



EMERGENCY Contact Hub Guide

The objectives of the hub are to:

- Provide a template for your community to help itself in an emergency.
 - Solve the problems your community has in an emergency using your own resources and expertise.
 - Provide a safe gathering place for members of the community to support one another.
 - Provide a geographic location for information sharing between community members and the responding agencies.
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What's in this guide?



This guide is designed to help you set up and run the Emergency Contact Hub. Although in an ideal world everyone would read the whole guide, it is designed that you can easily skip to the part that is pertinent to you or your community at that time.

Section 1



Working as part of a team

Section 2



Setting up the hub

Section 3



Your community response

Section 4



Recovery

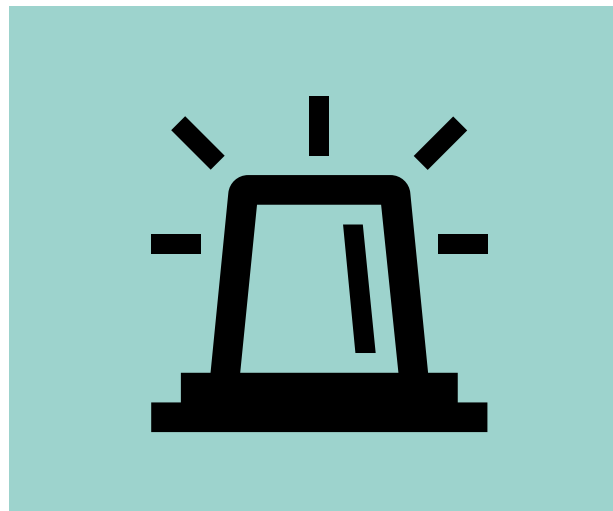


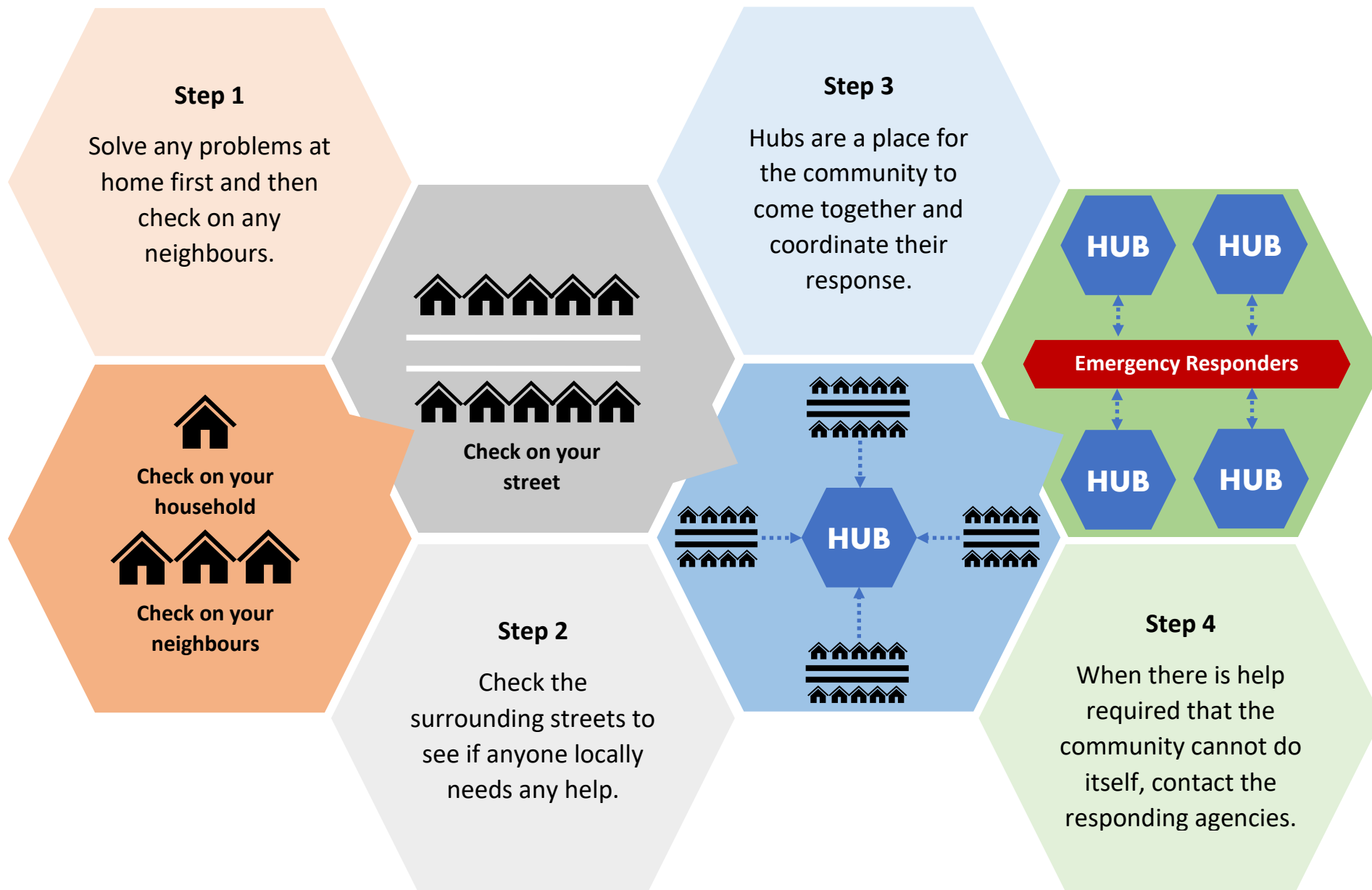
Incidents and Emergencies

During incidents, emergency services, local authorities and all associated responders need the help of local communities to resolve the incident and to achieve the best possible outcome.

Communities have many skills, resources and knowledge which are invaluable in emergencies. Whether this is helping yourselves or assisting the emergency services, anything you can provide is greatly received.

The Emergency Contact Hubs are a great way of the community coming together to help one another but also a quick and efficient way to communicate with the wider responding agencies.







Objectives of the Emergency Contact Hubs

The hub is a place for your community to coordinate its efforts to help each other during an incident. The main objectives are:

-
- Provide a template for your community to help itself in an emergency.
-
