



Wigtownshire Community Resilience Project - Dumfries and Galloway

Executive Summary

Following severe snow storms in 2012, Dumfries and Galloway Local Authority implemented plans to mitigate risks and prepare communities for future emergencies. In conjunction with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Community Resilience Teams (CRT) were formed within each of the Community Council areas of Wigtownshire. The project aimed to empower communities to become more resilient by enabling them to identify risks, formulate suitable responses and work in partnership with existing emergency response agencies to overcome adversity.

The project planned to develop 14 CRTs, which would support the Community Councils, however due to local interest, the number of teams was doubled to 28. In areas where there was no Community Council, teams operated as standalone entities within their local communities, working in close partnership with the local authority.

Project Background and Aims

Dumfries and Galloway's Chief Executive Service established a civil protection, resilience and corporate risk section in 2012 to develop Community Resilience Teams (CRT) and the Household Emergency Life-saving Plan (HELP).

The project aimed to increase resilience within local communities through the development of robust co-ordinated arrangements that complimented those of responding agencies. CRT programme advisors and the principle officers within the council, developed an engagement plan to introduce the concept of community resilience to the Community Councils. This led to the development of training, the formulation of support networks and the provision of guidance documents which were disseminated and discussed at special events, seminars and conferences.

The training events provided instruction and interactive scenarios that showed how communities could effectively deal with an array of emergency situations such as snow, flood, fire and many more. The CRTs also met with emergency service providers such as Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and HM Coastguard to ensure that emergency response plans were integrated and complimentary.

Activities

The project targeted specific communities in the Wigtownshire area which were considered to be the most vulnerable due to their isolation and the high risk of flooding, however due to the initial success of the project this process was expanded to cover the majority of the Wigtownshire area with double the number of expected CRTs being formulated.

Following training and support from the local authority the newly established CRTs were able to compile the Household Emergency Life-saving Plan (HELP), which has been disseminated to all households and been made available online at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7718&p=0>. The plan provides residents with the following guidance:

- Evacuation details and agreed places to meet in the event of an emergency
- Emergency equipment lists and guidance
- Emergency service contact details and radio frequencies
- Emergency actions and advice
- Details of neighbours and guidance for checking on them
- Putting together a Household Emergency Life-saving Pack
- How to turn off facilities information
- Further details and guidance at www.majoremergenciesindg.co.uk

In addition to the HELP leaflets and online guidance, CRTs put together training sessions, seminars and conferences on how to effectively manage emergencies, which were attended by a large cross-section of the community.

Impact

The project has enabled the CRTs to identify risks to the community and implement appropriate actions. This has resulted in the identification of vulnerable people and groups, the identification of community resources which could be used to assist in emergencies and has provided key contacts to the area response teams and Emergency Planning Service who can provide regular situational updates to the Wigtownshire CRTs and communities.

As a result of the success of the project, CRTs are now able to set up Emergency Centres to take care of those in need, check on the most vulnerable, equip, assist and maintain communications with other teams and agencies through the RAYNET radio system, which can operate when all other conventional systems are not functioning.

The most important impact of the project is increased partnership working between individuals, communities, local authorities, emergency services and the Scottish Government, resulting in positive change within communities and the establishment of 28 CRTs across the Wigtownshire area.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The project was monitored and evaluated regularly by the project team with periodic evaluations, conducted throughout the project. Evaluation data on the project was collected from focus groups, which were made up from a cross-section of the community, and feedback from the delegates that attended the emergency situation sessions, training events, seminars and conferences.

The data collated from the focus groups and delegate feedback was very positive; complimenting the nature of the training, its level and depth, the information provided and the enjoyment of the participants.

The formation of HELP has resulted in more community members being aware of the actions to take and precautions needed when involved in an emergency situation. Raising awareness and implementing individual and community plans will increase community resilience, assisting the vulnerable, elderly and isolated within the community.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

The aims of the project were achieved, however it was quickly realised that the existing number of CRT's was insufficient. This resulted in the formulation of double the number of CRTs, resulting in the need for additional emergency equipment and funding.

Resources

- Funding** The costs attributed to the project have been absorbed by the wider Emergency Planning Team and Area Response Team Services within Dumfries and Galloway Local Authority.
- Partners** The local authority provided two Community Resilience Advisors within the Emergency Planning Team, whilst Police Scotland, HM Coastguard, Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service, RNLI, Dumfries and Galloway NHS, RAYNET and the Scottish Government all provided advice, guidance, training, de-briefing, evaluation, development, improvements and planning.

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**
- 1 - Reduce the harm from fires and other emergencies
 - 2 - Strengthen community engagement and resilience

Practice Note Information

- Practice Note Title:** Dumfries and Galloway Community Resilience Programme
- Practice Note No:** PN 64
- SCSN Topic Areas:** Environment Safety, Public Space Safety, Personal Safety, Home Safety, Partnership Working
- Date Produced:** July 2015
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