

Community Emergency Plan Guidance

This guidance is to help communities put together a local Community Emergency Plan. The Community Emergency Plan template is available via Gloucestershire LRF website

<https://www.glosprepared.co.uk/preparing-your-community/>

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Please note: *this document and associated Community Emergency Plan template, which have been developed by Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Community Resilience Group, are for guidance only.*

The suitability of the application of this guidance to an emergency situation shall be entirely for the determination for the community themselves. This guidance does not constitute legal advice in relation to emergency planning.

Introduction

What are Community Emergency Plans?

Many communities already help one another in times of need, but experience had shown that those who have spent a bit of time preparing a simple Community Emergency Plan are better able to cope and recover more quickly from emergencies.

A Community Emergency Plan may help reduce the impacts of an emergency and greatly improve the resilience of a community by using local knowledge, skills and resources to support residents during and after an emergency.

Community Emergency Plans form part of a coordinated response with the emergency services, councils and other responders.

Why do we need a Community Emergency Plan?

Emergencies happen. Gloucestershire is a large area and in a widespread emergency the Emergency Services and Local Authority will have to prioritise those in greatest need.

There may be times when individuals and communities are affected by an emergency but are not in immediate danger and may have to look after themselves and each other for a period until any necessary external assistance can be provided.

Having a plan does not remove the responsibility of the emergency services and councils to respond to emergencies but complements their arrangements. A Community Emergency Plan can help to efficiently coordinate people who might be willing to assist, equipment that could be used and safe locations where local people can gather if they cannot stay in their homes. It also enables the District Council to liaise more easily with the community to see what the situation is and what support may be required.

Who should have a plan?

In many communities the Parish or Town Council may lead the development of a plan. However, if there isn't a Parish or Town Council, or where there is a risk affecting a particular localised area e.g. flooding, a Ward Councillor, community or local residents group may opt to lead the development of a plan for a specific location/ward etc. If a community / residents group decides to produce a plan they should make the Parish/Town Council aware if there is one.

Ideally all communities should have a plan - not just those that have experienced an emergency previously.

Emergencies such as loss of water supply or a power cut can affect any community

Where do Community Emergency Plans fit in an emergency?

Community Emergency Plans do not replace emergency services and council's emergency response arrangements, but strengthen them to support the local community.

Communities may activate their plan as part of their self-help and 'good neighbour' measures during an emergency such as severe weather or loss of power/ water supply.

Community Emergency Plans are also valued by emergency responders as a way of liaising with local people to support the local response. This may be requesting if a local building can be opened to act as a 'Place of Safety' for people evacuated, being the 'eyes and ears' on the ground, or providing information on the situation and what specific support may be required.

Community Emergency Plans don't have to be complex or lengthy. It is important that it suits the needs of your community. There's no need to make detailed plans for specific emergencies. Instead it's best to identify the people, resources and facilities that you might need and be prepared to use these flexibly.

The Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Community Emergency Plan template is designed to be flexible, so your community can just complete the sections that best suit its needs and can add any other information that you may find useful.

If producing a complete plan appears to be a daunting task, any preparation that your community can do will be worthwhile.



Just identifying community emergency contacts, a suitable Place(s) of Safety and 24-hour key holders for the Place(s) of Safety, in your plan will be really valuable information to assist emergency responders.

Sending a copy of your plan to your District Council

It is really helpful if you can send a copy of your Community Emergency Plan (and any subsequent updated versions) to your local District Council please (contact details in 'Further Advice and Support' section pg 31). This is so in the event of an emergency affecting your community, the District Council can liaise with the nominated key community contact(s) if necessary.

Please be aware: When you send your plan to your local District Council, any personal information in the plan will be held securely and only be used by appropriate council staff in the event of an emergency or potential emergency.

Before sending your plan to the local District Council, please check with any individuals whose details are included e.g. key community contacts, Place of Safety key holder contacts, that they are happy for their contact details to be shared with the District Council.

How to use this guidance

This guidance is to help you and your community produce a Community Emergency Plan. It is linked to a plan template available via Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum [website](#).

This guidance provides advice on the key stages in getting started, producing, testing and reviewing a Community Emergency Plan. It includes suggestions on what information to include in each section of the plan. However, not every section has to be completed and the plan template can be tailored to suit your community.

If your community only completes section 1 (Key Community Contacts) and section 2 (Place of Safety) of the plan template it will still provide really useful information to assist emergency responders with supporting your community in an emergency.

Any other information that may be useful for your community in an emergency can also be added to the plan e.g. maps of your community, photographs, useful contacts etc.

This guidance also includes references to other sources of supporting information and advice to assist in developing a plan as well as general information that may help your community and individual households be more resilient.

In this guidance the following symbols are used to indicate:



A 'tip' to consider for developing part of the plan or arrangements



Further information available on a particular issue



Link to a relevant website



Other Community Plan Templates and Guidance

There are a number of other Community Emergency Plan Templates and guidance available that your community may prefer to use including:

- **Gloucestershire Rural Community Council** – has plan templates, a toolkit and guidance available on its website
<https://www.grcc.org.uk/community-led-planning/emergency-planning>
- **Government Community Resilience Resources** – including plan template and guidance are available on gov.uk
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-resilience-resources-and-tools>

Getting started

Preparing a Community Emergency Plan requires voluntary input from across the community and harnessing local knowledge, skills and resources. The plan needs to be owned by the community as you are the local experts and the plan needs to work for your community.

Get together

- It is suggested that as a first step a meeting is arranged to talk about developing a Community Emergency Plan.
- The meeting could be a discussion by an existing body such as the Parish/Town Council or established community group or an open meeting where people could 'drop-in' to or a full scale public meeting.
- Thought needs to be given to where and when the initial meeting will be held, who will be involved, how it will be publicised and what information and materials may be needed at the meeting.
- Things to talk about at the meeting could include:
 - Emergencies that are likely to occur
 - The impact on your community and how it would cope
 - The benefits of planning ahead
 - Who is willing to help prepare a plan



What outcomes should you ideally aim for from the first meeting?

