

A GUIDE TO HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY PREPARE AN EMERGENCY PLAN



FOR THE COMMUNITIES OF ARGYLL AND BUTE



Partner organisations involved the update of this handbook:

- Argyll and Bute Council
- Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface
- Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership
- British Red Cross
- HM Coastguard
- NHS Highland
- Police Scotland
- Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Power Energy Networks



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Throughout this handbook there are examples of good practice to help you prepare your community's emergency plan. In each of the examples it will be clear that volunteers had an important part to play but the emergency services were in charge and the volunteers acted under the supervision and direction of the emergency services.

Argyll and Bute is known for its unique geography. We have the highest number of inhabited islands in the country – alongside them sits a diverse mix of rural communities and larger towns. This can mean that many aspects of everyday life and service delivery bring with them barriers to overcome, even in the best of circumstances.

However, that diverse geographic mix also means that Argyll and Bute's communities are known for their resilience. We are used to planning, preparing, working in partnership. All of this, along with our existing experience and knowledge, can stand us in good stead when significant challenges or emergencies strike.

“This handbook provides communities with another resource for their own local resilience toolkits. It helps communities prepare in advance, as far as possible, by creating and taking ownership of their own resilience plans. These plans set out ways that they can work in partnership with the council and other agencies, with local people and groups, and with the emergency services. Communities are best placed to know about local needs, opportunities and challenges. Their own expertise in this regard is what helps them to develop and drive clear, reliable plans which will help them to cope with the unexpected – whether that is severe weather, pandemic conditions or any other kind of emergency. If your community is looking to refresh its existing plans or develop new community resilience resources, this handbook will help to shape the right approach for the place where you live”.

Cllr Jim Lynch, Leader

Argyll and Bute Council

1. Introduction

An emergency could be anything from severe weather, flooding, fire or landslides to major incidents that involve transport such as a derailment or bus crash. Preparing your community for these kinds of events will make it easier to recover from the impact.

Being aware of the risks that you as a community may encounter and who within your community might be able to assist you, could make your community better prepared to cope with an emergency.

Local emergency responders will always have to prioritise those in greatest need during an emergency, especially when life is in danger. During these times, you as a community would benefit from knowing how to help yourself and those around you until assistance arrives.

This handbook is available to give advice to community groups that want to help their communities cope better in an emergency by preparing a **Community Emergency Plan**. It is written with existing groups like community councils in mind, but could be used by any community organisation – or by a group of people in a community who want to be more prepared.

When an emergency happens, organisations which are called “emergency responders” in this handbook, take the lead in supporting communities in dealing with emergencies. These are the “999” services including the police, fire and rescue service, ambulance service, coastguard and other organisations like local authorities and the NHS, as well as voluntary organisations like the British Red Cross, RVS and Salvation Army.

Having a Community Emergency Plan does not mean that your group should or could replace the emergency responders. **It is important to remember that you should never do anything which puts you or anyone else in your community at risk.** However, in a severe emergency situation, the emergency responders cannot be everywhere at once. They will always have to prioritise people in greatest need, especially where lives are at risk.

In the last few years, Argyll and Bute has experienced severe weather, flooding, travel disruption, fuel shortages, animal diseases, landslides and a pandemic flu outbreak. Disruptive challenges like these affect our daily lives, every community would want to recover from them as soon as possible.



In your community, vulnerable people who may already be in need of services become more vulnerable and others not normally needing any help may become vulnerable in extreme circumstances.



How communities organise themselves to prepare for emergencies can make a big difference. Making a Community Emergency Plan is about how people can make that difference by coming together to support each other.

“Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership benefits from having all health and social care services within the partnership. This allows Argyll & Bute to have an integrated response across all relevant services, from the community response to acute medicine. We plan on a locality basis and identify networks of support. This ensures we can respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities safely and effectively.

In a remote and rural setting community intelligence and resilience supports our response and ensures we have the greatest opportunity to work together towards recovery and overcome extraordinary events. We work in a partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, as part of a multi-agency response recognising that each Agency has statutory duties, but that we must work together to ensure that is joined up for our communities

Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership

2. Purpose of having a plan

A resilient community is achieved by working together

At the heart of how communities get through emergencies is how “resilient” they are – this means how well they can use their strengths to:

- prepare for,
- respond to; and
- recover from emergencies

More resilient communities:

- are aware of the risks that may affect them and how vulnerable they are to them
- use their existing skills, knowledge and resources to prepare for, and deal with, the consequences of emergencies
- work together to complement the work of the local emergency responders before, during and after an emergency.

A Community Emergency Plan is one way in which your group can help your community become more resilient. It can help your community cope until the emergency responders arrive, and help it recover in the long term.



We know that people already support and help each other during times of need. Simple activities like getting together to clear snow and ice from paths or offering a helping hand to neighbours who might become vulnerable in an emergency can make all the difference.

Good practice example: A house-fire broke out in a rural community during a period of severe winter weather in 2011.

Community members knew not to try to tackle the fire, but they played a vital role. Whilst the fire and rescue service was on its way, they were able to make sure that the fire engine was able to get to the scene, by clearing ice and snow from the access road. A local farmer used his tractor to tow the fire-engine part of the way to the building which was on fire.

