Brent Emergency Planning Community Response Procedures Tool Kit

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www.Brent.gov.uk/Emergencies

Introduction

Emergency planning and response in the UK is driven by The Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Act places a statutory responsibility on the emergency services and local authorities to undertake emergency preparedness and response activities. In nearly all cases, emergency incidents are dealt with by the emergency services, local authorities and the major utilities.

However, there are circumstances, where community groups are able to help coordinate vital preparedness and resilience building activities or assist in the provision of basic welfare in the outset of an incident prior to activation of the emergency services and local authority.

There is no statutory responsibility for parish councils or community groups to prepare or plan against local risks. However it is good practice for communities to identify local risks and agree simple procedures as to how they may mitigate or respond to these.

Appropriate mitigation and preparedness techniques prior to a potential incident such as putting in simple flood protection techniques or helping to salt and grit side roads and pavements can alleviate or even remove the potential for an emergency incident.

It should be recognised that community groups are not the emergency services and are not trained, equipped, empowered or resourced to carry out the functions of an emergency service.

Your response should be focused on preparedness or mitigation techniques and the provision of basic welfare in the outset of an emergency incident.

Data Protection

Once completed, some of the information these procedures will contain (e.g. addresses, contact numbers) is classed as 'personal data' under the Data Protection Act (1998). Whilst holding this data is legally justified (e.g. in order to protect interests of members of the community in an emergency) the information still needs to be handled sensitively.

Key to this will be to inform the community as to what information is held within the Community Plan and why and, most importantly, to provide them with assurances that the information will be handled sensitively.

CRB checks are not compulsory, as deployment is on an ad-hoc basis, though consideration should be taken by responders when handling survivors' information.

Relevant Documents

- 'Data Protection Act' (1998) www.ico.gov.uk/what_we_cover/data_protection.aspx
- 'Data Protection and Sharing – Guidance for Emergency Planners and Responders' (2007) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-and-sharing-guidance-for-emergency-planners-and-responders

Stage 1 - What is the Purpose of This Guidance?

This document is intended to be a guide to help you and your community produce some procedures to help you stay resilient against risks in your local area. These Community Response Procedures should be used as a tool to help you prepare for the emergencies that could affect your community.

This is only a suggested template and the document should be amended to fit your specific needs. There is further guidance embedded into the template in italics, which may help to guide your decisions.
Contact emergency.planning@brent.go.uk for further guidance or help please visit;
www.brent.gov.uk/emergencies/preparing-for-emergencies/

Why do we need Community Response Procedures?

Emergency incidents do happen these can range from the minor; heavy snow and ice blocking side-roads and pavements or the major; widespread flooding incidents resulting in evacuations. If communities are able to prepare as far as reasonably possible against these risks then the effects can be minimized or in some cases removed.

For example many minor risks dealt with at an early stage at the community level can remove or reduce the chance of that risk escalating into a major incident or emergency for e.g.;

➢ Clearing snow of paths and side roads and gritting pathways and pavements, keeps the conduits to the main road network clear and allows people to continue on their daily tasks

➢ Identifying local neighbours with gas stoves and/or wood burning fires to aide the vulnerable during times of severe power cut

➢ Disseminating risk or risk warning information about severe weather or flooding to people in the local area allows them to take precautions and undertake mitigation measures such as purchasing sandbags or flood protection before the event

➢ Keeping a list of the vulnerable, isolated or those with mobility issues expedites any evacuation for the emergency services should one be required

By becoming more resilient, you and your community can complement the work of local emergency responders and reduce the impact of an emergency on your community.

Who are the Local Emergency Responders?

These are the organisations that have a statutory responsibility to plan for and respond to incidents in your local area.

They include;

➢ Brent Council
➢ Emergency Services
➢ Brent Resilience Forum; multi-agency forum of local emergency responders

Planning For Your Community – Getting Started; Relationships, Vulnerability and Risk

Identifying your Community

You should begin by considering who these procedures are for and which community intends to utilise them?
Remember, that a community can be classed as any group of people with a common goal or interest; therefore you may want to consider holding an open meeting to allow as many people as possible to come together and contribute towards the process.
In turn, this will greatly increase your potential knowledge and resource base.

Indentify Existing Local Relationships or Networks You Can Work With

Community Resilience is something many people and communities already undertake.
The process is not about creating new networks, but rather an ongoing process of exploiting and enhancing existing relationships.
When undertaking this process, consider liaising with your local:
  ➢ Neighbourhood Watch Groups

  ➢ Community Groups

  ➢ Scout Leaders

  ➢ Residence Associations

  ➢ Faith Groups

  ➢ Youth / Outreach Groups

  ➢ Any other groups who come together to help the local community

Consider establishing a Community Action Group, this should involve as wider a group of people in your local community as possible. These types of open minded discussions allows greater local knowledge retention, which facilitates further accuracy when identifying dangers and risks within your local areas and a wider pool of resources when considering response procedures.

