

OFFICIAL

Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) National Guidance 2026

A framework for the Submission, Assessment and Governance of Multi-Agency Learning





Status and Classification

This document is classified as:

OFFICIAL

It may be shared across responder organisations and partner agencies in line with standard information-sharing protocols.

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes	Approved by	Next Review
0.1 Draft	April 2026	C. Hendricks-Lynch	Initial draft based on updated governance and system redesign	-	-
1.0 Final	May 2026	C. Hendricks-Lynch	Final approved version for national release	JESIP Lead / JIB	May 2027





Contents

1.	Document Ownership and Review	4
2.	Platform Development	4
3.	Distribution, Amendments & Updates	4
4.	Purpose	5
5.	Introduction.....	5
6.	Why JOL Exists	6
7.	Why the System Has Been Updated	7
8.	What JOL Is and How It Aligns with Other Systems	7
9.	Alignment with Other Organisational Learning Systems.....	8
10.	The Role of JOL SPoCs	9
11.	The JOL System at a Glance	10
12.	Types of Learning in JOL.....	11
12.1	Lesson Identified (Li) and Notable Practice (NP).....	11
12.2	National and Regional Exercise Debriefs (Thematic Repository).....	12
13.	Thresholds for National JOL submissions.....	13
14.	Governance and Decision-Making	13
15.	Action Notes and Implementation.....	14
15.1	Purpose of Action Notes.....	14
15.2	Integration with the JOL System (2026 Approach)	14
15.3	Issuing Action Notes	15
15.4	Responsibilities for Implementation	15
15.5	Monitoring, Assurance and Reporting.....	16
15.6	Legacy Process (Context for System Improvement)	17
15.7	Benefits of the 2026 Model	17
16.	Principles for Submissions	18
17.	Key Messages.....	18
18.	Definitions & Terminology	19



1. Document Ownership and Review

This document is owned by the National JESIP Team, who are responsible for its development, maintenance, and ongoing review.

Overall governance, strategic oversight, and assurance sit with the JESIP Interoperability Board, which provides national direction for JESIP, Joint Organisational Learning (JOL), associated Action Notes and tracking.

The JOL Working Group (JOLWG) and appropriate Organisational Leads will continue to be engaged in the review process, ensuring the document reflects current organisational learning and remains aligned with JOL principles and processes.

The document will be formally reviewed:

- Annually
- Following any significant system, governance, or policy change

All updates are subject to oversight and endorsement through the JESIP Interoperability Board to ensure alignment with national strategy and governance expectations.

2. Platform Development

JOL Online is a proprietary platform developed and maintained by Zeal Solutions Ltd in partnership with the National JESIP Team.

The 2026 redesign supports the governance, interoperability, workflow, and Action Note processes described within this guidance.

3. Distribution, Amendments & Updates

This document is intended for:

JESIP Strategic Leads	JOL Single Points of Contact (SPoCs)
Responder organisations (Category 1 and 2)	Local Resilience Forums (LRFs)
Relevant national stakeholders	

Amendments and Updates

Updates to this document will be:

- Version controlled
- Clearly recorded within this section
- Communicated through official JESIP channels





Minor updates may be made to maintain accuracy and clarity.
Major updates will be subject to formal review and approval.

Related Documents

This guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- JOL Online User Guidance (Technical “How-To”)
- Strategic JOL Governance Framework
- JOL Submission Guides:
 - Incident
 - Exercise
 - Observation

4. Purpose

This document sets out the **strategic framework, principles, and governance** for the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) system (2026).

It supports responder organisations and JOL Single Points of Contact (SPoCs) in understanding:

- What learning should be submitted
- How submissions are assessed
- How national learning is identified, acted upon, and assured.

5. Introduction

This document provides guidance for responder agencies on the JOL system (2026).

It sets out the purpose and structure of the system, explains how learning is assessed and progressed, and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of organisations and JOL Single Points of Contact (SPoCs). It also defines the standards required for learning to be considered for national submission.

This document is focused on principles and governance. Technical instructions on how to use JOL Online are provided separately.