This handbook sets out a step-by-step guide to preparing a Community Emergency Plan, from getting started, to practising your plan. However, it is not an instruction manual that must be followed to the letter. **Carrying out any of the steps is a worthwhile achievement in itself.**

It is important to note that the plan is not in any way a method by which a local authority or an emergency service may reduce its response or service to the community, the plan is intended to support and enhance the response.

“The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service has planned and prepared for a wide range of events and will always respond to deal with crises and make things safe. However, bringing matters back to normality will involve the whole community. It is far better to plan for what might happen and thus be prepared to react, than to simply wait and see. We support the development of community plans which will assist everyone in recovering from extraordinary events, and will allow all the agencies, services, and the public to work together to restore normal life in the shortest time possible.”

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service



Communities can deal with local issues, for example:

- clearing snow from pathways of people who are unable to do this themselves
- clearing of snow from school and nursery access routes and playgrounds
- flood prevention in risk areas e.g. sandbags
- providing hot meals and assistance within community centres and village halls
- checking on neighbours to ensure their safety and well-being during severe weather

3. The top risks in Argyll and Bute

The emergency responders already do a lot of work to identify the risks in their areas.

Risks to consider when preparing your community plan are:

- storms and gales
- flooding, coastal and fluvial
- landslips
- low temperatures and heavy snow

You can also access the West of Scotland Community Risk Register for information on top risks.

This publication is created as a result of risk assessments carried out by the West of Scotland multi-agency resilience partnership to identify the risks in the area and rate them in terms of their potential impact and likelihood of occurring.

The results of these assessment are used to inform the partnership and produce agreed and effective multi-agency plans and procedures.



[Scottish Fire and Rescue - Community Risk Register - West of Scotland](#)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the different organisations dealing with an emergency vary, some are set in statute and others fill a need. The police will normally take the co-ordinating role at a major, large or complex incident. Once an incident moves into the recovery phase, the local authority will take over the lead role. Here you will find the roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies contributing to this handbook.



The primary areas of police responsibility at a major incident are:

- the saving of life
- co-ordination during the Emergency Phase
- calling out of essential services
- protection and preservation of the scene
- investigation
- identification of the dead
- collation and dissemination of casualty information
- co-ordination of the media response
- application of counter measures to protect the public
- restoration of normality



The primary responsibility of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in major incidents is:

- the saving of life and rescue of people
- protection of properties and prevention of escalation
- the carrying out of other specialist services, including flood/water rescue services
- to assist people where the use of fire service personnel and equipment is relevant
- protection of the environment



HM Coastguard

HM Coastguard is the emergency response branch of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The MCA is an executive agency within the Department of Transport (DfT) and has the lead role for dealing with incidents at sea and some inland waters.

HM Coastguard is responsible for –

- minimising loss of life amongst seafarers and coastal users
- responding to maritime emergencies 24 hours a day
- developing, promoting and enforcing high standards of maritime safety and pollution prevention for ships
- minimising the impact of pollution on UK interests
- responding to non-maritime incidents such as floods, searches or assisting in evacuating areas.



The NHS role and responsibility in an emergency situation is to:

- provide risk assessment within their sphere of expertise;
- continue to perform emergency or urgent healthcare functions;
- contribute to emergency planning;
- maintain public awareness and arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public of health issues



In an emergency situation the principal concern of the council includes:

- support for the emergency services
- support and care for the local and wider community in conjunction with the Health and Social Care Partnership
- Co-ordination of the response by organisations other than the emergency services, e.g. the voluntary sector.

In the immediate aftermath of a major incident, the council will assist the emergency responders and ensure that resources are made available, including:

- the provision of a wide range of professional staff including skilled trades staff

- road closures and diversions
- plant and equipment
- emergency centres
- maps and building plans
- building safety inspections
- emergency lighting
- environmental health services
- clearance of debris and restoration of highways
- psychological support
- interpretation services
- help lines
- information to the public
- media liaison services

As time goes on, and the emphasis switches to recovery, the council's Chief Executive will accept the responsibility for the overall coordination of the incident from the Chief Constable. The council will take a lead in the recovery, rehabilitating the community and restoring the environment.

The council's Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) is responsible for the co-ordination of the council's response in an emergency. This includes the alerting and call out of other council officers; and voluntary agencies such as the British Red Cross and TSI. The CCU also liaises with the emergency services or utility providers in the co-ordination of any incident/emergency.



British Red Cross

The British Red Cross helps vulnerable people in crisis whoever and wherever they are. The Red Cross works alongside statutory agencies and voluntary sector partners to respond to emergencies and build community resilience. They provide practical help and emotional support to people and communities affected by emergencies. <http://www.redcross.org.uk/en/What-we-do/Emergency-response>



Third Sector Interface

Argyll and Bute TSI support third sector organisations within our communities – charities, social enterprises, voluntary and community groups.

- The TSI holds the contact details of almost all third sector organisations across Argyll and Bute; and therefore, can circulate information, enable contacts and network to ensure any relevant details are shared as widely as possible.



- The TSI is the lead agency for volunteering in Argyll. It runs the VolunteerArgyllandBute portal, which is both a database of existing volunteers and a way of organisations advertising for volunteers. The usual time to fill volunteer vacancies is under 48 hours.

