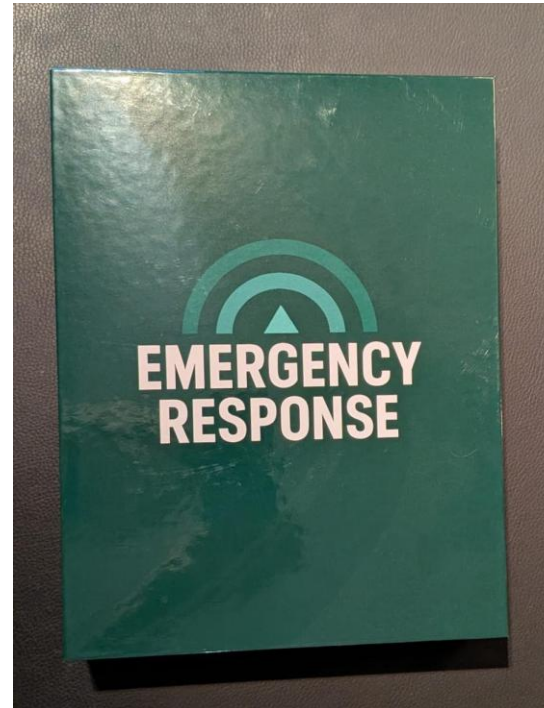


Journey into Emergency Planning Exercises

And its uses within the current industry landscape



This didn't start as a product



Why we started the Masters in Wargaming and Resilience Planning at Brunel

For Paul, it was after 20+ years of training and exercising and wanting to get to a point of making it more productively. While also making it more engaging for those participating in the training, while taking onboard the learning outcomes more organically.

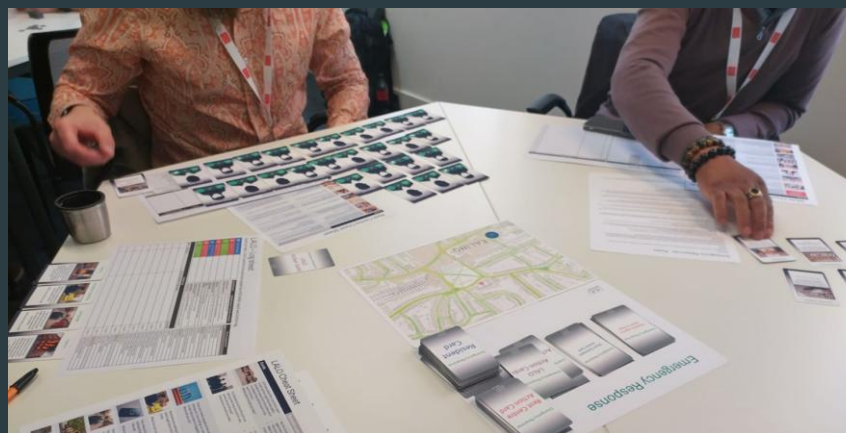
For Kyle, with the rumours of layoffs coming up in his job after almost 20 years in IT training and exercises, he decided it was time to get some formal certification. After having a conversation with the lead Professor Iain at Brunel through a social event, Kyle signed up with the goal of using this as a turning point in his career.



Game designs made during the course

Bloom's Taxonomy Training Game

- ▶ Game-design objective
- ▶ Existing emergency-planning experience
- ▶ Real-world training problem
- ▶ Opportunity to experiment
- ▶ First prototype



Defining the problem

The problem we were trying to solve

Background assumptions:

- ▶ Traditional corporate/government training
- ▶ Procedures and documentation exist
- ▶ Emergency plans exist

Questions raised:

- ▶ But how often do people have to use them under pressure?
- ▶ How do you practice decisions without running a major exercise?
- ▶ How do you make the training repeatable without being repetitive?

Prototyping

Prototyping with Ealing Council

Playtesting the concept right from the beginning with SMEs



Immediately, we asked:

- ▶ What felt realistic?
- ▶ What was missing?
- ▶ What was unnecessary?
- ▶ What confused players?
- ▶ What actually generated discussion?
- ▶ Red teaming

We didn't just test the game with Ealing Council; they became part of the journey in its design.

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect. The word "Iteration" is centered in a green, sans-serif font.

