity to the track, the danger of a further explosion, fire or any other dangers? No of course not as my brain and hands

were busy trying to keep this man's heart pumping and checking his pulse and body damage. The man who had been standing still next to me was still saying, 'Stay with us mate they will come and get us soon.' As I worked to maintain a heart beat it soon became apparent that he was fading rapidly and died very quickly in my arms from massive injuries sustained this close to the centre of the blast. He fell down into my arms and I lowered him to the track and out of a sense of dignity closed his eyes.

This particular aspect of my life was and is a scar that has changed me forever. I have felt guilty for not being able to keep him alive but this has been replaced by the knowledge that I did all anyone could have done and he did not die alone.

As if all of this was not enough another loud scream had developed behind me outside the train by the wall of the tunnel. Here was a woman lying twisted on the rails amongst the debris of the carriage doors and glass with a young man at her feet. I went towards them and told her who I was and asked who she was. She told me her name was Alison and that her leg hurt a great deal. I asked her permission to check her injuries and she said yes and I made the decision to move her back onto the floor of the next part of the carriage as I still did not know what dangers were all around us. The young man Rob/Mark offered to help lift her with me and we did this causing further pain to Alison but it was necessary. She said, 'Please stay with me, Tim', and I said I would until I was told otherwise. She gripped my hand until it hurt and never once showed any signs of giving up. I tried to mop up the split blood and move the glass away from us, all the while re-assuring her that the services would be on their way. There was no sense of time only heightened senses of smell, sight and sound.

The first to arrive was a team of paramedics, firemen and police. How grateful I felt for their arrival. Lisa a young paramedic was shocked by what she now saw but we worked together to re-assess and re-assure Alison that it would all get better from here. Sparing the details of what we did we got her onto a scoop stretcher and as team took her out of the carriages along the track and onto Edgware road station where we were put straight into an ambulance heading for St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. This was my first sight of the reason for our pain and suffering as there were so many armed police and specialist teams at the station that this was no ordinary train crash.

The next few hours were handled by the staff assembled at the hospital and they gave Alison every possible source of help and analysis to ease her pain and settle her ready for surgery. I stayed with her throughout and I was checked for any serious damage also.

This could go on and on but I need to know for myself that all of my current pain and confusion and changed life has been worthwhile. My wife Judy has suffered because the rock on which she rests has been shaken and changed. Our children have suffered anxieties they did not really deserve. People tell me that I have been a hero for helping and saving lives and although I know this to be true I have yet to feel good about much. My family also helped to re-assure me that they were there for me, my sister and her partner have visited from Wales, not to see for themselves the negative state I am in but to share their positive love to aid my recovery.

So many cards, so many best wishes for the future, all tinged with an air of hope that the Tim they all knew will return one day to be stronger and better for all of this horrid experience.

As a teacher of many years I have always believed in learning new things and teaching others to see the world as a very dynamic opportunity to be enjoyed. So many people I have helped and the hardest help to offer is to myself. There are many lessons to be learned from horror and I would urge everyone to think about first aid training, gain an understanding of what to do even if you like me think you will never need it. Fear of the dark will subside, fear of the dreams may fade, but what remains strong in my heart is that I would and could not have done anything any different that day. I worry about the future and the longer term damage as above anyone else I know myself best. Life has thrown some cruel things and some hard issues my way so far but I fear this to be the greatest challenge to what may be seen as normality for me and those that I love.

Tim (see also transcript of 23 March meeting)

My husband was in the front carriage of the Edgware Road bomb – he was cut by flying glass but it was fairly minor.

Why I'm writing though is about the reporting to the Terrorist hotline, just so that next time the information isn't lost.

My husband, Keith, was intending to catch a train from Paddington to Reading at 9.15am, and got on the Tube at about 8.42. The bomb went off around 8.50, he was evacuated and stayed to help a paramedic and rang me at 10.00a.m. after over an hour had passed. For several days we heard that the bomb had exploded at around 9.17am, which is when the emergency services were notified – but we knew it was earlier (you know if you're trying to catch another train, whether you're going to be late or not).

We rang the Terrorist hotline and they were rather dismissive of the idea that it was at 8.50 – but later on they announced that this was the time.

My point is – maybe someone should have noted down the time difference when we reported it, because 30 minutes must make a difference to what the security cameras are showing. We weren't the only people reporting it, I saw it in the press too.

I'm not meaning to criticise at all, it was a first time for all of us, but the timing was definitely wrong and we wanted to correct the facts when the investigation was at its height.

Susan

Kings Cross Passenger - Carriage 2

First and foremost I should like to commend the emergency services for all their hard work on the day. Under the circumstances the situation was handled very well. Whilst I appreciate the severity of the situation and the demands that were on officials that day, and in the months that followed, I think it is important to raise some examples of what was handled not so well so that we can learn from these mistakes should anything like this happen again.

The worst part of the day for me was the not knowing what had happened. Being stuck underground in hot temperatures not knowing whether you were going to be engulfed by a fireball/hit by the following train/electrocuted if you broke the doors and stepped on the track, this was the most fearful part. Due to the location of where the bomb exploded, it was not possible for the connecting carriages to communicate with the driver. I appreciate the intercom was devastated in the explosion and therefore prevented any communication. I would suggest measures were put in place to ensure passengers could be contacted at all times. Perhaps an intercom system on each carriage that links with an LU control room. I realise LU staff did not know what had happened either at this point but just to hear the reassuring voice of an official could have calmed the situation. Just to hear that someone knew we were down there, or that the other trains had been stopped could have eased the fear.

My contact details were taken on three occasions that day. The first time when the police boarded the buses to the Royal London Hospital, the second when I was admitted to the hospital ward and the third when I sorted out travel arrangements home. I was not asked for a statement by the police, nor did they contact me in the days that followed. After hearing that many people on our train had been visited by the police for information, on the 11th July, four days after the bombings, I decided to contact the local police station myself. This was a very stressful time, I kept re-living what had happened in my mind, did I have any information that could help? Why did they take the clothing from a passenger in carriage 6 when I was so close to the bomb? The fact that I couldn't speak with officers to raise these concerns certainly added to the stress of the situation.

The police were not the only ones who did not have my details. I was not on any of the authorities list of known victims. I had been missed off the lists of DCMS and in turn, did not receive an invite to the memorial service in November. Again, this resulted in me having to contact them for information. I did not receive any correspondence from the Trauma Centre that was set up in London, regardless of the fact that I live 50 miles outside London, it would have been nice to know that this sort of thing was available. As far as I am aware, nothing was set up for those that lived outside of London. I was certainly fearful of travelling to London again and could not face the journey to the city to receive counselling. It is only since Kings Cross United formed and information was posted on the site that I realised I could take part in a trauma assessment over the phone. If it was not for KCU I would not have known about compensation, the memorial service, trauma assessment or possible therapies. It was most upsetting to think I had fallen through the net when my details were taken twice.

The hospital staff on the Cambridge Ward were absolutely wonderful and clearly well trained for such an event. They helped to contact my parents and searched the grounds for a relative who had walked across London to find me. This was very important to me as it was terrifying being left with your thoughts as people around you lay so very badly injured. My only negative comment would be the lack of information about travel arrangements for victims when leaving the hospital. I was discharged in the evening and allowed to walk straight into the hands of the media at the gates. After searching the streets for taxis I decided to return to the hospital. Eventually I came across a room that had been set up to help people with travel arrangements. This was dealt with in a very efficient manner and I was in an ambulance to the outskirts of London within 20 minutes, here I was collected by relatives.

Finally, It may be an idea to introduce some kind of health checks for those still suffering chest problems. Although I have been assured by my GP that my asthma is normal under the circumstances, does anyone really know what we inhaled in that tunnel? I would be interested to know if there could be any long-term effects. Again, this lack of communication with health authorities adds to the stress and worry we experienced on that day.

Louise

I was in the 2nd coach of the Kings Cross train and was fortunate that I was not physically injured on the day. Unlike other people, I have no particular faults to find with operations on the day - staff on hand at Kings cross were extremely helpful and dealt with the unfolding situation extremely well I felt.

I was taken by bus to the Whitechapel hospital and again, was seen relatively quickly by a doctor. Granted, we spent lots of time hanging around at both kings cross and the hospital, but that was hardly surprising given the way that events were unfolding in front of us all. If anything, it was reassuring that I did not need immediate medical attention and I remember commenting that it was right that the most seriously injured were seen to as priorities, as anyone would expect.

My real comments and criticisms would have to be at the level of after-care which we received (or in my case didn't receive). Whilst at the hospital, I gave my name and address to numerous people, including the police, Tower Hamlets Council and the hospital authorities several times over. The police contacted me immediately and actually came to my home to take a statement on 10 July. I did not hear from the other agencies.

I phoned the 7 July assistance centre soon after the events and was told that I was welcome to attend the centre for a one-off counselling session. There was no comprehension of the fact that I was terrified of travelling into central London - they may as well have asked me to go to the moon at that point for counselling, as I was incapable of making a journey across London by tube (I live in the suburbs of north London). I spoke to my GP and he referred me for counselling, but my first appointment did not come through until the end of September - almost 3 months after the events! In the end, my employer arranged and paid for me to have counselling, starting in August when I was at my lowest point (I have only just finished these sessions which my employer generously sorted out for me). Although I am very grateful to my employer for intervening and providing me with the support I desperately needed, I would argue that this was not their responsibility and that more could and should have been done to ensure that the victims received the support they needed quickly, close to their homes if necessary and provided by the government.

A fellow survivor told me recently that she had received a letter from the NHS Trauma unit which has been set up for victims. I had not heard from them and asked my friend to send me a copy of the letter. When I later contacted them, they advised me that my details were listed on their database but that they had been notified that I was being treated locally. As a result, they did not bother to contact me. However, they are also monitoring the effects of 7/7 on victim's children and as a mother, that is something which is important to me.

My view is that I would much rather feel that I was "in the system" and that I could make choices about which services I wanted to take advantage of, rather than someone else making decisions for me about what I need.

Finally, I have just received a letter from Tessa Jowell inviting me to attend a survivors meeting in May, along with recognition of the difficult times I have been through. This letter expressing sympathy to the victims should have been sent months ago, not nearly 9 months after the events.

I do hope that these few comments may prove useful and that lessons can be learned to ensure that any future victims can feel that there is a support network in place to help them to rebuild their lives.

Pauline

On 7th July I was on the Piccadilly Line between King's Cross and Russell Square, carriage 3. My view is based upon improving communication should anything similar happen in the future.