Argyll and Bute TSI play a key role in ensuring that there is 3rd sector representation on all local planning structures, and in building the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to have their voices heard and therefore to fully participate in local decision-making. The TSI also helps volunteer-involving organisations to effectively recruit, develop and manage volunteers across Argyll and Bute.

5. Templates to help you create an Emergency Plan

Emergency Planning for Community Groups -

How to help make your community more resilient

We have prepared community emergency plan templates which you will find on pages 26-41. You can use or change them in whatever way suits you and your community, including adding your own community's name, logo etc. If your community would like to use these templates to create your plan, they can be downloaded from the Argyll and Bute Council's website.

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Different communities face different issues and have different strengths and ideas about how to tackle them. So, your Community Emergency Plan will be unique to your community. The plan is specific to your community council area but can be split into local areas if required. It is very important that you talk to people in your community who have resources they can use to help.



The Scottish Government's Ready Scotland website is a useful source of information for communities that want to develop Community Emergency Plans, and can be found at: www.ready.scot

Step 1 – Making your Plan

Getting started.

How to use this guide

This guide takes you through a step-by-step process that will enable you to:

- Decide who your plan is for
- Get the right advice
- Think about the risks your community faces
- Think about local skills, knowledge and resources
- Involve all the people who can help

Write and test a plan

Every day in Scotland thousands of people need to attend hospital for life-saving treatments like dialysis. If ice and snow caused a problem getting someone from their home to their hospital transport, could your community get together to help?

Achieving **any** of these things will help make your community more resilient.

You will want advice and assistance preparing your plan. Argyll and Bute Local Resilience Partnership endeavours to assist and support communities in preparing their plans.

Argyll and Bute Council has examples of completed emergency plans from other communities and can send copies to you if requested.

Contact: Resilience Unit, Argyll and Bute Council on 01436 658728 or 01436 658729. Or email emergencyplanning@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Look out for the “**action**” markers in the guide for suggestions on how to complete sections of the plan and where to find information to help you.



It may help you to gather background information on your community, such as a map of the area covered, which could include:

- main roads and rail lines (if any)
- rivers and lochs
- community facilities such as schools, village halls and residential homes
- grit bins

Action: Decide who and where your plan is for.

Who can you work with?

Good practice example: An elderly gentleman out walking his dog goes missing. Neighbours, responding to the family's phone calls enquiring about his whereabouts, search their properties.

Word quickly spreads and volunteers arrive to help search. When police and mountain rescue were mobilised, they were able to deploy a large number of people to assist with the search very quickly.

At the same time, a local hotel acted to provide a rest centre for the searchers providing refreshments and somewhere to co-ordinate.

It is important to remember that you need to have support and enthusiasm from your community for a plan to work. People need to be prepared to sign up and offer to get involved in helping if an emergency happens. Raising awareness and encouraging people to see the value of joining in are an important part of building the foundations for a plan.

To make your plan more effective, as diverse a group as possible within your community should have a chance to get involved. Different people bring different skills and opportunities. For example, some people may not be able to clear snow but could be willing to help look after people who have to leave their homes in an emergency. People from different ethnic communities may have language skills and could help communicate with people in your community whose first language is not English.

You could have an open meeting where the community can discuss their ideas for the plan and find out who is interested in helping to create it. There may already be a regular meeting where you can do this – such as a community council meeting, neighbourhood watch or residents' association.

You will need to bear in mind that you may need different methods to communicate with all your community. For example, people with childcare responsibilities may not be able to attend evening meetings and not everyone will be comfortable getting information by e-mail or through websites.



When you have got a group of people together, this is the group that will lead your preparations and co-ordinate the action you take with the emergency responders in your area.

Who will take the lead?

It may help to identify a co-ordinator to take a lead role in organising and taking forward the work of this group and helping to keep up motivation and interest from their community.

It is important that the person taking on this role has a good understanding of your community and has the backing and support of community members.

Action: talk to Argyll and Bute Council, and other key agencies if you need to, and the rest of your community.

Identifying risks

To plan for emergencies, you need to know:

- what risks face you?
- how likely are they to come about?
- if they happen, what would their impact be?
- are any people in your community particularly at risk?

It's important that you focus on those risks that:

- are important to you; and
- you can do something about.

Examples of the sort of risks you can consider are described below.

Environmental risks

- are there any areas that flood regularly?
- are you frequently cut off by snow?
- are there any sites of environmental or historic importance which may be impacted?

Infrastructure risks

- is there a major transport facility (like a ferry port or a train station) in the area?
- are there any vulnerable bridges or main roads?
- are there any large industrial sites in the area?

Social risks

- are there any known vulnerable people/groups in your area?
examples may include:
 - people who have recently had an operation
 - people without access to transport
 - people with limited mobility

- people reliant on regular medication or health visits
- are there any groups who might find it difficult to understand emergency information?
- are there any groups who don't live in the area full-time like holiday makers or travelling communities to consider?

Emergency responders cannot always determine exactly what individuals need, nor can they always identify who in your community may be vulnerable in a crisis, particularly those who may not previously have received support.

This requires local knowledge and help. Think about how **you** could share this information with the emergency responders if an emergency occurs.

Good practice example: In a heath fire on the outskirts of a village, locals became aware that individuals may be forced to leave their homes if the fire spread.

