

Chapter 16 Collaboration and Co-operation between Local Resilience Forums in England

Revision to *Emergency Preparedness*

Chapter 16 (Collaboration and Co-operation between Local Resilience Forums in England) of *Emergency Preparedness*

Summary

- The United Kingdom's approach to civil contingencies is based on the principle of subsidiarity where decisions are taken at the lowest appropriate level (individual, community, locality, or national) and co-ordination is at the highest necessary level ([paragraphs 16.1-16.5](#)).
- Local Resilience Forums are the principal mechanism for multi-agency collaboration and co-ordination.
- Category 1 and 2 responders are encouraged to work together across Local Resilience Forum boundaries to address civil protection issues that cross local resilience areas or which could overwhelm a locality. There are many benefits to co-operation including pooling of resources and reduced duplication of planning activity ([paragraphs 16.6-16.12](#)).
- LRF partners are free to design new and flexible approaches to working together collaboratively, as best suits their risks and needs. This could be across geographical boundaries or around specific risks. Government support to multi-LRF collaboration is provided through the DCLG Resilience and Emergencies Division ([paragraphs 16.13-16.16](#)).

- 16.1. The United Kingdom's approach to civil contingencies is based on the principle of subsidiarity; the principle by which decisions should be taken at the lowest appropriate level with co-ordination at the highest necessary level.
- 16.2. Local Resilience Forums are the building block for emergency planning activities with Strategic and Recovery Co-ordinating Groups acting as the local mechanisms which are engaged during the response and recovery phases of emergencies.

Opportunities to collaborate and co-operate at a multi- LRF Level

- 16.3. Planning for, and responding to, large-scale emergencies cannot be done in isolation in each LRF. Mechanisms for cross-boundary working and relationship building are essential as some emergencies will overwhelm localities' resources and/or boundaries.
- 16.4. Collaboration and co-operation between localities in England is a well-established and critical way of working in civil contingencies. It is a mechanism:
- o for enabling pooling of resources to achieve agreed mutual aims and outcomes;
 - o for avoiding duplication of work between neighbouring LRFs or avoiding activity by an LRF that may be counter-productive to a neighbouring LRF;
 - o to support planning and exercising for emergencies that cross local resilience areas or which could overwhelm a locality; and
 - o that enables individual responders, local forums and central government to work together to address large-scale civil protection issues.

- 16.5. Cross locality working is undertaken on a permissive basis and neither civil protection legislation nor guidance seeks to impose structures on local areas or limit how they choose to collaborate and co-operate. LRFs are free to create flexible multi-LRF mechanisms and processes to best suit their risks and needs.
- 16.6. In some circumstances, it might be more efficient for national organisations and those organisations which operate across local boundaries (such as utilities companies, transport operators, and government agencies) to share information using multi-LRF groupings. Indeed, some of these organisations will struggle to find the resources to duplicate work at the single LRF level. For further guidance Chapter 2: Co-operation and Chapter 3: Formal information sharing are available at: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/emergency-preparedness>
- 16.7. Regional Resilience Forums formerly provided a uniform system for LRF collaboration within that region. There is no continuing requirement to work on regional boundaries, and responders may now replace these regional forums with more flexible structures for multi-LRF working.
- 16.8. A range of different geographically based multi-forum groupings are possible. These include Civil Protection Forums, LRF Secretariat /LRF Chair Forums and multi-responder strategic alliances incorporating health and local authority partners. These forums may cover varying geographical areas and may encompass, for example, working with the Devolved Administrations. Responders may also retain existing groups on previous geographical boundaries such as the Media Emergency Forum, Mass Fatalities Groups, Capabilities, Risk and Working Groups, or establish other suitable mechanisms to enable cross-locality collaboration and co-operation. Other theme based multi-LRF groupings have been established to allow joint planning around shared risks such as East Coast and Reservoir Flood Planning groups. The national resilience extranet (NRE) is a source of information and case studies about multi-LRF groups.

- 16.9. Local responders should decide whether to maintain any former regional plans such as a generic response plan. Responders and LRFs are encouraged to put in place arrangements and plans that suit local needs, and to conserve, utilise and build on the good practice that is contained in any existing plans.

Government support for multi-LRF collaboration and co-operation

- 16.10. The DCLG Resilience and Emergencies Division (RED) works directly with LRFs, supporting collaboration and co-operation in planning for wide-area high-impact events affecting more than one locality. RED has allocated Resilience Advisers to each LRF so that LRFs have named contacts with which to build working relationships. Resilience Advisers support and challenge the LRF in a constructive, proportionate manner through:

- o simplifying and reducing duplication of central government interaction with local responders;
- o facilitating the co-operation and sharing of information between responders and LRFs to ensure risks are fully understood (e.g. implementation of the National Emergency Plan for Fuel);
- o identifying good practice and facilitating its sharing;
- o facilitating opportunities for peer reviews;
- o actively participating in training and exercising alongside LRFs, when appropriate, i.e. for wide area or high impact incidents where Government is part of the response machinery; and
- o facilitating discussions around mutual aid arrangements

More information on RED's role and the contact details for resilience advisors are available on the national resilience extranet (NRE).

- 16.11. Support for LRF collaboration is a key part of the RED adviser role. Successful cross locality working enables responders and local resilience forums to manage large-scale emergencies, and partners involved must have effective working relationships based on good communication, and effective, efficient information sharing. This will enable them to assess and agree who is best placed to address an issue. (see para 2.3)
- 16.12. DCLG RED plays an active part in increasing resilience: supporting preparedness enhancement and providing assurance to central government that the necessary capabilities are in place at the local level to meet national planning requirements.
- 16.13. Resilience Advisers within DCLG RED have been allocated liaison roles for each of the work streams in the National Resilience Capabilities Programme. RED will liaise with Lead Government Departments; LRFs and other relevant emergency responder organisations on current and planned LRF and multi-LRF capabilities.
- 16.14. RED's ability to engage with LRFs and, in particular, hold dialogue with multiple LRFs, complements the existing governance and information sharing arrangements in place between work stream lead Departments and local responders. This is achieved by:
- o access and insights into the national capability requirements;
 - o the ability to provide a richer picture of capabilities on the ground; and
 - o facilitation and promotion of cross-boundary working between LRFs.

For further details on the National Resilience Capabilities Programme, see Chapters 4 and 13 and <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/capabilities-programme>