Collecting Information

It is vital to ensure that isolated or vulnerable people are contacted either prior or during an emergency incident to see if they require any help or assistance. There is a myriad of existing organisations that can help you gain access to or aide you in collection this information.
Consider organisation such as;

  ➢ Brent Council Emergency Planning Team
  ➢ Brent CVS
  ➢ British Red Cross
  ➢ WRVS and other similar organisations
  ➢ Faith Groups
  ➢ Local Community Action Groups

When Considering Vulnerabilities

It is important to remember that emergency situations can make everyone vulnerable and greatly increases the difficulty or life for those who are already vulnerable or isolated.
Always remember;

➢ People may become vulnerable at any point in their life and we can all be vulnerable in different circumstances
➢ Being vulnerable means different things to different groups
➢ Vulnerabilities can vary in their duration
➢ Appearances can be deceptive; people are not always vulnerable, even if you assume them to be. Resilience is based on the totality of people's knowledge and life experiences

Identifying and Preparing Against Risks

It is important to be aware of all the risks that could affect your community and have an understanding how you could be affected by them in order to allow you to develop resilience. When undertaking this process communities should prepare for and focus on the risks they feel are relevant to their area of interest.

Brent Council has a duty to maintain a Community Risk Register (CRR), this gives an overview of all the major risks which affect the Borough and outlines the work done by the Brent Resilience Forum to reduce and militate against these risks.

This can be found at: www.Brent.gov.uk/communityresilience

Use this Brent wide document with your own local knowledge to try and indentify the small-scale risks pertinent to your own local area and community, which may not be included on the register for e.g.

➢ Blocked drainage ditches, resulting in small scale flooding on local roads or pavements/ footpaths
➢ Ice and snow blocking side roads and stopping people going about their regular business
➢ People with limited mobility who may need some extra assistance
➢ Groups who may struggle to understand risk warning messages due to language barriers
➢ Small industrial sites which may represent a very localised risk should a fire etc. occur

Action

Using the local risk assessment section on page 3

➢ Identify these local risks and their potential impact on the community
➢ Identify what simple things your Community Response Group could do to reduce or remove these risks

Assessing Community Skills and Resources

Once your Community Response Group is aware of the potential risks it might need to prepare for, you need to then consider what skills, resources or equipment your community already holds which could be utilised to prepare and mitigative against these risks.

Volunteers

Volunteering is often spontaneous and many individuals and communities will come together at times of crisis. However, as part of your planning process you could collect a list of people who are willing to give their time to help.

You may also want to consider talking with other existing local groups to see if their existing contacts or volunteers would be willing to aid in your response.

Resources

Consider what tools, equipment, premises or machinery could be utilised in preparing for or during an emergency. You may have people with specific qualifications or capabilities who may be vital in assisting you in a response.

Consider:

➢ 4 x 4 owners who may be able to assist in delivering prescriptions or food stuffs during times of flood, snow or ice

➢ Consider those who may own coal/ oil/ wood burning stoves or fires or gas powered stoves who may be able to assist at times of power outages

➢ Local business such as builders merchants who may be able to provide sand-bags or other vital resources

➢ List your trained first aiders who can be deployed should any incident occur, prior to the health services arriving

Key Locations

During an emergency incident the local authority may need your help in providing temporary welfare for evacuees until transport to a rest centre can be arranged. It may therefore be helpful to consider identifying a safe shelter point for people i.e. above any flood levels, with good mobility access etc. you should liaise with your local authority Emergency Planning Officer to see exactly what you can do to support them in this work.

Emergency Contact Lists

It is vital to keep accurate, up-to-date records of everyone who is in the Community Response Team as well as any other groups or individuals who have offered their help.

You may want to collate these numbers into a telephone tree or cascade which sets out the process and responsibilities for activating the required response team.
An example of which can be found on page 5

Stage 2 – What To Do in a Response

Activating Your Response

In most cases your response will be activated at the request of Brent Council Emergency Planning Team, however, there are preparatory measures your Community Response Team can take on their own accord.