Using their community emergency plan, they identified and prioritised those who would need to be evacuated and were able to present this information to the emergency services.

Voluntary sector groups regularly work alongside the emergency responders.

Both say that this works best where they have an established relationship and don't have to start from scratch when an emergency occurs.

It helps that they know who to talk to and have planned in advance what to do.

Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland, housing associations and other voluntary groups will also have a good idea of the people or communities who are vulnerable.

However, they will not know who may become vulnerable in a crisis, or what help they might want or need. This is where your help is particularly important.

For each risk, you should also think about what actions you can take to reduce the chances of it happening, or to minimise any impact.



The emergency responders already do a lot of work to identify the risks in their areas. They meet regularly as a Regional Resilience Partnership (previously the Strathclyde Emergencies Co-ordination Group). This group has the responsibility for the co-ordination of regional emergency planning and for overseeing the response to and recovery from, major emergencies. It also has a duty to publish a “Community Risk Register” (CRR) showing what risks have been identified in your area, and their potential impact.

However, the CRR mainly talks about relatively high-level threats, and how the emergency responders can address them. You should also use your local knowledge to try and identify other risks in your local area that may not be included in them.

The Community Risk Register for Argyll and Bute can be found at:

[West Community Risk Register SFRS](#)

Action: Complete the risk assessment template on page 29.

What can your Community Council or Community Group do to prepare?

One of the key things which the Community Council can do to make your community more resilient is to encourage individuals and families to think about what they would do in the event of an emergency.

You might want to consider encouraging local people to make plans for how they and their families would cope in an emergency. A Household Emergency Plan template which you can encourage people to complete is included in this guide on page 39. You may want to consider circulating this or something similar in your community.

Assessing community skills and resources

Once your community is aware of the risks and what their impacts would be, it is important to consider what skills, resources and equipment your community already has that could be used, if needed, during an emergency.

You may be surprised at the level of knowledge you have and the availability of equipment and other resources you have in your community. In any case, it is better to find out now what is or is not available.

You may want to look at your community’s existing skills and resources under the following headings and add this information to your plan.

Volunteers

People already help each other in emergencies. However, as part of your planning, you could speak to people and groups in your community and ask them, in advance, if they would be willing to volunteer during an emergency, and if they have skills, tools or other resources that could be used. For example, some people may have equipment and expertise they are willing to use while others may be trained in first aid or food preparation. Many people will be able to help in tasks such as clearing snow.

You can ask people about their skills and resources using a questionnaire. It's important to remember that people like to be communicated with in several ways.

You might also want to consider talking with existing local community groups to see if their volunteers or contacts would be willing to help in an emergency.

For example, sports club members may be willing to help if required. It is important to make sure that you keep volunteers up to date and engaged with your emergency planning.

Good practice example: Following a period of bad weather, a local museum was at risk of being flooded and the fire service was mobilised to assist with pumps.

Locals also responded with diggers, assisted in filling sandbags and relocated the precious artefacts to a secure location.

Tools and equipment

Within your community, think about what tools and machinery might be needed if an emergency occurs. There may be people who are qualified, capable and willing to operate these tools and machines in an emergency. For example, tree surgeons may have useful skills and equipment, and farmers may be willing to use their tractors to help. It is important to make sure that anyone using this kind of equipment is properly qualified and insured to do so. This is for their own protection and to protect the people they are helping.

Supplies

In an emergency, your community could require supplies, like food and water, which may be difficult to obtain. Where appropriate, you could consider talking directly with local businesses and suppliers who might be willing to provide them. If a written agreement is made between your community and the supplier, attach this to your plan.

Transport

Find out which vehicles could be used by the local community and know how to access them in an emergency. It is important to make sure that vehicle owners are properly licensed and insured to use their vehicles in this way.

People with specialist assets and skills can help protect communities.

Members of rural and island communities who have access to private vehicles, knowledge or equipment that can be used to enhance response to emergencies are signing up to the Community Asset Register.

For more information and to register interest click [here](#).

Action: complete the local skills and resources template on page 29

Insurance and health and safety

You should not see insurance and liability as a barrier to preparing your community for emergencies. Having a Community Emergency Plan does not mean that volunteers will be putting themselves in danger or endangering other people in the community. In fact, it means the opposite.

For every-day activities that you might do to help your neighbours, in a personal capacity, your ordinary household buildings or contents insurance will generally provide personal liability cover. You will need to take reasonable care and **should not take unnecessary risks**. If you are in doubt, you should check your policy or ask your insurer.



If you are part of an existing group, you will probably have third party liability insurance, and you can check with your insurer that the types of activities you want to do will be covered by your policy.

Information on insurance can be found at:

[Resources for community groups | Ready Scotland](#)

[Annexes | Ready Scotland](#)

If a group is not employing anyone health and safety legislation, does not, in general apply. Voluntary organisations and individual volunteers do, however, have a duty of care to each other and others who may be affected by their activities. In every case it is important to ensure that volunteers working on community resilience activities do so safely and anyone affected by their activities not put at any additional risk. If your group has control of premises the law requires you to take reasonable measures to ensure the hall, access to it and any equipment and/or substances provided are safe for people using it.

It's important that you take volunteer's safety into account even when doing relatively low-risk activities. For example, no-one should clear ice and snow wearing inappropriate clothes or shoes, and no-one should clear snow in an area which is overhung by large icicles.

