

Citizenship

# **Understanding risk management**

## **How well have UK governments managed risk?**

Downloadable Resource

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# Source 1 - Wiltshire floods

## February 2020

A press association article in the Wiltshire Times said, 'Temporary flood defences had been pushed back towards a pub and other businesses, sparking fears that the defences could be fully breached. Residents in the Worcestershire town of Bewdley were forced to evacuate earlier after the river spilled over barriers at Beales Corner.'

The blue temporary flood defences erected by the government's Environmental Agency were completely overrun with water.

**This could be used as an example of the government being underprepared.**



## Source 2 - The Millennium Bug 2000

Martyn Thomas wrote in The Guardian in 2019, 'Many PCs could not handle dates in 2000. Faults were found in the computers that controlled factories and offshore oil platforms. The UK's Rapier anti-aircraft missile system had a Y2K fault that would have prevented it firing. TaskForce 2000 led an awareness campaign, later joined by Action 2000 with a **£17m government budget**. The millennium bug was real and the internationally coordinated effort was a great success. Tens of thousands of failures were prevented.'

However, public perceptions of the risk led to hysteria. 'News bulletins were filled with horror stories about how this error was going to cause deadly calamity' a Jan' 2019 article in the 'Grimsby Live' online newspaper tells us.

**This could be used as an example of the government being well or over-prepared.**



### **Source 3 - Nightingale Hospitals 2020**

On 23 March the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced lockdown measures in the UK. On 24 March, the government announced it would turn the ExCeL Centre in London into a temporary hospital to cope with patients affected by Covid 19. Work began almost immediately and was completed in nine days. Seven further temporary hospitals were erected in weeks.

The Financial Times reported that NHS England has not disclosed how much the English Nightingales have cost, beyond pointing out that both the London and Birmingham hospitals are occupying their expansive sites rent-free. 'With further waves of coronavirus possible, it is important that we have these extra facilities in place and treating patients' said Simon Stevens, NHS England chief executive.

**This could be used  
as an example of  
the government  
being well  
prepared.**



## Source 4 - Statistics

From 'Full Fact', The UK's Independent Fact Checking Charity, October 2019.

- Rough sleeping increased by 165% from 2010 to 2018
- In May 2019 there were almost 4.4 million referrals for treatment on the NHS in England, where the treatment had not yet begun.....an increase of 70% compared to May 2010.
- There were around 202,000 members of the police workforce in England and Wales in March 2019. That's a decrease of 17% compared to March 2010. ( A police recruitment drive is currently in operation).
- In 2009/10 the Trussell Trust gave out almost 41,000 three-day food packages, and in 2010/11 it gave out 61,000 supplies. Looking at either year, the increase is well over 1,000% in 2018/19.

**Can any of these statistics tell us about how well the government is managing its citizens who may be at risk?**



# Glossary

**Strike** - workers choosing not to work for a period of time, without permission from their employer, in order to bring about a change in their working conditions.

**Mass protests** - citizens gathering in very large crowds in order to protest and bring about a change in society.

**Drought** - a lack of rainfall for a prolonged period which affects water levels.

**Coup** - when a change of those in political power happens in anti-democratic way and often involves violence.

**Hysteria** - an uncontrollable outburst of emotion or fear.

**Mitigation** - actions taken to lower a risk.

