



# Community Response Plan Toolkit

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# The Template

This document is designed to be used in conjunction with the template which you can access from the Make a Plan button on the Be Prepared Toolbar.

To prepare your plan:

1. Use this toolkit to guide you through the steps required to build a Community Response Plan.
2. Once the arrangements have been agreed collect the information you require.
3. Complete all the relevant sections of the template. You can leave sections blank when they are not appropriate.
4. If you have any queries or would like some support, use the [Contact Us](#) screen to let us know.

## Introduction

### What is the purpose of this toolkit?

This document is a step-by-step guide to help you and your community produce a Community Response Plan. The process of completing a Community Response Plan will help you prepare for the emergencies that could affect your community.

Together the toolkit and template are designed for completing a Community Response Plan from scratch. However, if you already have one, you could use them to update or validate your existing plan. You can use the template and toolkit as they are, alternatively you might tailor your approach to better suit the particular profile of your community.

### Why do you need a Community Response Plan?

Emergencies happen. The Emergency Services will always have to prioritise those in greatest need, especially where life is in danger. There may be times when your community is affected by an emergency but lives are not in immediate danger. Being able to help yourselves and those around you will assist the emergency responders and reduce the impact of an emergency on your community, both in the short and longer term.

## Before you start

The Resilience Partnership Team can support and assist you during the planning process. Contact us to register your participation and to find out more.

**ACTION** Contact the Resilience Partnership Team to register your participation:  
Phone 0116 305 6101; Email [llrprepared@leics.gov.uk](mailto:llrprepared@leics.gov.uk) ; LLR Prepared website [Contact Us](#) screen.

## Step 1 Community Response Team

This section outlines the key stages in getting started and putting together a planning and response team.

### Identifying your community

Begin by considering who your community is and who your plan is for. In planning for emergencies, it usually makes sense to think of your community as being those people who live near you, but you may also want to consider talking to and involving other people and communities in your planning as you may need to work together and help each other in an emergency.

### Getting people involved

One of the first things to consider is who can help you get started. Community resilience in its broader sense is already present at some level in most communities. It may not be necessary to create a new community network but rather enhance existing structures and relationships.

Identify the networks that already exist and consider how you could work together before, during and after an incident. Think about how different groups could fit resilience into their agenda, for example parish councils, Neighbourhood Watch groups, Scout groups, residents associations, youth groups etc, and how they could collaborate to develop a Community Response Plan. LLR Prepared can help you identify whether any community resilience initiatives already exist in your location.

Consider holding an open meeting in which people can discuss their priorities for the plan and identify who would be interested in helping either to create the plan and/or be part of a Community Response Team.

### Appointing a Co-ordinator

It is advisable to identify a Coordinator to steer the planning process forward. The co-ordinator should be willing to take a lead role in organising and taking forward the work of the Community Response Team. Experience shows that this helps sustain interest, focus and motivation. The co-ordinator should also act as a contact point between the Community Response Team and LLR Prepared.

The Co-ordinator could be an elected member but might equally be prominent within the community in another role. It certainly helps if they have good knowledge of their community and some influence within it.

Appendix A contains a suggested Coordinator Checklist.

**ACTION** Complete Table 1 in the template to create a list of the members of your Community Response Team and their contact details.

**Note:** Depending on the number of people involved, you may want to record contacts in a 'telephone tree' format, which sets out a process through which people have responsibility for ringing other contacts, thus speeding things up.

## Step 2 Local Risk Assessment

### Identifying local risks

It is important to be aware of the risks that could affect your community, and understand how you could be affected by them, in order to improve your community's resilience. Individuals and communities should then prepare for the risks they feel are relevant to their area.

The Government regularly assesses all the natural hazards and malicious threats that could affect the UK and this information is published in the National Risk Register. LLR Prepared looks at local risks and produces a Community Risk Register for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Visit the LLR Prepared website section on [Risks](#) for links to both the National Risk Register and the Community Risk Register.

You should also use your own knowledge to identify other risks that are local to your area. For example, there might be a local road that regularly floods, or a footpath that become dangerous or unusable in severe weather.

