

- There are barriers to communication and engagement between local resilience forums and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- While most local resilience forum plans broadly covered the practical and psychosocial needs of individuals and communities at times of crisis, the plans **did not offer detailed guidance on flexible approaches to support**. In particular:
 - **A lack of personalised support.** Most plans covered basic humanitarian needs, yet did not consider how such support could be personalised. For example, 85 per cent of local resilience forums whose plans were reviewed mentioned providing food, yet only 44 per cent considered dietary requirements.
 - **Prioritisation of short-term needs.** The emergency plans consistently prioritised short-term needs over longer-term support. Longer-term issues tended to be considered within the remit of other bodies such as local authorities, or were featured in other specific plans such as the Recovery Plan, highlighting a lack of joining up between different strategies.
 - **Information and communication.** Although all local resilience forums considered this aspect of emergency response to some extent, 30 per cent did not explicitly designate a central communication channel. Only 52 per cent of the plans referred extensively to ensuring privacy and data protection, and only 70 per cent included measures to translate communications so everyone could understand them.
 - **Psychosocial and mental health support.** Ninety-three per cent of local resilience plans referred to longer-term mental health support, but most plans lacked provision for short-term psychosocial support during and immediately after a crisis.
 - **Vulnerability.** Only 30 per cent of emergency plans defined vulnerable people, and they mainly focused on older people, children and individuals with disabilities. They did not

commonly mention other factors like poverty, irregular immigration status, pre-existing homelessness and geographical isolation, all of which can have a bearing on how crises affect people and communities.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the British Red Cross developed the following recommendations for national and local government, statutory bodies and the voluntary and community sector, all of whom have an important role to play in making crisis response in the UK the best it can be. These recommendations are designed to ensure that local resilience forums and local voluntary and community sector organisations are able to combine expertise and insight, and to ensure a truly a human-centred approach to crisis response.

Promoting best practice at the local level

- **Local resilience forums should use the British Red Cross voluntary and community sector checklist for local resilience forums** (see **Appendix 1**) to ensure that local plans cater for the varied and individual needs of people in emergencies, and that local communities are engaged with local planning processes. The Cabinet Office should endorse this list as part of its *Community Resilience Development Framework*.³
- **Building on and sharing best practice.** The review found there is a disconnect between national guidance and local planning. The British Red Cross recommends that the government continues to play a greater role in supporting local resilience forums to share best practice and maintain national standards, for example conducting regular national reviews of plans and implementing the Cabinet Office's *Community Resilience Development Framework*, which

3 Cabinet Office (2019). Community Resilience Development Framework. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828813/20190902-Community_Resilience_Development_Framework_Final.pdf (Accessed 6 November 2019).