

Community Resilience Planning



A short guide to creating a resilience plan for your community

Kent and Medway
prepared
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Introduction

This booklet provides a starting point for communities looking to become better prepared on a local level to respond to the potential impacts of emergencies on residents and businesses. It covers key points to consider when setting up a community resilience group and creating your community resilience plan.

Phase 1: Getting started

Who should be involved?

Identify local people who are willing to get involved in making a community resilience plan. This could include friends, neighbours, parish and town councillors, potential volunteers, emergency services and local businesses. Members of existing local community groups may also be happy to help.



- Consider an appeal for help in your local newsletter or social media group.
- Arrange a meeting – either an informal drop-in or a full-scale meeting in a local venue.

What to discuss

- How would the local community cope in an emergency?
- What are the benefits of planning ahead?
- How can plans and documentation help?
- Who is willing to help prepare a community resilience plan?



- Identify hazard hotspot areas
- Review and update contact details
- Identify actions and associated roles and responsibilities
- Develop an emergency communications tree

Phase 2: Getting organised

Form a community resilience group with people in the community that will champion local emergency preparedness initiatives.

Appoint a community resilience coordinator to take a lead role in organising and taking forward the work of the group, including helping to sustain motivation and interest in the community.

The coordinator will also act as a point of contact between the community resilience group and emergency responders in an emergency.

Consider appointing a representative to communicate with stakeholders and the media in case of an emergency.



Phase 3: Risk assessment

When assessing the risks in your area, consider:

- **Social risks** – this could be groups of local people who may be vulnerable in the face of an emergency.
- **Environmental risks** – areas that flood regularly, vulnerable sites of heritage or environmental interest.
- **Infrastructure risks** – major traffic routes, bridges, industrial sites that could be a risk in an emergency.

Learn more about risks

The National Risk Register assesses all natural hazards and malicious threats that could affect the UK at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-register-2023

The Kent Community Risk Register details local hazards, threats, and their potential impacts in Kent and Medway. It is published on the Kent Prepared website: www.kentprepared.org.uk

Local knowledge should be used to identify other risks.

You can also contact your local district or borough council emergency planning team for advice.

Phase 4: Identifying vulnerable people



It is vital that the community resilience group understands the needs of residents who might be vulnerable in an emergency and where they live. Keep a list of local organisations that may keep records of vulnerable people in the area. They might include voluntary groups like the British Red Cross, Age UK, or faith communities.

Things to 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 people and groups.
- Peoples' needs can vary depending on the duration of an emergency and may last through to the recovery phase.

How to identify vulnerable people

You may choose to write to your community or put articles in the local newsletter asking people to make themselves known if they feel they could need assistance in an emergency.

Use local knowledge of your community as a starting point.

You could organise a scheme where householders can display a window sign if they need assistance during an emergency.

Phase 5: Skills and resources

Volunteering

Volunteering is often spontaneous by nature, but it would be advisable to contact local individuals, businesses and groups before an emergency occurs to ask if they would be willing to volunteer, and if they have skills, tools or resources that could be used. Often people already engaged in community activities are more likely to take on volunteering roles.

Potential volunteers may need to seek permission from an employer to be released from duty to help with an emergency.

Keep volunteers engaged by holding workshops and exercising the community emergency plan.

Tools and vehicles

There may be people in your community who are qualified, capable, and willing to operate tools and machinery in an emergency, for example, local farmers could provide 4x4 vehicles, chainsaws, or other useful equipment.

Supplies

Food and water may be in short supply during an emergency. The community resilience group should talk to local businesses who might be willing to donate supplies. Create a register of the local resources that can be called upon in the event of an emergency.



Phase 6: Legal issues

Only assign tasks to volunteers that do not put them at risk and always observe health and safety guidelines.

Insurance for volunteers

You should consider whether you will need insurance for local volunteers. Check any existing policy provides suitable cover. It is possible that the local parish or town council or an organisation of which the volunteer is a member already has appropriate cover.

Visit the British Insurance Brokers' Association website at www.biba.org.uk for help finding a specialist who can arrange affordable insurance for community groups.

Data protection

Ensure that any personal information you collect is stored securely and that you adhere to UK General Data Protection Regulations.



Phase 7: Plan activation

The activation process for your community resilience plan and the communication flow with emergency responders should be agreed prior to an emergency.