- Decide if there is support for developing a plan
- See who is willing to help prepare the plan
- Appoint a Community Emergency Coordinator and Deputy (who have the time and ability to guide the work of the group and development of the plan)
- Appoint an administrator – someone to keep records of any meetings, information gathered and decisions made
- Plan further meetings- think about:
 - Where the group will meet
 - Who will prepare an agenda and any other materials needed
 - How outcomes will be recorded and circulated

Organise the work

Following the initial meeting, either the Parish/ Town Council or community group leading the plan development and anyone else from the community, who has offered to help prepare the plan, should form a core group and get together to organise the work.

As mentioned previously ideally a Community Emergency Coordinator should lead the work and ideally there should be an administrator to record outcomes from the group.

This guidance goes through the plan sections in order, but the group producing the plan doesn't necessarily have to consider the plan content in this order.



Although the group that prepares the Community Emergency Plan doesn't necessarily need to have exactly the same members as the 'Community Emergency Team' that would respond in an actual emergency, it's helpful if some key people are the same e.g. Community Emergency Coordinator, to enable understanding of the plan and arrangements.

Community Emergency Coordinator/ Deputy

- The Community Emergency Coordinator could be a Parish/ Town Councillor, Elected Member or another community leader / volunteer from within the community.
- They should be willing and have the time to lead the development of the plan and also lead the Community Emergency Team during an actual emergency.
- The Coordinator will be the key point of contact in an emergency for the local District Council.
- The Coordinator will be key in liaising between emergency responders, the Community Emergency Team and local community.
- Ideally at least 1 Deputy Community Emergency Coordinator should be recruited to support the Coordinator and provide resilience e.g. if on holiday/ ill



Information on the role and considerations for the Community Emergency Coordinator is available on Groundwork South Communities Prepared website. Community Emergency Groups can register for the site for free to access information and training material <https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/>

Community Emergency Plan Template

Restricted & unrestricted versions

- In order to protect personal contact information, it is suggested you have two versions of your Community Emergency Plan:
 - **Restricted version (for Community Emergency Team Members)** – this version of the plan will contain contact details (e.g. sections 1, 2, 7 & 8) and should only be made available to a limited number of individuals who require them e.g. the Community Emergency Team Members.
 - **Unrestricted version (for public)** – this version should not contain any contact details (*apart from the Key Contacts in Section 1 and Place of Safety Key Holder contacts in Section 2 if the relevant individuals are willing for their contacts to be available publically- if not they should be removed*). Sections 7 and 8 should be removed from the plan before making it publically available e.g. on a Parish Council / community website.
- It should be noted on the front of the plan if it is the 'Restricted' or 'Unrestricted' version.



Remember: if you make an unrestricted copy of your Community Emergency Plan available to the public- sections 7 & 8 containing personal contact information should be removed before doing so. Also you should check with those individuals whose contacts are in sections 1 & 2 if they are happy for them to be shared publically- if not please remove.

Plan distribution list

- This section is to record everyone who holds a copy of your Community Emergency Plan.
- This would most likely include all of the members of the Community Emergency Team.
- If the Parish or Town Council has not led the plan development it is important they are provided with a copy of the plan.
- It would also be appreciated if a copy of the plan could be sent to your local District Council please. An email address is included in the plan template. This is so the District Council has information on the key community contacts who they can liaise with during an emergency.
- It is advisable for plan holders have a hard copy as well as an electronic copy of the plan, should the plan be required in an emergency where there may be loss of power.

Plan review/ amendments

- It is good idea for your Community Emergency Plan to be reviewed at least annually.
- This is to ensure that any contact numbers, information on community resources and Place(s) of Safety etc. is up to date.
- In this section the date of any review/ amendments should be noted with brief details of the changes made and who has done this. The plan version number should be updated.
- The plan date and version should also be updated accordingly on the front of the plan and in the header.
- The updated version of the plan should be sent to all those in the distribution list asking them delete/ destroy (ideally shred) and previous electronic and hard copy versions.

Section ①- Key Contacts

- The contact details for the nominated Community Emergency Coordinator and Deputy(ies) should be included in this section.
- This is vital information for the local District Council to be able to liaise with the Coordinator/ Deputy during an emergency to understand what is happening on the ground, how the community has been affected and any specific support required.
- The Community Emergency Coordinator/ Deputy should be willing to be potentially contacted 24 hours as emergencies don't always happen during a week day!
- However, there is no expectation from emergency responders that the Coordinator/Deputy will guarantee to be available as it is appreciated they are volunteers and may have other work, family commitments or may be on holiday or ill etc.
- That is why it is advisable to try to also have at least two Deputies for resilience so that someone is hopefully available during an incident to coordinate the community's response and liaise with the District Council and emergency services as necessary.



Please be aware: The Community Emergency Coordinator and Deputy(ies) should decide if they are happy for their contact details to be made available to the public. If not their contact details should be removed from section 1 in the unrestricted version of the plan.

Section ② - Place of Safety

- A 'Place of Safety' is a local building that could be used to provide temporary shelter to people affected by an emergency. This may be residents who have to quickly evacuate for their safety due to a fire/ gas leak or for motorists stranded due to flood water/ snow etc.
- Buildings in the community such as village/ church halls, community centre, Scout/Guide hut, sports club, social clubs, local pub etc. make ideal Places of Safety as they are local, key holders often live locally and they usual have facilities such as toilets, kitchen, seating.
- Depending on the size of your community it may be possible to identify more than one Place of Safety. This would be really helpful to provide resilience should one Place of Safety not be available e.g. because it is inside an evacuation cordon, access route is flooded etc.
- **Before adding a Place(s) of Safety to your plan, you need to talk to and get permission from whoever manages the building e.g. trustees, management committee, Parish/ Town Council etc.** Please see further information on insurance later in this guidance.



Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) has produced a document with some key aspects to consider when assessing a Place of Safety.