6. Why JOL Exists

JOL was developed in response to repeated findings from public inquiries and national reviews which identified persistent failures in multi-agency working, including poor communication, ineffective planning, and a consistent failure to act on previous learning. A key gap highlighted was the absence of a national system to capture, share, and embed lessons across organisations.

In line with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, JOL was introduced to provide a structured, consistent approach to identifying, analysing and implementing learning, ensuring that lessons are not only recorded but translated into meaningful improvement in interoperability and national resilience.

JOL provides a structured national mechanism to ensure that learning identified across incidents, exercises and wider organisational activity is not only captured, but acted upon and embedded.

The core purpose of the system is to move learning along a clear pathway – from identification through to implementation – to improve interoperability and strengthen national resilience capability. This ensures that learning is not lost locally but contributes to broader system-wide improvement where required.

JOL supports the consistent application of JESIP principles and reinforces the importance of multi-agency working as a critical component of effective emergency response.





7. Why the System Has Been Updated

The previous JOL system, while effective in capturing learning, lacked clear national thresholds and consistent guidance. As a result, it was often used as a general repository for a wide range of debrief outputs, including learning that was local, single agency in nature, or not aligned to national interoperability priorities.

This created significant backlog and inefficiency and reduced the system's effectiveness as a national mechanism for identifying and progressing meaningful multi-agency learning.

The updated 2026 system introduces a strengthened governance framework with clearly defined thresholds, structured analysis, and transparent decision-making. It also places greater emphasis on SPoC responsibility at the point of submission.

These changes ensure the system is more focused, proportionate, and capable of delivering credible national learning outcomes.

8. What JOL Is and How It Aligns with Other Systems

JOL operates as a national interoperability learning system. Its purpose is to identify systemic issues and opportunities that have relevance across agencies and geographies, and to support the development of practical solutions that improve joint working.

It is important to recognise that JOL is not designed to capture all learning:

- It is not a general repository for standard debrief notes or organisational reflection,
- It is not a mechanism for logging single-agency issues or internal process improvements.

Rather, it acts as a filter and escalation mechanism, ensuring that only learning with clear multi-agency and national value progresses through the system.

Not all learning will meet this threshold. However, this does not diminish its importance – it simply reflects that it is more appropriately actioned through local or existing organisational pathways.



9. Alignment with Other Organisational Learning Systems

This document supports interoperability by aligning with established organisational learning systems across emergency services, ensuring a coordinated, consistent, and complementary approach to capturing, sharing, and acting upon operational learning.

In line with national guidance, alignment is maintained with:

- Fire and Rescue Services – *National Operational Learning (NOL)*
- Ambulance Services (Emergency Capabilities Unit – ECU, formerly NARU) – *Lessons Identified Database (LID)*
- Police Services – *National Police Chief's Council (NPCC)* arrangements

These systems operate alongside JOL as part of the broader national organisational learning landscape, with established mechanisms for sharing lessons and avoiding duplication.

Building on this foundation, the JOL system has been enhanced to actively support interoperability between these platforms. This includes:

- Secure access for nominated users within partner organisations to view relevant JOL submissions.
- The ability for partner organisations to provide 'external review commentary' directly within the JOL system.
- Automated 'push' functionality, enabling submissions to be shared without the need for manual intervention.

This functionality enables:

- Validation of whether learning has been appropriately shared across relevant organisational systems, in line with submission requirements.
- Identification and reduction of duplicate learning across platforms
- Enhanced accuracy and assurance, supported by subject matter expert input from partner organisations.
- Creation of a fully auditable record, with all commentary time-stamped and attributable

In addition, this approach reduces reliance on manual engagement between teams, improving efficiency while strengthening the connectivity and integrity of multi-agency organisational learning.





Where learning does not meet the threshold for JOL, it should be progressed through the appropriate organisational or sector-specific learning systems.

Further system integration is planned as part of the JOL 2026 Phase 2 release, including deeper alignment with partner systems such as LID, reflecting the original intent within national guidance to enable joined-up, cross-sector learning.

Oversight of this alignment sits with the JESIP Interoperability Board, with delivery managed by the National JESIP Team.