General advice on health and safety, and risk assessment for voluntary groups is available at:

www.rospace.com

[Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations \(scvo.scot\)](http://scvo.scot)

Identifying key locations

In an emergency, the council might need the community assistance to identify a safe place for people to shelter and set up a rest centre.

You should talk with the council to see what help the community could give to set up places of safety or rest centres.

Action: Identify list of sites. Complete key locations template on page 30.

Emergency Contact List

It is important to keep a record of who in the community has offered their help in an emergency. This will help you contact everyone quickly and make it easier for you and the emergency responders to identify who is able to help. It is important to keep personal details safe and available, remembering that you could lose power and access, and only share them with those who need the information. For further information see

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>

Assessing community skills and resources

Once you have drafted 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. By sharing it you may get more people interested in it and gain further support.

The council and other emergency responders need to be aware of your plan so that they will know who to contact and what assistance you can provide. You should record who has a copy of your plan and ensure that they receive a revised copy whenever it is updated.

Those in receipt of your plan should be listed on the Distribution List.

For advice and information on completing your plan, or send completed plans to:

Argyll and Bute Council
Resilience Unit
38 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh
G84 7PG

Or by email to emergencyplanning@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Step 2 – Responding and recovering

Using your plan

When an emergency happens, you will need to know how best to use your plan and volunteers. **In any emergency, having a plan is not a substitute for calling 999.** You will have made your local emergency responders aware of your plan as part of your planning process, so in most circumstances you should activate your plan in response to a call from the emergency responders. It is important that any actions which you carry out are co-ordinated with the wider emergency responders' efforts. You should work with your local emergency responders to identify how they will contact you, and how you should contact them.

In some circumstances, the emergency responders may be unable to contact you. Therefore, you should develop a series of triggers you can use as a community to decide whether to take action.

For example:

- Have we been able to contact our local emergency responders?
- What messages are being put out in the media?
- What can we do **safely** without the help of the emergency responders?

Action: record the process by which you will activate your plan. See page 33.





What to do when you put your plan into action

Using your list of skills, people and resources, you will need to decide what you can do to **safely work** with the emergency responders in the immediate response to an emergency, and a potentially long period of recovery.

Action: record first steps to take once your plan is activated using the template on page 34.

Your first community meeting

It may be possible for you to meet briefly once the plan has been activated. If so, an example of a draft agenda you can use for the first meeting can be found on page 35. The draft agenda is intended to be a guide only. You may find that your team and volunteers are already getting on with helping but it is important to make sure everyone is safe and working in a coordinated way.

Once the plan has been activated it may be useful to keep a record of any decisions or actions, with a note of the reasons this will help you review your plan afterwards. Keeping a record also makes it easier to brief volunteers and inform other agencies or individuals during an incident.

Managing your response

During an emergency, make time to regularly review the situation to ensure that your actions are still appropriate as things can rapidly change. For example:

- Is your information up to date?
- Are you able to establish and maintain contact with your volunteers and other agencies?
- Can you change your activities to meet new requests for help?
- Have you planned to ensure your effort can be maintained?
- Have you informed those around you of the changes in your actions?

You also need to review the risks and always ensure that volunteers are safe.

Evacuation

During the initial response to an emergency, it might be necessary for some members of your community to be evacuated from their homes to a safe place. Speak to those co-ordinating this response (normally the police) to see what role your group can play in this.

You may be able to assist with:

- door knocking or delivery of emergency messages
- looking after people in a rest centre; or
- Identifying those who may need extra help to move to safety.

Communications

Your group should discuss how you will maintain ongoing and up to date exchange of information with each other, the emergency services and the community. You will also need to consider what happens if communications are disrupted in the area. You may have access to walkie-talkies or amateur radio groups like the Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network (RAYNET), or other radio amateurs, that you can use to communicate with each other.

Your group could also consider door knocking as an option to communicate with the public and get the emergency responders' message across if it is possible to do this safely. You should work with the emergency responders to ensure any messages they are delivering to the community are consistent with those from the emergency responders.

Action: Record alternative communication methods to use during an emergency using the template on page 38.

“Emergencies are our daily business and the police, and our partners have many contingencies in place to manage a variety of eventualities. The extreme weather conditions in recent times provided many challenges for us all and strong partnerships within Argyll ensured that people were kept safe and our communities returned to normality as quickly as possible.

The communities within Argyll can feel very remote and the development of local community contingency plans will provide an element of self-sufficiency, and this key piece of work will allow communities to play a significant role in supporting the emergency response and subsequent return to normality, ensuring we all play our parts in keeping our communities safe.”

Police Scotland



Step 3 – Practising and updating your plan

It is important to regularly review and update your plan to ensure it meets the changing needs of your community. It is also important to make sure that your plan will work properly in an emergency.

As a minimum, you should check regularly that it is still up to date. You may want to practise using the plan to test how well it would work in an emergency and see how ready members of your team and volunteers are to help out.

You could work with your local emergency responders, using the local risk assessment you have produced, to identify scenarios that you can use to test the arrangements you have made in your plan.

Your local emergency responders may be planning to practise their own emergency plans, and if so, you may be able to practise “activating” your plan as part of their exercise.

