



CabinetOffice

Engaging the public and encouraging voluntarism: Lessons from the resilience sector

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Why engage with communities?

- CCS leading work across Government to support individuals & communities to prepare to deal with emergencies
- Communities that prepare are better able to recover, recover more quickly, & often suffer less psychosocial problems due to feeling more in control of the situation
- Many communities already spontaneously help – our role is to support & empower those that want to plan & prepare in advance of the emergency happening



Principles of Community Resilience

- **Self-selecting** communities – we won't get everyone
- **Done *by* people, not *to* people** (with support from practitioners & peers who are able to help)
- **Acting in support** of the 'blue light' services
- Must go with the grain of existing citizen engagement initiatives, **using existing non-emergency community networks**
- Using **local knowledge & resources**
- Raising **awareness of risks**



Who do we want to engage with?

- Geographical Communities
 - Your local area, but smaller than administrative boundaries
- Communities of ‘Interest’
 - Faith groups, sports teams, book clubs...
- Communities of ‘Supporters’
 - Emergency responders, community development workers
- Communities of ‘Circumstance’
 - Survivors, bereaved, affected people



Case Study One

- Lives in Birmingham City Centre, affected by the tornado
- Used social networking site to re-activate Residents Associations (using car crime as the 'hook')
- Volunteers for Birmingham Resilience Team
- Approaches management companies of tower blocks to mainstream resilience & emergency planning
- Works with other volunteers, using recent migrant population to strengthen community cohesion through emergency planning



Case Study Two

- Lives in Great Barton, Nr Bury St Edmunds
- Recognised local risks of nearby military base & reliance on main road for infrastructure
- Used local people & skills to help produce community emergency plan
- Worked with local authority to exercise rest centre facilities in village hall with community volunteers
- Resolved conflict with local allotment association using existing structures & relationships
- Lighting & special effects manager for the village pantomime



How do we engage with communities?

- Talk to those involved - visits, workshops, consultations
- Key role in governance of programme
- Share good practice – make use of case studies
- Liaise with voluntary sector partners to identify roles
- Support existing projects - Developing Community Resilience through Schools, Multilateral Approaches to Community Resilience
- Explore opportunities through Civil Contingencies Act Enhancement Programme to improve accessibility of risk information & involve communities in exercising



Community Resilience launch

March 2011 (tie in with Exercise Watermark) - launched series of online resources (requested by communities):

- *Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience* – strategic overview of government contribution to build community resilience
- *Preparing for Emergencies – Guide for communities* – introduction for those who are new to emergency preparedness
- *Community Emergency Plan Toolkit & Template* – detailed ‘how to’ guidance on community plans
- Updated *Preparing for Emergencies* web pages on Directgov – focus on individual & household resilience



Community Resilience launch (2)

Tied into Exercise Watermark:

- Ministerial input
 - Press briefings / interviews
 - Visits to community resilience events
- VIPs
 - Duke of Gloucester visit to community resilience event
- Partner organisations
 - Articles in partner organisations newsletters, etc
- Direct contact
 - Direct mailings to community resilience contacts (600+ people & organisations)



Working through others: Big Society & Community Resilience

- Big Society principles of ‘building capacity within communities to withstand shocks’ consistent with Community Resilience principles & aims
- Office of Civil Society currently exploring options to promote community planning & development:
 - Community First Fund
 - Community Organisers
 - National Citizen Service
- CCS/OCS joint working to identify opportunities to mainstream community resilience through Big Society programme



Working through others: Climate Change & Community Resilience

- Defra Climate Change Adaptation Sub-Committee report identifies “effective emergency planning” as key area for community action
- Environment Agency lead on Individual & Community Flood Plans which aim to increase overall community resilience
- CCS working with Defra & EA colleagues to identify new areas of collaboration across scope of relevant policies (linking flood plans to wider community emergency plans, shared research goals on adaptation, etc)



What's next?

- Work to reduce barriers to involvement – liability, insurance, etc - such as DfT 'Snow Code'
- Provide information for organisations that support communities
- Make the most of the opportunities provided by other organisations' programmes / policies
- Continue building case study library to showcase good practice at the local level
- Linking with international partners to share our successes & work through issues collectively
- Engaging the corporate world



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