10. The Role of JOL SPoCs

In line with the new framework, JOL SPoCs have an enhanced gatekeeping and qualitative role aimed at supporting a more consistent and proportionate gateway assessment before submission.

They are responsible for applying informed judgement and ensuring that only learning which meets the required national threshold is entered into JOL Online.

This includes ensuring that submissions are clearly articulated, supported by evidence, and focused on interoperability outcomes. SPoCs also act as a key communication link within their organisation, supporting both the sharing of national learning and the implementation of Action Notes where required.

In practical terms, SPoCs must consider whether the learning is:

- nationally relevant,
- whether it demonstrates a clear multi-agency impact,
- whether a solution is identifiable, and
- whether the supporting evidence is sufficient to withstand national scrutiny.

The quality of submissions entering the system is directly linked to SPoC judgement at this stage and is key to maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the system.

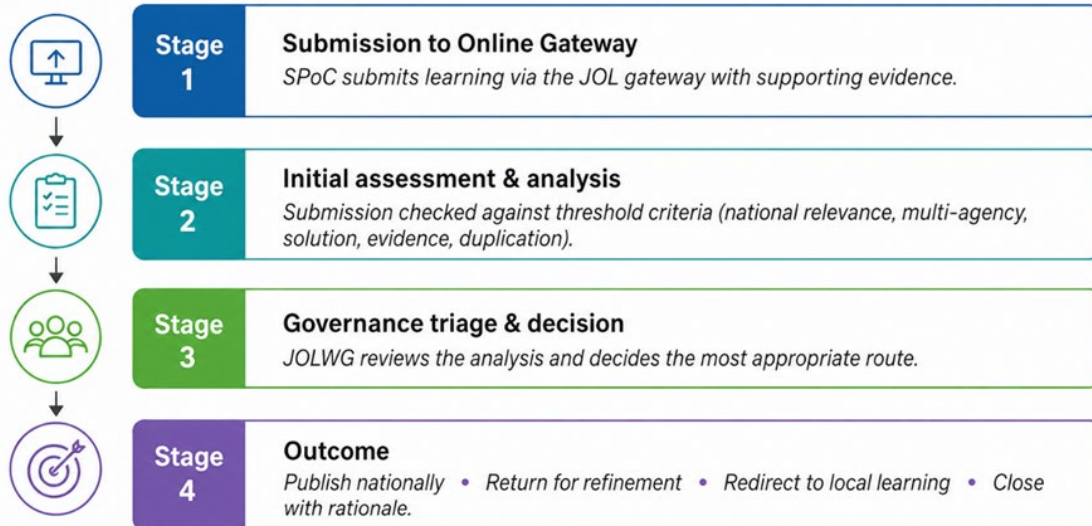


11. The JOL System at a Glance

The JOL system operates through a structured lifecycle, beginning with submission through the online gateway. At this stage, each submission is assessed against defined thresholds to determine whether it is suitable for progression.

Where threshold criteria are met, the submission moves into structured analysis. This includes assessing clarity, identifying any duplication, and ensuring the learning is framed in terms of interoperability. Where appropriate, external stakeholders may be engaged to provide subject matter input.

▲ JOL submission pathway



Submissions are then presented for strategic review either to the JOL Working Group or Counter Terrorism Working Group, depending on whether the submission was deemed terrorism related.

Strategic review will then determine one of four outcomes:

- **Publication** - The submission will be published on JOL Online
- **Return for further development** – The National JESIP team will engage with the submitter to obtain further information.
- **Closure** – The submission will not progress any further.
- **Escalation** – This submission is escalated to the Joint Interoperability Board for national action and consideration of issuing an Action Note.

Where learning is published, it becomes part of the national evidence base. Where required, it may lead to the development of an Action Note. (See section 16)





12. Types of Learning in JOL

The 2026 system recognises three distinct categories of learning:

- Incident
- Exercise, and
- Observation.

Incident learning is derived from real-world operational activity. Exercise learning originates from structured training or simulation environments. Observation learning captures insights from a broader range of contexts, including planning activity, coordination groups, public enquiries, health & safety / prevention of future death reports, organisational reviews, and cultural or leadership scenarios.

