

A GUIDE TO HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY PREPARE AN EMERGENCY PLAN



FOR THE COMMUNITIES OF ARGYLL AND BUTE

This handbook has been produced in partnership with

Argyll and Bute Council
Strathclyde Police
Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
NHS Highland
Argyll Voluntary Action
British Red Cross
Scottish and Southern Energy
Scottish Power
HM Coastguard
WRVS
Scottish Government



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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.

“It is vitally important local communities are able to respond to and recover from an incident or emergency either alongside the emergency services or in their absence due to abnormal circumstances.

This is even more crucial in Argyll and Bute where we have a number of remote communities and a high proportion of elderly residents.

I am keen to see all communities with their own plan and I am confident this handbook will clearly set out what has to be done.”

Roddy McCuish, Leader,
Argyll and Bute Council





Introduction

An emergency could be anything from severe weather, flooding or fire to a major incident involving transport. Preparing your community for these kinds of events will make it easier to recover following the impact of an emergency.

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 written 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 and WRVS.

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. Challenges like these affect our daily lives, and every community wants to get through them.

Within your community, vulnerable people who may already be using services become more vulnerable in an emergency situation and those that no-one thought of as vulnerable may well become so.

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



“Community Resilience plans would help us all to work together when we face difficulties with weather or other extraordinary events. The NHS has its own contingencies in place but we know only too well our remote and rural communities especially can experience challenging situations and the more we can get in place before the event and work together, the better. I would wholeheartedly encourage establishing these community plans.”

Derek Leslie, Director of Operations
Argyll and Bute CHP, NHS Highland

Purpose

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.

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 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.

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.

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 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.”

Area Commander Jim Scott, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue

Communities can deal with local issues, for example:

- the clearing of snow from pathways of people who are unable to do this themselves
- the 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

The top risks in Argyll

The emergency responders already do a lot of work to identify the risks in their areas. They publish a “Community Risk Register” (CRR) showing what risks have been identified in your area, and their potential impact.

Risks to consider when preparing your community plan are:

- storms and gales
- flooding
- landslips
- low temperatures and heavy snow



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 council will take over the lead role. Here you will find the roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies contributing to this handbook.

Strathclyde Police



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

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue



The primary responsibility of Strathclyde Fire and Rescue 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.

NHS Highland



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

Argyll and Bute Council



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
- 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 the recovery, rehabilitating the community and restoring the environment.

The council's Civil Contingencies Unit 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 WRVS. The Civil Contingencies Unit 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. We provide practical help and emotional support to people and communities affected by emergencies. [redcross.org.uk/emergencyresponseuk](https://www.redcross.org.uk/emergencyresponseuk)

Argyll Voluntary Action



Argyll Voluntary Action works alongside communities and individuals daily

- AVA 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.
- AVA has staff and volunteers in each of the main centres of population and can offer support – the precise availability will depend on capacity in any specific location and on the nature of the emergency.
- AVA are also in contact with large numbers of older people through their work with “Reshaping Care for Older People” and some of these may become ‘at risk’ if, for example, power is out for lengthy periods.

WRVS



WRVS has been working in local communities for over 70 years via trained Volunteers to support the community and statutory services at times of emergency as well as providing a wide range of support services to Older People through Hospital Cafes, Home from Hospital services and community support services such as Befriending, Telephone Befriending, Social Transport, Books on Wheels, Meals on Wheels and Safe and Well checks.

WRVS provide a 24/7/365 emergency response service across Scotland via teams of Community Resilience Volunteers. In Argyll and Bute support can be offered to those who may just be home from hospital, those who have no transport and others who are socially isolated in the main population areas, led by trained local team leaders to help during power outages, flood situations, train derailment or other emergency situations.

WRVS provides support to help Older People prepare for emergencies, emergency refreshments at Rest Centres, welfare support to the vulnerable and assistance with registration of those affected, during an emergency, with support continuing in the recovery phase, by linking to appropriate local WRVS Services and working with other local organisations to help people return to their normal way of life.

“This handbook will be a valuable guide for local communities in Argyll and Bute when it comes to creating their own plan for an incident or an emergency.

Community councils have a crucial role in resilience as does the council, third sector, private sector and emergency services and we must all work together to achieve the best results.