Communication With Survivors

After survivors left the train at Kings Cross Station hundreds were allowed to just wander off. It may have been useful to have some media coverage the following day to ask every passenger who was involved to contact a special telephone number. This may have made easier the difficult job the police had to do by contacting everyone.

Health Advice

At King's Cross Station, on the bus and indeed upon arrival at The Royal London Hospital bottles of water were handed out to everyone. I feel it would have been beneficial if everyone had rinsed their mouths out first (possible eyes too) and if possible brushed their teeth as I for one had so much soot and smoke in my mouth any by drinking the water I was just flushing the soot and smoke down me.

Upon exiting King's Cross Station there was one ambulance in attendance. I went over with the passenger I was sitting next to and requested that we should get our lungs checked out. The paramedic asked me how many people were 'down there', I replied 'hundreds'. He went on to tell me that he was going to call in a major incident and triage everyone. I never saw him again and my fellow passenger and myself helped another lady and actually sat in the back of this ambulance waiting for crew to return. Eventually we all transferred to a waiting red bus.

It would have been good if the paramedic had in fact triaged everyone as there would have been some organisation instead of at least 45 minutes chaos and hundreds of people walking away dazed.

My last criticism is with some hesitation as I appreciate it was a very difficult situation.

Deborah

On the morning of 7 July 2005, I left for work as usual like any other day. I work at the Local Government Information Unit situated on 22 Upper Woburn Place, and I reached Euston station just before 9am that day.

I was completely unaware of the horrific events that were occurring or had already occurred on the London Underground system at that time, and walked to work from the station as usual.

When I got in, I sat at my desk and started going through the morning emails, and planning my tasks for the day ahead. Around half an hour later I heard an incredible bang and for that moment I had no concept of what had happened just yards away from the door of my office building.

Seconds later, the receptionist came into my office in a state of panic. She was saying there had been a bomb outside on a bus, I was hearing the words but couldn't make sense of it, or couldn't quite believe it.

I left her with a colleague and went outside to see for myself, the streets were like something out of a movie, with people screaming and running everywhere. I could see the bus clearly in front of me, it was cracked open like an oyster shell, but I just couldn't believe or didn't want to believe that this could be or was a terrorist attack.

I went back in the building, by this point wounded and shaken members of the public were coming into my building seeking refuge and wanting to call their loved ones to let them know they were ok. Myself and another colleague switched our efforts to trying to help these people in any way possible. My feelings then, were so strange - I wasn't scared, because I didn't feel there was time to be. I just wanted to do anything I could to help people around me and members of the public that had come into the building. It was only after the event, that I allowed myself to truly understand and learn to accept what was happening in these brief moments of chaos.

After this initial panic had calmed and the police, ambulances and other emergency services were on the scene (which felt almost immediate) all the staff and members of the public that had wandered into the building were ordered to stay inside until we were told it was safe to leave.

Most people spent the day crowded around a television in the staff room desperate for news of what had caused the events outside, we kept looking at each other and shaking our heads, and saying it couldn't be terrorism could it - almost hoping there was another explanation that wasn't so awful. As news came through of the other attacks on the underground, we realised the true horror of the situation. For me, my feelings of disbelief subsided and I just felt shocked that this was actually happening.

We all waited to be let out of the building all day. It seemed like forever, but there were lots of police outside who were in close contact and explained that they did not want to let us out of the building until they knew it was safe to do so, and that we would not harm any investigative work by coming out, (ie disturb forensic evidence).

I cannot praise the emergency services enough, they were absolutely outstanding. They seemed like they were there immediately and were so so so helpful. Any criticisms I have would only be that we were in our building for such a long time, and it was unclear at the time when we would be let out...and that made me feel rather anxious. However,

policemen were close at hand and able to explain what was happening and why which helped a lot, and under the circumstances I think that holding members of the public in the building was actually the right thing to do. Around 4.30/5pm we asked a policeman again if we could all leave. They said it would be ok, as long as we all left at the same time and left contact details in case of any further enquiries they might have. We all assembled our things and made our way to a back exit of the building. Two policeman were waiting at the exit, they took our details and we were escorted by another officer off Upper Woburn Place in the direction of Euston station, after which we all made our way home.

It was just such an incredible day, I still feel a weird sick feeling when I think or talk about that day, it was just so horrific. I cannot thank the police, ambulance and other emergency services enough for their work that day.

I want to add that as a Muslim, I still feel sick and disgusted that these attacks were committed in the name of Islam. It's something a lot of Muslims have said since the attacks on 7 July, and somehow it doesn't seem enough to simply condemn, but condemnation is the first step on a long road to ridding the world of these silent killers and we will all need to make that journey together.

Faiza

I was in the next carriage, approx. 50 ft away from, the explosion at Aldgate. Luckily, I did not have any physical injuries. Once I had been directed away from the incident I was left, somewhat shocked by the events, not knowing how to get home.

I think that mainline train services unaffected by the incidents should have been restored much more quickly.

Dave

I had just come up to the H&C/Circle/Met eastbound platform at Liverpool Street from the Central Line. It's funny the things you remember, because I can still clearly see the Central Line platform clock saying 08:49 as I left it to go up the escalators. It took me just over one minute to walk to the H&C platform, where I would want to get the H&C to Aldgate East (only one stop, but I was feeling lazy!). As I got on the platform I knew a Circle Line train must have just left, because the platform was virtually empty - the Circle Line trains are always the most popular there, so you can always tell when one's due or just gone.

I walked onto the platform, turned right and walked a couple of paces. I was reading a book, so opened it to read a couple more pages before Aldgate East, and suddenly the lights all dimmed, and it all went weirdly quiet - this happened literally a split second before there was this loud, sharp bang. Your mind just had time to register that the lights and sound had changed in the area, and then the bang. I can still hear that 'bang' in my head, if I think about that day. There must have been about 20 of us on the platform, along the full length of it, so no one was standing particularly close to each other. I have a vague memory of us all looking up, standing stock still, brains obviously trying to compute what was going on. I remember feeling really calm for an instant, and then suddenly this horrible feeling crept through me - it sounds

melodramatic, but honestly, it was like some instinct in me knew something was terribly wrong, but it hadn't yet reached my brain. I don't know how long I stood still, I think I even picked up my book again briefly, but then something in me told me to run, and as I turned, I heard someone scream from somewhere down the platform (down at Aldgate itself?) and then the next thing I knew I was running with all these other people back out towards the ticket barriers.

As we ran out, LU staff came running towards us, shouting "what is it, what's happened?" and someone shouted "an explosion" but even before that exchange of words could finish, someone else on the LU staff just hit the emergency button and the barriers flung open and we all sprinted out. I was so impressed with the speed of their reaction - they just didn't hesitate to get us all out straight away - they didn't know what was going on, but they just knew to follow procedure. The strange thing was though, as we all pelted out of the underground bit of the station, loads more people were trying to come through from the mainline bits, and I remember thinking (but not being able to vocalise) that they should be stopped and the whole station should be evacuated.

In my gut I knew it was a bomb - I've heard a few IRA bombs go off in my time in London, back in the 90's, so I knew what they sounded like. I thought I was being ridiculous, but I knew deep down that's what it was. I ran out of the station into a totally normal street, which was just so bizarre. My heart was just thumping, and I rang my partner to say what had happened as I walked to the office. I then called the office to tell them to contact all the people who were coming into the mainline Liverpool Street station, to warn them that the station was being evacuated (because I assumed that's what would have happened), but was a bit surprised when I got to the office to discover that the main station hadn't been closed, and everyone was still allowed to walk through etc.

I breathlessly explained to my colleagues what had happened, and they got me a cup of tea to calm me down! Then we all got on the Internet. When they originally said it was power surges I was relieved, although I wasn't 100% convinced, but I wondered if that was just because of the shock it had given me. I had just about calmed down, and convinced myself that it really was power surges, when suddenly news came in about the No 30 bus, and then suddenly it all just crashed down again, and I was in a bit of a state. Of course, they 'locked' us in to our office for most of the rest of the day, because we were so close to the cordon that got thrown up around the city, and that just made it worse, because I just wanted to get home to my partner etc. I finally got to her sister's place in Kingston at about 6pm that night, after walking to Waterloo to catch a mainline train. The whole day was just so surreal - the real shock didn't hit me til Friday, when suddenly I couldn't stop crying because I realised just how close I'd been, and how lucky I was to have been that all-important 30 seconds away from that train.

I think the emergency services were outstanding on that day - I'll be honest, I don't normally have a lot of respect for our police, but they went up in my estimation that day. Even though no one really knew what was going on, they all just kicked in to action, assumed the worst-case scenario (which it transpired it was), and got things shut down and organised. And I think Londoners reacted well, also, although it's such a shame about the bigotry and suspicion that followed - for a few days we were united, just as human beings, and then it all fell apart again....

Since then I have finally become less nervous of travelling on the tube again - for weeks afterwards I wouldn't go near the Central Line, because I had this idea that if something else happened, I wanted to be on a line that wasn't so deep underground, so I switched to the District. It takes me longer but it keeps me calmer. I still mostly use the District, but sometimes now use the Central, and only occasionally get nervous about where I am when we're on those deep sections under the West End. It worries me that it was so easy for those men to do what they did, and that security seems to be non-existent again - when the police were out in their show of force, it felt much better, even though that's really not a good way to live. But I'm intelligent enough to know that policing the tube 24/7 is not feasible, and if these people want to commit these hideous acts, they'll find a way to work round that anyway - it probably wouldn't be our police's fault if they did, it would just show how utterly conscience-less the terrorists are, and how they would not allow anything to get in their way. I really don't know what we as decent human beings can ever do about that.

Angela

I drove to Enfield from Muswell Hill at some time after 9am and the first awareness I had of a problem was when I heard over the car radio an announcement that within the past half hour there had been a power surge on the underground, forcing the evacuation of a station. A little while later at my destination, someone remarked he heard that a bus had caught fire and we all agreed that it must have been one of the new concertina buses which seem prone to bursting into flames.

My phone was switched off for over two hours thereafter and the first hint I had of the gravity of the incident came in the form of a text message from one of my sons informing me that "we are all OK", which I found when I accessed my phone. This made no sense to me until I turned my car radio back on and heard that there had been a bombing. I rang my husband straight away and he told me he was home -- having been on a bus which had reached Camden before being turned back -- and that Jamie, my oldest son who had cycled to town was at his place of work in King's College in The Strand. Apparently Jamie went through Tavistock Square ahead of the bus bomb by about five minutes. Subsequently, my son arrived home very late. He spent much time cycling up and down side roads trying to find a way out of London, all the main east-west roads having been blocked off. Four-wheeled traffic was in a worse state. It would have been quite dangerous had there been another attack on the jammed-up traffic at the one or two points into which they were being funnelled.

