

Community Flood Plan Development Guidance Notes & Template

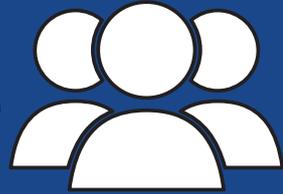


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Introduction

A community-led emergency flood response plan provides a structured and coordinated response by a group of residents or volunteers who wish to better prepare and support their community before, during and after flood events.

These community volunteers and responders will likely be the first people on-site when a flood event occurs or is expected to occur. They may be required to provide an all-important, initial level of support and a first response until local authority support is available or emergency services are able to attend and take a lead on operations.

A basic Community Flood Plan includes:

- community response group details and contacts;
- key contact information (authorities / emergency services);
- a list of communal flood defence equipment, resources and their location;
- pre-defined triggers to activate the response plan;
- details of how any communal flood defence equipment will be deployed, when and by whom;
- a record of actions, duties and roles to be carried out by volunteers, documenting who does what, where and when; and,
- the provision for the regular testing, review and updating of the plan.

On the following pages, you will find some key stages and aspects for consideration when developing your community emergency flood response plan. Please be aware that these are bespoke documents and the template may need adapting or changing to meet the needs and requirements of your plan.

1. Set up a flood action group / community group

- Try to find a small group of like-minded residents to help.
- Developing, co-ordinating and actioning a community flood plan at the time of a flood is a team effort and will require several people to work together and follow set procedures.
- Hold regular meetings to discuss and progress the development of your community emergency flood plan.
- Consider what may be a suitable means of quick and easy communication between group members to discuss the project and arrange meetings etc. Many groups use WhatsApp for day-to-day communication and email for arranging meetings and sharing documents.

2. Engage with Risk Management Authorities and Agencies (RMAs)

- Invite RMAs to your meetings and positively engage with them; your local council, Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and Environment Agency resilience team can all help you to develop a community resilience plan.
- They may also be able to provide details of the wider local authority emergency response plan and any designated evacuation centres that are identified as 'on-standby' for a flood event.
- Building relationships with authorities will help you to understand the role of different agencies and organisations in responding to emergency events, build direct contacts with those involved and identify how your community plan can be integrated and 'tie-in' with the wider community emergency response plan currently in place.
- While there is no statutory obligation for Local Authorities to supply sandbags to residents, they may be willing to supply your group with a stock of sandbags for use with your emergency plan.

3. Identify 'at risk' properties and people, and determine your area of operations

- While flood risk maps are openly available online, agencies can provide flood risk maps and help to identify critical areas and 'at risk' properties.
- Prioritising those most vulnerable and / or the properties at risk of flooding first, will help you to focus resources where they are needed most.
- Maps can help to determine and agree the geographic area that your group activities, operations and emergency flood plan will cover, and ensure this is clearly marked.

4. Engage with the community

- Approach residents, businesses and public sector organisations within that area to raise awareness of flood risk, identify vulnerable residents who may require assistance, and recruit for new group members and flood wardens.
- Consider what may be a good means of communication with the wider community in order to warn, inform and update. Many groups create a Facebook page for sharing key messages to the community, while some choose to create a group email address as an additional means for residents to make contact with the group. Once your plan is in place, your social media channels may become a hive of activity at times of inclement weather and provide an ideal way for the group to communicate with the wider area.
- Develop a list of contact details of those who require support and those who are able to offer support. Document the types of resources available to draw on from within the community itself.
- Identify other resources in the area which could play an important role in your community plan, such as 4x4 drivers and secure locations for the storage of flood defence equipment.
- Find out if there are community centres or village halls which could be used as an evacuation centre or base for operations for co-ordinating your response. This location must be in an area which is not at risk of flooding and ideally, have several suitable access routes to and from the location for residents to use safely.

5. Be mindful of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- When collecting contact details etc, ensure you are aware of data protection requirements when collecting, using, storing and sharing personal information.
 - Know what personal data is.
 - Only collect, store or use personal data if your group needs to do so for a clear, specific purpose; including consent and sharing data.
 - Only collect, store and use the minimum amount of data you need for your purpose. Don't keep extra data if you don't know why you need it, and don't keep data that is no longer needed for a clear purpose.
 - Make sure people know how to contact you if they want you to remove their data from your records.

