

PARISH EMERGENCY PLANNING

A
GUIDE FOR WOKINGHAM BOROUGH
PARISH COUNCILS
IN PREPARING SELF HELP
EMERGENCY PLANS

Parish Emergency Plan Guidance

GUIDANCE NOTES

Key Points

The following key points should be borne in mind when completing this template:

This document neither implies nor intends any formal role for parishes, towns or any part of the community (collectively called the 'community') in the response to, or recovery from emergencies.

There is no role implied or intended for the community in support of the emergency services in their own response to incidents.

The completion of the plan template in part or in full is entirely voluntary and is the responsibility of the local community.

While the local community has no formal role, there is widespread recognition of the value of planning from the local level upwards to help cope with potential emergencies.

The need to complete any part of the template, or the requirement to include other relevant information, will depend on the nature and composition of the community and the likely risks.

The Wokingham Borough, Community Resilience Planning Team, and the relevant borough liaison staff will provide advice and assistance where requested, and where relevant, to support the completion of the plan.

The Wokingham Borough Community Resilience Planning Team, and the relevant borough or emergency liaison staff accepts no responsibility for the content of the completed template.

The local community is encouraged to lodge a copy of the completed plan with Wokingham Borough Community Resilience Team.

Introduction.

Today, the following potential threats should be considered:

- Community isolation through Fluvial flooding, severe weather, and the loss of critical utilities and similar events
- Climate change disasters which could be caused by significantly higher summer temperatures, drought etc.
- Health crises such as 'bird' flu transferring to humans.
- Local or global terrorism aimed at business or non-business targets.

Emergencies have no boundaries and could affect the whole Borough or part/whole of Berkshire. Due to the unknown nature of emergencies the emergency services

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and other agencies may be overwhelmed resulting in a delayed response to specific areas.

What risks should be addressed?

The potential risk will vary between communities; for example, flooding may present the major risk in low lying land alongside rivers and streams, but this may not present a risk on higher ground in the west of the borough. It will be for the community to determine where to focus its efforts in the development of any plan. Additionally, it may be useful for a community to prepare more than one Self-Help Emergency Plan if there is a need to reflect risks that are likely only in certain points within their geographic area.

Parish Councils are advised to write simple, self-help emergency plans. This document offers guidance to Parish Emergency Committees in achieving this. The rules are not hard and fast and do not have to be followed rigorously. Wokingham Borough Community Resilience Team, (0118 974 6473) can offer further, detailed advice to any Parish requiring it.

Emergencies. Emergencies are dealt with in two phases.

The Response Phase. This includes Reaction, Rescue and Recovery. The Emergency Services (Police, Fire and Ambulance) assisted by the Local Authority lead during this phase. The aim is saving life and protecting property.

The Rehabilitation Phase. This covers Relief, Remediation and Regeneration. The Borough Council takes over responsibility for the Recovery from the Police. This is when the emergency services have finished their main work and it is time to clear up and get back to normal.

Parish Emergency Plan. The Borough Council has prepared generic and specific emergency plans to deal with most types of major incident but the effects of some emergencies may be so severe that for a short period, Parishes might have to self help. The emergency service support may be limited, delayed or in the worst case, not available. This is when a parish might rely on its emergency plan to support the community using its own resources.

Legislation. The main government legislation is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which lays a duty on Local Authorities to plan for contingencies. There is still no requirement in law for Parishes to write Emergency Plans.

Finance. During a major emergency, Local Authority Financial Services are responsible for special financial arrangements. The Parish Council needs authority from its Borough Council before spending money in response to the emergency. Where saving life is involved the Borough Council is unlikely to prohibit spending. Careful housekeeping is necessary and Parishes should keep accurate records of anything they spend.

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Parish Records. Throughout an emergency, Parish Councils must keep a simple log of events and records of supplies and expenditure. This simplifies reclaiming any moneys due when the emergency is over.

Payment for urgent needs. During a major emergency, The Department for **Work and Pensions** (DWP) can make emergency payments to people in urgent need. They can make immediate payments to people in their homes for food and fuel and other essentials during the first days after a disaster. People who can't get to work can sometimes claim limited income support.

Emergency Feeding. The Borough Council will arrange temporary feeding at Emergency Rest Centres.

Parish Emergency Committee

Objective. The Parish Emergency Committee (PEC) is empowered to identify local resources and to prepare a Parish Emergency Plan. During the emergency, the PEC assists the Parish Council in implementing the plan. Some Parish Councillors should sit on the PEC to give it authority and access to the Parish Council. Only Parish Councillors may vote on the PEC. Ideally, the minimum number of members is four.

Plan Preparation. The Parish Emergency Committee is responsible for writing and updating the Parish Emergency Plan.

Parish Emergency Planning Adviser (PEPA). The PEPA is an appointee of the Parish Council. He or she will keep in touch with the Borough Community Resilience Officer (CRO) and advise and assist the PEC in preparing the Parish Emergency Plan.

He or she need not be a member of the Parish Council but ideally should have management experience and knowledge of how the emergency and voluntary agencies work. The PEPA provides advice and helps prepare the Emergency Plan. The following list of responsibilities is not exhaustive and can be changed to suit circumstances.

Responsibilities

- To develop emergency planning policy within the Parish and advise the Parish council on all emergency planning matters.
- To advise and assist the Parish Emergency Committee (PEC) in preparing and maintaining the Parish Emergency Plan.
- In the absence of a PEC the PEPA will write and maintain the Parish Emergency Plan.
- To act as the Parish contact for all emergency planning matters and in particular liaison with the Wokingham Borough Community Resilience Team.
- To identify the equipment and stores needed for earmarked properties.

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- To advise on collecting and recording data and to assist in developing:
 - Communications and information.
 - Vulnerable within the community
 - Homelessness, buildings, shelter, hygiene and waste disposal.
 - Food and water supplies.
 - First aid.
 - Works, transport, fuel and energy.

Data Protection Act. Parishes that hold data should register under the Data Protection Act. Notification is best done online by visiting:
<https://forms.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/cgi-bin/dprproc?page=7.html>.

Vulnerable People.

There are a number of groups of people who, in a crisis, should be considered as potentially vulnerable:

- Older people with mobility limitations.
- Disabled people (including physical disability and learning disability).
- Blind and partially sighted people.
- Parents who are on their own with children under 12.
- Anyone in charge of a group of children when the incident happens e.g. playgroup staff, Guide and Scout leaders.
- Newcomers to the parish who may not know all its facilities.
- Hearing impaired people. It should also be noted that people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be aware of broadcast alerts, and may need a personal visit to ensure they know of any risks the community is being alerted to.

It is good practice to make an offer of help to them in a crisis if enough people are available. The community should identify any sheltered housing complexes, and should check with the warden or other responsible person that they have a plan which will help ensure the continuing safety of residents in the event of any foreseeable crisis. Any residential care establishments will already have such a plan (possibly under a different title, such as "Crisis Plan or Business Continuity Plan") which will have been required by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

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Pets and Livestock

Pets are invariably regarded as members of a family and for farmers their livestock represents years of hard and commitment. In life-or-death situations the first priority will be to save human life, but owners will be very reluctant to abandon animals and it is therefore a good idea to include them in the planning.

For all animals the prime needs are likely to be temporary accommodation or containment, followed by food and water. Veterinary attention may also be required. If your community includes boarding kennels, stables, breeding establishments and/or livestock farms/holdings, owners should consider;

Any local threats

How they would evacuate animals to a safe place, and

If their premises could be used for animals from a nearby emergency.