When assessing the likelihood or impact of incidents on your local area give special consideration to any exceptional circumstances including:

#### **Social risks**

Are there any particularly vulnerable people or groups in the area? Examples might include:

- Sheltered housing and care homes
- People without access to transport or limited mobility
- Groups that might find it difficult to understand emergency information
- Transient groups such as holiday makers or travelling communities

#### **Environmental and commercial risks**

Are there any sites of environmental, economic or historic importance in the area? Examples might include:

- Commercial / industrial enterprise
- Livestock
- Historical buildings and museums
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest

### Risk reduction measures

Decide whether there are measures that can be locally implemented to reduce the incidence of risks occurring, or their impact when they do. A simple example would be arranging for the installation of a grit bin so that pavements can be gritted to stop them becoming icy.

You might find it useful to discuss this assessment with LLR Prepared for further advice on potential risk reduction and protective measures.

**ACTION** Complete Table 2 in the template with details of the risks you have identified and the actions you have taken, or that can be implemented, to reduce their impact.

## Step 3 Local Resources

Once the team is aware of the risks it might need to prepare for it is important to consider what skills, resources and equipment your community already has that can be used, if needed, during or after an emergency.

It might help to assess your community's skills and resources under the following categories:

### Volunteers

Volunteering is often spontaneous by nature and many communities and individuals automatically help each other during times of need. However, as part of your planning, you should seek to identify individuals and groups who would be willing to volunteer during an emergency, and the skills, tools or resources they could supply.

It is important to keep volunteers up to date and engaged with your emergency planning. One good way to do this is to involve them in rehearsals of your plan. More information about managing groups of volunteers can be found at

Volunteering England - [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

### Tools and equipment

Consider what tools, machinery and equipment available within the community might be useful in an emergency. Examples might include

- 4x4 vehicles
- Chainsaws
- Mobile catering facilities
- Non electric heating units

Identify those people within the community who are qualified, capable and willing to supply and operate these.

### Supplies

Supplies such as food, water and sanitation products might be difficult to obtain in a prolonged incident. The planning team should identify where stocks might exist and consider talking with residents or local business proprietors who might be willing to provide these.

Consider formalising any such arrangements with a written agreement and attach this as an annex to your Community Response Plan.

### Transport

Consider creating a list of the vehicles that could be called upon to help transport members of the community. It is important to ensure that vehicle owners are properly licensed and insured to use their vehicles in this way.

Organisations such as 4x4 Response ([www.4x4response.info](http://www.4x4response.info)) could be helpful in letting you know what groups may already be operating in your area.

**ACTION** Complete Table 3 in the template to create a list of the people, resources and supplies that could be called upon to assist in an emergency.

## Step 4 Places of Safety

In an emergency it might be necessary to set up a safe place which can provide shelter and refreshments to people who are unable to stay in their own homes. Church halls, village halls, leisure centres and libraries often provide suitable accommodation as many have toilets and catering facilities. Schools can also be considered, although should not be a first choice as they should be allowed to remain open for normal business whenever possible.

As different emergencies might affect different parts of your community, you should try to identify more than one site, each in a different location.

It is important that you get the permission of those responsible for any buildings you identify to:

- Ensure that they have appropriate insurance and liability cover to use the premises in this way
- Agree the procedures for opening the premises outside of normal hours

LLR Prepared maintains a list of venues throughout Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for which arrangements have been agreed for their use in an emergency. [Contact us](#) to find out whether arrangements exist for buildings in your locality.

**ACTION** Complete Table 4 in the template with details of the venues that would be used as places of safety and arrangements for opening up.

## Step 5 Activating Your Plan

Triggers for activation

You will need to know how to activate your plan and contact your volunteers when an emergency happens.

In most circumstances it is anticipated that you will be asked to activate your plan by LLR Prepared. We will work with you to confirm how initial contact would be made and the procedures that should be included in your plan to reflect this.

However, in other circumstances you might wish to make this decision for yourselves. It is therefore worth considering in advance what type of situations might lead to the plan being activated and developing a series of triggers you can use to help decide whether to take action.