- Tell people what data you have about them if they ask you to, and remove it if requested.
- Store data securely.
- Be clear whether data belongs to your group or to you personally. Just because you have access to contact details held by the group, doesn't mean they are your personal contacts.
- Further information on GDPR for community groups can be found in the following guide: <https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/data-protection-for-community-groups/>

6. Discuss what needs to be done and how it can be achieved

- Identify risks, impacts and what actions can be taken by the group as part of the community response plan.
- If your community has flooded previously, look at what worked well, what didn't work well, and how your actions and efforts could improve things next time around.
- What can realistically be achieved with the people and resources you have?

7. Start to develop your community flood plan

- Working as a team, think about what you will need to do BEFORE, DURING and AFTER a flood event. Some examples of actions may include:
 - **BEFORE** – Warning and informing residents of possible flooding via the group's social media channels, text, WhatsApp messages or telephone trees etc. when trigger points are reached. Make calls to put flood wardens on standby and check and prepare equipment and resources.
 - **DURING** – Keep the community updated with any developments and inform the local authority emergency planning team that your plan has been triggered. Community plan coordinators can liaise with authorities, deploy flood wardens and equipment, check on residents, operate and support evacuation centres, assist with deploying barriers and sandbagging properties etc. and assist with dry evacuation, if required.

- **AFTER** – Engage and liaise with the community and risk management authorities during the recovery support phase. Help and support in arranging skip-drops, assist with the clean-up and distribute information sheets to those flooded to provide guidance on post flood recovery, insurance claims processes and available contact numbers for support services. Volunteers can also help affected residents with moving wet and damaged furniture and items.
- Decide what you want your group response to look like. Prepare for the fact that properties may be flooded, and that emotional support and post-flood recovery support may be required.
- Develop role profiles / responsibilities for flood wardens and spontaneous volunteers. Consider what your wardens and volunteers are physically capable of doing? What is safe for them to do?
- As a community group delivering your emergency response plan, define your remit – what are you prepared to do as part of the response plan, and NOT prepared to do?
- Your flood plan may involve checking on and providing preliminary support to vulnerable residents who most need assistance, but DO NOT put yourselves in harms way undertaking wet evacuations. There are dangers associated with wet evacuation during a flood and it is the role of emergency services to undertake this activity.

8. Formalise your plan

- Identify a suitable trigger(s) to activate the plan, such as the [Environment Agency's Check for Flooding Service](#) or the [Environment Agency's Flood Warning Service](#) for river and coastal flooding. In addition, monitoring station data could be used. The MET Office Severe Weather Warning Service can be used to anticipate periods of heavy rainfall and possible surface water flooding. Triggers can also include gauge boards on watercourses or local knowledge gained from previous flood events.
- What equipment will you need and how will you communicate? Wellingtons, high-visibility vests or rain jackets, torches, first-aid kits, laminated documents and clipboards for your flood plans, hand-held radios for communication etc.?
- Will you need provisions for the evacuation centre such as tables and chairs, hot drinks, blankets etc.?
- Who will co-ordinate operations? Appoint designated people for this role to liaise with emergency services.
- How, where and when will you deploy flood wardens and other resources?
- Finalise all your contacts and ensure volunteers know their role and can be ready on standby. Develop the processes and procedures which need to be followed – everyone must know their role and what is expected of them. Risk assessing your activities can help

to identify what is safe and what is not safe to undertake during an emergency.

