



**Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum Meeting**  
**Tuesday 25 October 2011**  
**Department for Business Innovation and Skills**  
**1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H0ET**

On Tuesday 25 October 2011 the Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum met at the Department for Business Innovation and Skills premises, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H0ET. The meeting title was 'Demonstrating the inter-dependency of the statutory and voluntary sector relationship in UK emergency planning, response, recovery and resilience arrangements'. One hundred and twenty participants from a range of voluntary and non-voluntary organisations attended the meeting. The programme is attached at Appendix 'A'.

***Morning session***

Kathy Settle, Deputy Director at the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat welcomed the participants and Moya Wood-Heath, Chair of the Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum outlined the programme for the day and reminded participants of the objectives of the meeting, to:

- Explore the impact on the voluntary sector of emerging civil protection arrangements and priorities
- Consider ways that individuals, communities and the voluntary sector can contribute to the development of community resilience and recovery phase activities
- Reflect on the opportunities and learning presented by the Olympic Games as a catalyst for improved engagement with the voluntary sector
- Report on Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum activities since the November 2010 Forum meeting
- Share information and good practice.

There were then four brief presentations followed by a plenary session; copies of the speakers' slides are attached at Appendix 'B'.

**Kathy Settle, Cabinet Office, Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat:**  
*'Emerging civil protection arrangements and priorities'*

Kathy provided the meeting with an outline of the National Security structure. She referred to: the National Security Strategy with its focus on the strategic context within which the agencies operate and the ends that they seek to achieve; and the Strategic Defence and Security Review, with its focus on how the agencies seek to achieve these ends and the resources that can be devoted to achieving those ends. Kathy referred to the risk groupings that had been identified and, in particular, the tier one risks, which are the highest priorities.

She gave an overview of the National Capability Programme and the actions taken to better prepare the resilience community. Kathy also referred to the shifting landscape, including the challenges of reduced money, structural changes and preparing for the Olympics. She explained that CCS were working on: the production of the *Dummies Guide to Business Continuity*; producing guiding principles for supporters of community resilience and the sharing of good practice case studies; and updating the National Risk Register.

Kathy spoke about the 'Get Ready for Winter Campaign' and joint working with other government departments, agencies, private and voluntary sector organisations. She explained that the purpose of the 'Get Ready for Winter Campaign' was to provide a single point of reference on 'Directgov', for individuals and communities, including raising awareness of winter risks and their consequences, with very simple advice and tips on travelling, health and wellbeing and preparing the home. Kathy thanked the voluntary sector partners for their engagement and support for the campaign.

The presentation concluded with Kathy welcoming the voluntary sector contribution to UK emergency planning arrangements and the Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum's continued support to specific activities, including the Civil Contingencies Act Enhancement Programme; the development of community resilience; translating the national risk picture into voluntary organisations' planning; and the review of business continuity arrangements.

**Commander Robert Broadhurst, Metropolitan Police:**  
*Planning for the Olympic and Paralympic Games*

Bob set the scene by outlining the scale and complexity the activities of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (the Games) entailed, extending over 64 days; at 30 competition venues; with 14,000 athletes competing and nine million spectator tickets. He also referred to the security, public order and crime risks associated with the Games and the need to support the aim: "To deliver a safe and secure Games in keeping with the Olympic culture and spirit."

Bob then described the complex structure involved in policing the Games, with the inclusion of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and the challenges of securing relevant planning information. He outlined the command, control and communication arrangements that would be put in place to provide effective links with all partners, locations and activities.

He illustrated the police command structure that would be used, with the conventional Gold, Silver, Bronze management functions and how this would meet the three layers of demand: venues, functional roles and police force-wide impacts. He also explained that the policing operation would need to extend beyond the 64 days from the beginning to the end of the Games, to include the Olympic torch route, the Queen's jubilee celebrations and regular

events such as the Notting Hill Carnival. Bob explained that all of these activities would have an inevitable impact on resilience, throughout the summer.

Bob identified the Metropolitan Police strategy for meeting these demands and its key roles in: the prevention and detection of crime; the protection of life and property; the maintenance of the Queen's Peace. He explained that in order to meet the increased policing demand there would be changes to normal leave arrangements to enable the Service to deploy up to 9,000 officers, each day. He concluded his presentation by describing the role of the Strategic Briefing Cell which will collate multi-agency updates, twice each day, for the information to be shared with other agencies.