There are already strong community relationships and connections but we need to make them even stronger so those who need help the most get the support they need, when it matters.



Once communities have their own plan in place it will not only provide peace of mind to the people of Argyll and Bute but an essential tool for getting us through any challenging weather conditions. I am very keen to see all our communities develop their own plan using this handbook as a guide.”

Sally Loudon, Chief Executive, Argyll and Bute Council

Emergency Planning for Community Groups - Templates to help you create an Emergency Plan

How to help make your community more resilient

We have prepared community emergency plan templates which you will find on pages 24-36. You can use or change them in whatever way suits you and your community, including adding your own community name, logo etc. If your community would like to use these templates to create your plan, they can be downloaded from Argyll Voluntary Action and Argyll and Bute Council's websites.

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk or www.argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk

“Argyll Voluntary Action works alongside communities and individuals daily. We are keenly aware of the increasing number of frail and older people in our communities and the shared responsibility we all have to ensure robust and resilient communities who care for those less able. Emergencies and extreme weather are forecast to increase sadly and this underlines the importance of all strands of our communities working together. All agencies, public, private and third sector are taking steps to mitigate any crises and we hope that our community councils will join us to support the preparation of plans which are essential for community safety. This is an important development for Argyll and Bute – we hope to see it developed across the whole of our beautiful but fragile environment.”

Glenn Heritage, Chief Executive, Argyll Voluntary Action

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.readyscotland.org

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. This will initially be provided by Argyll Voluntary Action who has entered into an agreement with Argyll and Bute Council to support communities in preparing their plans. Argyll Voluntary Action will either be able to offer advice or contact the relevant agencies on your behalf. Argyll Voluntary Action covers all of Argyll and has regional offices in Oban, Lochgilphead, Dunoon, Helensburgh and Campbeltown. They can be contacted at:

Area	Address	Telephone
Campbeltown	21 Longrow South Campbeltown PA28 6AH	01586 554744
Dunoon	Community Education Centre Edward Street Dunoon PA23 7PJ	01369 700100
Helensburgh	14 Colquhoun Square Helensburgh G84 8AD	01436 671613
Oban	21 High Street Oban PA34 4BG	01631 564839
Lochgilphead	10 Tigh Mhicleoid Lochnell Street Lochgilphead PA31 8JL	01546 606808

Argyll Voluntary Action also has examples of completed emergency plans from other communities and can send copies to you if requested.

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
- 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?

One of the first things to think about is who can help you. In many areas there are already active community groups and businesses which help respond to emergencies. Consider what already exists around you.

As well as Argyll Voluntary Action, you may want to talk to your local councillors, the council and local organisations like the police, fire service, ambulance service, NHS board, and voluntary organisations active in your area such as mountain rescue teams, the WRVS or the British Red Cross.

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 coordinate.

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 coordinate 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 Voluntary Action, your local authority, and other key agencies if you need to, and the rest of your community.

Identifying risks

In order 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 particular 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 Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG). 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.

It is worth looking at this document to help you think about the potential risks to your local area and their impacts.

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 can be found at:

<http://www.strathclydefire.org/your-service/community-risk-register.aspx>

Action: Complete the risk assessment template on page 26

What can your Community Council 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 37. 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 wealth 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 a number of 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 out 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 sand bags and relocated the precious artefacts to a secure location.

Tools and equipment

With 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.

Action: complete the local skills and resources template on page 27

Insurance and health and safety

You should definitely 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.

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.communitytoolkit.co.uk

www.rospa.com

www.scvo.org.uk/information/running-a-voluntary-organisation/people/volunteers

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 28.

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

www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/data_protection/practical_application/the_guide_to_data_protection.pdf

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.

Action: Record who needs copies of your plan using the template on page 25.



Please send your completed plans to **Argyll Voluntary Action:**

Area	Address	Telephone
Campbeltown	21 Longrow South Campbeltown PA28 6AH	01586 554744
Dunoon	Community Education Centre Edward Street Dunoon PA23 7PJ	01369 700100
Helensburgh	14 Colquhoun Square Helensburgh G84 8AD	01436 671613
Oban	21 High Street Oban PA34 4BG	01631 564839
Lochgilphead	10 Tigh Mhicleoid Lochnell Street Lochgilphead PA31 8JL	01546 606808

Argyll Voluntary Action will circulate copies of your plans to the appropriate emergency responders. Remember to keep a copy for yourself!