Examples might include:

- Residents having to evacuate their homes with nowhere to go
- Prolonged loss of power anticipated affecting all or parts of the community
- Blocked roads affecting service delivery

Then decide on the first steps you would take once an emergency has met the threshold for activating the plan.

**ACTION A** Liaise with LLR Prepared to confirm the process they will use to put designated people on standby to activate your Community Response Plan.

**ACTION B** Complete Table 5 in the template with brief details of the threshold circumstances for activating the plan, how they would be assessed and by whom.

## Step 6 Initial Actions

### Convening the Emergency Response Team

Decide the process you would follow locally to move from a decision to activate the Community Response Plan to the position where the team has gathered and decided on its response priorities. This should cover:

- Confirming the time and place for an initial meeting
- Callout of team members
- An initial appraisal of the situation
- Liaison with LLR Prepared

### First meeting

Appendix B contains a draft agenda for the first meeting but is intended to be a guide only. In practice you may find that not all team members and volunteers are able to attend and might even have started helping others already. It is important nevertheless to make sure that everyone is safe, working in a co-ordinated manner and notified of the priorities agreed by the team.

**ACTION** Complete Table 6 in the template with the list of actions that culminate in holding the first meeting.

**Note:** Although the table asks you to identify the person who should complete each action, the tasks should be described in such a way as to assist someone who might be deputising and is less familiar with the process.

## Step 7 Community Response Team Roles

Decide what actions your Community Response Team could take, both to assist the emergency services and operating independently. The nature and extent of the team's anticipated roles should take account of the size of the team, the resources that can be called upon, and any particular expertise.

Generally speaking, it is always advisable that volunteers avoid lone working and try to work in pairs or larger groups. Consider:

### Assisting the Emergency Services

- Helping police/local authority with door knocking
- Providing information about the most vulnerable and those who need urgent help
- Providing information about local conditions

### Evacuation

It might be necessary for some members of your community to be evacuated from their homes to a safe place. The team may be able to assist by:

- Running a rest centre (providing catering, equipment, supplies, emotional support)
- Door knocking and distributing information to residents
- Assisting those needing help to move to safety.

## Communications

Priorities here should include:

- Communicating information to residents about the situation and any arrangements that are being made for their welfare
- Communicating information to LLR Prepared about the situation on the ground and priority requirements for assistance

You may have access to walkie-talkies or amateur radio equipment which could be deployed when normal communications are disrupted. Details of these arrangements should be included in the plan.

NOTE: It should be ensured that any messages that are delivered to the community are consistent with those issued by local or national authorities.

## Clear up and recovery

It is essential that any work undertaken in relation to clear up and recovery is done with strict regard to health and safety and without placing anybody at risk.

- Clearing roads and access
- Assisting in the return to normal following the emergency

**ACTION** Complete Table 7 in the template with details of roles that you decide could be suitably undertaken by your Emergency Response Team.

## Step 8 Emergency Kit

Decide what items of equipment and supplies should be stored ready for use and make arrangements to acquire and store them in an agreed location. Ensure any items that have a “use by” date or are subject to periodic updating (e.g. contact information, maps, etc) are replaced on a suitably regular basis.

**ACTION** Complete Table 8 in the template with details of the items you have agreed to store ready for use.

## Step 9 Emergency Contact List

It will help you respond swiftly if you gather contact numbers together in one place. The template prompts for certain details but you should add others that might be useful, local businesses for instance.

**ACTION** Complete Table 9 in the template to create a one stop emergency contact list.

## Step 10 – Practising and Reviewing Your Plan

### Reviewing and updating your plan

It is important to regularly review and update your Community Response Plan to ensure it meets the changing needs of your community. It is also important to make sure that your plan will work in an emergency. You may wish to practice activating the plan to test how well it would work and to see how well prepared the members of your team and volunteers are to carry out its actions.

Practising the arrangements in your plan will allow you to identify any problems with it. Once you have completed an exercise of this type, you should review and update the plan to reflect any lessons learned. You should also regularly update your contact lists to ensure the information is accurate.

When you make any changes and amendments to the plan, you should record the amendments to ensure that everyone knows they are using the latest version.