I do not believe that at even the earliest stages of the disaster either the police or the Underground services thought there had been a power surge. It is obvious that from the start someone was deliberately lying about the incident. I cannot think why, this is certainly not a matter that could have been kept secret. It does not give me any confidence in future such announcements.

Also, from the evidence of letters in local and national papers, it became evident that hotels were charging higher rates for people stranded by the disaster, which I consider appalling. Even worse, was the premium-rate telephone line set up by the police. Surely worried Londoners should have had access to information about their relatives without incurring high phone charges? My husband, an Israeli, was shocked at the way both bombing victims and their relatives have been treated.

Although much has been made of the fighting spirit of individual Londoners in the face of such an attack, the administrative handling of it -- from available information, the disorganisation of the evacuation and the total lack of care, support and feeding of stranded workers who were forced to stay in town -- was abysmal.

Lydia

On the 6th July we are all holding hands fingers crossed as we waited anxiously for the result of the London 2012. We are heavily involved with this as they will be using our coastal waters here in Weymouth and Portland and of course by now you all know the result, so we are jumping up and down on this great fantastic achievement for London and for us down here in Dorchester, as we are now an Olympic Town.

Then the next day wham, who ever would have thought that one day on we would all be thinking of friends and colleagues and their safety, and again two weeks before all this had happened we are up there on the 25th June and we won two big awards for marketing and marketing excellence, a lot of our contacts from magazines and interviews that we contribute to were there and of course work and live there, so we are now really anxious and worried.

So I took the initiative and I phoned around all our friends and contacts, our first concern was that they were all okay when they said yes we talked to them every half hour on our news, and kept the people in Dorchester here informed indeed as they had children and friends travelling to London that day, my own husband John was on the train to London to go to a meeting and was phoned by another friend to get off the train (by pure chance he was running late that day and got the later train) John was stuck in between Poole and Dorchester as the police jumped on the train and interviewed everybody on there, the doors were locked with no one allowed in or out.

Joss

Information: First I heard of it was when I got a phone call from a colleague who lives in Essex and wanted to know which bus to get in to work from Liverpool Street. He said it looked like something pretty serious had happened. I was on a number 19 bus into work at the time. I then saw lots of police vans speeding through Holborn, and the thought of an attack vaguely crossed my mind, but not seriously, as there are often alerts. I then got a text message from my colleague who subscribes to Sky News bulletins stating a power surge on the underground. We thought this sounded slightly suspicious. Colleagues coming in to Kings Cross from Leeds then stated problems with closed tube lines and asked for info for how to get to the office from there – we advised on buses, but thankfully they walked. The mobile phone system then went down. I had just managed to call my mum by this point to say I was okay. The reports of the “buses” exploding made it more serious. We used internet sites to try to find out what was going on. Sky News was on the only site with much up to date news. The BBC website was very slow. Text messages came into colleagues with various reports of more explosions that had been heard of. Relatives were calling up the landline of our office to check employees were okay. An HR manager did an audit of all staff to check on everyone – a few people were missing for a couple of hours, and mobile phones

being down didn't help. We had a number of meetings in our office that day with colleagues visiting from around the country, so the task was not easy.

We read on the Home Office emergency / terrorist website about the guidance on staying indoors etc. Various reports about tanks on the streets of Covent Garden didn't help. People were quite nervous and closed blinds in case of bombs near the office. We had a radio on, which gave fairly up-to-date information, and then watched News TV for statements from Sir Ian Blair and Tony Blair. At around 3pm we were told it was okay to go home. For some people this involved buying new shoes to replace high heels, and a long walk. Many were fearful of more attacks so didn't want to get on buses that operated out of Zone 1. It was unclear about which mainline stations were working, which caused problems for people returning home.

Overall – I think the main problem was the initial report of a power surge. If people knew about the terrorist attacks as soon as possible, they wouldn't have continued to get on the buses, and some may have turned round and gone home (to Leeds/Sheffield etc.) straight away. I don't know if this was deliberate – but I think better communication with the main media channels would have helped. We got the sense that the BBC might have been a bit cautious in the information that it was giving out, so as to prevent panic.

Lucy

My experiences on that fatal day may be of interest or useful as they illustrate how being in the midst of a terrible event can produce unexpected almost banal preoccupations. It shows the need for information to be given out to routine hospital attendees so their presence does not interfere with the handling of an emergency.

As luck would have it I had a routine check up appointment, to see an orthopaedic surgeon after foot surgery, in the fracture clinic which is next to the A&E section at the new UCH building, at 10am on July 7th.

To get there I was bicycling behind and round Kings X station about 9.30AM and heard the bus bomb go off as I passed Southampton Row's junction with Euston Rd.

As a cyclist I was isolated from information. I had seen a swaying man, with a blackened half of his rather florid face as I went along Goods Way. I took him to be drunk as he had a bottle. I wondered why he was only dirty on one side of his face. In retrospect he may have been shell-shocked after escaping from the tube.

I saw all the evacuated crowds in the road between St Pancras and Kings X, and with fellow cyclists had some difficulty weaving through them. I thought they were rush hour crowds, and wondered why there were so many in the road rather than on the pavement. It wasn't till I got to the Euston Rd and asked the policeman directing traffic what was going on, that I learnt that there had been an explosion at King's X but I did not know it was a terrorist attack. I assumed it could have been a works explosion, and that the casualties would be taken to UCH. There didn't seem to be many ambulances at the station at that point, so I had no idea of the scale of the event. I knew nothing about the other bombs and that the hospital would be on emergency alert.

I had never been to the newly opened UC hospital wing. My first preoccupation was where to tie up my bike. There didn't seem to be any bike racks, and I was afraid that people would take it away in case it was full of semtex explosives if I tied it up to the nearest railing. In any case there were so many people on the pavements that the bike might cause an obstruction sticking out from railings. In the end I did tie it to the hospital stair rail and informed the doorman.

My next 'problem' was that my entry to the fracture clinic was barred because it required access through the dedicated A&E entrance. Mindful of all the dire sanctions if one misses a hospital appointment, I was anxious to register the fact that I had tried to keep the appointment. There was a barrage of computers being manned in the main hospital lobby but it wasn't clear if they were there all the time or just because of the emergency. They, and the rest of the hospital staff who were behind a red tape, seemed to be waiting for instructions and couldn't tell me what to do. I even went up to the first floor in the hope that I would find someone with a computer to register that I had tried to keep my appointment! That clinic didn't seem to know what was going on either. There was nothing to indicate that the hospital was on emergency alert.

I mentioned to one of the waiting chaplains that I thought it would be helpful if they put up a noticeboard explaining that no routine clinics would be held, that those attending would automatically be given another appointment later, and please would we all go away as quickly as possible. I think the Chaplain thought my idea was good and would mention it for future incidents.

After hanging around for 10 minutes wondering what to do I cycled home via Camden Town, to avoid Kings X. There seemed to be an awful lot of diverted traffic which made the going difficult, and there was an incident tape round Mornington Crescent tube. This made me wonder what else was going on, and I stopped to look at the newsflashes on a screen in a TV shop. But it wasn't till I got home and turned on the TV that I discovered the full horror of what I had been in the middle of.

I hope this is of some use to you for future planning, even if my preoccupations at the time sound ridiculously trivial in the face of such a terrible event.

Lisa

On 7 July I was in our office in Brick Lane. I was running a training event for new members of staff. My first knowledge that something had happened was around 9am. I was told by a colleague that there had been an electricity surge on the underground and there were casualties. Some of my delegates had not arrived and concerns were being raised about their safety. By 9.15 it was clear from radio reports that there had a number of explosions. At one point they thought there had been 6. By 9.25 I contacted my parents to say I was safe. However, they were completely unaware of the situation as they were having a cream tea in Yorkshire!

I checked that my partner was safe as she works near Russell Square. They were told not to leave the building. My company's HR team telephoned all our London Offices to check that people were safe. I was very impressed at how quickly this happened. A decision was taken that our office in Brick lane would close and staff could return home. This was because many lived in the area and had friends and family to contact.

I decided to meet my sister-in-law's work place in Old Street. I got a bit lost and had to trek round the city. This was strange as most of the roads had been cordoned off. There was a strange eeriness about the place. What I thought was strange was that the pubs and bars were heaving and people were laughing and joking. It was the atmosphere you get when England are playing during the week and people are leaving work early to watch the game.

My partner was still told not to leave the building and she was getting worried how she would get home. My company managed to get accommodation for me only 200 yards from my partner's office. This meant I had walk from Old Street to Tottenham Court Road. This was strange I was walking against the crowd. There were thousands of people making the way out of the city. There was a clear sense of unity. I was fortunate enough not get directly caught up in the bombings. However, I was saddened to hear one of my old colleagues had lost his partner on the bus bombing.

I thought the emergency services did a fantastic job. There was a sense of calm. However if all the explosions had taken place above the ground it would have created more panic for the public and services and naturally there would have been more casualties and disruption.

Carlo

As part of our work experience we were a group of trainee probation officers who were to go to London and observe a parole board hearing. I recall that but for the fact that my two colleagues lived in Northampton I would have no doubt caught the train from Wellingborough, possibly the same train that would have four complete strangers join at Luton. Nevertheless I parked my car outside Northampton train station and met up with my colleagues and boarded the 7.45ish train to London-Euston. I had planned ahead a little and browsed the internet the night before and located our final destination that looked like a group of offices on the north bank of the Thames opposite Lambeth Bridge. More by luck than judgement we caught the Northern line train going south, our tube destination Embankment. Had we planned more accurately we should have boarded at King's Cross and headed towards Green Park, changed for the Jubilee Line and got off at Westminster.

I recall the lights flickering as we entered the tube system on the Northern line, so the story we heard over the announcements seemed quite plausible that there were electrical faults on the tube service. I remember my two colleagues boarding a tube train and I indicated that I would catch the next one as it was so crowded. Once I got off the train I caught up with my colleagues and we realised that we had some way to walk if we were to arrive on time for the parole board hearing. I recall that as we walked the sound of London was pierced by the sound of sirens I guessed that the Police would be busy that day and paid no more attention to it.