Each category presents different characteristics and challenges in terms of evidence, relevance, and applicability. As such, each is supported by its own tailored guidance, which can be found within the Resources area in the JOL system and on the Collaborate page on Resilience Direct.

12.1 Lesson Identified (Li) and Notable Practice (NP)

In addition to the categories of learning a published JOL will also be classified into either a Lesson Identified or a Notable Practice.

1. A Lesson Identified highlights where improvement is needed. It is used when an incident, exercise, or observation reveals a gap, unintended outcome, or opportunity to improve. A Lesson Identified does not require that a solution has already been fully implemented, but it should identify what could be changed to improve future performance, safety, or decision-making.
2. A Notable Practice, in contrast, captures effective practice that worked well and should be recognised and shared. It reflects actions, decisions, or approaches that contributed positively to the outcome of an incident or activity. The purpose is to promote consistency and support wider learning by encouraging others to adopt similar good practice.

In simple terms, a Lesson Identified focuses on what could be improved, whereas a Notable Practice focuses on what should be repeated. Both are essential to the JOL system, helping organisations learn not only from challenges and gaps, but also from effective practice that supports safer and more interoperable working.





12.2 National and Regional Exercise Debriefs (Thematic Repository)

In addition to the three formal learning pathways, the JOL system now includes a dedicated repository for national and regional exercise debrief documentation.

This has been introduced in recognition that:

- There is currently no consistent national location for the collation of large-scale exercise debriefs.
- JOL SPoCs have increasingly submitted full debrief reports via the JOL system, despite these not being suitable for formal JOL consideration in their entirety.
- These documents often contain significant thematic value, even where they do not meet the threshold as a structured JOL submission.

This repository allows organisations to:

- Submit full debrief reports from national or regional exercises.
- Request thematic analysis or commentary, where appropriate
- Support broader system understanding of emerging patterns, repeat issues, and systemic challenges.

It is important to note that:

- These documents are not processed as formal JOL submissions.
- They do not progress through the JOL publication or governance pathway.
- They are not shared openly or published via JOL outputs.

Instead, they are retained for:

- Thematic interrogation
- Supporting evidence-based insight
- Informing national understanding when requested by services, partners, or government (e.g. Home Office).

This approach ensures that valuable material is:

- Captured and utilised appropriately.
- Separated from the formal JOL threshold process.
- Used to support strategic insight without compromising system integrity.





13. Thresholds for National JOL submissions

For any submission to progress within JOL, they must meet a consistent set of national criteria. This includes demonstrating clear multi-agency relevance, national applicability, and an identifiable interoperability issue or benefit.

In addition, the submission must include a practical solution or actionable outcome, either explicitly stated or clearly inferable, and be supported by sufficient evidence. This typically includes a structured description of what was observed, why it matters, and what should change.

Submissions that do not meet these criteria may be returned for further development or closed at the gateway stage. In such cases, learning should be progressed through appropriate local or sector-based mechanisms.

Further detail on these criteria, including how they should be interpreted and applied in practice, is provided within the 'JOL Submission Guidance' documents. These are structured across the three learning categories—Incident, Exercise, and Observation—and offer expanded explanation, examples, and practical guidance to support consistent decision-making at the point of submission.

14. Governance and Decision-Making

The 2026 governance model introduces a more robust and transparent approach to decision-making within JOL. The JOL Strategic Governance Framework document can be located in full within the Resources section.

Decisions are based on clearly defined threshold criteria, and all outcomes are recorded with supporting rationale. The JOLWG plays a central role in reviewing and determining submission outcomes, supported by structured analysis and stakeholder input.

The JOLWG Chair also holds delegated authority to close or return submissions at the gateway stage where thresholds are clearly not met. This supports efficiency and prevents unsuitable submissions from progressing unnecessarily.





15. Action Notes and Implementation

15.1 Purpose of Action Notes

Action Notes are the formal mechanism through which nationally significant learning identified through the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) process is translated into required action across responder organisations.

Where a submission identifies a systemic issue or opportunity requiring national change, it may be escalated through governance and developed into a JOL Action Note, subject to approval by the JESIP Interoperability Board.