**James Cruddas, Department for Communities and Local Government, Resilience and Emergencies Division:**

*'Resilience and Emergencies Management, the new model'*

James began his presentation by explaining that RED's aim is to fulfil its core purpose to: drive the transfer of power and funding away from Whitehall to people and communities and to create, through its core policy responsibilities, the conditions which energise and empower individuals and communities to build successful neighbourhoods. He identified the RED's role as: enabling resilient localities; ensuring preparedness for high impact or wide area emergencies; discharging the lead government department responsibilities; and providing government support when emergencies do occur.

He explained that RED had about 50 staff, including resilience advisers who were able to provide a facilitating role, working with groups of LRFs and helping to achieve 'Whitehall barrier busting'. He described the role of the Resilience Advisers as Government Liaison Officers at the time of an emergency and that they would provide the Government information flow link with COBR. He described the RED role in taking responsibility for post-event inquiries and the identification of lessons learned. James acknowledged that recovery planning was less well developed than response planning and that more work needed to be done to support recovery phase activities, including which Government department may take-over the role for recovery.

James then outlined RED's view of the voluntary sector contribution to emergency planning arrangements, to include: supporting statutory services in preparedness; assisting with evacuation arrangements in the response phase; and assisting with rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an incident. James ended his presentation by commenting on the fact that pressure on local authority resources has, in some cases, led to a potential reduction in support to the voluntary sector, with some partners failing to engage fully with voluntary organisations in training and exercising. He noted that there had been some delays in reimbursing voluntary organisation costs and that there were inconsistencies in the involvement of the faith communities and a need for greater clarity on the aims and opportunities for the engagement of the voluntary sector.

**Helen Shirley –Quirk, Department of Health:**

*'Changes to the health system in England'*

Helen outlined the proposed changes to the health system in England. She explained that the Secretary of State for Health will continue to have ultimate accountability for the National Health Service (NHS) and that Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities are due to be abolished from 1 April 2013. It is proposed that NHS care will be commissioned by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) from appropriate providers, with local authorities having a stronger role in shaping health services and an increased role for the voluntary sector and social enterprises. The Directors of Public Health will be employed by local authorities. It is proposed that the NHS Commissioning Boards allocate resources, commission certain services and support the CCGs so that there should be greater freedom for providers of hospital and other services. There will be a new public health service: Public Health England (PHE).

The NHS Commissioning Boards will be responsible for ensuring a comprehensive NHS emergency preparedness and response system, and for leading mobilisation of the NHS in an emergency. There are no proposed changes to the way responders to emergencies (ambulances, hospitals etc) carry out their work. The PHE will be responsible for providing public health emergency planning, response and resilience leadership, together with independent scientific and technical advice. The Directors of Public Health will ensure plans are in place to protect the health of the population and to respond to emergencies.

Helen explained that the proposals in the Bill are that NHS acute trusts, ambulance trusts and the PHE should be Category 1 responders; NHS Commissioning Boards and CCGs are likely to be Category 2 responders. There will be a clearer obligation for all NHS-funded units to prepare for and respond to emergencies. The NHS Commissioning Boards will be aligned to the DCLG resilience hubs.

The presentation concluded with Helen describing the management of the transition to the new arrangements, including the development of detailed work on the implementation of emergency planning, response and resilience frameworks.

**Anne Milton, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Health**

The Minister explained that there are about 27,000 excess deaths recorded in a harsh winter and that there is a risk of isolation, hardship and a negative impact on the quality of life of many people. Therefore, it is important that effective plans are in place to deal with the impact of a harsh winter to reduce the number of deaths, keep people healthy and ease pressure on Health and Social Care Services. 'The Cold Weather Plan for England' is linked to the annual influenza prevention campaign and the 'Keep well, keep warm campaign'.

It is clear that the 'Cold Weather Plan' would be able to achieve its full potential only if a range of organisations was involved. The Minister identified a range of activities undertaken by the voluntary sector during the winter of 2010/2011, including: the increased use of volunteers to make telephone calls to hundreds of isolated vulnerable people, to establish that they were safe, warm and had food and, where necessary, assistance and to provide the help required; the use of the voluntary sector organisations' fleet of 4x4 vehicles, across England, to reach stranded vulnerable people, to support local ambulance services and provide transport for key health sector staff; provide flu friends for vulnerable people unable to collect their anti viral medication; provide volunteers to a support line service offered by Lincolnshire County Council; and provide volunteers in a number of English counties to support rest centres that were set-up to accommodate stranded motorists.