Eventually we reached our destination and were shown to the room where we would be observing hearings for that day. We were introduced to a very relaxed gentleman who briefed us about what to expect that morning. Some ten minutes later another board member arrived and we indulged in conversation. things were a little odd as the board chair was late arriving. We did not know this but by this time much of the mobile

network was down. Nevertheless the bespectacled gentleman who arrived, folding his bicycle looked rather worst for wear. He then proceeded to explain the reason for his late arrival. There had been an explosion at Kings Cross, he had witnessed pandemonium with walking wounded. He spoke with sadness and respect for those who had obviously suffered greater trauma than himself yet at the same time acknowledged his own humanity. I asked to be excused once the chair had explained what had happened. I went out into the corridor and made a telephone call on my mobile phone – fortunately I was able to make calls to landline phones and tried to call my wife, who was on the phone. I then called my mother and just said to her that I was all right and could she get a message to Jo. My mother was a little bewildered by this and I began to explain that there had been an accident, an explosion of some sort and this call was just to reassure everyone that I was OK, perhaps if she turned on the news? Once I had returned to the hearings we spent the next two hours going through the five cases that we were to observe. The business of the day was to continue, though my thoughts were elsewhere.. However the board chair was kind enough to let us go once we had heard all the cases. He explained that we might find it difficult to get home, that if we left it any later no doubt it would be impossible.

As we left we speculated about the facts, explosions, sirens, the flicker of light on the underground that we all noticed. We walked towards Trafalgar Square, as we passed the House of Commons we noticed large black Jags with sirens pull into the security gate at one of the entrances, the armed policemen were more noticeable, such things are when one's adrenalin was running high. Yes I admit we were excited by the noise, the atmosphere was electric yet at the same time there was no sense of panic just urgency. We all tried our respective phones, mine was the only one that worked so I let my colleagues use it to try and contact their loved ones.

As we walked towards Trafalgar Square we stopped off in one of the bars and as we sat there drinking one of my colleagues was able to access the internet. The news came flooding in. Suspected bombs had gone off all over London, tube stations, a bus, casualties, deaths... That would explain why there were no buses running. We speculated too, what if we had caught another train and gone to Kings Cross? We knew one of the explosions had gone off there, then the terrorist threat, what was Al Qaeda's pattern? None of us knew for sure, what we did know was how do we get out of a city that had no transport system?

After we left the bar we walked, we asked directions, we got lost, we got wet. A man noticed our plight as we passed and offered his spare umbrella to one of my colleagues, it was gratefully received. We were lost amidst the larger than usual crowds of pedestrians on the street. As we turned briefly into Oxford Street, one of my colleagues tried to use their mobile and managed to contact her brother, he relayed a story of how their sister on hearing the news from the previous day and ignorant of the news of this day had said to workmates in her office "Isn't it great news about London?" So much for yesterday's papers. Eventually we got through to our office in Northampton and spoke to colleagues therein. Graeme spoke to me explaining that the Chief had agreed to fund an overnight stay in London, not the Hilton mind. We were buoyed on by the prospect of staying the night, all expenses paid in a reasonable hotel, we were grateful that it was not to be probation hostel.

As we made our way to Euston Road, we turned a corner and eventually we noticed the yellow tape across the road, we approached looking for a way around, we recognised that in contrast to the blaring sirens around parliament was the silence around Kings

Cross...

We walked down Judd Street and I was consumed by the silence of one of London's busiest thoroughfares. We turned and stared at what seemed perfectly normal on the surface but like a set for a science fiction film like "Day of the Triffids" except for the occasional ambulance that set off past the yellow tape and the accompanying Police presence. We stopped at a sandwich bar and contemplated our next move. We resolved to find out when Euston station would be open and I approached a man in uniform. he replied that Euston would be unlikely to be open today, probably the early hours. Our options were now to try the various hotels and at each one our choices faded away. Sorry no rooms but leave a mobile number and we will call you if the booking falls through. We were resigned to spend the night in London, walking the streets. We felt a little sorry for ourselves but that soon faded when we were reminded by more sirens that there were people worse off than us. After spending more time making phone calls we got news to our office that we were stuck. The reply was we will get you out somehow but how? There must be millions of people wanting to escape London tonight, short of an airlift we were stuck. We were grateful for the communication, someone cared about us.

At around 3.00pm we noticed movement towards Euston station, not panic but curiosity took us towards the station, the yellow tape fell away as groups of people were on the move. We walked into the station and looked anxiously at the digital images on the screens. Delayed...Delayed...Delayed...Northampton 3.30. We made our way to the platform, most of our fellow passengers to be, walked to the platform, perhaps not overly keen to board a potential terrorist target. Some ran, some always will. As we settled in our carriage we were overcome by a mixture of anxiety and fatigue. We all turned when someone ethnically different from ourselves boarded the train. The irrational thoughts and prejudices that had built up subconsciously entered our imaginations. They must have noticed.

It has occurred to me since 7/7 that it is ignorance of the facts that saw us through that day, the confusion, the anxiety and the excitement. Yet that same ignorance generates irrational fears perhaps those same fears which motivated the bombers, to this day I speculate to myself where that fourth bomber would have gone had he not been turned away from the tube at Euston, had he been ten minutes earlier, had I boarded the train at Wellingborough, had we boarded at King's Cross. Ignorance brought death to the city, and yet ignorance might have saved my life.

Gary

I work from home here in Purley, my girlfriend commutes by Southern railway to Victoria, then by District and Piccadilly lines to Sudbury Hill.

I spotted an item about 'explosions' on the London Underground on the internet. I quickly rang her office to check she was OK, and found that she was.

My girlfriend was due to leave work early that day at noon for a meeting with our bank manager here in Purley. We knew by then that the Underground was closed but thought she could get a bus to Wembley then a train via Kensington Olympia to Clapham Junction and from there home to Purley. Unfortunately, the trains to Clapham were also off.

She got on another bus, this time to Golders Green. There she was told that no buses were going into zone I or II. She tried queuing for a taxi, but it was hopeless.

I was preparing to get into the car and somehow drive to Golders Green to collect her. Then the news came through that the buses were running into central London again and she eventually struggled through to Victoria and onto a train home. She finally made it home by about 7pm.

Given that there were problems in central London, surely some effort could have been made to keep the trains through Kensington Olympia working to allow people to avoid the area?

Chris

The only comment I have to make is that I was appalled that the emergency phone line for relatives making enquiries was an 0870 premium rate line - I believe it is normally either a free call or an 0845 number. As I understand it, an 0870 number also makes money for the organisation setting it up. In contrast I noticed that the number for information on suspects was indeed a freephone 0800 number, as one would expect. I believe this is part of the 'human' story on which you are seeking information. I should add that fortunately I had no reason to ring the 0870 number personally.

Jackie

I was at the office, at my desk when someone said there had been a bomb in central London. I went onto the internet and found it was true, my heart sank. My son in law travelled into central London daily and would have been arriving at Kings Cross. I called his mobile - no reply.

My daughter had recently given birth to our second grandchild and was coping not only with a new baby, but with post natal depression, and an energetic two year old. The last time I saw her, she was tired and worn out. I knew she would be frantic when she heard the news. I knew someone should be with her.

I tried several times to call my husband, who was at home, to tell him, so that he would go and be with our daughter, but I couldn't get through to him. I tried calling his mobile, but it was switched to messaging - I left a message. I tried to call my son in law's parents. No reply. I knew I must leave to be with her.

Then my daughter telephoned. She had heard the news on the radio whilst driving home from the supermarket with the children. She had tried to contact her husband without success. Called his office and was told he was not there. By the time she called me I could feel her fear. I immediately grabbed my car keys and left the office, ran to the car and tried to concentrate on sticking to the speed limits through the town and country - it was the longest drive I've ever driven.

I arrived at my daughter's house to find her sitting on the kitchen floor, breast feeding her baby, whilst at the same time on the telephone, again to her husband's office to ask

if he had arrived, her two year old standing with cupped hands under her chin catching her tears. It was the most heartbreaking sight. It was my grandson's 2nd birthday the following day. Normally a boisterous, energetic child, he knew something was wrong, and as I arrived, he very gently moved aside and stood quietly, holding her tears in his hands, as I tried to comfort his Mummy. After a while, my husband arrived, he'd only just heard the news. We all hugged and held each other tightly. Hoping.

I don't remember much about the next hour, it was filled with such fear and dread and despair and my little girl's tears. At 11.45 the telephone rang – it was her husband, my grandchildren's father, my son in law. He was safe.

In response to your letter in the Richmond and Twickenham Times on Friday 21 October, I am writing to tell you about my experience of 7 July 2005. I am a primary school teacher and teach at St. John the Baptist School in Hampton Wick, LBRUT.

July 7th was a particularly unusual day at St John's anyway, as it was the final day of a full Ofsted Inspection. There was already an air of intense anticipation and tension in the school. I had arranged to take approximately sixty 7 and 8 year olds to Kingston College for the afternoon. Howard Farmer, a science teacher at the college and father of one of the children in my class had kindly offered to give the children a science show with lots of fizzes, bangs and optical illusions. We were to travel by public transport and consequently route inspectors for the 281 were deployed to come and accompany us en route. Confusion arose over the time of travel and therefore two inspectors arrived at 10.00am to escort us into Kingston. In fact we weren't travelling until 12 noon. It was these inspectors who informed us of the explosions in London. As a result staff members were alerted to the situation and began trying to contact family members who worked in London.

My own husband works in Kingston, but on 7th July had arranged a meeting in Bow. He had left a message on my mobile phone telling me that he was stuck on a tube outside West Kensington and that he was unsure what was going on. I was unable to contact him until much later. My headteacher's son was in Shepherd's Bush and unable to contact him. A colleague's girlfriend was in Holborn. He later went to 'rescue' her.

We found a news site on the internet and gathered as much information as we could. At around 11.00am it was limited, but we knew that there had been 3 tube explosions and a bomb on a bus. We felt a heightened sense of responsibility taking our youngest children on public transport not knowing whether the attacks were over and whether they were confined to Central London. We always carry out a risk assessment before taking the children on trips. I would never have dreamt that we should have to include 'death or injury as a result of a suicide bomb attack' as a potential risk. On 7 July it would have been appropriate to include such a risk.

My husband got off the tube safely and, although he was being persuaded to continue his journey into Bow by car, decided to re-schedule his meeting and return home. He walked to Hammersmith where he managed to catch train to Richmond and from there to Teddington.

The route 281 inspector returned to St John 's school around midday and escorted us all the way to Kingston College. He asked passengers to vacate the top of the double

decker bus which stopped at a regular bus stop on the Kingston Road, so that all 60 children could travel together. In Kingston, when we disembarked from the bus, he then stopped traffic to ensure the children crossed the roads safely. We were so grateful for his careful attention to the safety of the children, especially in light of what had happened in London.

On returning to school, I was informed that emergency measures were in place for those children whose parents might not turn up to collect them. Thankfully, we did not have to enforce these measures. All children were, happily, collected.