9. Write down your plan

- Document and record your plan, policies and procedures. Everyone involved will need a copy of the plan to refer to during a flood event, including those residents who will be receiving support and assistance.
- Once your plan is finalised, you may wish to consider developing different copies for distribution to different users.
 - A 'Community' facing version of the plan for distribution to residents. This version of the plan should not contain names, addresses, telephone numbers and other personal details of fellow residents. Keep it simple, easy to understand and follow, and highlight only the key bits of information and procedures which residents need to be aware of. This version can provide details of the designated flood warden for their street, information and details about how to prepare their home for flooding, how to make a flood kit / grab bag, where their local evacuation centre(s) may be located and who they can contact for more information. It can include the basic outline of the community response plan and inform residents of what is expected to happen at each stage of the plan.
 - A 'Volunteer' facing version for use by flood wardens or spontaneous volunteers etc. This version(s) should omit names, contact details and personal information – only a list of streets and addresses should be included. Volunteers will need a copy of the plan for reference but also a list of their duties and actions. Flood wardens can be assigned their own area or streets to cover and should have an address list of properties requiring further support and assistance.
 - A 'complete and unrestricted' version for use by flood plan coordinators only and for sharing with your local resilience network or forum. This version would contain names, addresses, telephone numbers and identify vulnerable residents requiring assistance and the type of support they need. This will be securely stored and can only be accessed by emergency services and first responders. It will provide them with contact details for the plan coordinators allowing them to call ahead, find out what support may be required and prioritise community level response across the wider area. This is the version of the plan which will need to be reviewed and updated most regularly to ensure contact details and contents remain accurate and relevant.

10. Regularly test and review your plan

- The need to activate your flood plan could come at any time of day or night, 365 days a year. Carry out 'dry-runs' to test the response times of volunteers and the roll out, logistics and practicalities of your plan.
- Ensure all contact details and phone numbers are checked and updated using version control measures or a date stamp applied to the final documents.
- Ensure that the latest version of your plan sits on the local resilience forum and is available to emergency responders.

It is important to remember that communication and organisation is key and that you may need to work to a response time when actioning the different stages of your plan. Regular testing of your plan and deploying equipment will help to speed up the process and identify any flaws or aspects which may need reviewing.

Depending upon the actions carried out and the activities undertaken when delivering your community emergency response plan, it is useful to know that constituted flood groups can apply for funding and access community group insurance if so desired. Insurance cover is usually reflective of the risk and activities undertaken by the group and its members as well as to provide public liability cover. There are also a number of public, private and voluntary sector organisations who can provide mental health, first aid and flood warden role training to flood groups.

This pre-populated plan can be used as it is, or as a guide to help you create your own flood plan using one of our blank templates.

Trigger 1



Flooding is possible. Stay vigilant and make early preparations for a potential flood.

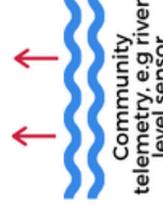
What to do at this stage

- Monitor the situation through forecasts, local radio stations and monitoring stations.
- Send a communication out that a flood alert/Met Office Yellow Warning has been issued.

Community flood group actions

- Monitor the situation through forecasts, local radio stations and monitoring stations.
- Check that any community level defences are ready to go and available to deploy if required.
- Contact all flood wardens and the flood group to be on standby.

Trigger 2



Flooding is expected. Immediate action is required to protect yourself and your property.

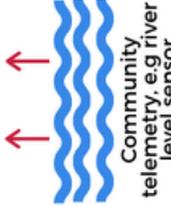
What to do at this stage

- Continue to monitor the situation.
- Warn and inform the community that flooding is expected and to deploy any PFR.
- Activate community flood plan.

Community flood group actions

- Contact the community to notify them that a warning has been issued.
- Deploy flood wardens and community flood defences.
- Wardens should help the vulnerable to deploy their PFR and prepare for a flood.

Trigger 3



Severe flooding is expected and is likely to cause significant risk to life and destruction of property.

What to do at this stage

- Send out a communication that evacuations are taking place and provide the address of the evacuation centre.
- Prepare to evacuate and cooperate with the emergency services.

Community flood group actions

- Ensure residents are safe.
- Help vulnerable residents to evacuate.
- Complete evacuation checklist and give to emergency services.



Trigger 1

WHAT IS YOUR TRIGGER?

Flooding is possible. Stay vigilant and make early preparations for a potential flood.

What to do at this stage

Community flood group actions

WHAT ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE?

Trigger 2

WHAT IS YOUR TRIGGER?

Flooding is expected. Immediate action is required to protect yourself and your property.

What to do at this stage

Community flood group actions

WHAT ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE?

Trigger 3

WHAT IS YOUR TRIGGER?

Severe flooding is expected and is likely to cause significant risk to life and destruction of property.

What to do at this stage

Community flood group actions

WHAT ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE?