The Minister described the benefits of voluntary and community groups working together to identify the most vulnerable; how vulnerable individuals could be supported through raising their awareness of the dangers presented by severe winter weather, how to mitigate its impact, in addition to providing practical support by checking on them and providing additional heating, food etc.

The Minister also referred to the 'Get Ready for Winter Campaign' that had been launched the previous day, and the key role of the voluntary sector in raising awareness and providing advice on a range of activities such as checking on vulnerable neighbours, the preparedness of vehicles and the benefits of receiving Meteorological Office weather warnings.

### **Plenary session**

There was a short question and answer session involving the Minister and speakers.

Q. There was concern about how health emergency planning arrangements would be maintained, following the removal of Primary Care Trusts.

A. The key role will sit with local authorities who will be encouraged to engage a range of organisations, including the voluntary sector to provide strong links between healthcare and social care. Public Health England will provide an overview of these arrangements. Emphasis was placed on the importance of working with LRFs. [Helen Shirley-Quirk agreed to speak directly with the questioner, following the plenary session.]

Q. How can we secure greater voluntary sector involvement in Olympic planning activities?

A. Local voluntary sector organisations should work with emergency planning personnel from local Category 1 responder organisations to develop and build on current arrangements. It is recognised that the information flow from LOCOG is not as good as

we would wish, but more details will emerge, and more comprehensive plans will follow, so it is important to maintain contact, now.

Q. What action is being taken to deal with a possible increase in people trafficking during the Olympics and how may the voluntary sector be involved in the response to this?

A. There is an expectation that both people trafficking and prostitution may increase as a consequence of the Olympics. The Metropolitan Police has set up a dedicated team that is working with the National Policing Improvement Agency. Voluntary sector organisations are asked to liaise with their local police service contacts to identify how they could support the response to these issues.

Q. How can we deal with the challenge of completing CRB checks on volunteers?

A. There can be a risk of focussing excessively on the challenge of completing CRB checks rather than considering whether each responder needs to undergo a CRB check. We can lose sight of the benefits of working in partnership and responding to the situation, especially when this may involve the contribution of smaller charities or local community groups.

DCLG and CCS are working on 'barrier busting' and this could include dealing with some myths about CRB checks.

Q. Has DCLG taken-over the Humanitarian Assistance Unit role previously undertaken by the Department of Culture Media and Sport?

A. DCLG is exploring how best to ensure that a similar support function continues to be available. At this stage, the position is not clear and it is recognised that further work needs to be done to make sure this important subject is given sufficient attention.

Q. How did you allocate practical support roles during the response to the flooding?

A. We utilised our existing knowledge of local groups to ensure that we are able to make the most effective use of local resources. It was important that each of the organisations involved were thanked, and supported, and that we did not allow disproportionate concerns about CRB checks or child protection issues to get in the way.

Q. How did you get organisations and individuals to work together across the normal inter-agency barriers?

A. We invested time in encouraging communities and organisations to work together, including during the preparation of emergency plans. It was important to have

community resilience arrangements in place and to build on these to help to clarify responsibilities and expectations.

**Comment**

I think it is really important that we have meetings like this, where organisations from across the resilience community can come together to share knowledge and understand better the contribution that can be made by each organisation. It would be helpful if we could do something similar at a local level.

**Response**

The Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum Working Party will explore, during 2012, how the local dimension can be reinforced.

**Buffet lunch**

***Afternoon session***

The session comprised three brief presentations and at table discussions; copies of the speakers' slides are attached at Appendix 'B'.

**Mick Free, Humanitarian Assistance training lead at the Emergency Planning College:**  
*'Humanitarian assistance in emergencies'*

Mick began his session by describing the objectives and role of the Emergency Planning Society Human Aspects Group, of which he is the chair. He explained that its remit is to ensure that humanitarian assistance is a priority in the emergency planning, response, recovery and resilience arrangements within the UK. The objectives of the Human Aspects Group include: working with the Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College and other appropriate training organisations, to develop and facilitate the most appropriate training related to the humanitarian aspects of an emergency; to support the development and publication of the most up-to-date relevant guidance on humanitarian assistance and community resilience.

Mick then described some of the key guidance and the importance of its role in providing effective response arrangements to meet the needs of individuals affected by an incident. This guidance includes: Emergency Response and Recovery; National Recovery Guidance; Humanitarian Assistance in Emergencies; Guidance on establishing Humanitarian Assistance Centres; and also the range of community resilience guidance documents.