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 31.

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 32.



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 33. 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 coordinating 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 36.

“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.”

Russell Dunn, Divisional Commander, Argyll and Bute, Strathclyde Police.



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 Voluntary Action 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 Voluntary Action.

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 24-36 are available to download from Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll Voluntary Action's websites.

[Insert your community 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>

LOCAL SKILLS AND RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Skill/Resource	Who?	Contact details	Location
<i>Example: Trained First Aider</i>	<i>Example: Mr A Sample</i>	<i>Example: 0131 123 4567</i>	<i>Example: 1 Sample Street, Sampletown, SA1 2PL</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

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

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

Photo	Name:
	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 near:

- 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 have to 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:.....

Name:.....

Name:.....

Address:.....

Address:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Tel Number:.....

Tel Number:.....

Tel Number:.....

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 0845 601 8855

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 have to 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 have to 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.readyscotland.org

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.

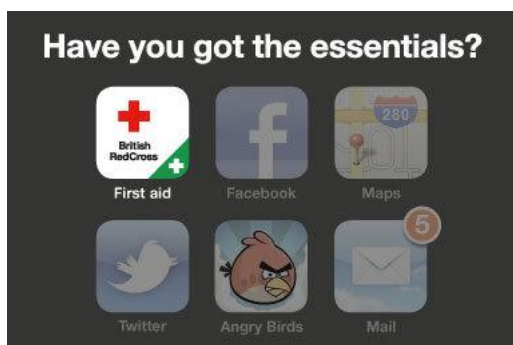
The strength, adaptability and local awareness that communities bring can help deal with an emergency.

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 situation.
- Increased self-esteem and confidence to act.
- Acquisition of transferable first aid skills.

To find out more about our work visit redcross.org.uk.



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.

www.redcross.org.uk/app



FACT SHEET - CANDLE SAFETY

- In 2004, 1,771 fires were caused by candles, which resulted in 11 fatalities and 691 casualties in the UK.
- Always use a substantial purpose made candleholder.
- NEVER leave a burning candle unattended and ensure that they are fully extinguished before going to bed.
- Keep candles well away from children, decorations and furniture.
- Candles cause many injuries as well as fires.
- Position away from curtains.
- NEVER place them under shelves or other surfaces.
- Tea-lights present particular hazards - The base of the foil holder will get hot and transfer heat to combustible surfaces.
- Always read the manufacturers instructions with candles, holders etc...
- Use of candles is increasing - market increase of 50% in the last few years.



CANDLES & TEA LIGHTS

COMMUNITY SAFETY FACTSHEET 11/10

Candles and Tea lights present a serious fire hazard. The following information should be used to provide advice when carrying out HFSV's or other community engagement activities.



WHEN GIVING ADVICE PLEASE REMEMBER

- Always put candles on a heat resistant surface, be especially careful with night lights and tea lights, which can get hot enough to melt plastic.
- Put candles in a proper holder keeping them stable and stopping heat transferring to the surface below.
- Take care with votive (prayer) or scented candles. These kinds of candles turn to liquid to release their fragrance, so put them in a glass or metal holder.
- Position candles away from curtains, fabrics and furniture. And keep them out of draughts.
- Keep candles apart. Leave at least four inches (10cm) between two burning candles.
- Don't put candles under shelves and make sure there's at least three feet (one metre) between a candle and any surface above it.
- Never lean across candles as there is a risk of setting fire to your clothes or your hair.
- Candles should be out of reach of children and pets.
- Don't move candles while they are burning. Extinguish candles before moving them.
- Extinguish candles before you leave a room or go to sleep and never leave a burning candle or oil burner in a child's bedroom.
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put them out. It's safer than blowing them, which can send sparks and hot wax flying.
- Candles that have been put out can go on smouldering and start a fire. Make sure they're completely out.

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.

An emergency sticker from Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution. The sticker has a white top section with the company logo and name. Below that is a green horizontal bar. The main body of the sticker is dark blue with white text. It provides the emergency phone number 0800 300 999, which is highlighted in a red pill-shaped button with a green arrow icon. It also includes instructions on what to do if neighbours are not affected and the company website. A small reference number '008826' is in the bottom right corner.