- Solve problems your community has in an emergency, using your own resources and expertise.
-
- Provide a safe gathering place for members of the community to support one another.
-
- Provide a geographic location for information sharing between community members and the responding agencies.
-

Wider Response



Responding agencies (including the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Environment Agency, Utilities, NHS, and Local Authorities) are likely to be very busy during a large-scale incident and will therefore need to prioritise where assistance is required and may not respond to every issue immediately. Despite this, it is vital that all life-threatening situations are continued to be called into 999.

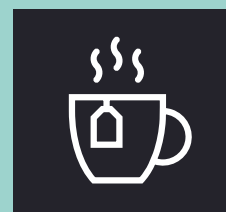
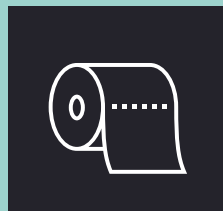
- All hubs are provided with this welcome pack, some role cards, and lanyards. It is also suggested that all hubs have a map of their local area.
- Some hubs will be provided with some basic equipment which will include torches, radios, blankets, power packs, first aid kits and stationery. These will be distributed equally across the county to ensure every geographical area is closely located to some equipment.
- Some hubs will have additional equipment that they have provided themselves – this might include power generators.
- Some communities may have a small emergency group who run their hub, however, this is not essential and the hubs are designed to be run by anyone in the community working with people they may not know.
- Some other community groups may also activate in an incident; it's important that the hubs work alongside these groups as much as possible.
- People working in the hub have no legal powers and cannot force anyone to do anything.
- Emergency Services/responding agencies may communicate with the hub, but this will not always be the case.