It is suggested that you consider 2 levels of activation triggers:

1. Which will activate your preparatory response such as information distribution or mitigation measures **(Semi-Regularly)**
2. To activate a further response such as undertaking a localised evacuation to a welfare point until you can be alleviated by the emergency services or Brent Council (these triggers and suggested activities should first be discussed with Brent Council's Emergency Planning Team) **(Hopefully Never)**

Suggested triggers for activation of Preparatory/ Mitigation/ Resilience Measures:

- Have we received information about any potential risks from the Council or local media outlets
- Have you received any Severe Weather Warnings?
- Is heavy snow and ice predicted?
- Official communications from the emergency services?
- Is more then 50% of the community without utilities?
- What can we safely accomplish without the help of the emergency services or the Brent Council's Emergency Planning Team.

First Steps When Responding

After you have decided on your chosen threats, prevention methods and activation triggers, you should complete the table on page 8, which allows you to set out your first steps when responding to any risks.

There is a draft agenda for you first Community Response Group meeting on the following page, please adapt these as appropriate.

It is good practice to record all your decisions on the log on page 9 so in future meetings you quickly and clearly know what you have achieved and what tasks are outstanding. Moreover, when undertaking community resilience activities you have a duty of care to your local community and might be required to justify some decisions at a later time.

Stage 3 - Practicing and Reviewing Your Plan

Sharing Your Procedures

Once you have created your plan, it is vital that you share it with your community to get their thoughts and views on your chosen procedures. It is paramount that all members of the community feel that the plan works for them.

It is also very important that you share your plan with the Brent Council's Emergency Planning Team; so they know who to contact should your response be required and what specific assistance you can potentially provide.

You should also maintain a distribution list to record who has received a copy of the procedures and in what format. This ensures that people receive any revised copies following any reviews or up-dates.

Reviewing and Updating Your Procedures

Your procedures should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure they continue to meet the needs of your community. You should also encourage your volunteers to let you know as and when their personal information changes.

To make sure that your chosen procedures will work properly, it is important that your procedures are tested. This allows you to test how appropriate they are for your specific response and how ready your Response Group is to carry out its chosen actions.

Practising these arrangements can be as simple as carrying out a simple call-tree test or to the more elaborate; carrying out a full activation to a chosen location. Following a practise or test of your procedures you should revise any aspects which either didn't work or can be improved.

Remember when you make any changes or amendments to the document; you should record these next to your distribution list to ensure everyone knows they are using the latest version.

Supporting Organisations

If you feel like you may require further training and/or resources to increase the accuracy of your planning, there is a list of organisations below who may be able to provide you information and free resources.

You can also contact community.resilience@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.ukif you would like further information or to tell us about community resilience work you are involved with.

Where to get more information

Below are the details of useful organisations where you can find further information on how to become more resilient.

Brent Emergency Planning Department

http://brent.gov.uk/emergencies

 Email: Emergency.Planning@brent.gov.uk

Detailed information about specific activities undertaken in Brent and a number of documents to support your planning process

Community Resilience - National Government advice on Community Resilience

https://www.gov.uk/resilience-in-society-infrastructure-communities-and-businesses

The **Local Authority** home of resources for individual and community resilience

http://www.communityresilience.cc/

Environment Agency - For information on environmental risks, including Flood Warnings

http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Met-Office - For information on severe weather including risks and potential alerts

http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/

British Red Cross - Information on the simple precautions that can be taken to prepare for a range of emergency situations, along with advice on how to cope

http://www.redcross.org.uk

RSPCA - The RSPCA has put together some guidelines so that you can be prepared

http://www.rspca.org.uk/in-action/international/emergencyresponse

Telephone: 0300 1234555

Potential Funding Streams

There may be circumstances in which you need additional funding to help enhance resilience in your community. Below are some examples of tools which can help you find the best available funding for your community, as well as a selection of examples of national, regional and local funding.

It is important to check the relevant websites for the most up to date information to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria or closing deadlines.

These grant finding websites and tools have been developed to find the most suitable grant for community projects. The process involves a simple checklist to see what funding is available.

Grant Finder

http://www.grantfinder.co.uk

Grants and policy database with details of 6,000 funding opportunities

Funding Central

http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk

Is a Government funding portal for all third sector organisations, including community groups, providing access to 4,000 funding and finance opportunities. As well as tools and resources situations, along with advice on how to cope when they do.

Government Funding

http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk

Online portal to grants for the voluntary and community sector

Lottery Funding

http://www.lotteryfunding.org.uk

Lottery Funding is a joint website run by all lottery funders in the UK.

This site allows you to search information on current funding programmes across the UK.

Grantsnet

http://www.grantsnet.co.uk

A search directory for grants and funding programmes available within the UK.