As the compartment filled with thick smoke and black soot the sound of crashing glass and screams for help broke through the silence and shattered lives. After two loud bangs, one after the other I had the thought that this might be the end of the line for me. I felt no panic or concern for myself except that I imagined what might happen next and I asked God for the strength to endure it. In my head and my spirit I heard the words "Are you ready?" 'Yes' was the answer although it seemed to come from some other place in me I was not aware of. I quietly wondered how my husband and children would hear the news and how they would feel. I imagined the funeral. I was praying continuously in the spirit under my breath even though other thoughts, pictures and feelings crowded in at the same time.

No one in my carriage was crying or screaming. There was no panic. Eerie silence enveloped us. People were crouched on the floor making the most of the air there, some tying handkerchiefs and scarves over their noses and mouths. One young man listening to other sounds through his headphones, reading the newspaper, appeared to be quite calm until I saw his hands and the paper shaking uncontrollably. I was almost outside of myself, a calm observer of the scene around me. Surreal is a word that comes to mind.

I knew within moments and with certainty that I was not going to die like this. This was NOT to be my end. There was a real sense of God's presence and the serene and mighty presence of angels round about me and in my carriage.

No longer concerned about my own safety I was able to shift my prayers to those who were desperately afraid, injured and dying alongside my carriage where the explosion had ripped through metal, brick and lives. Sharing water, chewing gum, tissues, speaking to this one and that one I waited in the smoke and soot for whatever was gong to happen next

I was thanking the Lord that the emergency lights were on, that the screaming had stopped, that the smoke didn't seem to be worsening, no ball of fire was hurtling through the train. After some time the voice of a London Transport person came over the loudspeaker, we were so relieved and reassured that someone 'in charge' was alive and able to help us. He said someone would be coming through to take us out to safety after the other train was evacuated and debris was removed from the front of our train. (I discovered much later that one bang had been the explosion and the second was our train slamming into the debris from the explosion onto our rails.) We were all filthy and hands and faces and clothes covered in a fine layer of soot. Chimney sweeps all.

What seemed like an age later we were told to 'be calm and line up single file and move slowly down the carriages'. As we passed by the other train were amazed and horrified at the damage and incredulous that we had been spared.

When I looked out through the back end of the train and at the tiny ladder we were to climb down, ahead in the dense blackness and stench of the tunnel was what seemed like a white shining necklace winding its way through pitch black towards the end of the tunnel where indeed we could see the light of the station in the distance. What relief! When I looked up I saw the white-gloved hands of transport staff and rescue workers holding out lamps towards us and onto the perilous path beneath us; hands of comfort and support and words of encouragement and direction. Here was a human chain of kindness that broke my heart. I began sobbing and shaking then and for a very long time afterwards. We were walked out, passed from hand to hand, voice to voice, lamp to lamp, along the perilous tracks, hunks of metal and wood, coal and stones, a hazardous, unpredictable path.

In that incredible gift of rescue and support, kind words and hope, my humbled and grateful soul poured out in floods of tears; I had survived. My life was restored.

In the aftermath of horror and recovery there are lessons on many levels to be learned for those of us looking for them and for ways to make sense of this disaster.

My personal epiphany has led me to two things in my prayer and reflection, in seeking God and hearing His voice.

'Are you ready?' the question so clearly in my head in that moment of post collision uncertainty is a question we don't often allow ourselves to think in the ordinary day to day of life. Was I ready? There were no other books to read, bible verses to learn, church services to go to, sick people to visit, tithes to give, dinners to cook, paycheques to collect. This was it. How was I going to live out the last moments of my life, what choices could I still make now? What regrets would I have over choices I hadn't made before?

Following 9/11 many of us around the world may have asked similar questions, including, what if it had been me? I was one of those and now here I was, caught up in some terror I had no knowledge of except what was real, in the here and now. Now, it IS me. As a regular commuter in London I had often imagined what this moment might be like, but the reality was a whole other horror story.

But I climbed out and walked free of injury into the London sky and fresh air. To carry on as before? Grateful but unchanged? I pray not.

So I ask you now, 'are you ready?' When you leave the safety of your home today to go on your way, your errands, your school run, your way to work, your grocery trip or visit to the gym, 'are you ready'? Do you know without a doubt that the everlasting arms of your creator and loving God are open to you, that He will show you the way and give you the strength and hope you need in the moment? In spite of the unpaid bills, unwashed clothes, things unsaid and undone, you are loved beyond belief and will be welcomed home? Knowing the amazing gift of grace and the freedom of salvation that comes in accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is the only 'blessed assurance' we can know. This experience for me has pushed me to a place I was hesitant to go before;

a place which can encourage those who don't know this assurance to seek it with all of their heart. We cant wait any longer, the moment is now.

Do the people in your life know that you love them? What would their last memories of you have been if you did not come back from work or shopping today? We are none of us perfect whilst we're here, but it's worth thinking about our leaving. I could have left this earth, this life on 7/7/05.

I will never know why others died on that day, why others were severely injured and maimed, why others are planning funerals or surgery and I am planning a holiday. Gratitude is not enough. Compassion is not enough. Action is required. A different me has emerged from the tunnel, walked a different path, seen horror and smelled death. I will not be the same again.

Since 7/7/05 the Lord in His gracious and gentle wisdom has reminded me that His word is 'a lamp to my feet and a light to my path' (Ps 119:105). I am not sure I know what the twists and turns of this new path will be, but I am expecting one. I know more truly now than ever before that even though the new path beneath my feet and ahead of me is perilous, like nothing I have ever imagined or would dare to tread again, he will shine His light on the path, give me angels to watch over me, guide me, and show me the safe place to put a sure foot and know there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

Are you ready?

I refer to your request for feedback on the events of 7/7.

Normally I would have been in the vicinity of two of the bombs as my travel terminus is Kings Cross and my work is at Fitzrovia/Tottenham Court Road. However, luckily, that morning I was at work early before 08.00 am.

Experience:

- Initial word-of-mouth news was that there had been terrorist bombs.
- BBC initial reports misleading - 'power surge'.
- The noises of sirens and helicopters all around outside.
- Lack of information as our local TV source was in a conference room
- My initial concern that 'dirty' chemical bombs had been used.
- People carrying on as normal - not wanting to believe what was potentially going on?
- Friends and relatives were very concerned when watching TV pictures, which we couldn't see!
- Staff check on anyone missing.
- When the conference in the TV room was interrupted to check that people were alright (they carried on oblivious to the sirens) the attendees laughed... They didn't when they saw the TV pictures.
- Sky News were faster to respond than the BBC.
- I worked late to miss the rush.
- Left work at 8.00pm, the streets were eerily deserted.
- The trains home were even more eerily deserted, full of rubbish due to the crowds leaving early.

Clive

I boarded the Victoria Line at Euston at about 9:00 and was told by staff that, due to a power surge, the escalators were not working and that we were to proceed the platform via the spiral staircase. This was obviously after the bombs had been detonated, but staff did not seem to be fully aware of the emergency.

When I arrived at Victoria, at about 9:20, we were again informed that, due to a power surge, the escalators were not working and we should go to the main concourse by foot. It was also mentioned that the District & Circle lines were closed by the power surge.

When I arrived at the main concourse, it was announced that the District line was now working again and that passengers could go to the platform.

People were also being admitted to the station.

My thoughts on this were that the staff at LU should have been alerted to an emergency situation quicker and that people should not be able to get into the Underground if a situation occurs. Evacuation of the stations would be hampered if the general public were to be made aware of the emergency and it seemed to me that, perhaps, the power surge was a euphemism to ensure evacuation

However, looking back, people were entering stations and being allowed onto platforms up to ½ hour after the bombs detonated.

As regards the way commuters, like myself, were able to leave London, I can only praise the planning and organization. It was very efficient and, as you know, worked.

Jon

I was on the Metropolitan and Jubilee lines on the morning of 7 July.

I was repeatedly told that there was a power surge by London Underground staff, even an hour after the bombs.

Fortunately a fellow passenger had a mobile and could get BBC News, which said there had been six bombs reported.

London Underground were clearly telling their staff to lie.

They were actually encouraging people to get buses to central London, without telling people this might be dangerous.

London Underground deliberately put lives at risk by lying.

I will never believe anything that London Underground staff tell me in a future incident. That is dangerous.

Jonathan

I understand you are interested in looking at how people were kept informed of the situation on 7th July 2005.

I would draw your attention to the, in my view, sensationalist reporting carried out by most of the broadcasting services on the day.

Much of the reporting that was done was prompted by any people calling in on mobile phones and describing situations. Often including stills and moving images from those same mobile phones.

It was quite clear that these were 'raw', unedited and moreover unverified reports from emotional and traumatised people.

The effect was to create an atmosphere of nervousness and panic amongst everyone and to further generate such reports.

I believe a much more responsible level of reporting needs to be taken or enforced so as to avoid the heightening of a situation which is already very serious.

Nigel

I run a Yorkshire B&B, and we had 2 young Polish girls due to stay with the night of 7.7. They had flown into London, and were due to take the train to us in Skipton, North Yorkshire from Kings Cross. They heard the explosions but were not close, so they had to wait several hours until the trains starting running to Yorkshire again. This made them miss the once a day bus to our remote village, so we drove into Skipton to pick them up. We used the BBC website and Sky News to stay in touch happenings.

We also had a Japanese man cancel for the week after due to the bombs, and he was flying into London.

So bigger picture, if London is an inbound airport hub for holiday makers to the UK, then the impact of bombs on the rest of the country needs to be considered!

Simon and Alice

I have lived in London for the last 4 years and over that time have had many happy moments here, in a city I love and feel like a true part of. The attacks on 7th July were a horrific act upon those who were killed and injured, and every person in the city and the country. Whilst I felt scared, upset and angry, I also felt a sense of pride and unity to belong to such a place that reacted the way it did. I thought that the emergency services were amazing, and have a lot of admiration for the speed and manner in which they acted, no doubt saving the lives of many people and reassuring the public at such a frightening time that they could and did cope efficiently.

I think everyone involved, whether a part of the emergency services, the victims and their families, the public who also helped at the scenes of the bombings, or the community of London as a whole, was brave and commendable,

and the way in which the city pulled itself together and stood as one to defeat the terrorists makes me prouder than ever to live here.

Lorraine

I believe you would like feedback from 7 July from passenger experience. My main complaint is that we should have been alerted earlier that there was a major incident so that we could leave London and get home. In the event it took me all day to get back home to Brighton including walking from Victoria to Hammersmith from where I was collected by my husband who drove up the M23, M25, M4 to get me.