Iteration

Classroom assessment / validation

- Initial demo of prototype with non-SMEs
- Validation of brief and specs
- Mistakes found and documented
- Peer review and feedback

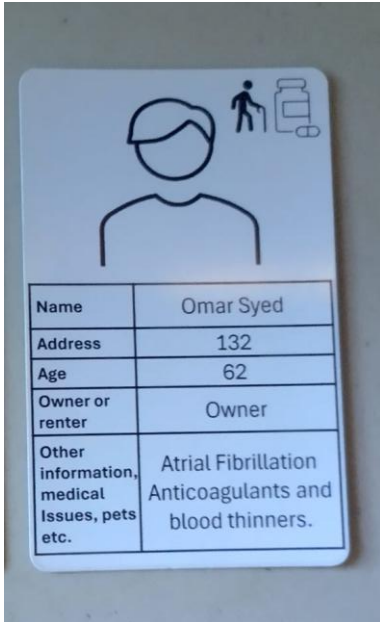




Industry demand / feedback

- ▶ A decision point was made post-course that this could be improved and used within the industry
- ▶ Followed up with Ealing Council for additional playtesting and feedback
- ▶ Play tested the first commercial iteration at Kings Collage in 2025
- ▶ First design choice updates created

How the design evolved



- Word heavy
- Simple design



- Iconography
- Simplified information
- Dark template

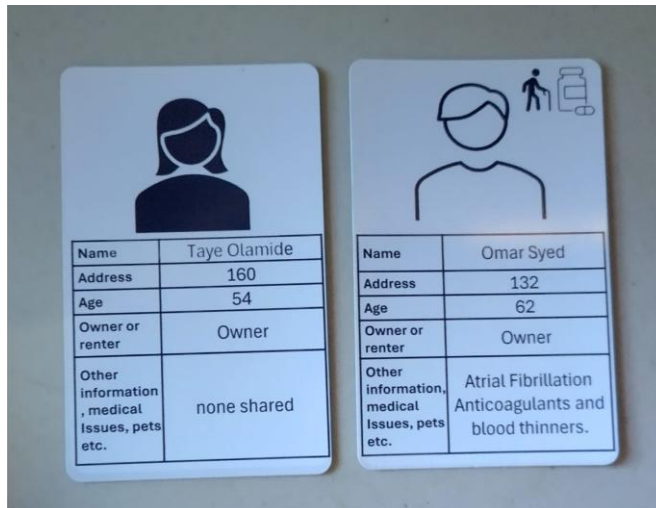


- Brighter
- Cleaner design
- Less icon choices
- More variation

What we learned about game design

Players need enough information to decide, but not enough to be comfortable:

- ▶ Reduce cognitive clutter
- ▶ Make rules intuitive
- ▶ Use familiar terminology
- ▶ Abstract where necessary
- ▶ Preserve meaningful decisions
- ▶ Don't design for the facilitator
- ▶ More concise ruleset for faster play



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Final Product

What happens in the room?

Brief of the game mechanics and exercise rules.



Allocation of roles (usually of those already performing them or setting up teams as required)



Initial Scenario kick off



Inject / Resident / Action phase where the majority of the discussion occurs on how to solve the issues.