 **Scottish and Southern
Energy**
Power Distribution

For Power Cuts or Emergencies please call us on

 **0800 300 999**

FREEPHONE

If your neighbours are not affected, it is worth checking all the trip switches on your fusebox(es) are **ON** before calling us.

Please place this sticker where it is easy for you to find - perhaps on your fusebox or near your phone.

www.ssepd.co.uk

008826



Additional Guidance in the event of a powercut

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 have to – 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 if your electricity supply goes off



If you have a power cut...
we're the people to contact
to get the power back on

Central & Southern Scotland
0845 272 7999
Power loss & emergencies

General Enquiries
0845 273 4444

For more information see our website
www.spenergynetworks.co.uk

SP ENERGY NETWORKS

Step 1: If you have a trip switch, check to see if it has operated. If it has, switch off all your appliances and try to reset the trip switch.

Step 2: If possible, check to see if your neighbours have lost supply. If they are also without power please contact us, if not please go to Step 3.

Step 3: If you have checked your trip switch and your wiring and appliances are not faulty please contact us.

Don't assume that we will know that your power has gone off. Please report your loss of supply using the power loss & emergency numbers shown. You may wish to keep a note of this number and keep it near to your telephone. If you have a mobile phone, you may wish to save the number in your contacts now.

What happens when you call?

When you call we may require some information from you such as your **name, postcode, house number** and **telephone number**.

If we are aware of an interruption to supply and we have enough information for us to deal with the situation, we may activate our voice messaging system giving information about the interruption including the estimated time of restoration wherever possible. This message will be targeted to a specific geographic area and contain all the relevant information we hold at the time you call.

Priority Services for customers with special needs during power loss

We know how difficult it is for anybody during a power loss, but in particular we recognise how especially worrying it must be if you rely on electricity for medical equipment, or have other special needs.

We keep a **Priority Services Register** so that we can contact our most vulnerable customers if they do experience a power loss. You can be included in our register if you are:

- Dependent on medical equipment
- Chronically sick
- Disabled

Or have some other special needs you would like us to consider.

Being on our register won't necessarily mean we can restore your power more quickly, however we will try to contact you if we know of a problem in your area.

We'll keep you informed with regular updates and, if necessary, we can work with external agencies who may be able to assist.

If you meet the criteria we have outlined for inclusion on our register and would like to take advantage of this service, please contact us on our website www.spenergynetworks.co.uk or phone us on **0845 273 4444**.

Looking after your health when the power goes off

If electricity is crucial to your health (for instance, if you use medical equipment at home) ask to be included on our Priority Services Register.

Also ensure you have plans in place in the event of a long power cut.

Make sure any medical equipment has battery back-up.

If you are suffering from serious health problems please call the **NHS 24 Scotland 08454 24 24 24**. In an emergency please contact your local hospital.

Make sure you stay safe and comfortable, during cold weather dress warmly using several layers of clothing.

If you have vulnerable or elderly neighbours please try to ensure they are safe, comfortable and, wherever possible, have some food or a warm drink.

Switch off and unplug any electrical appliances that get hot such as electric fires, heaters and cookers as you may forget they are on when the power is restored.

Keep a battery power radio in your house, as you may be able to receive updates on the incident.

Unplug sensitive equipment such as TVs, videos, faxes and computers.

Ensure you have a torch with charged batteries. Leave it somewhere you can get to easily.

Avoid opening your fridge or freezer if you can.

Leaving a light switched on will tell you when the power is restored.

Many modern telephones won't work in a power cuts so please try to keep at least one phone in your house that doesn't run off the mains supply, i.e. a traditional analogue telephone or mobile.

Remember streetlights may also be off so take care if you have to go outside.

If you have a mains operated stair lift, check to see if there is a manual release handle that can be used to return the stair lift safely to ground level. Many stair lifts have battery backup. If yours does not, it may be possible to get one fitted..

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.

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 Council would like to thank the organisations involved for their help and support in creating this handbook.



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HM Coastguard
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Oban Mountain Rescue
WRVS
Local Government Association
Oban Times
Argyllshire Advertiser
Middlesbrough Evening Times
Argyll and Bute Council Civil Contingencies Unit
Scott Cameron
Kevin McGlynn
Derek Gordon/BRC

This handbook has been prepared by the Community Resilience Project Team of Argyll and Bute Council, September 2012