LLR Prepared can assist you to organise an exercise.

**ACTION** Complete Table 10 of the template with details of the frequency on which you will review, update and exercise your plan.

### Sharing your plan

Once you have developed your plan, share it with your community to get their views. It is important that all members of the community feel that the plan works for them.

It is also important that you share your plan with LLR Prepared. We will store a copy so that we will know who to contact and what assistance you can provide in the event of an emergency. You can send us a copy by email from the [Contact Us](#) web page.

You should record who has a copy of your plan and ensure that they receive a revised copy whenever it is updated.

**ACTION** Complete the sections of the template entitled Plan Version Details and Plan Distribution List.

## Appendix A Coordinator Checklist

The checklist below is a prompt you can use as you go through the process of producing a Community Response Plan.

- Have you contacted LLR Prepared for advice and support?
- Have you formed a Community Response Team?
- Have you informed other groups operating in your community?
- Have you considered the risks that your community might face?
- Have you assessed the existing skills and resources in your community?
- Have you identified key locations in the community to use in an emergency?
- Have you considered who in your community might be vulnerable in an emergency?
- Have you decided how and when you would activate your plan?
- Have you shared your plan with your community and with LLR Prepared?

## Appendix B Meeting Agenda

Date:

Time:

Location:

Attendees:

1. What is the current situation?

Location of the emergency - is it near:

- A school?
- A vulnerable area?
- A main access route?

Type of emergency:

- Is there a threat to life?
- Has electricity, gas or water been affected?

Are there any vulnerable people involved?

- Elderly?
- Families with children?

What resources do we need?

- Food?
- Off-road vehicles?
- Blankets?
- Shelter?

2. Establishing contact with the emergency services

3. How can we support the emergency services?

4. What actions can safely be taken?

5. Who is going to take the lead for the agreed actions?

6. Any other issues?

## Appendix C Supporting Information

### Funding arrangements

There may be circumstances in which you need additional funding to help enhance the resilience of your community. There are many organisations, government departments and charities that provide funding for community groups.

The following 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. Check to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria and closing deadlines.

#### **Grant Finder** - [www.grantfinder.co.uk](http://www.grantfinder.co.uk)

Grants and policy database with details of funding opportunities.

#### **Funding Central** - [www.fundingcentral.org.uk](http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk)

Funding portal for all voluntary sector organisations, including community groups, providing access to funding and finance opportunities, plus tools and resources supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies.

#### **Government Funding** - [www.governmentfunding.org.uk](http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk)

Online portal to grants for the voluntary and community sector.

#### **Lottery Funding** - [www.lotteryfunding.org.uk](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** - [www.grantsnet.co.uk](http://www.grantsnet.co.uk)

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

#### **Office of the Civil Society** - [www.cabine toffice.gov.uk/content/big-society-overview](http://www.cabine toffice.gov.uk/content/big-society-overview)

The Office of the Civil Society regularly has information about new and existing grants.

### Using local knowledge to identify vulnerable people

It is important to ensure that isolated or vulnerable people are contacted to see if they need assistance during an emergency. Organisations such as local authorities, utility companies and voluntary sector organisations have systems and resources that can identify vulnerable people. However, these groups cannot always determine exactly what help individuals want and need, nor can they always identify who may be vulnerable in a crisis, particularly those who have not previously received support. This requires local knowledge and your help.

LLR Prepared will need to help those in most need first and it would assist us if the Community Response Team is able to provide information about those in the community who might be vulnerable

in an emergency and where they live. Think about how you could compile this information and the local organisations or people who might be able to assist with this.

## Insurance and liability

When thinking about how community members can help, and the assets and resources you can use, you should also think about insurance issues. Communities should not see insurance and liability issues as a barrier to preparing their community for emergencies - a common-sense approach to helping each other is also required.

The Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism (SARAH) Bill was passed in 2014 to address these concerns via the courts. The Government is also working with the insurance industry and community members to explore insurance and liability issues for a range of community emergency scenarios and will make the findings available publicly.

You can find further information on insurance issues at [www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk).

Please do not put yourself or others at risk when preparing or using your plan.