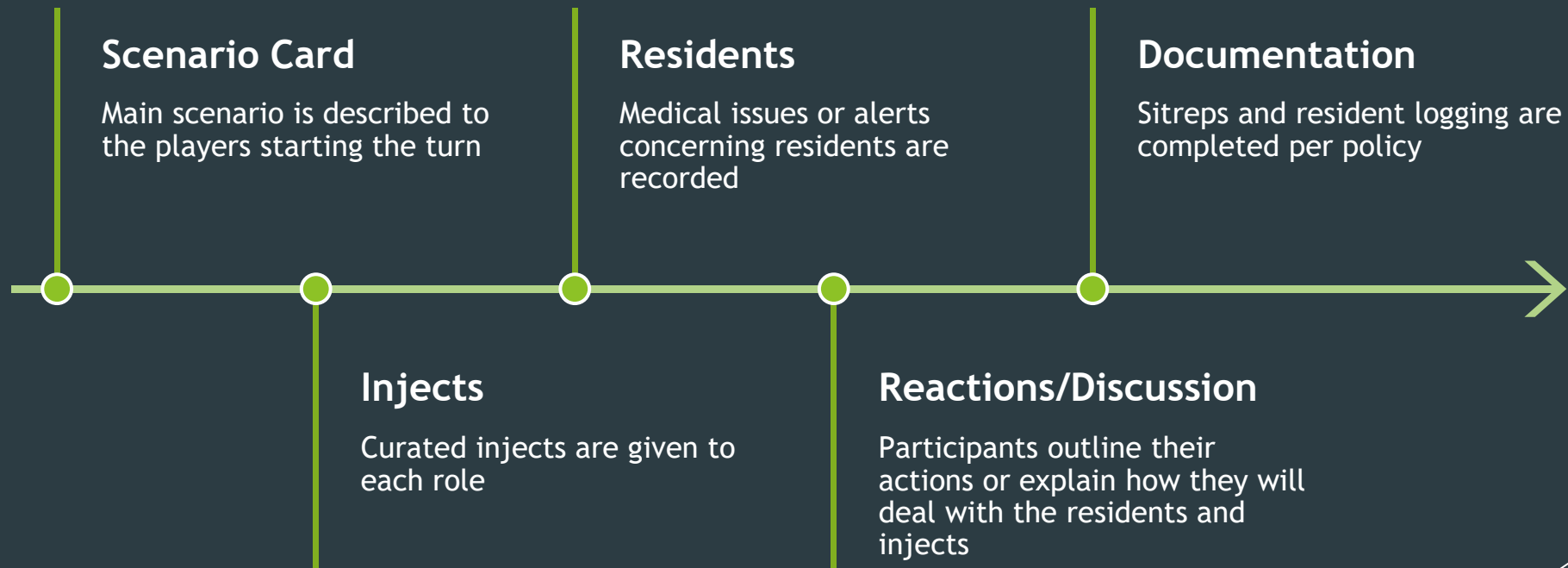
Facilitator observations recorded and debrief of actions discussed

Game Architecture

- ▶ Scenarios
- ▶ Roles and Responsibilities
- ▶ Residents
- ▶ Injects
- ▶ Medicine
- ▶ Alerts
- ▶ Actions
- ▶ Documentation
- ▶ Consequences
- ▶ Debrief

Game mechanics can be adapted to be simplified or more complicated depending on the participants

A typical turn in the exercise





What are we exercising?

For the participants:

- ▶ Existing processes and procedures
- ▶ Escalation process and responsibility
- ▶ Resource management
- ▶ Communication channels
- ▶ Who takes responsibility and when
- ▶ Situational control

For the facilitators:

- ▶ What assumptions are being made
- ▶ What is being recorded
- ▶ How the participants are interpreting information
- ▶ Training methodology shift

But at no point is the exercise about winning.

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Using it with real people

Who uses it?