Practising the arrangements in your plan will allow you to identify any problems with it. Once you have practised your plan, you should review and update it. You should also regularly update your emergency contact list to ensure it is accurate.

When you make any changes to the plan, you should record them to make sure that everyone knows they are using the latest version and ensure that everyone who needs a copy of the plan is sent a copy of the updated version.

Please send copies of completed plans to Argyll and Bute Council and ensure that hard copies are kept safely retained.

Every step of this process helps make you and your community more resilient – supporting the work of emergency responders and building the sense of community in your area.

Step 4 – When you use your plan

If you use your plan in an emergency situation, remember it is very useful to take time to evaluate what happened. You need to consider what went well and what did not and what could be done differently in the future.



You may want to update your plan as a result and if you do, please remember to send a copy to Argyll and Bute Council.

Sometimes after a large-scale emergency there is a “multi-agency” debrief with all of the emergency responders involved. Individual organisations frequently debrief their own personnel. It may be useful for you to consider doing the same.

If your internal debrief raises any questions or concerns regarding the other emergency responders, you should contact them.

The templates on pages 28-43 are available to download from Argyll and Bute Council’s website.

[Insert your community's name here]

Community Emergency Plan

Plan last updated on xx/xx/xxxx

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 999

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Name	Role	Phone number/email address	Issued on
<i>Enter name</i>	<i>Enter role</i>	<i>Enter details</i>	<i>Enter date</i>

AMENDMENTS TO PLAN

Name	Details of changes made	Changed by	Date for next revision
<i>Enter name</i>	<i>Enter details</i>	<i>Enter name</i>	<i>Enter date</i>

LOCAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks – including likelihood	Impact on community/ vulnerability	What can Community Emergency Group do to prepare?
<p><i>Example: River through village can flood – every 2-3 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example: Flooding of local streets</i> • <i>Example: Blocked access to community hall</i> • <i>Example: Damage to homes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example: Encourage residents to improve home flood defences</i> • <i>Example: Work with local emergency responders to see if group can help with distribution of flood warnings and any evacuation and rest centre establishment required</i> • <i>Example: Identify vulnerable people who live in areas likely to be flooded</i>

KEY LOCATIONS

Building	Location	Potential use in an emergency	Contact details
<i>Example: Church Hall</i>	<i>Example: Sampleton village</i>	<i>Example: Rest Centre/safe place</i>	<i>Example: Church warden's contact number</i>

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

Name:	Photo
Title:	
24hr telephone contact:	
Email:	
Address:	

Name:	Photo
Title:	
24hr telephone contact:	
Email:	
Address:	

Name:	Photo
Title:	
24hr telephone contact:	
Email:	
Address:	

LIST OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

That may work with people or communities who may become vulnerable in an emergency

[Use this space to record details of organisations who work with people who may be vulnerable in an emergency]

ACTIVATION TRIGGERS

[Use this space to record details of how your Plan will be activated. You should include details of how the plan will be activated as a result of a call from the emergency responders, and also how your community will decide to activate the plan yourselves, if the emergency responders are unavailable]

FIRST STEPS IN AN EMERGENCY

Follow the instructions below when the plan is activated.

	Instructions	Tick
1	<i>Example: Call 999 (unless already alerted)</i>	✓
2	<i>Example: Ensure you are in no immediate danger</i>	✓
3	<i>Example: Contact the Community Emergency Group and meet to discuss the situation</i>	✓
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		

DRAFT COMMUNITY EMERGENCY GROUP FIRST MEETING AGENDA

Example Community Emergency Group Emergency Meeting Agenda

Date: *Enter Date*

Time: *Enter Time*

Location: *Enter Details*

Attendees: *Enter Details*

1. What is the current situation?

Enter details

What information do you have, who does it come from and is it accurate?

It may be that your first action is to gather information

You might want to consider the following:

Location of the emergency. Is it nearby:

- 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
- Non-English-speaking people
- What resources do we need?
- Food?
- Off-road vehicles?
- Blankets?
- Shelter?

Can the community help?

2. Establishing contact with the emergency responders

Enter details

3. How can we support the emergency responders?

Enter details

4. What actions can safely be taken?

Enter details

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

Enter details

6. How are you going to stay in touch?

Enter details

7. What do we need and when do we need it in order to sustain our efforts?

(For example, a few messengers now to spread an evacuation message, a lot of volunteers later when people are ready to be moved)

Enter details

8. Any other issues?

Enter details

Keep a brief record if you can

ACTIONS AGREED WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY IN THE EVENT OF AN EVACUATION

[Use this space to record details of the actions you can take to help your local authority if an evacuation is necessary in your community.]

ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAYING IN CONTACT IF USUAL COMMUNICATIONS
HAVE BEEN DISRUPTED

[Use this space to record details of alternative communications within your local area should usual methods of communication be disrupted.]

Household Emergency Plan

If a major emergency happens it may be some time before help arrives. It's very important that you and your family get together to prepare.

- ✓ **Agree a plan in advance with those in your home**
- ✓ **Complete this template together and keep it safe in case you need to use it.**

If the emergency means it is not safe to go out, the advice is usually to:

GO IN (go indoors and close all windows and doors)

STAY IN (stay indoors)

TUNE IN (to local radio, TV or the internet, where public information and advice from the emergency responders will be broadcast)

My local radio station: **Is on frequency:**

If you must leave your home, get out, stay out, and take others with you.