Facility Map

Every facility is different and embracing this concept is what makes the scheme unique. There are no real requirements for a venue to be used as an Emergency Contact Hub however, it is expected that they contain or at least have access to:

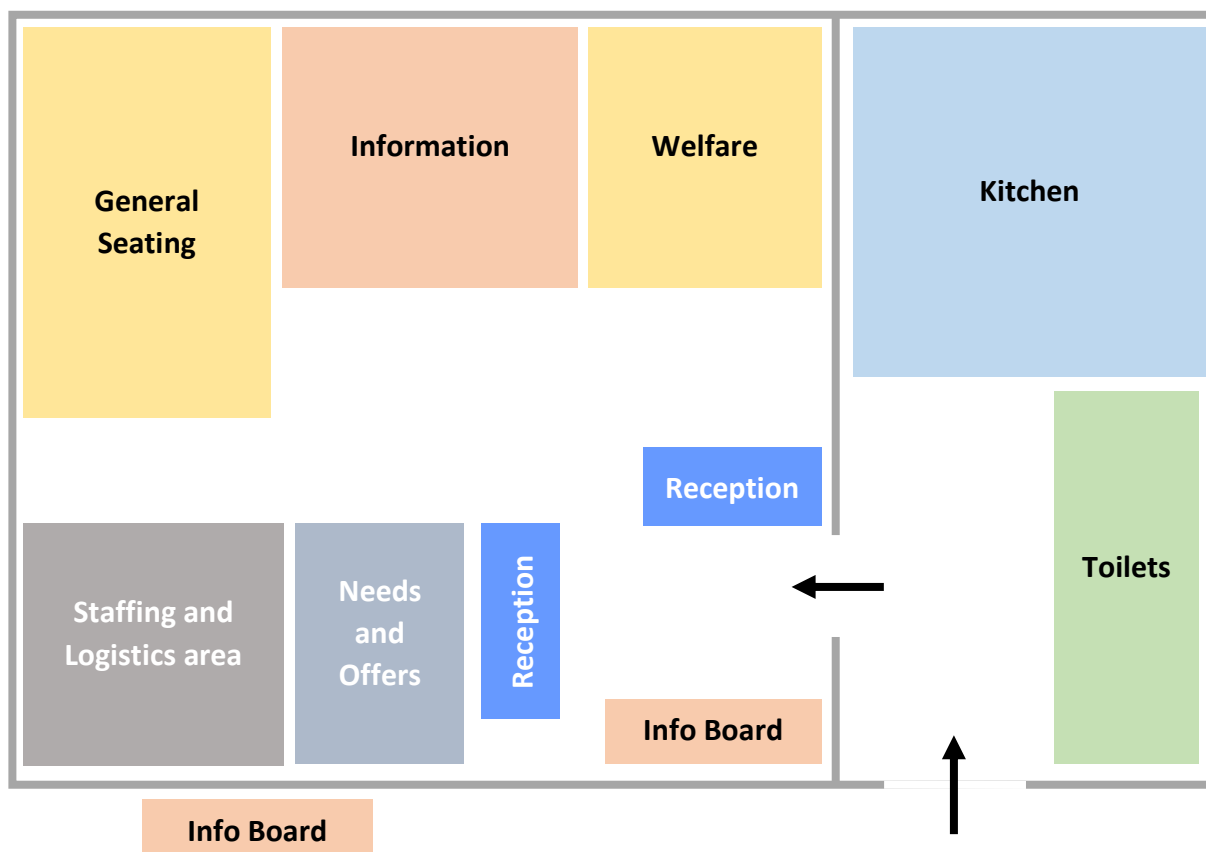
- Toilets.
- Running water or the ability to store bottled water.
- Tables and chairs.



It is advantageous if the venue has:

- Disabled access.
- Heating.
- Electricity or potentially a generator.
- A kitchen or drink making facilities.

Here is an example of how you might choose to set up a hub. This is only an example using a simple community hall style and it is up to your community to decide how to layout your sections.



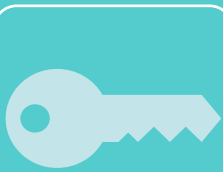


Accessing the Hub



Check the Environment is Safe

Are there any potential hazards nearby that might threaten the facility or cause concerns for visiting community members? If the area looks unsafe, identify an alternative location.