This document is available via Gloucestershire LRF [website](#)

- Once permission is granted to use a building as a Place of Safety, it is important that you speak to key holders for that building to see if they are willing for their contact details to be included in the plan, for them to potentially be contacted 24hrs in an emergency situation.
- Where possible, it is helpful to include the contact details for more than one key holder for a building identified as a Place of Safety to provide resilience should they not be available.
- Depending on the type, scale of emergency and the length of time residents may have to be out of their homes, local authorities may send staff/volunteers to assist at the Place of Safety or open up a Rest Centre (which tend to be larger facilities), or source other suitable accommodation e.g. hotel/ B&B for those residents who may be more vulnerable.
- In an emergency if a Place of Safety needs to be activated, the District Council will liaise with the nominated Community Emergency Coordinator about this.
- If your community is small and doesn't have a suitable Place of Safety consider approaching a neighbouring community to see if they have identified a Place of Safety they would be willing for you to use if need be.



If your community decides to just complete sections 1 and 2 that will still be really helpful. However you should still consider how you will make your community aware that you do have contacts/ Place of Safety identified.

Section ③ - Local risk assessment

- It is important to be aware of the risks that could affect your community and understand how you could be impacted by them, in order to improve your community's resilience.
- There are some risks shown in the table in section 3 of the plan template that could potentially affect any community e.g. power cut, loss of water supply, severe weather.
- There are also some risks that your particular community may be more vulnerable to e.g. regular flooding, snow (for communities located on higher ground), potential risks from any industrial sites in/ near to the community etc.
- Local knowledge and experiences of members of the group developing the plan are really helpful when considering local risks.
- For each risk identified, consider what could feasibly be done to prepare e.g. property level flood defences for communities that regularly flood, open up a Place of Safety if motorists are stranded due to snow, ensure vulnerable residents register for utility companies 'Priority Services Register' (see info later) to potentially receive extra support during loss of supply.
- Some individuals assisting with the development of your community plan may have experience of doing risk assessments before, through their job or as part of a charitable/ community group etc. Please note the risk assessment in section 3 of the plan template is very simple. The purpose is just to be aware of the potential risks and anything that can be done as part of your preparation rather than look in detail or score the risks.



Don't try to plan in detail for each specific risk, as this will limit your flexibility to respond and there may be some risks that occur that you didn't foresee anyway.

Dynamic risk assessment

- During the response to an emergency, it may be necessary to also carry out simple dynamic risk assessments for a particular activity that may be required (e.g. use of equipment, door knocking etc.) or for the changing circumstances of the emergency via some simple steps:
 - Identify any hazards i.e. anything that may cause harm e.g. equipment misuse
 - Identify any risks from the hazard e.g. injury
 - Identify who could be harmed e.g. person using equipment, others in vicinity
 - Identify any control measures already in place to reduce risk e.g. only trained personnel use equipment
 - Identify any other control measures required or potentially take the decision that risks of undertaking an activity outweigh benefits and stop and alert authorities.



Further information on risk assessment is available as part of GRCC toolkit
<https://www.grcc.org.uk/community-led-planning/emergency-planning>

Section ④ - Plan activation

- It is helpful to think about how you will know when an emergency has occurred, how your plan will be put into action and who will be responsible for deciding to activate the plan.

Remember in any emergency, having a Community Emergency Plan is not a substitute for calling 999 if there is any risk to life.

- You could consider local 'triggers' that will alert you to a possible emergency for example:



Examples of potential 'triggers' for activating your plan

- Warnings or request from emergency services e.g. knocking doors to ask residents to evacuate
- Request from District Council i.e. to open up a Place of Safety etc.
- Actual loss of water supply or electricity/ gas supply in the community
- For communities at risk of flooding: Environment Agency Flood Warnings, substantial changes in local river levels
- Severe weather warnings from the Met Office
- Severe cold weather alerts or heatwave alerts
- Media messages, or local social media sources about an emergency

- **Monitoring** - for each trigger it is helpful to note in the plan, where feasible, who from the Community Emergency Team will monitor for that potential trigger e.g. severe weather warnings.
- **Reporting**- also Community Emergency Team Members who may be undertaking monitoring should know who e.g. Community Emergency Coordinator to report any issues to.
- **Flood / Snow Wardens** – it should be borne in mind that if your community has a Flood/ Snow Warden they may already be undertaking some monitoring, so ideally they should be linked into the wider Community Emergency Plan / team if not already.



Plan activation: it is helpful to agree in advance and note in section 4 who will make the decision to activate the plan and who they then let know.

For example the Community Emergency Coordinator (or Deputy in their absence) may make the decision, or Parish Council or the Community Emergency Team collectively following an initial meeting.

Section ⑤ - First steps in an emergency

If a decision is made to activate your Community Emergency Plan, it is helpful to think in advance what next steps may need to be considered by the Community Emergency Team and note these in section 5. Such next steps may be to:

- **Community Emergency Team members to be contacted** - this may be via a 'telephone tree' or other means e.g. WhatsApp group etc. See further information under the Communications part of this guidance.
- **Community Emergency Team to meet** – depending on the scale of the emergency it may be helpful for the team to meet to coordinate any actions.
 - The time and location of meeting (e.g. Community Emergency Coordination Centre) should be agreed (see more info below)
 - Who should attend the meeting should be agreed
 - **A suggested meeting agenda is found in Appendix A of the plan template.**
 - The first meeting is just the first step and further regular meetings may need to take place to coordinate the community's response. Arrangements for follow up meetings should be put in place and communicated clearly to everyone who needs to be involved. Meeting frequently, at fixed times, can help individuals organise their activities and ensure their attendance.
- **Keep a Log** – where possible it is good practice for a log to be maintained by the Community Emergency Team:
 - To note any information received, decisions made and action taken.
 - A log will be helpful for the team to keep track of the emergency and also at a later date for any debriefs or if there are any public meetings etc. following an incident.
 - The log could also be used to note any expenditure incurred – as the District Council may be willing to reimburse any reasonable costs after the emergency.
 - **A suggested log template is found in Appendix B of the plan template.**
- **Establish the Situation** – a good starting point for the response to any emergency is to establish what the situation actually is and what the impacts are. It is important to as far as possible establish factual information rather than be guided too much by social media, hearsay and rumours. This may include gathering information from Community Team Members, residents, relevant organisations e.g. if there is a water supply issue to contact the water company and check their website etc.