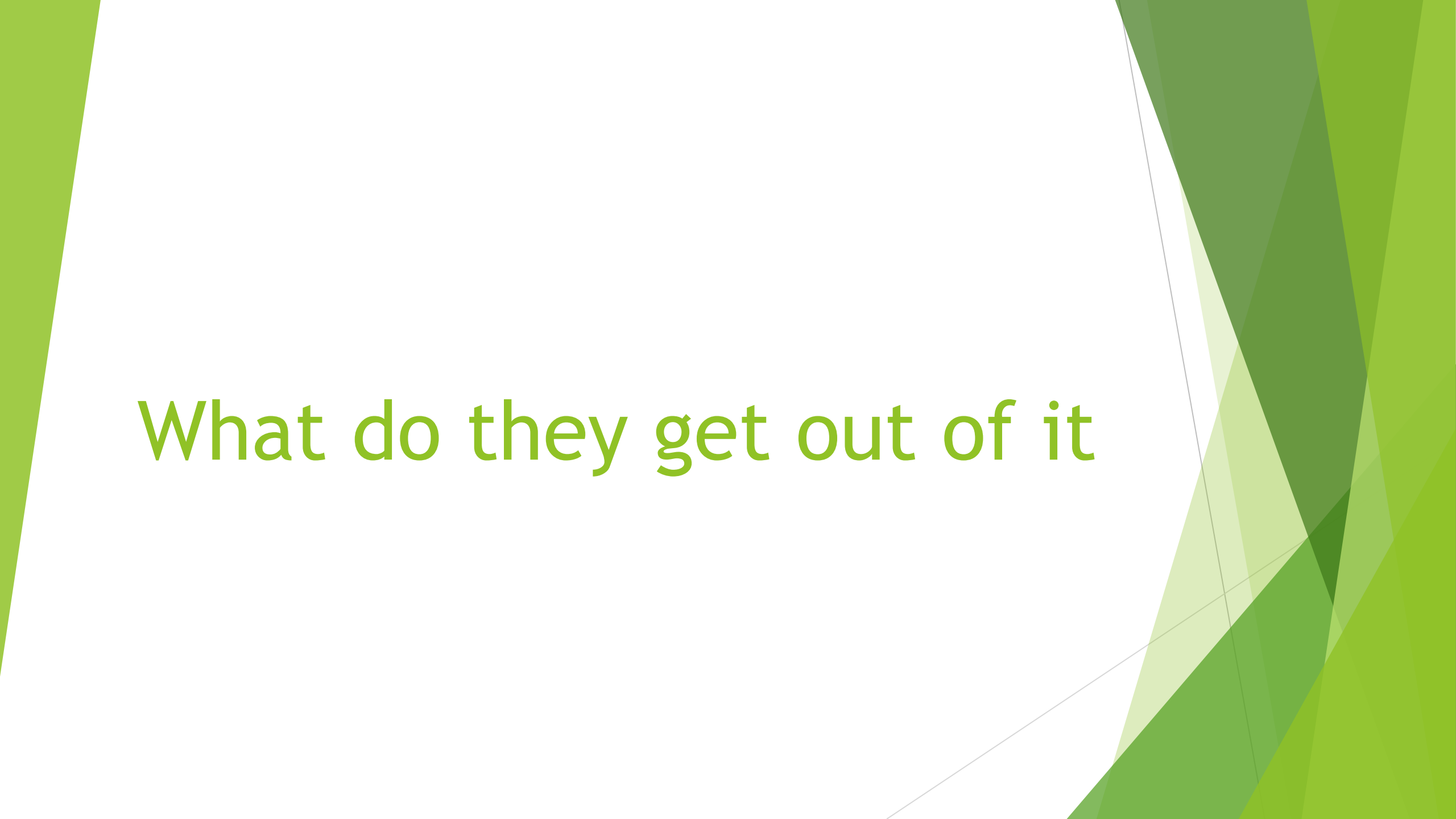
Created while attending Brunel's Masters in Wargaming and Resilience Planning course.

Now being used within Local Councils in South and West London

- ▶ Resilience and Emergency Planning Departments
- ▶ Silver Level Managers
- ▶ Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALO)
- ▶ Rest Centre Managers

All as a supplement and further training on the existing council training used by Silver/LALO/Rest Centre volunteers within the Local Councils.



The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern, layered effect. The text is centered horizontally and vertically within the white space.