Locate the Keys

Identify how to open the facility. Does it have a key box or a number for the key holders on the outside? We ask all hubs to have an easily identifiable method for activation that is obvious to members of the community.



Locate the Hub Pack/Box

All hubs will have a pack and/or box of essential equipment. All hubs are asked to keep this in an easily identifiable and accessible location, that should be marked on a noticeboard as you walk in.



Identify a Safe Working Place

Some hubs might be more than one room. It's important you identify the most appropriate space to use, ideally with disabled access, some segregation between areas and easy access to facilities.



Clean Up

Make sure the hub is clean and tidy before opening, move any furniture or tables that are obstructive. Ensure all walkways are clear.



SECTION 1

Working as part of a Team



In this section:

Bring Everyone Together

Assign Roles

Hub Supervisor

Information Officer

Receptionist

Public Information Officer

Needs and Offers Officer

Welfare Officer

Facilities Manager

Role Handovers



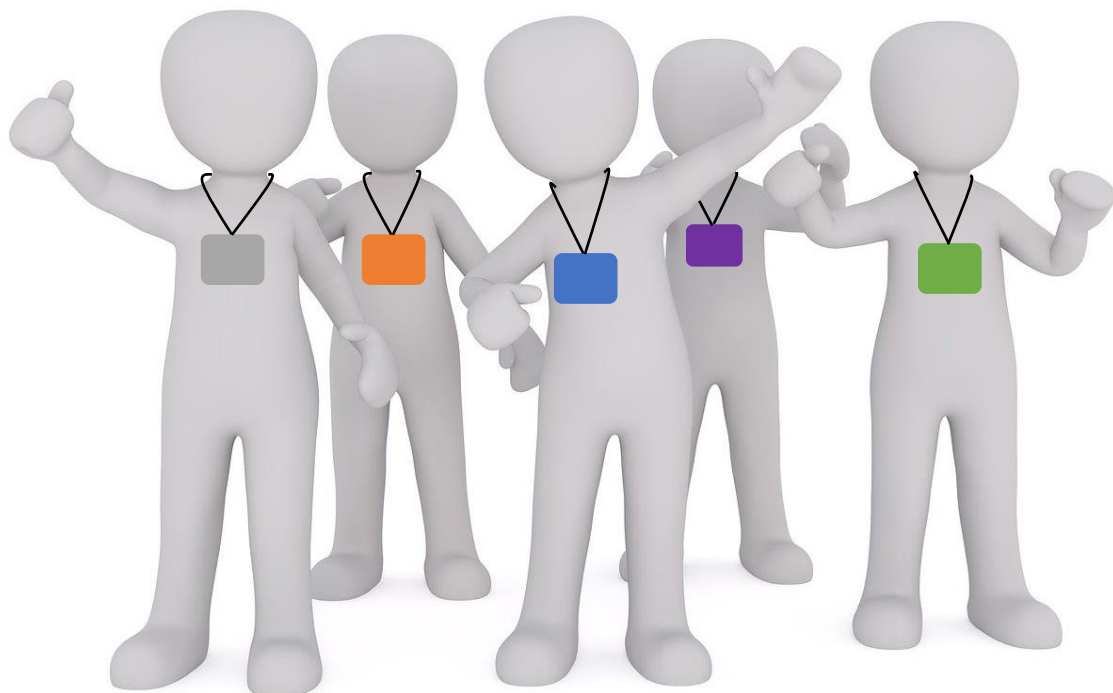
Bringing Everyone Together

Once the hub is ready, it's important that a group of volunteers come together to understand the roles and activities required. Some hubs will have a pre-identified group who all know one another and are used to working with each other, while others will be completely new to each other and have never volunteered in an emergency before. Either way, the group should come together and form a response group and work out how to respond to the task at hand and proactively support the local community.

You are here to:

- Provide information to your community so they know what is going on and how to stay safe.
- Understand what is happening locally by gathering information.
- Solve problems using your local knowledge and information.
- Provide a safe place for the community to come together.