- **Activate any volunteers/ local resources** – depending on the situation the Community Emergency Team should consider what can be done to **safely** respond to the emergency and lessen the impacts on the community. This may include activating any volunteers or local resources as appropriate (see section 7) to assist.



Community Emergency Coordination Centre

- The Community Emergency Team may wish to consider a suitable location where a 'Community Emergency Coordination Centre' can be based in an emergency.
- This would be somewhere (such as a village / church hall, Parish Council office etc.) where the Community Emergency Team can coordinate the community's response from.
- It can also be somewhere local residents can go to share or ask for information about the emergency or for people to go to if they need any support.
- It is advisable, where feasible, to think of both primary and back-up locations for the Community Emergency Coordination Centre, for resilience, should the primary location be impacted by the emergency.
- Depending on the number of suitable buildings and volunteers available in a community it may be possible to identify separate locations for the Community Emergency Coordination Centre and Place of Safety.
- If not, they could both potentially be in the same building, particularly if a separate room/ area was available for the Community Emergency Coordination Centre away from the where the public may be for a Place of Safety.
- Details of the Community Emergency Coordination Centre location(s), including key holder contacts should be included in section 8 (Contacts) of the plan template.



Financial Records – it is advisable to keep a record and receipts for any items that are purchased by Community Emergency Team members to support the community emergency response, in case the Parish or District Council is able to reimburse any reasonable costs incurred.

Section ⑥ - Communications

- Effective communication is key in the response to emergencies.
- As such, whilst developing your Community Emergency Plan, it is important to consider what communication methods will be used both for the Community Emergency Team members to liaise with each other, but also for keeping residents and the wider community informed. Details of such communication methods should be included in section 6.
- It is also advisable to consider how the Community Emergency Team will communicate with each other and residents if certain communications in the area are normally unreliable anyway e.g. poor mobile phone signal or poor broad band coverage/speed or if communications are impacted by the emergency itself e.g. loss of power.
- Where possible the Community Emergency Team should ensure information communicated to residents is consistent with those messages being issued by local or national authorities/ emergency services.
- It is important that any information provided to residents during an emergency is as up to date as possible. As such, it may be advisable for a member of the Community Emergency Team to be given a distinct role for communications (particular if they already have skills that would be valuable e.g. familiarity with websites, using social media etc).

Potential communications methods for Community Emergency Team members

- 'Telephone tree' – see example in **Appendix A of plan template**
- WhatsApp group
- Email group
- Closed FaceBook group
- Virtual video platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, Skype etc.

Potential communications methods for residents

- Parish/ Town Council website / social media accounts
- Community groups websites / social media accounts
- Community Facebook page
- Parish Council notice boards
- Via other existing networks e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, local social/ sports groups members
- Door Knocking
- Use of other platforms e.g. Next Door <https://nextdoor.co.uk>

Section ⑦ - Local volunteers, skills and resources

- Within your community there may be individuals who are willing to volunteer to help in an emergency, even if they don't necessarily want to be involved in the plan development.
- Some of these individuals may have specific skills or resources that would be useful in an emergency. Although people should not be put off volunteering if they don't have specific skills as they will still be able to provide valuable support and local knowledge etc. A 'can do' attitude and willingness to 'muck in' are as important as any specific skills or resources.
- The key to acting promptly and effectively in an emergency is to ideally identify any such volunteers and resources in advance.

Volunteers

- You may want to consider placing something in a Parish or community newsletter, on a community website/ social media or hold a public meeting/ drop in session to make the community aware that an emergency plan is being developed and to ask for any volunteers who may be willing to support the community in an emergency.
- It may also worth be talking to existing local groups to see if their volunteers or contacts would be willing to help in an emergency.
- It is important to keep volunteers up to date and engaged with your emergency planning. You may wish to involve them in testing your plan, invite them to a post emergency debrief.
- It is also important that you check at least annually that individuals are still willing to volunteer and their contact details are up to date.



Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) has further information in its Community Emergency Plan toolkit regarding volunteers including a signup sheet template.

<https://www.grcc.org.uk/community-led-planning/emergency-planning>

Spontaneous Volunteers

- During an emergency local residents and members of the public may wish to help out who have not 'signed up' as a volunteer in advance.
- Ideally these spontaneous volunteers are better integrated into the organised community response rather than acting in isolation and potentially causing issues and duplication.
- As far as possible any spontaneous volunteers should be directed to the Community Emergency Coordination Centre if established, or provided with details on how they can get in touch with someone e.g. Community Emergency Coordinator should they wish to volunteer.

- Ideally spontaneous volunteers should be registered, allocated suitable tasks and briefed by the Community Emergency Team.
- If spontaneous volunteers who are children (aged 18yrs or younger) present themselves to volunteer it is best to ensure they volunteer with a parent or guardian.
- Spontaneous volunteers might present themselves stating they have specialist skills, equipment or training. If they have no means of verifying what they say (either with Photo ID or current certificates) you cannot guarantee that they are insured, trained, or competent to do what they say in an emergency situation, therefore be cautious about giving tasks that are reliant on these claims.



Groundwork SW has a spontaneous volunteer sign sheet on its Communities Prepared website (under the CEV Coordinator Training page). Community Emergency Coordinator or Parish Council rep etc. just need to sign up for free as a member to access the resources.

<https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/>

Skills and resources

- Every community has people who have helped in the past or who have the skills that would be particularly useful in an emergency.
- These may include local farmers, health professionals, first responders, builders, electricians, and others with specialist skills and training.
- Members of the community or other local groups may also have access to resources that would be useful in supporting the response to an emergency at a community level such as:
 - Vehicles (e.g. 4x4, tractors)
 - Tools
 - Generators
 - Sources of food
 - Walkie talkies etc.
- You will need an understanding of the terms on which you might be able to utilise equipment and resources and agreement to do so.
- Consideration needs to be given to where any equipment is stored, so that is secure and accessible when needed, also identify who is responsible for their security and maintenance.
- Once agreement has been gained from volunteers, and regarding the use of equipment and resources, information on this should be recorded in the table in section 7 of the plan template. Contact details will also be required for everyone involved.

