



## Mid Galloway Young Teams - Dumfries and Galloway

### Executive Summary

In 2012 Mid Galloway experienced the most severe snow storms in its history, rendering villages, towns and farms cut off and isolated. During the emergency operations young people and volunteers proved invaluable in assisting residents, delivering food and checking on vulnerable members of the community.

In light of this emergency, the local authority created Community Resilience Teams (CRT)<sup>1</sup> to prepare and plan for emergencies. Due to the positive impact that young people made during the 2012 emergency and following on from the successful Mid Galloway Young Citizen project, the Mid Galloway Young Teams were created, providing young people with training, skills and confidence to assist during future emergency situations.

The project has been very successful, with emergency service providers, local authority CRTs and Community Councils congratulating the four young teams who make up the Mid Galloway Young team.

### Background and Aims

As a result of previous emergencies in Dumfries and Galloway, which resulted in elderly and vulnerable people being placed at risk, the newly formed Community Resilience Teams implemented a project that would provide young people with training, skills and the confidence to assist CRTs during future emergencies.

During the 2012 winter emergency many young people got involved in going house to house to check on elderly and vulnerable community members; this good work combined with the Mid Galloway Young Citizens project resulted in the Community Safety forum holding a consultation with young people about their views on volunteering to help their communities. The consultation identified a willingness to volunteer in support of the local community, which led to the formulation of the project to create four 'Young Teams' who would work in partnership with the CRTs during emergency situations.

The aims of the project were to:

- encourage and support young people to become involved with volunteering in preparation for emergencies
- provide appropriate training to develop skills and confidence
- to engage and work with the CRT
- to support elderly and vulnerable people in the community

The project engaged with young people aged 12-18 from small villages, towns and farms across Mid Galloway, which resulted in the formation of four teams that would assist the CRT during a period of crisis, providing assistance and intergenerational support.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Community Safety Network, Practice Note 64 dated Jul 2015

## Activities

The project set out activities for young people that enabled them to develop the necessary skills and confidence needed to assist during emergency situations. These activities included training on:

- The provision of support and intergenerational assistance to local communities during emergency situations using the Household Emergency Life-Saving Plan (HELP)
- How to assess and manage risk
- Keeping themselves and others safe whilst responding to a range of emergency situations
- Engaging with communities to promote awareness and support
- Peer mentoring, to enable older members of the Young Team to peer mentor the new team members assisting with the sustainability of the project and reducing project costs

Following the training, the Young Team members hosted Community Safety lunches, which gave the Young Team the opportunity to engage with the elderly and some of the most vulnerable members of the community. Additional presentations were given to Community Council members, who provided positive feedback on the level of knowledge and skills of the Young Team members.

## Impact

The project has unified the work of the stakeholders involved with emergency planning at a regional and local level. This has resulted in the development of a flexible project incorporating training relevant to the needs of young people and specific to local issues. The evaluation of the project identified that the primary aims had been met; however the project identified the need for a more regional approach to community resilience, which led to the formation of the four Community Young Teams and the regional Mid Galloway Young Team.

Feedback from the training, which was conducted using instruction and interactive scenarios, identified that as a result the young people were confident, had increased and developed skills and knowledge and were better engaged with their communities, all of which has had a positive impact on the engagement between intergenerational groups.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the project was conducted by partners who used document research, questionnaires, baseline data and focus groups to collate data on the performance of the project. This analysis identified that in cases of extreme emergencies local communities would:

- be better prepared with improved awareness and knowledge
- have emergency plans in place, which would include equipment and actions to take
- Were prepared and ready to cope with a wide range of community emergencies

The project has resulted in less reliance on the major emergency services and dependence on the local authority, which significantly reduces any potential cost implications arising from an emergency situation.

The evaluations showed that:

- Young people, who participated in the project, felt a sense of pride at being recognised for doing good work within their communities
- CRT members were delighted to welcome so many young people to their teams
- Elected members and community council members were impressed with the presentations given to them and the knowledge and commitment of the young people engaged with the project

## Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

The original plan was to develop four young teams in four communities, however it was soon realised that to provide a more unified service the four teams would need a more central focus which led to the formation of the Mid Galloway Young team.

The project highlighted the need for increased resources which led to communities joining resources to facilitate a more holistic response to emergencies.

To enhance the sustainability of the project, a peer mentoring program was implemented, which trained the older 'Young Team' members to peer mentor new volunteers and to develop those already engaged, helping to make the project more sustainable and cost effective.

The young teams continue to be engaged, working within their communities to ensure future engagement in emergency planning and management.

## Resources

Funding	The cost of the project was £1000 which was spread across the four communities at £250 per community. This fund was provided by the Mid Galloway Community Safety Forum and was used to fund four courses for 34 young people across the four community areas.
Partners	In addition to the funding partnership contributions were also received, with staff, venues and resources all provided. Additional training costs for new volunteers have been offset as a result of the peer mentoring programme which has reduced the cost for future training for new Young Team members.

## Outcomes

National	09 - We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger. 11 - We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others. 12 - We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations. 15 - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
Local	Short Term - communities are better prepared for any emergency that may occur, young people know their roles in these situations and feel valued and included  Medium Term - there is an opportunity to further develop the project using peer mentoring to bring on new members

Long Term - the roll out of the project across the whole of Wigtownshire and possibly to other local authority areas outside Dumfries and Galloway

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### Practice Note Information

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