Think of two meeting places: one near home and one further away, in case you can't get home.

✓ **Meeting Place 1 (Near Home)**

✓ **Meeting place 2 (Further away)**

Location.....

Location

.....

.....

.....

.....

Pick a friend or a relative who lives out of the area, who you will agree to call to say you're OK, should you need to leave home. Make sure this person knows.

✓ **Friend or relative to call to let people know that you're OK**

Name.....

Telephone number.....

If it is safe to do so, you should check on your neighbours and vulnerable people living close by. Have a think about who they are in advance.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Tel Number.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Important Telephone Numbers

- For the emergency services, dial 999
- For NHS 24, dial 08454 24 24 24
- For SEPA's Floodline, dial 0845 988 1188
- For Scottish Water, dial 0800 0778 778

You should record other important telephone numbers:

Schools/Colleagues:

Work Contact:

Doctor:

Insurance:

Gas supplier:

Carers/childminder:

Plumber:

Vet:

Local authority:

Electricity supplier:

Other:

Pack an emergency kit

You should keep enough food and water and other essentials at home for at least three days.

Whether you must stay in or get out, packing a small emergency kit will help you get through. Keep it in a safe place at home where you can reach it easily. Your kit should be kept in a waterproof bag and the top ten things to include are:

- ✓ Battery radio with spare batteries, or a wind-up radio
- ✓ Battery torch with spare batteries, or a wind-up torch
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Important documents like birth certificates and insurance policies
- ✓ Bottled water, ready-to-eat food that won't go off and a can-opener too
- ✓ Spare keys to your home and car
- ✓ Spare glasses or contact lenses
- ✓ Toiletries and details of important medicines
- ✓ Pencil and paper, penknife, whistle
- ✓ Pet supplies

If you must leave your home and there's time to gather them safely, you should also think about taking:

- ✓ Essential medicines
- ✓ Mobile phone and charger
- ✓ Cash and credit cards
- ✓ Spare clothes and blankets
- ✓ Games, books, a child's special toy
- ✓ Pets

For further advice on being prepared for emergencies see www.ready.scot

6. Useful information

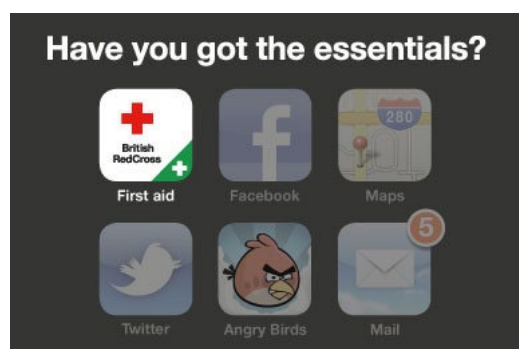
British Red Cross – Community Resilience

Underpinning the theme of resilience is the notion of how well we (individuals, families, communities, society) respond when faced with a crisis. Some of the common themes associated with resilience include:

- preparing for emergency events
- overcoming adversity
- the ability to recover
- dealing with the physical and emotional challenges.
- The strength, adaptability and local awareness that communities bring can help deal with an emergency.

The Red Cross works alongside statutory agencies and voluntary sector partners to respond to emergencies and build community resilience. One example of Red Cross community-based resilience work is Everyday First Aid. The key outcomes of Everyday First Aid training are:

- Increased competence in first aid delivery, confidence in first aid skills, and willingness to provide first aid in an emergency.
- Increased self-esteem and confidence to act.
- Acquisition of transferable first aid skills.



First aid at your fingertips

The free Red Cross app features simple, easy advice on 18 everyday first aid scenarios, and will give you simple skills to deal with sprains and strains, broken bones, unconscious casualties and more. The app also gives tips on how to prepare for emergencies, from severe weather to road traffic accidents.

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/en/What-we-do/First-aid>

To find out more about our work visit. <http://www.redcross.org.uk/>



Staying warm and well this winter

Here are some top tips for warding off the winter chills.

- Dress in plenty of layers and make sure that you have some warm shoes or boots with non-slip soles.
- Keep a mixture of salt and sand handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather.
- Keep simple cold, flu and sore throat remedies in the house. Your pharmacist can make suggestions and can also advise you on how to manage minor illnesses.
- Eat healthily and stay as active as possible – keep basic food items in the cupboard or freezer in case it's too cold to go shopping.
- Use a hot-water bottle or an electric blanket (serviced every three years) to warm the bed – never use the two together as this can be very dangerous.

The recommended temperature for your main living room is around 21°C (70°F), and the rest of the house should be heated to at least 18°C. Age UK's free information guide *Winter wrapped up* includes two room thermometers. You can use one in your living room and one in your bedroom to make sure that you stay warm in winter.

To order your free copies of *Winter wrapped up* or *Save energy, pay less guide*, call free on

0800 169 65 65



Our goal is to keep the lights on 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week. Events outside our control, such as bad weather conditions, can mean that the power is sometimes interrupted. When this happens, our first priority is to get the electricity back to normal for our customers, as quickly as possible.