Insurance and health and safety

Please remember:

Do not put yourself or others at risk. If you or anyone else is in immediate danger call 999

- The use of resources, buildings and vehicles in an emergency may not be covered by their present insurance. There may be health and safety concerns about volunteers using unfamiliar equipment.
- These issues should not be left until the emergency takes place because they may result in constraints on what community members can actually do.
- Planning ahead will help to minimize any problems of this type.
- There are a number of practical things that you should be able to do:
 - **Buildings and equipment insurance** - liaise with the owners of buildings (e.g. those identified as a Place of Safety) and vehicles about any constraints that may arise from their insurance and see if it is possible to remove these, perhaps by notifying the insurer in advance. Often insurers are happy for the use of buildings etc. in an emergency situation but would prefer to be made aware of this possibility in advance.
 - **Equipment use** - think about the types of equipment that might be used by volunteers, and the circumstances in which they will do this. Undertake a risk assessment of the activity to help identify any training or ways of working that will minimize the risks identified. Ideally only equipment owners should use equipment that may carry greater risk e.g. power tools or those trained to do so.
 - **Insurance for volunteers** - consider whether you need public liability insurance for local volunteers, it is possible that an existing local organisation or an organisation of which the volunteer is already a member, already has appropriate cover.
 - **Buddy system** - volunteers should always work in pairs in order to:
 - Assess risk and decide actions together
 - Swap tasks so they don't become too repetitive or tiring
 - Provide safeguarding confidence to the public and each other
 - Alert their 'buddy' to danger
 - Also it's more fun working together



Remember – anyone volunteering to support the community response to an emergency has responsibility for ensuring their actions do not put themselves or anyone else at risk. Whilst risk assessments and control measures can help, the most effective way for individuals to stay safe is through vigilance and common sense.



Social Action, Responsibility & Heroism Act (SARAH) Act in 2015.

Aims to reassure those who intervene that as long as their actions were undertaken responsibly with due regard to safety, for the benefit of society or during an act of heroism, the courts will take this into consideration. Further information is available

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/318839/sarah-bill-fact-sheet.pdf

Safeguarding

- Although safeguarding considerations shouldn't inhibit volunteers from supporting others in their community during an emergency, it's advisable that the Community Emergency Team members and any volunteers are just made aware of some basic safeguarding principles to bear in mind to safeguard themselves and any vulnerable people they may be assisting.

Safeguarding considerations for Community Volunteers

- They should let family/ friends know they are volunteering and where they are going.
- They should not be on their own with residents (particularly those who may not be known to the volunteer) without other people around i.e. they shouldn't enter a resident's property to provide assistance on their own, or if a resident in a Place of Safety was distressed and wanted some quiet space, a volunteer shouldn't go into a another room away from the main area with them on their own.
- They should be cautious accepting gifts or money from people they are helping and use common sense e.g. if someone is paying for shopping done on their behalf or someone provides cakes etc. for the Place of Safety that should be fine but in other situations the offer of money may not be suitable.
- They should not place themselves in positions where they may feel unsafe.
- They should be made aware of a nominated contact e.g. Community Emergency Coordinator who they can report anything that concerns them, whether it's regarding a resident or how another volunteer is behaving etc.
- If a resident is offensive or abusive towards them or another volunteer, they should not get into confrontation but report this to the Community Emergency Coordinator who should if necessary contact the Police.

Reporting any safeguarding concerns

- Safeguarding means keeping people, children and adults, safe from abuse.
- Types of abuse and harm include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect, radicalisation, discriminatory, financial.
- During the response to an emergency a Community Emergency Team member or volunteer could potentially have some safeguarding concerns about the welfare, health or wellbeing of a child or adult.
- Community Emergency Team members or volunteers should be made aware who they should report any safeguarding concerns to e.g. Community Emergency Coordinator.
- The Community Emergency Coordinator should not investigate further themselves but report any such concerns to Gloucestershire County Council Adult or Children's Help Desks or to the Emergency Duty Team out of office hours. Contact details are found in the 'Other Useful Contacts' section of the plan template.



Further information a Safeguarding awareness animation provided by NHS Gloucestershire can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvEfpI-rm0k&feature=youtu.be>

Welfare and wellbeing of volunteers

- Supporting the response to an emergency can potentially be tiring and stressful.
- It is vital that in addition to health and safety and safeguarding measures, consideration is also given to the welfare and wellbeing of Community Emergency Team members and any other volunteers involved in the supporting the community's response to an emergency.



Welfare considerations for Community Emergency Team members and volunteers:

- Should not volunteer if they are unwell or family circumstances or impacts of the emergency itself make it difficult for them to do so.
- Should not undertake anything they are not comfortable with.
- Should take regular breaks and make sure they have something to eat & drink.
- Should know who they can go to (i.e. Community Emergency Coordinator) if they have any concerns or queries.

Vulnerable people in an emergency

- Emergencies can make anyone more vulnerable and they make life more difficult for people who are already vulnerable. Local emergency responses will need to prioritise those in greatest need first.
- Local authorities and the NHS have tried and tested systems in place to identify vulnerable people, known to the authorities, who may be affected by an emergency.
- However, there may be other people in your community who the authorities are not aware of as they don't receive any support, or who are not normally vulnerable but may be temporarily e.g. just come out of hospital, or made vulnerable by the emergency e.g. their home is flooded. This is where local knowledge is invaluable.
- Nevertheless, you should not keep a list of individual 'vulnerable people's details either in your Community Emergency Plan or held anywhere else, as this could breach data protection legislation. Also such a list could quickly go out of date, and not take into account people who are temporarily vulnerable or are made vulnerable by the circumstances of a particular emergency.
- However, contact details for representatives of local organisations or groups that may know of people within the community who might be vulnerable could be included in section 8 of the plan. You would need to check a suitable contact for the organisation /group is willing to be contacted in an emergency and for their contact details to be in the plan.
- During an emergency the Community Emergency Team may also become aware, from door knocking, social media messages etc. of residents in the community who are vulnerable and may need some support.
- It may be that the Community Emergency Team can provide this support at a local level depending on what is required, or the Community Emergency Coordinator may need to liaise with the District Council initially, if there are vulnerable people who need support that cannot be provided by the community.