To illustrate the recognition of the importance of placing the needs of individuals at the centre of emergency planning, Mick described two relevant courses at the Emergency Planning College: Introduction to Humanitarian Assistance and Planning for Emergency Assistance Centres.

Mick ended his presentation by outlining the potential and important contribution of the voluntary sector to the provision of humanitarian assistance and how best the voluntary sector could position itself in local emergency planning arrangements. He stressed the importance of being part of local multi-agency integrated response arrangements, with clarity on intended/anticipated roles to relevant Category 1 or 2 responder organisations. He concluded by referring to the importance of being part of LRF planning arrangements and involvement in training and exercise opportunities, to assist in portraying the professional approach of the voluntary sector.

**Judi Evans, British Red Cross and Alan Purdue, formerly of Castle Morpeth Borough Council:**

*'People centred recovery after flooding'*

Alan and Judi began their session by using a number of pictures to describe the extent and impact of the flooding in Morpeth. Alan explained that 1012 properties were flooded in Morpeth town centre of which 913 were residential and many of the others provided community infrastructure, e.g. the library, GP surgery, leisure centre. He explained that there was a smooth hand-over from response to the structured and defined recovery plan, and recognition of the importance of establishing that, the recovery plan fitted the identified needs, and it also had clarity about the resources required to implement the plan. He referred to the strong partnership ethos that underpinned the recovery arrangements.

Alan and Judi discussed the mental health implications for individuals affected by the flooding and how the recovery activities sought to shorten the period of impact and to reduce the extent of the swings between emotional peaks and troughs. He explained that the plan identified named personnel, as opposed to posts, to support the partnership working priority, that the voluntary sector was a full partner and that the local authority provided facilitative leadership. The local authority recognised that it would not be able to meet all of the identified needs without assistance, working closely with a range of voluntary organisations. The recovery plan acknowledged that communities will recover and that the local authority can help to remove obstacles to this recovery.

Judi ended the presentation with an explanation of: the value of making the business case for full and integrated involvement of the voluntary sector highlighting the current pressure on local authority budgets, the flexibility of volunteer hours, voluntary sector knowledge, expertise and experience gained from being national players over many years, and the range and their ability to provide practical and emotional support. Judi summarised the key elements of an effective recovery plan as one that provides an approach that is: prompt, practical, people centred and partnership based.

**Claire Goldstraw, Meteorological Office Public Weather Service Customer Group:**

*'Public Weather Service Customer Group'*



Claire explained that the Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG) acts as the customer for 'free-at-point-of-use' weather information and severe weather warnings for the UK, including the general public and resilience community. It provides an independent and impartial body to act collectively as an intelligent customer, watchdog and guardian of the Public Weather Service (PWS).

She explained that nine out of ten people think weather forecasts are useful and between seven and eight out of ten people think that weather forecasts are accurate. 73% of the emergency responder community are very satisfied with its services and 97% either satisfied or very satisfied.

Claire talked about the new severe weather warnings and their use of simplified language, to make them less technical and more consistent with the language and colours used by others e.g. the Environment Agency. She explained the contribution of the new categories 'Alerts' that are issued more than 24 hours ahead and 'Warnings', issued less than 24 hours ahead; that 'Warnings' are based on both the expected weather conditions and the potential impact(s) they may cause. Claire described the significance of each of the green, yellow, amber and red warnings and used the example of the impact on Scotland of the depression from hurricane Katia to illustrate how to make maximum use of the information.

Claire ended her presentation by discussing the current PWSCG consultation to capture requirements for weather forecast and warning information by community resilience groups in the UK, including requirements for the pre, during and post event phase, the impacts of severe weather and helpful communication channels. She provided details of the web links to the consultation, one for responders and one for the general public and invited attendees to contribute to the consultation [the consultation process closes on 31 December 2011].

### **At table discussions**

The participants worked at their tables (ten tables) to discuss five different questions; each of the five questions was considered by two table groups. The following is a record of the questions and key discussion points:

#### **Question**

*How can the voluntary sector work with the DCLG RED structure in order to support integrated voluntary sector involvement in civil protection arrangements?*

#### **Key points**

- if LRF structure is effective there will be a communication channel with RED
- voluntary sector organisations have to take responsibility for providing engagement
- recovery planning should follow guidance and be co-ordinated through the recovery group
- inconsistencies across the country make it difficult to determine what works well

- there is a lack of effective communication and cohesiveness of messages, so information can be slow and inconsistent
- integration does work well within some LRFs but the same level of support is not present, consistently
- there is a potential loss of networking
- it might be useful for the RED representative to attend some voluntary sector sub-group meetings
- RED needs to understand existing links
- what can RED offer in the recovery phase
- concern that the new Red structures cover too large an area
- important that the appropriate voluntary sector representatives attend the meetings; they must have authority to make decisions
- there is some confusion about who the voluntary sector organisations should contact, i.e. the LRF or the RED personnel.