I arrived at London Bridge from Brighton at 9am for a meeting and went down the tube station at 9.15. to be brief, once the sirens started going off and we could not travel by tube [around 9.45] we were advised to take buses into town. So we were all being moved by bus into the incident zone even as ambulances and police were rushing past. We kept asking and were told there had been an explosion because of the power surge. Even the police walking around in pairs could not give any information. I had to text my family to check the news on TV and internet to find out what was going on. If I had known say by 10.30 I would have gone straight back to an overline station and headed home. In the event I tried to get to my meeting by bus, found the meeting cancelled then headed for Victoria, got evacuated from the station then walked to the coach station, faced a total shutdown of transport and people milling around. If there had been further suicide bombs we would have been targets standing around outside the train stations.

Our approach should be that as soon as information becomes available of an incident to advise people to stay at home or get back home. It is sad that some of the people who died on the bus had been evacuated from Kings Cross trying to get to work. For me faster information for the public was the missing part of the emergency response on 7/7.

S

I was at work when the bombs went off on 7 July. I am a freelance Management Consultant and Project Manager.

As the news filtered through I was aware the situation was grave. Younger members of the office were getting more concerned and needed calming down.

We were advised not to leave building till after 3 pm. Which was sensible. However we were starved of news and how to make our way home.

Having been through the IRA bombing and disruptions in the last 20 years working in London, I am sure we will recover.

However there does not seem to be a co-ordinated command centre for a large scale attack. Being left in the dark and on my own was the main message.

Written submissions by individuals

I was lucky and walked from the City via Kings Cross to Finsbury Park to catch a northbound suburban train back to Hertfordshire in 4 hours. Other folks were good natured but apprehensive.

News as to which stations were open and how to get there should be the minimum. Reliable and fast news relay is needed. BBC was the slowest. CNN was a tad more accurate at the early stages.

My wife got news that Kings Cross Thameslink was open but this was not the case when I and many others got there. The milling crowds were getting to a dangerous level and were channelling into some nearby alleys. Thank goodness a stampede did not happen. People were asking me for directions to various stations.

Recommendations

- Central London Command to pass on news and safe routes asap.
- Contingency plans for main transport links and the evacuation of people.
- Including plans how to notify the public of the shut down of main stations, bus and tubes
- Safe routes, evacuation sites. More high level maps at strategic areas showing key routes and railway stations.
- Police to take control of directing people to transport access points. Not just barring the way.
- Central website, mobile and radio broadcasts on updates of what transport is running (not just what are shut down).
- Overnight emergency accommodation - offices, schools, public buildings

It falls upon London Authorities to work out a central plan. I do it for my clients. Happy to bounce ideas and work out the various aspects. Don't just spend money hiring expensive consultants. We, Londoners, collectively will have ideas to come up with a workable contingency plan.

TK

As someone living outside London who watched the story unfold online, two things struck me about the media coverage. One was the fact that for several hours the official line was that 'power surges' had occurred, although clearly it would have been apparent much sooner that what happened was the result of explosions. I was curious about what agenda would lead to this line being adopted for so many hours following the blasts.

The other striking thing was that in the hours and days following the explosions we heard about the recovery operation under King's Cross and were warned that many people in the trapped carriage/s would have died, but the bodies could not be removed because of the danger to rescue personnel. However, I do not recall the death toll changing substantially or hearing anymore about the recovery of the trapped carriage/s.

Andrew

I live in north London with three children at three different schools - some relying on a coach journey and some walkable from school.

COMMUNICATION

I kept in touch with my husband by landline and email – I was initially concerned about the lack of mobile coverage. I would like to know more clearly why the mobile coverage went down and if it was to clear channels for the emergency services or just overload from the number of calls. I also would like to know if it would be helpful for people not to use their mobiles in these circumstances.

CHIEF OF POLICE

I relied on BBC News website for information and BBC TV and radio. An important factor for my reassurance was to see the Chief of the Met making regular calm statements and giving advice. He was quickly on TV and that was important - for me to feel someone was in charge. I felt I could trust him.

SCHOOLS

My children's schools have prepared for such a contingency but I don't think they responded all that well - they did not use their websites efficiently and they did not stick to prepared procedure. I would like to see schools better prepared with an agreed policy which is adhered to. Most parents have got used to communicating with their children by mobile phone- so many children have lost the ability to think on their feet- and when the mobile coverage went down it was frightening for children. I would like to see children better prepared for what to do if the mobiles go down, if they can't get public transport home etc- in some ways children were fortunate that they were at school - it would have been different in the summer holidays with more children out and about.

HOSPITALS

The emergency services seemed amazing and I have huge respect for them- our local hospital switched to major incident mode and was calm and efficient- I could see it had procedures as I walked past to school to pick up my children.

Nadine

I work in Victoria, but was at home on sick leave on 7 July.

The only confusion I experienced in witnessing the TV reports of events was the conflicting images of the significant number of emergency services in attendance and the very small reported death toll of, I think, two people. This figure was not updated until much later in the day, and I feel that this could have misrepresented the seriousness of the attacks for people worried about friends or relatives, who had to rely on media coverage for information.

Matthew

I was fortunate enough not to be directly involved in the terrorist attacks, although I was at Paddington underground station when we first heard of an incident and subsequently took a tube to Piccadilly and bus down to Hammersmith as advised by the LT transport staff.

What particularly impressed me was the way that by the evening rush hour LT staff were available at every tube station advising on the best way to complete your journey, on what was a very difficult day for them and all the emergency staff involved.

I feel that this dedication towards those of us not directly involved, which was fortunately the vast majority, is a tribute to the planning and preparation which took place both prior to the incidents (in general terms) and on the day.

Please ensure that that my thanks are passed onto all those involved.

Matt

I was traveling to work on the Northern Line at the time of the first explosion from Waterloo station but was unaware of what had occurred. The first inkling that something was wrong was through hearing the sirens of the emergency services from my office on Oxford Street close to Tottenham Court Road. This was followed by a call from a colleague stuck at Waterloo due to "power surges". I eventually received a call at about 10am from an ex-colleague who was seeing reports on the television of bombings and I immediately called my colleague stuck at Waterloo to tell him to leave London asap. Then I logged onto the internet and literally followed the events on the BBC throughout the day. There was advice being broadcast through the website suggesting that all those in their offices stay put which we all followed. The only other communications matter was the fact that mobile phones didn't seem to be working but I imagine this was due to the volume of calls and the fact that the Emergency Services needed the networks kept free. When I eventually left my office to walk to Waterloo at around 4.30pm the Tube staff on hand and police officers assisting people to get where they wanted to go on foot were remarkable and patient; as were most of the walking 'commuters' to be fair. I must commend the internet news websites for keeping everyone up to date and not only the Emergency Services but all London Transport staff who acted so selflessly that day. I think the internet came into its own and proved what a valuable source of information it is.

Claire

I run a catering company delivering to City and West End clients. I would like to have had more information earlier in the day. I knew that the explosions were bombs as soon as the Tavistock Square bomb went off as it exploded almost outside one of my clients and one of my waiters was an eyewitness. He was able to call immediately and inform me before the mobile phone networks went down. However I was not able to contact my four drivers to get them back to base in Southwark. I personally think it would have been beneficial to give definitive advice regarding access to central London. I had 3 events that evening inside the congestion zone area and 2 of the clients wanted to proceed with the events as they had been paid for!! - Obviously I did not wish to put my staff at risk and they certainly did not want to travel into central London that evening. However the clients were asking us to carry on as usual. I can understand that it is extremely difficult to give out information until you are 100% positive of the situation but maybe the best idea would have been to ban all incoming traffic to the area? I

would like to say that I thought that the overall management seemed superb from the point of view of a member of the general public and congratulations to all the groups involved.

Catriona

I was at work in my office on Shaftesbury Avenue on the 7th of July. However what really characterised the day for me was the complete lack of official communication - all my knowledge of events was through knowledge, hearsay and word of mouth.

The first we heard of the events was an email from our Managing Partner mentioning "bomb alerts" at approximately 9:30am. Having no TV in the office, we tried to access web pages but found them overloaded. When we eventually found the BBC website all that was mentioned were electrical surges and so we had no idea whether we should be using public transport, leaving the office, etc etc. The "electrical surges" explanation continued on the website for hours.

The only time we eventually found out that there was a terrorist threat was when one of our partners happened to be at Tavistock Square at 9:47. Still, we had no way of knowing this had happened as phone calls could not be made from mobile phones. When the message eventually filtered through from this witness, we still had no idea what to do - go home, stay and work, etc etc.

In fact, the tube blasts were first confirmed not by official news source, but through an email forwarded through 10 people which originated from "a friend from Reuters", who stated there was "approximately 50 dead".

My overriding point is that if it wasn't for emails and knowing witnesses we would not have had a clue what was happening, and nor did we know what action (if any) we should take, because there was no TV or Radio access and internet access was almost impossible. The lack of communication caused more anxiety than the actual events, that day.

Mandeep

A brief thought on how passengers in another incident similar to 7 July could be better kept informed in the future:

I was travelling on the 46 bus from Hampstead to Farringdon at 9.25 that morning when the bus pulled up between Kings's Cross and Euston stations. It was obvious something major was going on at KX from the ambulances massed outside. Our bus was diverted towards Holborn. The first I knew that something was wrong was from a fellow passenger who had a mobile: he said that explosions had been heard at Aldgate and King's Cross.

Surely once these explosions had been heard at public transport stations, all London bus drivers should be radioed to be told of developments; they should then make that announcement to their passengers and offer them the option of getting off the bus.

Adrian

I was lucky not to be in London on July 7th. I heard the news of the power surge on the radio and rang my boyfriend to tell him so he could come another way home. He worked on Tavistock Square, and I was on the phone when the bus bomb went off. The phone cut out and I didn't get hold of him again until around 3pm when he was walking to Fenchurch Street to try to get home.

I have nothing but praise for all emergency services and the BBC news coverage. Their work was amazing in such a terrifying situation. However, I do hope that communications will be improved in light of what happened. Land lines, mobiles and the internet were all down for hours. A lot of work is needed to ensure this failure does not happen again, as friends and family were scared too. Perhaps a website is the answer, but its capabilities will have to be massive. Maybe other websites could be shut down to enable emergency ones to work? Even the lines to Heathrow Airport were jammed for hours.

There is no one answer, but London coped fantastically and will do so again.

Sarah

I was working in London at the time, in an office just off Oxford Street. Travelling in on the Central Line from Epping, Essex, I passed through the middle of the bomb sites at around 9.10am, just after the explosions had happened. I got off the tube, and my husband changed lines, and later on I found out that he had been evacuated from the station.