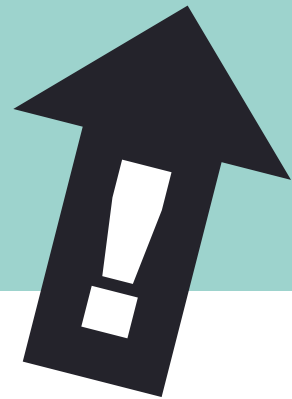
One of the key aspects is to make sure everyone has a clear understanding of the overall situation as this can then help them make better and informed decisions.





Assign Roles

You may find it easiest to appoint a **Hub Supervisor** as the first action. This might help initially with organising the rest of the team. Having a Hub Supervisor will also ensure that the group concentrate on the whole task at hand from the very beginning. As you start to organise the overall team you might find it's appropriate to change the person in the Supervisor role.



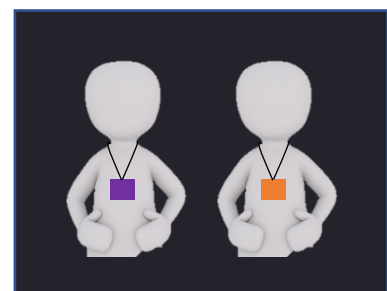
What are the roles?

Below are some suggestions of possible roles. You do not need to follow these; however, we have highlighted in **Black and Bold** the ones we feel are most important. Dependant on the numbers of people you have available, you may need to double up on roles (so hold more than one role each), or you might have multiple people carrying out a role together.



Role Lanyards

Each role has a corresponding lanyard, which we ask the volunteer to wear to make them conspicuous and easily identifiable. The lanyards have the role/volunteer title on one side with the key tasks on the back.

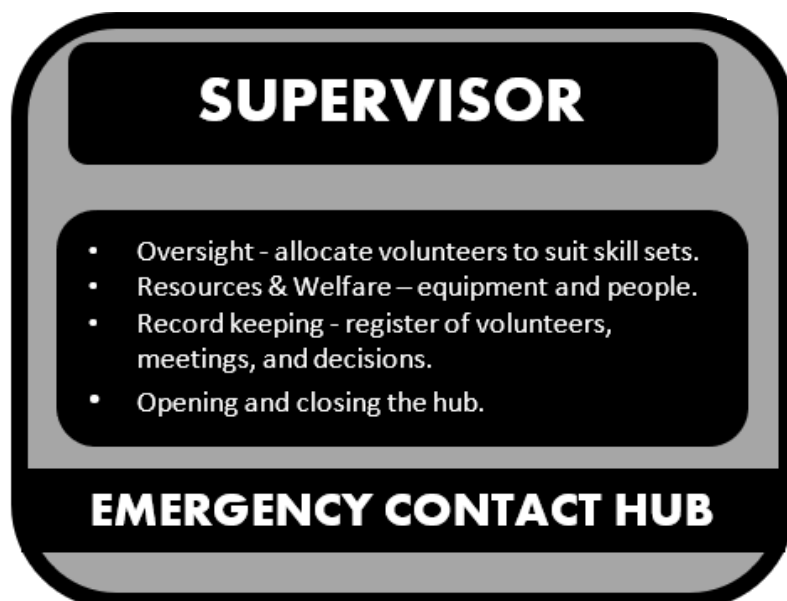
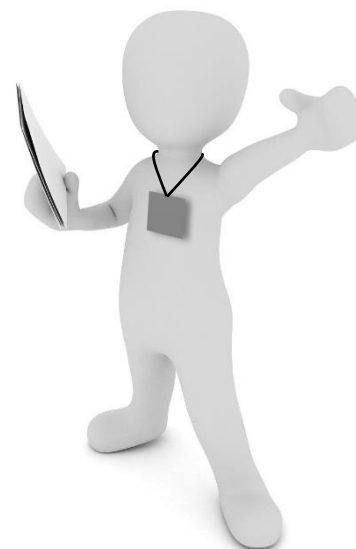




Hub Supervisor

The Hub Supervisor oversees all activities in the hub and makes sure it runs as safely, effectively, and efficiently as possible.

