



The Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum



Brief guide on engaging the voluntary sector in civil protection

Introduction

The Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum (VSCP), in collaboration with the Cabinet Office, DCLG Resilience and Emergencies Division and voluntary sector partners, has produced this booklet as a guide for Resilience and Emergencies Division Resilience Advisors.

The voluntary sector has an important role to play in supporting the statutory services in the planning for, response to and recovery from many emergencies. Experience shows that active engagement with, and involvement from the voluntary sector in emergency preparedness work such as planning, training and exercising, will build relationships and mutual confidence, enabling the sector to be more effective in the event of an emergency.

This booklet can be used as a prompt for Resilience Advisors when asking LRFs about their level and scope of partnership working with the voluntary sector. It contains information on the range of activities and services that can be provided by the voluntary sector, as part of local civil protection arrangements, and offers suggestions on how to organise these activities and services. It is intended to help Advisors working with those LRFs where there is limited voluntary sector engagement.

Background

In 2003, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat asked that the Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum (VSCPF) be formed, to provide a means of demonstrating, at a UK and a national level, its commitment towards strengthening the UK's civil protection arrangements and the way in which the voluntary sector can work in a truly cohesive and co-ordinated way with all its partners.

DCLG's Resilience and Emergencies Division is keen to support improved voluntary sector engagement at LRF level. One key way of achieving this is through support from Resilience Advisors who are in a position to work with LRFs to help support effective engagement at local level.

Understanding Levels of Engagement

By working closely with LRFs, Resilience Advisors will have a picture of how strong relationships are with the voluntary sector. Advisors should be able to ascertain the strength and depth of partnership working if they considered the following questions:

1. What are the existing arrangements for engagement with the Voluntary Sector?
2. Who acts as a voice or represents the voluntary sector at the LRF (executive)? Is the representative at an appropriate level?
3. What is the extent of voluntary sector involvement in:
 - a. planning
 - b. training
 - c. exercising
 - d. decision making?
4. What arrangements are in place to disseminate information and engage with the wider voluntary sector? Is there a role for a communications structure within the LRF to help to disseminate information?
5. What else could the LRF do to promote, encourage and support the voluntary sector in:
 - a. planning
 - b. response
 - c. recovery
 - d. community resilience?

Appendix 'A' continued

Support role	Activity	Partner supported
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recording of individuals attending centres • tracing individuals, nationally and internationally • assistance at casualty bureau, in some local areas • logging/diary procedures • computer support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency services • local authority adult and children services • local authority housing • NHS
Training and exercising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of training needs and capabilities • devising instructional programmes • joint planning, conduct of and participation in multi-agency exercises, including call-out arrangements and debrief • formulation and dissemination of good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency services • local authority departments • utility companies • NHS
Building individual and community resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting resilience messages and materials • individual and community resilience building • encouraging local participation in resilience activities • developing individual resilience through daily service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authorities • emergency services

Appendix 'A' continued

Support role	Activity	Partner supported
Search and Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mountain, cave, tunnels and shafts, cliff, moor, inland waterways, coastal rescue, coastal or inland flooding, etc. supervision of other searchers (e.g. youth organisations) loan and advice on use of specialist equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emergency services lowland and urban search and rescue
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transport and escort of homeless, outpatients, relatives, etc, to and from transport hubs, hospitals, mortuaries, centres, hostels, etc. assistance with evacuation to centres 4x4 vehicles and drivers disabled passenger vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local authority adult and children services local authority housing departments emergency services NHS
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> radio and telephone communications equipment and operators vehicles messengers interpreters and translators distribution of resilience information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emergency services local authorities utility companies other voluntary organisations
Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advice and provision of appeals, collection and distribution of disaster funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local authorities

Consideration

Planning for and responding to emergencies is primarily delivered at a local level. Therefore, the inclusion of the voluntary sector in civil protection is managed most effectively at a local level, supplemented by multi-LRF co-operation and a national policy framework.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Category 1 responders to “have regard to” the activities of certain voluntary organisations when carrying out their emergency planning duties. This has created a climate of expectation that Category 1 responders will make the most of the resources and expertise that the voluntary sector can offer, putting this relationship on a more robust and long-term footing.

By establishing the most appropriate organisational framework, the voluntary sector can be included in the planning process. Sound co-operation through the LRF and directly with individual Category 1 and 2 responders, based on an agreed framework, can lead to an effective structure. This structure should suit local circumstances, be understood by all concerned and have clearly identified points of contact. Arrangements must be kept up to date by regular formal and informal contact. Effective involvement and representation of the voluntary sector at a local level will also facilitate a more effective engagement and response in the event of wide-area, sustained and also international emergencies.

There is recognition that local authority and national level engagement is generally good. However at LRF and cross-border levels, it is becoming more difficult to achieve consistently high levels of voluntary sector engagement with Category 1 and 2 responders.

In order to ensure that arrangements are fully understood and recognised by all the organisations involved in partnerships between the Category 1 and 2 responders and voluntary organisations, it may be worth considering how to organise these arrangements in a way that best suits the nature of the partnership. This could be done by establishing roles and responsibilities through involvement in planning, training, exercising, leading to inclusion in:

- Service Level Agreements
- Memorandum of Understanding
- protocols
- formally reflecting arrangements within actual plans.

Further Help

The VSCPF has developed a checklist of useful prompts to assist an LRF to develop, fully, its partnership with the voluntary sector. A copy (titled 'Improved Partnership between LRFs and Voluntary Sector, Issues for Consideration') can be located at Y:\FSD\RED Temporary\RED WIP ASD\06-Capabilities & Workstreams\58-Voluntary & Community Sector\VSCP\Guidance for RAs. Here, you will also be able to find examples of effective practice and further guidance.

Further information about the VSCPF can be found at

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/voluntary-sector-civil-protection-forum

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Appendix 'A'

The following is a summary of the main voluntary sector support roles:

Support role	Activity	Partner supported
Practical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staffing rest, family and friends reception, survivor reception and humanitarian assistance centres • feeding • provision of clothing and other essential items • advice on entitlements, grants, loans, claims • resettlement of victims, evacuees, etc • support and comforting • information and advice • telephone support lines • drop-in centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authority adult and children services • local authority housing • police services, including family liaison officers and casualty bureau • ambulance and health services • fire and rescue services
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support to ambulance service (including provision of air ambulances) • first aid and medical aid posts • first aid and medical aid support in casualty clearing stations, reception, rest and humanitarian assistance centres • auxiliary roles in hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ambulance and health services
Social and psychological aftercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening skills, welfare support and comforting • befriending • longer-term support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authority adult and children services • NHS