

Evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Service response to a terrorist attack.

Cameron Grant

2204610

Professional Policing

Policing Terrorism BMPL5011

Jane Davies

UWTSD

20/11/24

22 people including children were killed in a terrorist bombing attack and over 100 injured at the end of an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester Arena (*Strategic Comments*, 2017). The numbers of deaths and injuries show the need for better systems such as stop searches to prevent terrorism and improve safety measures in public places.

The aim is to evaluate how effective public services were in responding to a terrorist attack. This includes looking at how well emergency services, like the police, ambulance, and hospitals, worked together to manage the situation and support those affected.

When an explosion happens, it creates a blast wave with two parts. The first part is the shock wave, a strong wave of energy that moves through materials. The second part is the blast wind, which follows the shock wave and carries debris causing tears, cuts and wounds (Manchester Arena Inquiry, 2022). Understanding how the Manchester bomb worked is important for helping experts learn how to prevent similar attacks in the future. By knowing the bomb's design and how it was made, Public services can find ways to stop these devices before they are used. It allows police and security teams to better protect people at events like concerts.

A terrorist is a person or group that uses violent actions that aims to influence the government or intimidate the public the action fits this if it causes serious violence to someone, causes serious damage to property, puts someone's life in danger, creates a serious risk to public health or safety, or seriously disrupts an electronic system (*Terrorism act, 2000*). Understanding what terrorism is crucial when analyzing the Manchester Arena bombing because it helps clarify the motives and methods behind the attack. Knowing that terrorism involves using violence or threats to influence governments or intimidate the public allows us to see the broader context of the attack.

Police personnel were quickly on the scene and there followed a fast deployment of armed officers to secure the area and help the wounded (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles, 2022a). Public services are needed to arrive quickly at the scene of a terrorist attack to minimize casualties, provide instant medical assistance to the injured, secure the area, and begin investigations. Fast response can save lives, maintain order, and heighten the chances of stopping perpetrators before they can cause harm.

Multiple patients had to find their own way to hospitals. The survivors decided to transport injured persons to the hospital due to the shortage of ambulances and the volume of patients. Eighty-five patients arrived at the hospitals on their own (Bartolucci, 2023). This indicates challenges in emergency response coordination and the sheer volume of casualties that strained resources. The scenario could highlight the need for improved emergency preparedness, communication, and resource allocation to ensure patients receive aid from public services quickly.

The Public Services conducted an evaluation to understand what they had failed to do in the Manchester Arena Bombing. It is recognized that improper patient identification poses a risk to patient safety. Patients who are transported to the emergency room will not have identification when they exit the area following an incident. Upon arrival, a major incident identity label is attached with a prewritten major incident casualty number (CRAIGIE, 2020). This means identification after an incident is crucial for patients because it helps medical professionals quickly access important medical history, contact information, and any relevant allergies or conditions, ensuring appropriate and timely medical treatment. It also assists in identifying the patient accurately, preventing confusion or errors in treatment.

Public Services used the 10 second triage system to identify high and low risk patients when arriving at a crime scene. The Ten Second Triage tool shows the recommended priority triage routes depending on incident characteristics. Each has a 'yes', which guides you to the next question, or 'no' answer which determines priority. (National Health Service, 2023). This system can efficiently prioritize patients based on the severity of their condition, leading to quicker medical attention for those in urgent need.

This system helps to streamline the process, reduce waiting times, and ensure that critical cases receive care.

Greater Manchester police admit that they acted inadequately to the Manchester arena bombing. The reaction to this significant occurrence was not coordinated. Multiple agencies' capacity to respond to a horrific set of circumstances was impeded by the failure to establish sufficient command and control over the issue from the outset. Inadequate training, poor planning, poor communication, and a lack of strategic leadership all contributed to the failure (Watson, 2022). The Manchester police admitting they didn't do well shows transparency, accountability, and a commitment to learning from mistakes to improve future responses. On the other hand, admitting failure publicly could damage public trust and confidence in the police as it shows that the current training and knowledge of the police service is not good enough.