I think everyone in my office knew that 'power surges' seemed a bizarre explanation for what was going on, and when rumour reached us about the bus then we started to realise what was happening. As is wont to happen in these situations, we then heard numerous 'red herring' reports of other bombs going off in the vicinity of where we were working - it was probably the first time that I had feared for my life, and being on Oxford Street, I felt we might be prime targets.

After we heard about the bus, all work stopped in my office and my colleague and I went for a much needed smoke. All we could see and hear (which continued for most of the day) was sirens blazing up the road, probably towards Tavistock Square. Lunchtime came and we went to our local, the Champion on Wells Street to try and take the edge off the shock and panic.

Afterwards, at around 2.30, my colleague and I decided to leave work and try and make it to my manager's house to stay for the evening (he had plumbers in so was not at work). He lived in Crystal Palace, so after a short detour to Victoria to collect my husband, off we went on foot. After walking, a train journey where we got turfed off after one stop and an illegal minicab journey, we finally got there at around 7.30pm and proceeded to sit in front of the news all night.

On our journey, we found the emergency services and Underground staff to be fantastic. They weren't taking any chances with security, but they kept smiles on their faces for members of the public all day, even though they must have been asked the

same questions 1000 times and I'm sure they were just as scared and shocked as everybody else. I have no criticism at all with they way things were handled, I thought they were an absolute credit to us. I was also touched with the way that ordinary people bonded, total opposite from the usual 'keep your head down and don't speak to anyone' London philosophy.

I think this is when it all sunk in for me, now I knew I was safe for the night I could finally take in what had happened. I cried for a while, and then set to trying to account for friends and family that I hadn't spoken to earlier in the day.

The next morning, when I woke up, I remembered what had happened and was dreading getting on the tube/bus. So we got a train to Victoria and walked to work. At lunchtime I got back on the tube to go home – it was so quiet, but everyone was looking around at who was getting on and off.

The long tem impact for me? I spent the next few weeks in tears of relief every time I got off public transport, and on one occasion I was so frightened on the tube that I cried on my husband's shoulder. In addition to this, I could hear sirens constantly when no-one else could and I found myself with an unhealthy fixation with news coverage - I just couldn't stop watching it and would check BBC News every 5 minutes at work. I am still suffering from this now, but to a lesser extent and I cannot help but feel deep sadness whenever the monthly anniversaries of the attacks come around.

I now realise that I was probably suffering from mild post traumatic stress, but at the time I just couldn't understand why I felt the way I did.

With the advice of friends and family, I decided to leave my job in London, because my symptoms were not getting any better. I was not happy in my job anyway, but this really decided it for me.

I hope my opinion is of use in some way, it is nice to get it off my chest anyway!

Victoria

We are based in Farringdon and struggled to keep staff updated using the national TV channels and internet news services.

I suggest that a "disaster" website is created that can be utilised at such times that has the capacity to cope with high volume access so that there is one point of dissemination of advice and instruction.

Philip

Like many, if not all, Londoners, I'm fully supportive of, and grateful to, all those involved in the events of that day - be they members of the intelligence services working to prevent such acts or the emergency service crews responding to them.

What I am concerned about is the delay with which services on the entire TfL network (and principally the London Underground network) was suspended. At approximately

09.05, BBC News London were reporting two 'power surges' on different lines of the network on television. 10 minutes later, after I'd walked the short distance from my flat to Notting Hill Gate tube station, I saw that the entrance to the Circle and District line platforms had been closed off (due to these reports one would assume). The entrance to the Central line platform, however, was still open, and indeed Central line tube trains were still operating in both directions. It wasn't until the tube train got to Marble Arch tube station that passengers were instructed to alight from the trains due to the suspension of services on the London Underground network. Bus services were still operating normally - though admittedly well over their capacity - and I eventually managed to board a bus.

I'd like to know, notwithstanding communications weaknesses and a desire to ascertain exactly what was happening, why there was such a delay in suspending services on the entire London Underground network given that (at that time) two sizeable and separate incidents had obviously occurred on the network simultaneously. Given the same, I'd also like to know why bus services were continuing to operate. Indeed, in light of the fact that the bomb explosion on the bus at Tavistock Square occurred one hour after the explosions on the London Underground, it may well be that swifter action to suspend bus services would have prevented the loss of life at Tavistock Square.

Jonathan

I live in North London and commute into Moorgate or Kings Cross every day on the WAGN line. I was already at work in Blackfriars when the first bomb exploded.

The only feedback that I would like to give is that it would be great if there was one official place that Londoners could access to give the official line on what to do. Many of us stayed at work and in the building as we had heard that was the best thing to do. But you don't get information in one place to tell you when it might be safe to try and get home and also it would be useful to have an up to date message board of what transport is up and working where.

At the moment there are various different sources for the data and some of it does not get updated quick enough. Also I feel that tube, train and bus information should be in one place with the safety information. This would help with the authenticity of the information.

I hope this helps to make improvements in the future

Kate

I was working on the Strand in Stanley Gibbons and it was the internet (BBC) that gave us the initial news of power blasts and then later bombings.

However for the remainder of the day I listened to Capital Radio which gave up to date information about the attacks. It was highly informative and I was able to tell all my work colleagues and managers up to date information.

I recommend we use Radio Stations designated in giving up to date information.

Calum

The emergency services were excellent though to get details of what was happening for families and friends were difficult. A family member was there and it took many hours to know what was happening and not very helpful people

DvHrt

My partner was at Paddington underground station when the Edgware Road explosion went off; she left the Circle line platform and then boarded a tube on the Bakerloo line [Paddington] and alighted this tube at Oxford Circus.

I couldn't believe it when my partner told me she was allowed to get on another train when the platform she was just standing on, had experience [in her words, at the time] "A large boom"

I suggest the London Underground consider implementing a procedure, whereby, once a large bang is heard on the Underground, the control centre assumes the worst and evacuates all stations & closes the whole system down. Unless power surge bangs / booms, are a common occurrence? Although in hindsight this would not have made any difference to July 7th tube network. It may have made a difference if the whole transport network could have been shut down, quicker than it was. If the Underground control centre had the authority and means to authorise the complete shut down of the London Transport network. Or if the responsibility for the whole of the London Transport network is coordinated centrally with real time links to the tube, buses, trains and airports. As long as all transport departments have robust plans in place & staff are trained, in the event of a request to completely shut down the network.

Aside from this, I also believe; scenario-based terrorist emergencies should be fully investigated, for the transport network and the UK itself, to be 'one step ahead' and enable robust contingencies plans to be considered / implemented.

Peter

I live in Essex but work in central London, and whilst I was not directly affected by the bombings, I was in London that day. I passed through Liverpool St about 30 mins before the bombs went off, and was in a seminar at the time the atrocities occurred.

My observations are that the emergency services should be proud of the service they provided on that day. This was clearly something that was expected, but not something that you can really prepare for, so I have the utmost respect for the police, ambulance

and fire crews work on that day, and for the various other people involved such as the tube workers etc. I would also say the same for the intelligence services. They have allegedly stopped many such atrocities on these shores, and whilst there are individuals intent on terrorising the British public, there will always be a risk that cannot always be anticipated, but they have clearly saved many lives already.

I would agree with the general sentiment that these bombings seem to have brought people together as opposed to creating tensions between different cultures and religions – perhaps except for those narrow minded enough to truly believe that religion was the reason for these atrocities.

My heart goes out to all those directly affected by the bombings, and I sincerely hope that the intelligence and police services continue their good work against these extremists whose intent is to damage our wonderfully diverse society.

Steve

I was on the Tube when the bombs presumably went off, however I was at Westminster, and we were informed (very calmly) that there had been power surges and the Tube then continued.

My only other real encounter with the whole thing was attempting to get back home to Hatfield, given that the entire London network had been closed. Police and directions for those wandering overland across London (many of whom were blatantly lost) were good, it was scary but at least felt as though there was some situational control. The people working at Finsbury Park with a queuing system and loud announcements as to how the train system was working, were excellent.

I thought the whole thing was dealt with very well.

Amanda

I would like to start by saying how impressed I was by the professionalism of the emergency services, which was evident from television coverage of the event (I happened to be at home that day and became glued to the television as events unfolded).

However, my main purpose in composing this e-mail to you is to highlight the truly remarkable efforts of the Thames Clippers service that day, combined with a number of pleasure/sightseeing boats. My apartment overlooks the River Thames and the Canary Wharf pier, and I can only compare the scenes I saw to a mini-Dunkirk... A long snake of people queuing along the riverpath to get onto boats, with a queue of boats waiting to pick them up. I think that it is an often overlooked fact that the river became a very important means of getting people home that day.

At the time I was delighted that a large number of the pleasure-boats, which are generally used for parties, were also involved in the evacuation of people from Canary

Wharf. However, I was interested to discover that a number of them were privately chartered by the banks, specifically to ferry their employees home/to train stations. I would suggest that this large fleet of boats should be an integral part of future planning, so that a truly co-ordinated service can be established.

In addition, I wonder whether it would be worth investigating the possibility of using the Regents canal to get people close to Kings Cross and Paddington railway stations to pick up mainline services in future?