Please remember: not to keep a list of 'vulnerable' individual's details as this could be in breach of data protection legislation.

Instead information could be included in your plan on organisations/ groups with existing links that may be able to help identify vulnerable people in an emergency.

Also to consider how else vulnerable people could potentially be identified in an emergency e.g. door knocking, phone calls to check, social media etc.

Section ⑧ - Contacts

- It is important to keep accurate, up-to-date records of everyone who is a member of the Community Emergency Plan, as well as anyone else in the community who has offered their help in an emergency.
- It is also important to include contacts for key holder(s) for any Place(s) of Safety that have been approved for use within the community.
- A list of other useful contacts is provided in the plan template. This can be adapted to suit your community and any other useful contacts specific to your community can be added.
- It is advisable that you make anyone who is willing for their contact details to be included in the plan, aware of what you will be using them for, and who else will have access to them (e.g. only the Community Emergency Team members will have access to them).
- Please note that your local District Council only need to know contact details for the Community Emergency Coordinator and Deputies (section 1) in order that they can get in touch in an emergency. So all other contact details could be removed if preferred prior to forwarding a copy of your plan to the local District Council.
- Please remember if the plan is made publically available e.g. placed on a Parish Council or local community group website, any contact details should be removed (other than for the Community Emergency Coordinator/ Deputies and Place(s) of Safety Key Holders if willing for their contacts to be publically available).
- **It is suggested that all contact details within the plan are checked/updated at least annually, and preferably more frequently.**
- If the plan has been led by the Parish/Town Council or an existing community group, a suggestion is that the contact review is placed on the agenda of the annual AGM or scheduled for another meeting as appropriate as a reminder.



Please remember: it is important to keep personal details safe and only share them with those who need the information.

Further information on data protection is available via

www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection

Appendices

- As mentioned previously in this guidance document there are a number of suggested appendices in the plan template including:
 - **Appendix A - first meeting agenda for the Community Emergency Team**
 - **Appendix B -logging sheet.**
 - **Appendix C – Maps – consider including any maps for your community**
- These can be adapted (or taken out of the plan) depending on what suits your Community Emergency Plan/ Team.
- Additional appendices can also be added if your Community Emergency Team would find other information useful. This may include information on other communication methods e.g. 'Phone Tree', WhatsApp group, instructions on Facebook closed group etc.



Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) has further advice in its Community Emergency Plan toolkit on including maps/ photographs in your plan
<https://www.grcc.org.uk/community-led-planning/emergency-planning>

Other considerations

Stand down

- The duration of an emergency could vary from a few hours (e.g. water supply issue), to days (e.g. snow) depending on the nature of the emergency and impact on the community
- As such, the length of time the Community Emergency Team may be supporting the response could vary, but it is advisable to think about stand down procedures after an emergency. This may include:
 - Confirmation from the District Council/ Emergency Services the emergency is over
 - Return home of evacuees: if a Place of Safety has been used, authorities confirm evacuees can return home or their transfer to longer term accommodation
 - Support from Community Emergency Team is no longer required for the response (***NB there may still be a role to play supporting recovery of the community***)
 - Equipment: return of equipment/ resources
 - Holding a 'hot and 'cold' debrief – please see following



Stand down – once an emergency is over, please remember to let anyone (e.g. Community Emergency Team members, volunteers etc.) who has been supporting the response or has been on 'standby' know.

Debrief

- Emergency responders routinely hold a debrief following an emergency to talk about what worked well that could be done again in future emergencies, but also what didn't work so well and could be improved upon for any future emergencies.
- Likewise, if you activate your Community Emergency Plan for an emergency, it would be helpful to hold debriefs.
- **Hot Debrief** - ideally a quick 'hot debrief' should be held as soon as possible once the community response to an incident has finished for all those who have been involved e.g. Community Team Members, volunteers.
- The purpose of a 'Hot Debrief' is to allow all those involved to feedback their initial thoughts on what worked well and what could be improved in the immediate aftermath. **However, most importantly it is also chance to check how everyone is and give them an opportunity to talk.**
- Supporting the response to an emergency can affect people in different ways. Many people will be fine once they've had some rest and spoken to family and friends. However, some individuals could potentially be more adversely impacted and may need to seek additional support. Further information on such support is found in the 'Useful Websites' section of this guidance which could be signposted to at both the hot and cold debriefs.
- **Cold Debrief**- ideally a 'Cold Debrief' should be held within a couple of weeks of the end of emergency. The purpose of a Cold Debrief is having had chance to reflect, and for emotions and reactions to have 'cooled down' for those involved in the response to feedback their thoughts.
- The Community Emergency Team could decide how, where and when to hold a Cold Debrief and who should be invited to take part. It may be just a debrief for the core Community Emergency Team members, or opened more widely to anyone else who was involved in the community response e.g. other volunteers, people who assisted with resources etc.
- A Cold Debrief doesn't have to be complicated, it can be as simple as just asking everyone involved for a couple of points on what they felt worked well and what could be improved.
- The most important things to bear in mind for debriefs is that no one should be blamed, everyone should be free to contribute without criticism and outcomes should be recorded.
- Where feasible steps should then be taken to make any improvements identified and responsibilities allocated for this. The Community Emergency Plan should also be updated.

Testing the plan

- Once your Community Emergency Plan has been prepared, it is a really good idea to test the arrangements that you have put in place to make sure they work.
- Regular testing will build the confidence of those involved, keep people engaged and help to identify and gaps or things that may need to be improved prior to an emergency occurring.
- Regular testing will also help to ensure that plans remain up to date and effective. There will inevitably be changes as people come and go, resources change etc.