What to do if your power goes off

- Check your trip switch or fuses to make sure there isn't a fault with your wiring or an appliance.
- Check if any neighbours are affected. If they are, it is more likely to be a problem with the local network. If there is a network problem, please make sure you let us know.
- If your trip switch, wiring and appliances are not faulty, please phone our Emergency line.





ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE IN THE EVENT OF A POWER CUT

- Keep a battery-powered radio tuned in to your local radio station.
- Keep a torch with fresh batteries in a place where you can reach it easily.
- Ensure you have a 'plug in' phone to replace a battery or mains electricity supported phone and/ or ensure you have an alternative charger for your mobile phone, for example a vehicle charger
- If you use other forms of heating and lighting, such as paraffin heaters and candles, don't leave them unattended.
- Switch off appliances and lights but leave a light on so you know when power has been restored.

If you have elderly or infirm neighbours, check to make sure they are comfortable. If you know of anyone who needs priority service, e.g. anyone on a ventilator or dialysis machine, please contact our Careline team by phoning Freephone 0800 622 838.

If we have warned you in advance that the electricity will be turned off, boil some water and keep it in a thermos flask. You can use it to make hot drinks or fill a hot water bottle if it gets too cold.

Don't open the freezer door unless you must – this helps food stay frozen for longer. When the power comes back on, check the food inside. Food should keep for about eight hours without power. If the food is still hard and icy, you can leave it in the freezer. Turn the freezer to its maximum setting for 24 hours, before putting it back on a setting that keeps it at -18°C.

Careline Team

We know some of our customers have special needs which can be compromised if their electricity supply is interrupted. These special needs may include medical conditions which rely on machines that run on electricity such as a kidney dialysis machine or a ventilator.

If you believe you have special needs, or you are aware of a neighbour or relative with special needs, you can ask to be placed on our Priority Service Register. Our team of specially trained Careline advisers will advise on the support we can offer.

You can contact Careline by phoning **0800 622 838**. All calls to our Careline are free, unless you use a mobile when your provider may charge. If you have hearing or speech difficulties and you are a text phone user, you can send text messages to our Text line on 0800 622 839. All calls to our Text line are free, unless you use a mobile when your provider may charge.

Our Careline team also give advice on where you can get special controls and adaptors to help you use appliances more easily, if you have difficulty finding suitable help.

One of the services we offer is to personally contact you in advance of a planned power cut (e.g. when we have to undertake essential maintenance) to check what additional support you may need. We will always do this if we can, but we can't promise to do it every time there is a planned power cut much as we would like to.

Please note: we cannot guarantee a constant supply of electricity so it is essential you have alternative arrangements should you experience a supply interruption.



What to do During a Power Cut

Should your supply be lost unexpectedly please use our [postcode lookup](#) or call the [emergency number](#) for your area and we'll give you our best estimate of how long it will be before we can get your power restored.

Please [call us urgently](#) if you see any of the following, and we'll make the equipment safe:

- Damaged equipment or lines
- Overhead lines that are on the ground or low enough for people or vehicles to come into contact with them
- Sparking overhead wires that are twisted or pushed together by broken tree branches.
- Broken substation fences or damaged electricity manhole covers in the road or pavement which leave live equipment exposed.
- Electricity meters and associated equipment that are not secure or waterproof.

If there are cables on or near the ground, please keep clear of them. These may still be live and able to conduct electricity through damp ground or metallic objects. If they are on roads or on footpaths, dial 999, tell the police and help keep passers-by well away.

For more leaflets and advice on Power Cuts can be found on our website:

www.spenergynetworks.co.uk

7. Legal disclaimers

The partners, listed at page 2, wish to make it clear that they are not the employing body for the volunteers referred to in this document. They are volunteers, acting on behalf of the Community Council or community organisation.

The partners accept no responsibility whatsoever for any loss, injury, claim, liability, costs or damages caused by the actions and/or negligence of the volunteers or anyone acting on behalf of them.

Health and Safety Advice

Health and safety legislation doesn't generally apply to someone who is not an employer, self-employed or an employee.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the regulations made under it apply if any organisation (including a voluntary organisation) has at least one employee.

The HSW Act sets out the general duties that employers have towards employees. It also requires employers and the self-employed to protect people other than those at work (e.g. members of the public, volunteers, clients and customers) from risks to their health and safety arising out of, or in connection with, their work activities.

Whilst carrying out voluntary activities for the community, the co-ordinator and the volunteers must be aware of their requirements under health and safety legislation, which in this case due to the likely activities, is a common sense approach. The task should be assessed, the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be selected and worn, and the task should be re-assessed during operation.

For example, clearing snow, the area to be cleared would be checked to ensure that there are no hazards i.e. icicles that could drop onto the volunteers. The correct PPE for this task would be boots, gloves, and a hard hat, and possibly a fluorescent jacket if operating near to a roadway.

The health and safety issue has to be taken cognisance of, but should not overwhelm the task; hence a common sense approach is stressed.

For further Health and Safety information in relation to volunteering, please use the links below:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/charities.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/index.htm>

Argyll and Bute Local Resilience Partnership would like to thank the organisations involved for their help and support in creating and updating this handbook.



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This handbook was originally prepared by the Community Resilience Project Team of Argyll and Bute Council, September 2012 as part of the highly successful Community Resilience Project.

Endorsed and updated by Argyll and Bute Local Resilience Partnership.