It is important to develop a series of triggers that can be used to initiate a response from the community resilience group.

Remember – always call 999 if there is a risk to life.

Considerations include:

- Have we been able to contact emergency responders?
- What advice messages are being put out in the media by the authorities?
- Can we initiate our plan safely without the help of emergency responders?
- Alert members of the community resilience group.

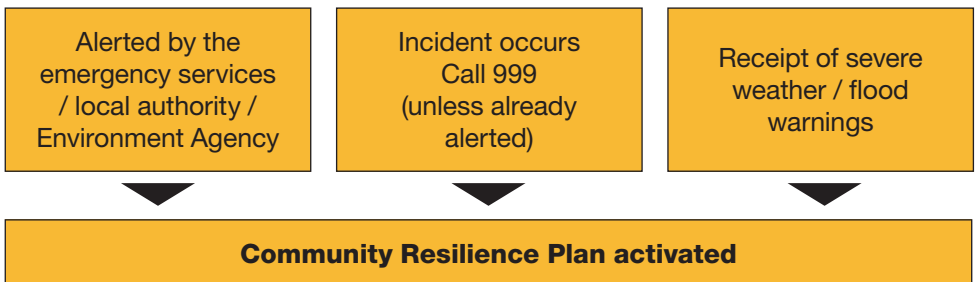
Avoid making a detailed plan for specific emergencies as this will decrease the flexibility of the plan to deal with any incident.

Always share your completed plan with your local borough or district emergency planning team.

Phase 8: What to do after the activation?

- Ensure you are in no immediate danger.
- Contact the community resilience group members and meet to assess the situation.
- Agree actions and ensure each member of the group / volunteers knows what they will do.
- Contact your local emergency responders to ask if there is anything they may require.
- Let them know how the situation is developing on the ground.
- The group should meet regularly to see how the situation is developing, what actions are progressing and whether you need to reprioritise tasks or move resources round.

Examples of when a Community Resilience Plan may be activated.



- Once the immediate actions have been completed and the situation starts to improve, start thinking about the recovery phase and the role of the community resilience group in helping the community return to their day-to-day life.

Communications

Maintaining communication – discuss how you will cope if communications are disrupted in the area. Find out if you have access to Starlink or amateur radio groups (for example, the Radio Amateurs Emergency Network (RAYNET)) that you can use to communicate with each other.



Consider door knocking as an option to communicate with the public and get the local emergency responders' messages across if it is possible to do this safely.

Work with the local emergency responders to ensure any messages delivered to the community are consistent.



Evacuation

During an emergency, it might be necessary for some members of your community to be evacuated from their homes to a safe place. Speak to your local authority emergency planning team duty officer to see what role the community resilience group can play in this.

You may be able to assist with:

- Door knocking or delivery of emergency messages.
- Running of a temporary rest centre or identifying those who may need extra assistance to move to safety.

Phase 9: Reviewing and testing

Regularly review your plan to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflects the changing needs of your residents.

Hold simulated exercises to test arrangements, train participants and identify any changes needed.

Table-top exercises – run through incident scenarios designed to put your plan to the test. Consider different incidents at various times of year and day or night.

Live exercises – a physical exercise requires preparation and commitment from your community resilience group and could involve emergency responders and members of your community.

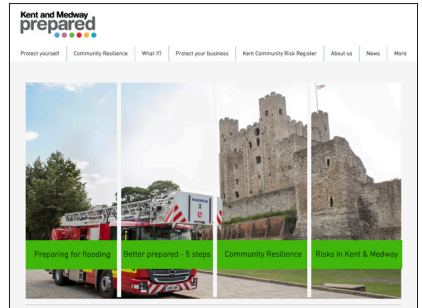
Kent Resilience Forum can provide exercise scenario templates. For more information, please email krf@kent.fire-uk.org

Further resources

Kent Prepared

Full guidance on creating a community resilience plan and a template can be found on the Kent Prepared website:

www.kentprepared.org.uk/community-resilience



Communities Prepared



Communities Prepared is a national community resilience programme that equips community volunteers with the knowledge and confidence to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a range of emergencies, from flooding and severe weather incidents to pandemics. Visit their website to access free training workshops, e-learning and guidance at www.communitiesprepared.org.uk