

## ‘People at the Heart of Planning’ Checklist for Local Resilience Forums

For more information see the British Red Cross’ report *People power in emergencies: an assessment of voluntary and community sector engagement and human-centred approaches to emergency planning*.<sup>1</sup>

1. Every local resilience forum should have a voluntary and community sector sub-group to coordinate voluntary engagement, meetings and training.
2. Each local resilience forum should keep a directory of the voluntary organisations they can call on. This should contain details of how each group can help, how to get them involved and at least two current emergency contact numbers. This information should be available to forum members and should also be shared among other voluntary and community organisations.
3. Minutes should be taken during voluntary and community sector sub-group meetings, or at the very least action points should be recorded. These minutes or action points should be easy to access (for example, via forum websites) and publicly available. Local resilience forums and borough resilience forums are about community readiness and engagement, so communities should feel included. An important part of this is transparency about how forums operate, and where appropriate some redacting should overcome any sensitivity issues.
4. Voluntary and community sector sub-groups should run training sessions at least every two months – but ideally monthly – to allow members to share skills and better understand the capabilities of the group.
5. Local resilience forums should publish a lexicon of common emergency response terminology and circulate it among voluntary and community sector sub-group members to ensure everyone is using the same set of terms during incidents.
6. Local resilience forums should offer greater support with voluntary vetting/DBS checking.
7. Local resilience forum chairs and members often find out important information which should be shared with relevant voluntary organisations, subject to UK security regulations.
8. Local resilience forums and voluntary sector lead representatives should be encouraged to publish a regular online newsletter for forum members, or could use social media to share experiences and successes with fellow sub-group members.

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<sup>1</sup> British Red Cross (2019) *People power in emergencies: an assessment of voluntary and community sector engagement and human-centred approaches to emergency planning* <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/we-speak-up-for-change/people-power-in-emergencies>

9. Voluntary and community sub-groups should be included in local resilience forum live training exercises, and should be considered in the planning and execution of training events.
10. Sub-groups should check members' availability before arranging meetings. Tools like Doodle are free and are a very effective way of doing this.
11. It should be made easier for people to attend sub-group or local resilience forum meetings by varying meeting locations across the area covered by the forum.
12. Voluntary sub-group members should be able to attend meetings via conference call or video conference if they cannot be there in person. Where possible, use of tools such as Zoom or Skype should also be encouraged by providing simple instructions and making it easy to use them.
13. Local resilience forums and voluntary and community sector sub-groups should be encouraged to pool knowledge, and to train and collaborate with neighbouring areas and boroughs.
14. Local resilience forums should be encouraged to share learning to help improve voluntary and community sectors' knowledge. This could take the form of newsletter items, social media posts or agenda items for the next meeting. The London Resilience Group already does this monthly for the borough resilience forums. Voluntary organisations – especially the Emergencies Partnership – will also be keen to discover examples of good practice or lessons learned from incidents at local level.
15. Local and borough resilience forums should introduce a widely accessible system of communication such as WhatsApp. This can be a way of activating voluntary sector in an emergency, as well as allowing voluntary and community sector sub-group members to communicate with one another.
16. Every local or borough resilience forum should be encouraged to use social media as a means of driving voluntary and community engagement and promoting what they do. Social media channels such as Twitter can also be a useful way of activating voluntary sector in an emergency, as well as issuing mass communications to affected communities.