An early shortcoming in the emergency services' response to the Manchester assault was a communication breakdown. JESIP's objective of fostering cohesive emergency group operations had not been achieved. Regarding the location of the mutual emergency services rendezvous place, there was a communication breakdown. Furthermore, it was unclear if the attack had been classified as a "major incident." During the initial moments of the attack. (Davidson, 2022). The failure of JESIP hindered effective communication and coordination between emergency services. This lack of interoperability potentially delayed critical responses and coordination efforts during the incident, impacting the overall effectiveness of the emergency response and potentially increasing the risk to victims and responders.

Fire and Rescue Service got only three calls about the Arena attack. They had to rely on what the police and ambulance service told them since they had no direct information. It took two hours after the attack for four fire engines to arrive at Victoria station, and there were more delays before the fire crews could enter the Arena (Lowe, 2020). This situation is bad because it shows a slow reaction to a serious emergency. The fire service got only a few calls, so they didn't have enough information to respond quickly. Depending on other services for updates can cause delays, which can be dangerous during a crisis. It took two hours for fire engines to arrive and even longer for

crews to get into the Arena. This shows they weren't ready and didn't work well together. People inside were left waiting for help when they really needed it, making the situation even more scary and risky.

Between 2010/11 and 2017/18, Greater Manchester Police's income dropped significantly from £632.99 million to £545.39 million. The number of police officers also decreased by 25%, from 8,219 to 6,159. In addition, staff jobs and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were reduced (Manchester Arena Inquiry, 2022b). With fewer officers, it becomes harder to patrol and monitor potential threats. It also means fewer resources available to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. This put extra pressure on the police and emergency services, making it harder for them to do their job and keep the public safe during the attack.

The trauma caused by the Manchester Arena bombing led to the creation of the National Health Service Manchester Resilience Hub, which started operating just 7 weeks after the attack. The Hub offered mental health support by inviting survivors to complete online screenings about stress, anxiety, and mood, with follow-up assessments every few months. Based on their responses, people were referred to appropriate care. (Stancombe *et al*, 2022). The creation of the Manchester Resilience Hub provided immediate support for people's mental health, which was crucial for their recovery. By offering regular screenings and connecting survivors to the right care, the Hub helped people cope with stress, anxiety, and emotional pain.

The CONTEST strategy is the UK's plan to reduce terrorism risks and protect people. It brings together government agencies, local authorities, emergency services, and international partners to prevent radicalization, disrupt threats, and respond quickly to attacks. Its four main elements Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare—focus on stopping terrorism before it starts, addressing active threats, securing key targets, and ensuring a fast response (UK Government, 2023). The Pursue and Protect helped to identify and stop further threats, secure public spaces, and ensure safety after the attack. However, the bombing revealed issues, particularly with intelligence-sharing under the Prevent part of the strategy, leading to reviews of counter-terrorism measures and how information is exchanged between agencies. While CONTEST provided a solid

framework, the attack highlighted areas for improvement, such as preventing individuals from slipping through and improving coordination.

Figen Murray has led a campaign in the UK using Martyn's Law that wants all big public places to have better security, such as performing thorough stop and searches before entering a building to correct the failures of the Manchester arena bombing. (Yosipof et al, 2023). Martyn's Law makes arenas and big public places safer for everyone. By having better security and checking people before they enter, it can stop dangerous situations before they happen. This way, families can enjoy events without worrying about their safety. Overall, it helps create a more secure environment for everyone to have fun and feel protected.

The threat from terrorists is serious and can happen anywhere. That's why the Bill needs different places to be ready for possible attacks. It asks those in charge of locations and events to think about how to lessen the impact of a terrorist attack and keep people safe. They must plan for the risks and know how to respond if an attack happens (UK Government, 2024). Businesses being prepared through Martyn's law means getting ready for possible problems or emergencies before they happen. It involves planning and thinking ahead so that you know what to do in different situations. This can help everyone stay calm and act quickly if something goes wrong. This could include having emergency contacts, first aid kits, or knowing escape routes.