Kirsty

It was a very normal day except that I was a bit late to the tube station... As I approached the Balham station I noticed it was a bit crammed more than usual and then I saw one of the Tube staff standing facing a crowd at the station entrance (that was completely shut down) and telling the people that there is a signal fault on the northern line and we have to find alternative routs, (what the hell is this, everytime there is a signal fault they allow us into the station and we wait a bit longer for the trains, why aren't they letting us in.??!) I call ibrahim my housemate.... he was 10 minutes ahead of me.. he got the Train instead of the Underground from the same station "Balham"..... I check the trains entrance and it is crammed with tens of Londoners trying to get a ticket or trying to get through to the platforms..... checked the screens.... delays ... delays.... and none of the trains would go to Waterloo "the heart of London"..... then no alternative but the bus..... and the bus it is.... standing at the bus station, everybody is upset and annoyed.... everybody is late for work.... people make the usual phone calls to their offices to inform their colleagues they were going to be late..... I call the office as well.... and got informed others said they'd be late..... (it looks like a horrible morning.... lots of deadlines to meet.... and I'm still at the bus station).... I waited for an hour... 2 buses passed by... fully packed.... first bus stopped but allowed only 2 people on board..... the second one did not even stop.... (it seems the bus is not an option at the moment.... better head back to the station) ... walking back to the tube station.... oh God... all cleared.... station opened again..... so I enter the station take the escalators down to the platform... the platform is packed the electronic sign saying 2 trains r coming... everybody is cursing the underground system..... (thinking of the few trades to be missed, the deadlines to be compromised, the bonus to be wasted)..... suddenly... another announcement "no northern line service today..... please leave the station immediately"..... cursing... shouting..... people rushing again as they all realise they are thinking of the same thing "the trains" if the underground is not working the trains are the second best options all the time..... we rush towards the train platform entrance..... all with bitterness towards the station staff... they stop us for a while... afterwards.. they let us in..... still no trains to waterloo..... trains going only to Victoria..... I can just take the train to Victoria and then take the tube to Waterloo..... I got into the train with some others until it was completely packed..... then the usual stuff happened.... few started talking... few reading and few kissing..... finally we arrived Victoria after around 20 minutes in the train..... Victoria station.... huge.... busy..... in total chaos..... I got a phone call from Sherif my housemate..... he stayed at home..... he spoke of some kind of explosions..... something that has to do with "power surge" that caused fire in a tube station.... as I was talking to him on the phone.... I checked the Victoria underground station.... it is closed..... sherif

confirms..... the underground is entirely closed..... I looked around... confusion everywhere..... went outside the station... disastrous..... people, buses, cars, all occupying a very little space in front of the station.... all crammed in a very tight area in a "Cairo style" chaos..... so much not like London.....

in the middle of all that I saw a bus with "Waterloo" on its front.... I got in it... asked the driver if he is still going to Waterloo.. he confirmed..... the bus was not that full though there were lots of people outside the station waiting to go to central London..... ("lucky me" I thought... but wait a sec... why didn't they take the buses?) in the bus..... street is jammed still.... called sherif... he said there were explosions in various tube stations and then he mentioned an bomb on a bus..... a bus!!!..... it wasn't confirmed though..... I stare at the people around me..... should I tell them what Sherif has just said?? not a good idea I thought... there is no need to frighten anybody..... a guy beside me started speaking to us.... he was wondering if we knew what was happening... he turned out to be a reporter with Financial Times..... a lady beside him spoke about explosions in the tube..... (will she mention buses?) we all start looking at each other and ask each other where we r heading..... (will we get there?).... we start chatting and everything seems normal when a lady got a phone call and she says something about a bomb on a bus..... (should I leave the bus?)..... we were approaching Waterloo Bridge..... about to get to the station but it was so crowded.... the bus stopped and the lady and few others left..... I stayed.... don't know why but I stayed..... it's probably a rumour about the bus just like the "power surge" few minutes later..... the driver gets a message from the central station we all heard the message very clearly..... "park your coach immediately, passengers should leave the bus at once, check if there are strange devices on board" the message was very clear..... we all looked at each other and started laughing..... (was it disbelief? or maybe a sudden realisation of what could happen to us?).... the driver kept on driving.... we were starting to realise slowly our situation.... I started to realise that it could very well be the end..... just like it was the end of some others who took another bus confidently and felt very lucky they were not caught up in the tube..... and they just very simply ceased to exist in a fraction of a second.....with all their dreams, hopes and fears.... (will it explode? I kept thinking..... will it happen?..... will I be just one of the images you see everyday on your tv screen? will I just be another bloody piece of flesh mixed with some metal debris thrown on the ground? will people know that there is a lot more behind me than just a rotten body? then I wondered... do I realise and feel those images on tv? do they transcend their "image" format in my mind to their "human" form?)..... brain squeezed..... others started to panic..... I felt cold..... I didn't want to die..... no no... I don't mind dying... it's a fact of life.... I didn't want to die in this way.... unnoticed.... unidentified..... just died in a blast!..... just a piece of flesh to be photographed from different angles and published in different newspapers without any care for my dreams, hopes, fears, ideas.....

but I had to reach a resolve.... at least until I get off the bus..... I don't care..... if it has to happen this way then I don't mind..... I didn't have a choice after all.....

we left the bus at Waterloo..... complete disorder everywhere..... have to cross the bridge to get to work.... a helicopter is flying over Trafalgar Square..... a policeman with a machine gun right beside me.... (will it be a battlefield?)..... didn't want to go through the main streets..... preferred to get to work through the park..... for the first time since the morning things seemed in order..... the trees where they are..... doves seem not to be disturbed..... only thing left of the outside chaos is the police, ambulance and emergency sirens.....

got to work..... everything seems perfectly ok... people a bit late.... but "business as usual"... deadlines not changed.... people trading... discussing.... arguing.... as if nothing

happened..... "business as usual" is the rule and it reigns as long as you are still breathing..... only a single interruption when Blair delivered his speech..... after which things returned to normal again....

Ahmed

I work behind Liverpool St. Station and close to Bank. What struck me was the chaos and lack of information which flowed from the authorities immediately after the news broke on Sky. Was I supposed to keep my staff in the office? Were stations closed? Which ones? How could people get home?

The exodus which followed of commuters across London, mainly on foot, seemed in hindsight bizarre. Should another attack occur, wouldn't thousands of people walking in slow time through London's streets present another terrorists target? No police were on hand to marshal and advise people which route to take on foot, where was safe etc.

Some mode of transport should have been provided within call to ferry people to stations outside of the city. Instead black cabs became our lifeline home. Hotels became block booked by large corporates.

Small firms like mine need some guidance on what to do next time, and people need help at hand on the streets, IF that is where we are to be left, again, next time.

Andrew

0870 Casualty Bureau

The above number was the only one issued for casualties at the time of the London bombings, charged at 8-10 pence per minute from the time of dialling, that is people were being charged whilst on hold waiting for their call to be answered. The costs were even higher from a mobile phone. A lot of callers would be calling from mobiles phones given the fact that many were travelling to work at that time and were displaced for many hours.

Given the revenue sharing available from this 0870 line it was inappropriate for the Metropolitan Police / Home Office / relevant telecommunications company to be making money from the suffering of callers, whether this be directly or indirectly being subsidised on equipment costs and rebates. Subsequent donations to charity does not right this theft of callers' money.

Even now despite the Metropolitan Police comments this evening (3/11/05) on the GLA/Police review of the July bombings, the 0870 number is STILL being promoted for casualties. 0800 anti-terrorism hotline, but 0870 for casualties. It's on the Metropolitan Police website now (http://www.met.police.uk/news/terrorist_attacks/):

Its there with the alternative 'normal' number that they were forced to issue, so what is the purpose of still listing the 0870 first? Everyone knows in a list of two or more numbers at least 90% of people will dial the first number first.

The issue of this 0870 number was a completely inappropriate response to the bombings.

At about 9.10am we were at the front upstairs of a 24 bus approaching the Euston Rd.- Gower Str. intersection where we were held up by various emergency and police vehicles speeding towards Kings Cross. Proceeding down Gower Street we noticed people leaving the Tube stations in huge numbers. There was no panic or alarm. It must have been about then that the Tavistock Square incident took place though we did not hear it. The 34 buses towards Hackney Wick were crammed with people. Rumours began to circulate that there had been incidents but I suppose from habit no-one took much notice. We alighted at Westminster Abbey and walked to the Tate Britain Gallery where we spent the morning. We left there soon after twelve. Someone inside the building said that there was no transport which seemed unbelievable until we went outside and found it to be true. We therefore decided to walk to Hampstead where we were supposed to pick up our grandchildren from school. This we did via Hyde Park and Regents Park (quite a walk, but not unpleasant). From Vauxhall Bridge to Victoria Station we were practically the only people walking that way; everybody else was walking the other way, which we thought strange. Apart from a helicopter landing near us in Regents Park we saw little else of note. Our only concern at that stage was that our grandchildren, hearing rumours, might be worried by our lateness but in fact we were hardly late. A policeman laughed when we told him we were walking to Hampstead. He said it would take us all day.

J.A.H.

For your information, here is my account of my journey into work on July 7th with comments.

I arrived at my normal station, Vauxhall, at approx 09:45 having travelled by South West trains from Windsor & Eton Riverside station, en route to my office in Euston.

Very occasionally, the train conductor announces if there are known delays on the underground. No announcements were made on this occasion.

I left Vauxhall overground station and made my way down to the Vauxhall underground entrance where signs stated that the underground was closed (cannot recall exact wording). I decided to go back to Vauxhall and get an overground train into Waterloo.

As I walked back to the overground station, commuters were still 'flooding' down towards the underground. I asked one of the station staff to make an announcement to warn passengers about the underground outage. I recall that I heard the announcement made.

As I got onto the train bound for Waterloo, commuters were leaving the train heading for the underground. I told a group leaving the train that the underground was out. Their reaction made me believe that they had not been told anything either.

At Waterloo, I tried to call my wife from my mobile but could not get a signal. It would be around 10:00 – 10:05 by now. The underground entrance at the the platform 1 end of the main Waterloo concourse was closed.

I decided that the travel chaos was so bad that I caught the next train to Windsor from Waterloo.

COMMENTS

My main comment is that, with the communications capability we have today, MUCH more could have been done by transport service providers to warn commuters about the underground outage. Early warning would have allowed them to make alternative plans and so prevent the dangerous build up of large crowds of people which we see at times even today when there is a problem on the underground.

There must be more coordination of communication between the overground train operators and the Underground to keep travellers informed. How about messages in French AND English as we are in Europe?!

I believe that the mobile telephone network capacity was deliberately managed to restrict access by users.

Could LUL do something with text alerts to passengers who choose to subscribe to a service? (Not much good if the mobile system is taken down though!).

As a means of smoothing the flow of commuters through London, train operators should be required to provide passengers with news of problems with the underground or on any other services originating from London termini.

Tom

I was a Londoner for almost a decade until 2000, and I happened to have a meeting in Kings Cross on 7th July.

The meeting didn't happen; as a First Aider I offered to help when I noticed paramedics in BMA House from the rear, only learning at that point that a bus had been bombed out the front.

My observations from the day:

- how calmly the city reacted to having no tube service
- how effectively the Euston Road was cleared of ordinary traffic to allow emergency vehicles to use it
- the BMA were superb; they were calm, professional, dignified and effective. With the utter carnage on their doorstep, they made good use of the expertise they had, and also ensured that those of us who helped were given drinks, food, a debrief, the chance to phone home
- in all that I experienced, there was great dignity and calm in the most trying of circumstances

Stephen

I was really impressed by the way the emergency response specialist acted upon the bombing. The skills and ability were really professional. This is the first time i am experiencing such events and the way it was handled was extraordinary. I am confident and happy to say that i am living in a society where trained specialist are always ready to help the needy people.

A well done to all the people who helped in one way or another to the families of the victims and the public.

GA

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