What do they get out of it

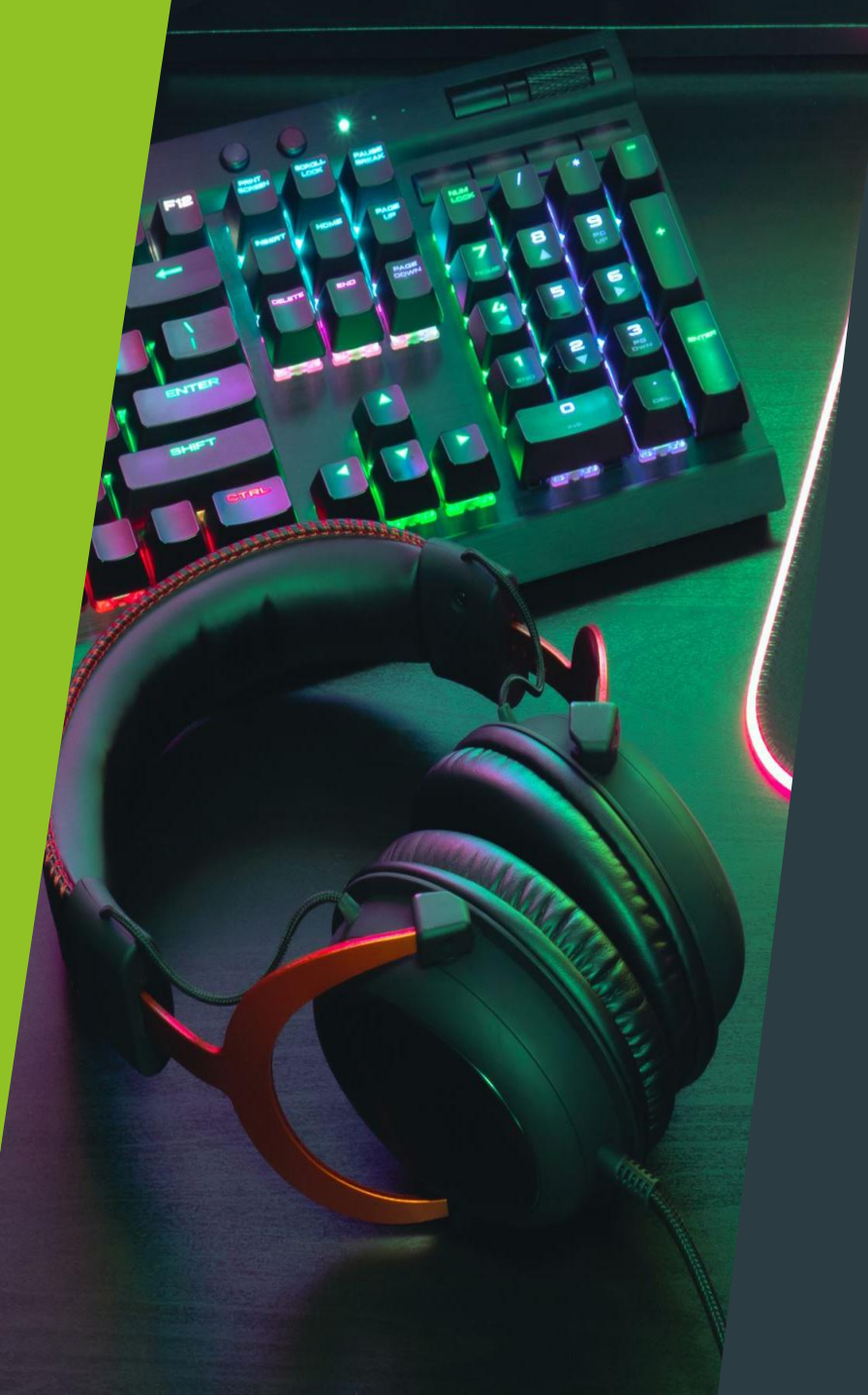
The outputs are
not points
on a scoreboard

The output is the conversation and evidence generated by play:

- ▶ Decision gaps
- ▶ Role ambiguity
- ▶ Communication issues
- ▶ Resource assumptions
- ▶ Training needs
- ▶ Procedural misunderstandings
- ▶ Good practice
- ▶ Questions nobody had previously asked
- ▶ Confidence in capability

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

What we learned building it



Challenges

- ▶ Gamification is not the norm, it is new, and it is perceived as being just play
- ▶ Pricing due to it being again perceived as a game instead of training
- ▶ Participation. More senior members may find it hard to adapt to a new way of training through gamification.
- ▶ Non-gamers may find the rules aspect restricting or unfamiliar.
- ▶ Immersion issues. Some players cannot understand the difference between the realism they think the training should have vs the abstract required to get the appropriate output from the training
- ▶ Wording of Wargaming vs Serious Games
- ▶ And finally, training and exercising is not seen as a priority within organisations

Things that did not work

Players bringing
their own
assumptions

SMEs
compensating
for bad ideas

Every playtest
changes
something

Information
overload on
cards

Facilitation can
hide design
problems

Rules being
unclear or
overcomplicated



Evacuate: Fire Marshal Training

- ▶ Award-winning game, DSET - Defense Simulation Education and Training Conference, Serious Games Showcase and Challenge Europe, Manual Game Award 2026
- ▶ Cluedo-styled exercise to help Fire Marshals understand evacuation procedures under pressure
- ▶ Working on systematic walkthroughs of an office space to clear our occupants while a fire takes place
- ▶ Understanding chokepoints and how communication is a key element to be successful

Questions?