Hashem bought chemicals for explosives, bomb parts, and bought a Nissan Micra to store them in Manchester while they were in Libya. Witnesses said the brothers held extreme views. They prepared the attack at various locations, including a flat where they made the explosives. In April 2017, they flew to Libya, Hashem stayed in Libya, while Salman returned to the UK on May 18, picked up the parts, and finished making the bomb. On May 22, Salman used it in the Manchester Arena bombing. (Greater Manchester Police, 2020). If the police and the terrorism unit had given due importance to crucial intelligence they received about Salman Abedi's homemade device, his travel to Libya, and the witnesses who said he had terrorist beliefs, they might have been able to stop the bomb before the concert. By taking this intelligence seriously and acting on it, they could have searched for the bomb and found it in time. This action could have

prevented the attack and saved many lives. Better communication and attention to the warnings could have made a big difference in stopping the bombing from happening.

There was a much faster response with the fire service and London bombing to Manchester. A fire fighter arrived at the scene in six minutes, he quickly realised it was a terrorist attack. he treated injured people at the scene while they were being fired which saved many lives that night. (London Ambulance Service NHS, 2021) The London Bridge stabbing incident in 2019 showcased a fast and effective response from the emergency services, including the fire service, in containing the situation and aiding the injured which is a big improvement. In contrast, the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017 saw a 2-hour delay in response which means that lives that could have saved weren't. Analyzing the two can help improve the response of public services in future cases.

A key issue in Manchester was the delay in starting Operation Plato, the plan for responding to terrorist attacks. This plan divides the scene into three zones: a "hot" zone with active threats, a "warm" zone where the threat has passed, and a "cold" zone that is safe. Only armed officers can enter a "hot" zone, while others can enter "warm" or "cold" zones. In Manchester, zoning wasn't done in the first critical hour. By 22:50, officers knew the threat had ended, so the City Room could have been labeled a "cold zone." However, this information wasn't shared, causing a delay in getting paramedics into the area until 23:30, an hour after the bombing (Baker-Beall *et al*, 2024). Not labelling the City Room as a "cold zone" and not sharing that information put lives at risk. Because paramedics couldn't enter quickly, many victims missed critical medical help that could have saved them. Emergency responders didn't know if it was safe, leading to cautious decisions and a lack of needed assistance for those in urgent need. The inquiry showed that better communication and quicker action could have saved lives.

The Inspector focused on coordinating Manchester's Police with Paramedics for first aid and evacuation in the foyer. To stay informed, he regularly met with the Advanced Paramedic and Tactical Firearms Commander to discuss progress. Once all casualties were evacuated, the Inspector handed over control to the GMP Crime Scene Manager to secure the foyer as a crime scene (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles, 2022b). This means first aid and getting people out quickly could be done. By staying close to the action and meeting regularly with key people like the Paramedic and Tactical Firearms Commander, the Inspector stayed up to date and made sure things were going as planned. Having another Inspector in charge of setting up safety zones (cordons) helped keep the area secure.

The public services showed bravery during the terrorist attack. MI5 operates in close collaboration with the police, ensuring utmost secrecy in their operations. The entire nation should express deep gratitude for the unwavering dedication and bravery exhibited by its personnel. Day in and day out, they tirelessly strive to safeguard the well-being of the British populace (Braverman, 2023). Public services being brave during terror attacks is important because their courage often leads them to act swiftly and decisively in protecting and assisting the public. Their bravery can save lives, maintain order, and instil a sense of security in the community amidst chaotic and dangerous situations.

A Support programme for victims and workers post manchester bombing was developed to help with mental health. The Manchester Arena Support Group (MASGP) served as a support group initiative aimed at helping those who were bereaved, seriously injured, responders, and other survivors of the 2017 Manchester Arena terror attack. Implemented nationwide, this program was designed based on proven principles of effective intervention in the aftermath of mass trauma incidents and support programs related to acts of terrorism (European Commission, 2022). The MASGP was created to provide a community and resources for those impacted by the bombing. It offers a safe space for survivors to share their experiences, receive emotional support, and access resources. Groups play a crucial role in helping individuals cope with trauma, mutual support and understanding among those who have gone through similar experience.

The intention of this essay was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Service response to a terrorist attack before, during and after. There were many failures and wrong doings that happened. There was a failure of using JESIP in the Manchester Arena Bombing which meant a lack of communication and intelligence sharing between public services as noted by (Davidson, 2022). Many recommendations were put in place such as Martyn's Law which calls for better security and stop and searching people before they enter a building (Yosipof, 2023). This means that in the future terrorist attacks will hopefully be dealt with better as having learned from the poor coordination of public service's during the Manchester Arena Bombing.