Action Notes ensure that learning is not only captured, but actively progressed into consistent, measurable improvement across services. In doing so, they provide a structured means of strengthening interoperability and national resilience through coordinated action.

15.2 Integration with the JOL System (2026 Approach)

The 2026 JOL system introduces a fully integrated approach to Action Notes, embedding them within the end-to-end learning lifecycle.

Action Notes are now generated and managed directly within the JOL system, creating a clear and continuous link between:

- the originating submission,
- the structured analysis and governance decision, and
- the resulting national action.

This integration establishes, for the first time, a single, authoritative system of record for both learning and action. It enables:

- Improved traceability, linking decisions directly to their evidence base.
- Greater transparency, with activity visible across the full lifecycle
- Stronger governance oversight, supported by consistent audit records.

This approach ensures that learning and action are no longer separate processes, but form part of a coherent and auditable national system.





15.3 Issuing Action Notes

Where a submission meets the threshold for national action, a recommendation is developed through the JOL process and presented to the JESIP Interoperability Board for consideration. Where approved, it is issued as a JOL Action Note.

Each Action Note clearly defines:

- the required action or expectation,
- the intended outcome or improvement, and
- whether it is issued for action or for information.

This clarity ensures that organisations understand both what is required and why, supporting consistent interpretation and implementation across services.

All Action Notes are issued and managed through the JOL system, providing a controlled, standardised approach to communication and record-keeping.

15.4 Responsibilities for Implementation

Responsibility for implementing Action Notes sits with individual responder organisations, supported by their internal JESIP governance arrangements.

Organisations are expected to embed required actions within their:

- policy and procedures,
- training and exercising activity, and
- operational practice.

This ensures that learning is translated into meaningful and sustainable change.

JESIP Strategic Leads retain accountability for implementation within their organisation. This includes:

- ensuring actions are delivered,
- coordinating internal activity where required, and
- providing assurance of completion through appropriate reporting mechanisms.

These responsibilities ensure that Action Notes are consistently applied while maintaining clear local ownership of delivery.





15.5 Monitoring, Assurance and Reporting

The 2026 system provides a structured and transparent approach to the monitoring and assurance of Action Notes through the JOL platform.

All activity relating to Action Notes is captured within the system, creating a time-stamped and fully auditable record that is directly linked to the originating learning. This establishes a continuous line of sight from lesson identified through to implementation and assurance, supporting both operational understanding and national governance.

The system enables consistent tracking of progress across organisations and improves visibility of implementation status at both local and national levels. In practice, this approach supports:

- Real-time visibility of progress and completion status across responder organisations
- Standardised reporting, ensuring consistency in how implementation is recorded and assessed.
- Direct linkage between Action Notes and originating JOL submissions, strengthening traceability.
- A clear and accessible audit trail, supporting governance, scrutiny, and future analysis.

The National JESIP Team is responsible for overseeing this process, including monitoring implementation activity, collating assurance data, and reporting progress to the JESIP Interoperability Board.

This ensures that:

- actions are actively tracked and reviewed,
- implementation is evidenced rather than assumed, and
- national assurance can be demonstrated in a clear, consistent, and repeatable manner.





15.6 Legacy Process (Context for System Improvement)

Under previous arrangements, Action Notes operated outside of the core JOL system and were managed through largely manual processes.

Distribution, response collection, and compliance tracking were undertaken through separate tools and localised methods, supported by the JOL team. While effective at the time, this approach relied on manual coordination and limited the ability to provide consistent visibility, reporting, and end-to-end auditability.

The transition to an integrated system addresses these challenges and strengthens the overall governance and assurance model.

15.7 Benefits of the 2026 Model

The integration of Action Notes within the JOL system represents a significant step forward in the maturity of national organisational learning.

By bringing learning, decision-making, action, and assurance into a single system, the 2026 model provides clear end-to-end visibility of the learning-to-action lifecycle and strengthens both efficiency and governance.

Key benefits include:

- A fully integrated and auditable system of record
- Improved consistency in implementation and reporting
- Enhanced oversight and assurance at a national level

This ensures that Action Notes are a fully embedded component of a modern, integrated system, capable of demonstrating clear impact and supporting continuous improvement in multi-agency working.