Routine checks might include:

- Contact lists: ring every 3 months
- Activation process: test annually
- Facilities set-up e.g. Place of Safety: test annually

Testing options: There are several types of exercise that you can use to test your arrangements and train participants, these include:

- **Discussion based**- low cost and easy to prepare, useful as a talk through of your plan and a handy tool for training.
 - **Table Top** - a scenario based simulation of an emergency which can help validate your plans but requires a significant amount of prior preparation.
 - **Live Play** - a great tool for testing and building confidence in your arrangements, such as the setting up of your Place of Safety or Community Emergency Coordination Centre, however the process needs careful preparation and can take lot of time, effort and coordination. You may wish to invite representatives from other communities that have or are developing a plan to take part in your exercise so you can learn from each other.
- Once you have tested your plan, or parts of your plan, steps may need to be taken to address any gaps or areas for improvement the test highlighted. Your Community Emergency Plan may also need to be updated to reflect any changes or improvements.



Plan Testing Toolkit

A toolkit that provides guidance on testing you Community Emergency Plan is available on Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum [website](#).

Promoting the plan

- Following all of your hard work to produce an emergency plan for your community, it is a good idea to make members of the community aware that there is a plan in place.
- This can be beneficial in providing some reassurance to residents, but also may lead to other members of the community coming forward as volunteers or offering to provide support with equipment/ resources.
- The plan could be promoted via any existing Parish or community newsletters, via the Parish/Town Council or community websites and social media. The plan could also be discussed at existing local groups or awareness raised at local events e.g. fete etc.
- Consideration would need to be given in advance of providing details for a suitable contact for residents to get in touch with should they have any queries or wish to volunteer etc.
- Promoting the Community Emergency Plan could also provide an opportunity to encourage residents/ households to become more resilient themselves by preparing an Emergency Box/ Grab Bag and considering having a 'Household Emergency Plan'. Please see further information section following.

Useful information

Priority Services Register

- Many utility companies have a Priority Services Register, which eligible customers can join to access extra assistance, particularly during a supply emergency.
- If the utility companies don't know about such customers, they may take longer to get essential supplies to them in an emergency.
- You can usually register on each utilities' Priority Services Register if you are:
 - Of pensionable age
 - Chronically sick
 - Registered disabled
 - Have other specific needs such as sight loss, hearing loss or a mental health condition
 - Living with children under 5
- If you are eligible, you will need to contact each of your utility suppliers separately e.g. electricity, gas and water to join their Priority Services Register.
- Contact your utility providers or look at their website to find out more.



Are You Ready Booklet

- Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) has produced an 'Are you Ready' booklet that contains practical advice on various emergencies such as fire, flood and loss of power.
- An electronic version of the booklet is available on the LRF website <https://glosprepared.co.uk/preparing-your-family/>
- If any Town and Parish Councils wish to place the booklet directly on their website or print their own copies, a web version or file suitable for professional printing can be obtained by making a request via the LRF website contact page <https://glosprepared.co.uk/contact-us/>

Household Emergency Plan

- Households can also be encouraged to put together their own emergency plan.
- Having a household plan can help you deal quickly and effectively in a stressful situation.
- Involving your family in writing the plan can help them be prepared too.
- It doesn't need to be complicated, but you should consider what is around you: where you live, work or visit, including schools, shops etc. For example, do you live near a river, airport or factory?
- Ask yourself and your family the question, 'what if?'; then find the answers.
- Think about emergency friends, important contacts and how people would know your needs in an emergency.
- Further information on putting a Household Emergency Plan together including a simple plan template is included within the 'Are you Ready?' booklet on the Local Resilience Forum's website <https://glosprepared.co.uk/preparing-your-family/>

Emergency 'Grab Bag'

- Households can also be encouraged to put together an emergency 'Grab Bag'.
- Most households have items that would be useful in an emergency in their house, but it's helpful to put them all in one easily accessible place.
- In an emergency situation it may be necessary to either access items easily at home e.g. torch in a power cut, or if you need to evacuate quickly to have a small-easy to carry bag of necessities ready to go.
- Suggestions on what to include in an emergency 'Grab bag' are found in the 'Are you Ready' booklet on the LRF website <https://glosprepared.co.uk/preparing-your-family/>








Useful websites

Organisation	Website
Police	www.gloucestershire.police.uk Twitter: @Glos_Police
Fire & Rescue Service	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfire/ Twitter: @Glosfire
Health & Wellbeing	
NHS 111 Service When medical help required but not 999 emergency	https://111.nhs.uk/
National & County Mental Health Services Links on Gloucestershire County Council to a range of services and advice	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/advice-on-covid-19/looking-after-your-wellbeing/wellbeing-support-for-all-gloucestershire-citizens/national-and-in-county-mental-health-services/
Safeguarding Information on safeguarding adults & children	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/ https://www.gscb.org.uk/
Highways	
Gloucestershire County Council Highways Road closure information	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roads-in-severe-weather/current-road-closures/ Twitter: @GlosRoads
National Highways (formerly Highways England) A40, A417/A419 and the motorways Traffic and road closure information	https://www.trafficengland.com/ Twitter: @HighwaysSWEST
Flooding	
Environment Agency Flood Risk To find out if an address is at risk of flooding	https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk
Environment Agency Flood Warnings & Alerts	https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings
Environment Agency River Levels	https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels
Flood Guide Guidance on flood preparation, response and recovery prepared by multi-agency partners	https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/flood-risk-management/flood-guide/
Flood Online Reporting Tool (FORT) Online system to share details of flooding and observations to assist in flood risk planning NB FORT will not trigger an emergency response	https://fort-gloucestershire.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/

Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum		
Glos Prepared		https://glosprepared.co.uk/
Information on the work of the LRF and how families, business and communities can prepare for emergencies		Twitter: @Glos_Prepared
Water / Sewerage Companies		
Thames Water - Interactive incident map		www.thameswater.co.uk/help-and-advice/work-in-your-area
Severn Trent Water - Interactive incident map		https://www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/check-my-area/
Bristol Water - Service status information (NB Water supplier only - contact Wessex Water for sewerage issues).		www.bristolwater.co.uk/service-status/
Wessex Water		www.wessexwater.co.uk
Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water) - Interactive incident map		www.dwrcymru.com/en/In-Your-Area.aspx
Gas		
Wales and West Utilities	0800 912 2999	www.wwestutilities.co.uk
Electricity Distributors		
National Grid Loss of supply interactive map		https://powercuts.nationalgrid.co.uk/tweets
Scottish and Southern Electricity Network Loss of supply interactive map		https://powertrack.ssen.co.uk/powertrack
School Closures		
Gloucestershire County Council School Closures		https://closures.gloucestershire.gov.uk/
Weather		
Met Office		https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/
Lightning Map		www.lightningmaps.org
Community Resilience / Community Emergency Plans		
Gloucestershire Rural Community Council Emergency planning toolkit for communities		https://www.grcc.org.uk/community-led-planning/emergency-planning
Communities Prepared – info & training resources		https://www.communitiesprepared.org.uk/
Location		
What3Words Tool to find and share exact locations. Can be used to direct Emergency Services to a specific location.		https://what3words.com/ Also available as a Free App- see below

Useful Apps

<p>Met Office Weather App</p> 	<p>For the latest weather information including severe weather warnings and rain radar.</p>
<p>St John Ambulance First Aid App</p> 	<p>First aid advice for dealing with emergency situations including illustrated guides and voiced instructions.</p>
<p>British Red Cross First Aid App</p> 	<p>British Red Cross Support Line: 0808 196 3651- Contact us Monday to Friday, 10am to 12pm (midday)</p> <p>Our friendly, trained staff and volunteers are here to help you find the support you need. We offer free emotional and practical support and will help to connect you with services available in your area. We'll help you find the support you need.</p> <p>Full details of our support line are available here – National Support Line helpline British Red Cross</p> <p>Set up to support people (in more than 200 languages) who are lonely, worried, or impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, and finding it difficult to access food or medication in the UK. Support line volunteers can provide (where possible), emotional support, local support services, wheelchair, and other support services and Covid information and practical advice.</p> <p>Please visit and browse our website for further information on what we can offer in</p>

	<p>general or to find specific information of contact details for the different areas.</p> <p>Further information can be found on our website here - The British Red Cross Worldwide Humanitarian Charity</p>
<p>British Red Cross Emergency App</p>  <p>The logo for the British Red Cross Emergency App features a red cross symbol to the left of the text 'BritishRedCross'. Below this, there is a large red exclamation mark.</p>	<p>Various features including clear and practical advice what to do in a variety of emergency situations.</p>
<p>What3words App</p>  <p>The logo for the What3words App consists of a red square containing three white slanted parallel lines.</p>	<p>what3words is a way to identify precise locations. Every 3m square has been given a unique combination of three words to find, share and navigate to precise locations using three simple words.</p>

Further advice and support

Please remember your community is not on its own

Whilst having a Community Emergency Plan is really beneficial in being able to support the community using local knowledge, skills and resource etc. it does not replace the emergency response arrangements the statutory authorities have in place.

As such, your community is not on its own and advice can be provided both with preparing and testing your Community Emergency Plan and also support during the response to an emergency. Contact details for such advice and support are below.

Organisation	Contact Details	Support / Advice
Cheltenham Borough Council	Office Hours: 01242 262626 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) Out of Hours: (emergencies) 01242 264102 Please email completed Community Emergency Plans & any queries to: communityservices@cheltenham.gov.uk	Advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan
Cotswold District Council	Office Hours & Out of Hours (emergencies): 01285 623000 Please email completed Community Emergency Plans and any queries to: Corporate.Responsibility@publicagroup.uk and copy in Rebecca.Gundy@publicagroup.uk	Advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan
Forest of Dean District Council	Office Hours & Out of Hours (emergencies): 01594 810000 Please send completed Community Emergency Plans and any queries to: Corporate.Responsibility@publicagroup.uk and copy in Karen.Rushworth@publicagroup.uk	Advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan
Gloucester City Council	Office Hours: 01452 396396 Out of Hours (emergencies): 01452 396220 Please email completed Community Emergency Plans and any queries to: Emergency.planning@gloucester.gov.uk	Advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan

Organisation	Contact Details	Support / Advice
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Office Hours: 01684 205010 Out of Hours (emergencies): 01684 293445 Please email completed Community Emergency Plans and any queries to: EHenquiries@tewkesbury.gov.uk	Advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan
Stroud District Council	Office Hours: 01453 766 321 Out of Hours (emergencies): 01453 222104 Please email completed Community Emergency Plans and any queries to: emergency.planning@stroud.gov.uk	Advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan
Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)	Office Hours: 01452 883388 Please email queries to info@gaptc.org.uk	Generic advice, and to direct queries to the appropriate Parish/Town council
Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC)	Advice on emergency planning and access to the latest information. Through GRCC's package of resources and experience of supporting parishes on Emergency Plans for over 10 years they can provide; A step by step guide to producing your plan; Fully adjustable templates to download and adjust as you wish; Examples of how communities are approaching emergency planning and lessons learned from their experiences; Information on linking up with local authorities. GRCC can also provide training on how to complete, review and test Community Emergency Plans – contact for details of training and fees, where relevant. Rachel Seymour RachelS@grcc.org.uk or info@grcc.org.uk	
British Red Cross (BRC)	National Support Line: 0808 196 3651 (Available 10am-6pm daily) Set up to support people (in more than 200 languages) who are lonely, worried, or impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, and finding it difficult to access food or medication in the UK. Support line volunteers can provide (where possible), emotional support, local support services, wheelchair, and other support services and Covid information and practical advice. Please visit and browse our website for further information on what we can offer in general or to find specific information of contact details for the different areas. Resources: BRC also has resources (personnel, volunteers, vehicles) across the UK and when requested in an incident, the most appropriate resources will be deployed. Further deployments can be considered in large scale incidents requiring mutual aid. What we can do: Provide emergency practical and emotional support to people in crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional, psychosocial support • Signposting to relevant local and national services and support • Guidance for people affected by emergencies • Help to people to plan their own recovery after an emergency • Support to vulnerable people in their home 	

Thank you for your support with Community Resilience