Reference List

Bartolucc, A. (2023) *Spontaneous hospitalization in the immediate aftermath of the manchester arena bombing*, Wiley Online Library. Available at: [Spontaneous hospitalization in the immediate aftermath of the manchester arena bombing - Bartolucci - 2023 - Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management - Wiley Online Library](#) (Accessed: 25 February 2024).

Baker-Beall, C. *et al.* (2024) 'From Prevent to Protect and Prepare: The Manchester Arena Attack and Shifting Priorities in the United Kingdom's Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST)', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, pp. 17 - 19. doi: 10.1080/1057610X.2024.2327664.

Braverman, S. (2023) *Manchester Arena Inquiry: Volume 3 report*, UK Parliament. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-06/debates/145EF763-1DEC-44A4-A4F5-3FEF468B132F/ManchesterArenaInquiryVolume3Report> (Accessed: 14 March 2024).

CRAIGIE, R.J. (2020) Manchester Arena bombing: lessons learnt from a mass casualty incident. *BMJ Military Health*, **166**(2), pp. 72.

Davidson, L. (2022) 'Advancing a social identity perspective on interoperability in the emergency services: Evidence from the pandemic multi-agency response teams during the UK COVID-19 response', *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 77, p. 1.1-1.2. doi:10.1016/j.ijdr.2022.103101.

European Commission (2022) *Manchester Attack Support Group Programme*, European Commission. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/collection-inspiring-practices/ran-collection-search/manchester-attack-support-group-programme-masgp_en (Accessed: 15 March 2024).

Greater Manchester Police (2020) *A man who conspired with his brother to carry out a terror attack that killed 22 people at the Manchester Arena has been convicted*. Available at: <https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2020/march/a-man-who-conspired-with-his-brother-to-carry-out-a-terror-attack-that-killed-22-people-at-the-manchester-arena-has-been-jailed/> (Accessed: 23 November 2024).

UK Government (2024) *Martyn's Law Factsheet*. Available at: <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2024/09/13/martyns-law-factsheet/> (Accessed: 23 November 2024).

UK Government (2023) *CONTEST The United Kingdoms Strategy for Countering Terrorism 2023*, pp. 2–6.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (2022a) *The Kerslake Report, JESIP*. Available at:
https://www.jesip.org.uk/uploads/media/Documents%20Products/Kerslake_Report_Manchester_Are.pdf (Accessed: 25 February 2024).

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (2022b) *The Kerslake Report, JESIP*. pp. 69. Available at:
https://www.jesip.org.uk/uploads/media/Documents%20Products/Kerslake_Report_Manchester_Are.pdf (Accessed: 25 February 2024).

Lowe, D., 2020. Manchester Arena Bombings: main lessons that have been learnt. *Counter IED Report*.

Manchester Arena Inquiry (2022a) 'Report of the Public Inquiry into the Attack on Manchester Arena on 22nd May 2017', *Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume 2: Emergency Response*, 2, pp. 2–2.

Manchester Arena Inquiry (2022b) 'Report of the Public Inquiry into the Attack on Manchester Arena on 22nd May 2017', *Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume 2: Emergency Response*, 2, pp. 148 – 149.

National Health Service (2023) *Major incident triage tools*. Available at:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/major-incident-triage-tools/> (Accessed: 14 March 2024).

Stancombe, J. *et al.* (2022) 'People's experiences of distress and psychosocial care following a terrorist attack: interviews with survivors of the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017', *BJPsych Open*, 8(2), p. e41. doi:10.1192/bjo.2022.2.

Strategic Comments (2017) 'The Manchester Terrorist bombing', 23(5), pp. 1–2. doi:10.1080/13567888.2017.1344018.

Terrorism act (2000) Legislation UK Government. Available at:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/section/1> (Accessed: 23 November 2024).

Watson, S. (2022) *Statement in response to Manchester Arena Inquiry Volume Two Report*, Greater Manchester Police. Available at:

<https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2022/november/statement-in-response-to-inquiry-report>

(Accessed: 14 March 2024).

Yosipof, A. et al (2023) 'Persistence of risk awareness: Manchester Arena bombing on 22 May 2017', *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 94.

doi:10.1016/j.ijdr.2023.103805.