16. Principles for Submissions

Submissions to JOL should consistently demonstrate a focus on interoperability and be grounded in evidence. They should present learning that is generalisable beyond a local context and clearly articulate what should change.

Submissions should also be proportionate. Not all learning requires national visibility, and SPoCs should ensure that only learning of genuine national value is submitted.

Ultimately, learning should be framed in a way that supports actionable improvement rather than descriptive reporting.

17. Key Messages

Not all learning is intended for national publication, and this is an intentional feature of the system. JOL is designed to filter and prioritise learning that has broader value, rather than act as a repository for all information.

The role of the SPoC is therefore critical in maintaining system quality and ensuring consistency in how learning is assessed before submission.

Importantly, where learning is closed or redirected, this does not diminish its importance. It reflects a decision about the most appropriate level at which it should be actioned.

High-quality submissions strengthen the system as a whole, enabling meaningful national insight, supporting thematic analysis, and driving improvements in multi-agency working.





18. Definitions & Terminology

Term	Definition
Joint Organisational Learning (JOL)	The national system for capturing, analysing, and acting upon multi-agency interoperability learning.
Action Note	A formal directive issued following approved national learning requiring action by organisations.
Actionable Outcome	A clearly defined improvement or change resulting from the learning.
Assurance	The process of verifying that actions have been completed effectively.
Audit Trail	A recorded history of decisions and actions within the system.
Closure	A decision outcome where a submission does not progress further.
Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG)	The governance body responsible for reviewing submissions and determining outcomes relating to terrorism.
Debrief	A structured review conducted after an incident or exercise to identify lessons.
Duplication (Duplicate Learning)	Repeated or overlapping submissions across systems.
Escalation	The process of raising learning for national-level action.
Evidence Base	Supporting information validating the learning submission.
Exercise Learning	Learning derived from training exercises or simulations.
External Review Commentary	Input from partner organisations to validate and enhance submissions.
Implementation	The process of embedding learning or Action Notes into organisational practice.





Incident Learning	Learning derived from real-world operational activity.
Interoperability	The ability of emergency responder organisations to work together effectively during incidents.
JESIP Interoperability Board	The strategic oversight body responsible for governance, approval of Action Notes, and national direction.
National JESIP Team	The team responsible for maintaining the JOL system and overseeing delivery and assurance.
JESIP Strategic Leads	Senior organisational representatives accountable for implementing learning and Action Notes.
JOL Online	The digital platform used to submit, assess, and manage JOL learning and Action Notes.
JOL Working Group (JOLWG)	The governance body responsible for reviewing submissions and determining outcomes.
Lessons Identified Database (LID)	Ambulance Service learning system.
Lifecycle	The full journey of learning from submission through to outcome and implementation.
Local Resilience Forum (LRF)	Multi-agency partnerships that coordinate local emergency planning.
Multi-Agency Impact	Learning affecting more than one responder organisation.
National Operational Learning (NOL)	Fire and Rescue learning system.
National Relevance	Learning applicable across multiple organisations or regions
Observation Learning	Learning derived from wider contexts such as planning, reviews, or cultural insights.
Organisational Learning	The process of identifying, analysing, and acting on lessons to improve performance.





Proportionality	Ensuring submissions are appropriate in scale and importance for national consideration.
Push Functionality	Automated sharing of submissions across systems.
Real-Time Visibility	Live tracking of implementation progress.
Secure Access (Nominated Users)	Controlled user permissions for partner organisations.
Single Point of Contact (SPoC)	The designated individual responsible for submitting and managing JOL learning within an organisation.
Structured Analysis	The formal review process assessing clarity, duplication, and interoperability relevance.
Submission (Gateway Stage)	The initial stage where learning is entered and assessed against thresholds.
System of Record	The authoritative source for storing learning, decisions, and actions.
Thematic Analysis	The process of identifying patterns and trends across multiple pieces of learning.
Thematic Repository	A storage area for exercise debriefs used for analysis but not formal JOL progression.
Threshold Criteria	The standards a submission must meet to progress (e.g., national relevance, multi-agency impact).
Traceability	Ability to link actions and decisions back to original learning.