#### Question

*How can LRFs, Devolved Administration equivalents and the wider resilience community maximise the opportunity that is provided by planning for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, in order to engage better the voluntary sector in local civil protection arrangements? How can we build on the legacy opportunity provided by the volunteers recruited for the Games to capture their involvement and enthusiasm?*

#### Key points

- the lack of detailed information available prevents effective voluntary sector engagement
- multiple and simultaneous requests for voluntary sector support may exhaust voluntary sector capacity
- live sites will be greater in size than anticipated
- voluntary sector needs to do more to make their capabilities known to local authorities
- local authorities need to improve voluntary sector representation on LRF groups
- use volunteers who are known personally to raise profile of organisation
- recognise the potential benefits of working with the voluntary sector
- use the Games activities to develop local voluntary sector engagement, where that engagement is not as strong as it could be
- remember that there will be many related events that could provide opportunities for voluntary sector involvement.

#### Question:

*How can LRFs, Devolved Administration equivalents and the wider resilience community make better use of the voluntary sector in developing recovery phase arrangements? What are the benefits of involving the voluntary sector in the recovery phase? What good practice examples are there that we are able to share?*

Key points:

- clear plans and agreements must be in place at strategic and community level, with clear expectations of voluntary sector involvement
- joint training and exercising helps to build contact and professionalism
- little apparent funding available; funding/contracting arrangements should be in place where possible; who pays the bill?
- plans and systems needs to be available to deal with convergent volunteers
- individuals should be encouraged and empowered to help themselves
- make better use of good practices examples, e.g. the Tottenham post-riot community involvement
- build on experience to raise awareness of the demands of the recovery phase
- have the 'right' personnel available to support the arrangements
- local authorities should recognise the potential provided by the voluntary sector
- recognise that volunteers may be part of the affected community so utilise their knowledge and existing involvement.

Question:

*How can LRFs, Devolved Administration equivalents and the wider resilience community build on the opportunities provided by the 'Get Ready for Winter Campaign' and the localism agenda, to make better use of large and small voluntary sector organisations in developing community resilience? To what extent may the economic situation have an impact on the development of community resilience activities? What good practice examples are there that we are able to share?*

Key points:

- individuals need to be involved so that they can be better prepared; everything cannot be done for them
- local authority emergency planners need to work with other local authority departments
- individuals are ultimately responsible for their own resilience
- localism is about involving local communities; we should not see it as something new
- local authorities need to seize the initiative to drive it forward
- it is good practice to have a joined-up voluntary sector MOU
- the localism agenda is well developed within some parishes
- smaller/local voluntary sector organisations are sometimes excluded
- there are some challenges in engaging with the health service, in some areas
- the current economic situation is seen by some as a barrier to development
- the voluntary sector may benefit from involvement at the strategic-level.

Question:

*How can better use be made of the skills and resources of the voluntary sector in addressing the human aspects of civil protection planning, response and recovery? What good practice examples are there that we are able to share?*

Key points:

- the initial response is frequently seen as the most important phase; it is not as easy to get similar interest in the recovery phase
- collaborative planning is essential
- exercises are important; they tend to make people feel involved
- important to have voluntary sector groups within the community during the recovery phase
- it would be useful to have clearer capability mapping at a local and national level for response, skills, equipments, vehicles and premises
- promote the CCS community resilience programme through local authorities to inspire individuals and community groups to prepare
- there needs to be co-ordination of the voluntary sector is recognised that there can be a challenge in identifying who should lead the co-ordination role
- there can be challenges in securing volunteer involvement in a protracted response
- we can learn from experience in some other countries
- voluntary sector organisations need to provide a strategic-level manager to work with the recovery group
- important that voluntary sector recovery engagement is part of a multi-agency activity
- real potential for small/local voluntary sector organisation involvement
- promote the CCS community resilience approach and tools.

### **Summary and close**

Moya summarised the day and thanked each of the speakers, work group facilitators, the participants and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat for their support for what had been a very successful Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum Meeting.

Moya Wood-Heath  
Chair, Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum  
December 2011