This includes making sure that all roles are being carried out and that everyone in the team is properly supported. The Supervisor must also ensure that key decisions and actions are discussed with the group and, where possible, a consensus is reached. This is a community run scheme and therefore no one person has overall control. However, it is important that effective and informed decisions are made during a crisis.





Key Tasks



Oversight

Make sure that all roles are allocated to volunteers that best suit their preferences and skill sets. Ensure that no-one feels isolated and is not doing a role that they do not want to.



Resources

All volunteers will need to have the correct equipment to undertake their role. This covers equipment from tables to pens and paper alongside additional staffing. If the role needs more help (if more staffing is required it's the Supervisor's responsibility to help locate this).



Meetings

Regular meetings will need to be held so that the volunteers are aware of the current situation and future requirements of the hub/incident.



Keep a record

Make sure a record of decisions and actions are kept – this is just so you can look back at what you did. We will not ask for these records, however it's useful to have them to contribute to subsequent learning.



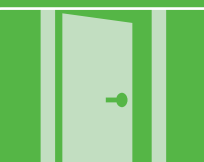
Welfare

It's important that all volunteers are kept well fed and hydrated alongside given breaks. Volunteers in a crisis tend to be keen to work hard for extended hours and forget to take breaks and eat/drink. The Supervisor will need to ensure welfare is a key part of the hub.



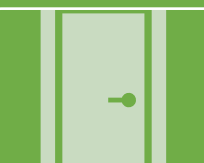
Register

It's important to keep a register of who is working and when. This helps for record keeping and understanding when people need breaks. It is not required to keep a register of community members who use/visit the hub.



Closing up and opening the hub

When the hub is closed for the night, the Supervisor must ensure it is locked and then reopened the following day if required. Signage may need to be put up highlighting the hubs opening hours (this may also need to be passed to any responding agencies you are working with).



Shutting down the hub

When the community feel the hub is no longer needed, the Supervisor must ensure the hub is shut down and packed away. Should you be liaising with any multi-agency organisations it will be important to notify them that you are also closing.



Working with the Media

The Media are an important part of any incident and will be managed by the statutory responding agencies. However, there may be specific media interest in your Emergency Contact Hub. The Supervisor's responsibility is to work with them should any arrive. It is up to the group what you allow the media to see of the hub.



WHAT CAN I SHARE?

Anything the media can see (as if they were a member of the public).

General Information (it's busy, it's really quiet, we've had lots of offers of assistance).

Public Information you have received from the emergency responders.



WHAT CAN'T I SHARE?

Any personal information or details about your community. *Some individuals may choose to share their details.*

Addresses or contact information of the community.

Details of deaths or injuries.

Details on people homes.

Legal Information

In general, you do not have any special legal powers when working as part of the hub.

Legal regulation or law does not prohibit community proactiveness. However, it's important that as a community group you operate within the law and work to promote health and safety within the hub.

If you are unsure on anything or need clarity relating to the law, please contact Wiltshire and Swindon Prepared.

In an emergency remember to always call 999



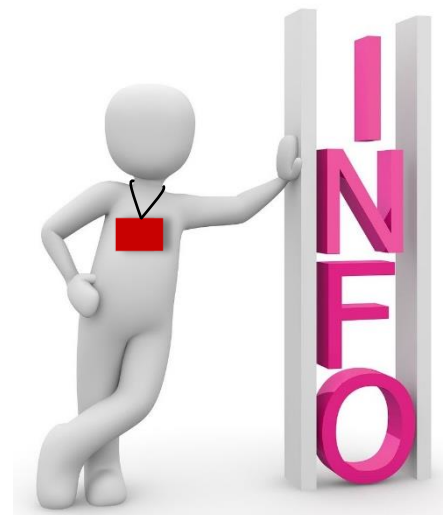


Information Officer

The Information Officer is vitally important in the hub structure. The aim of this role is to coordinate all information for the hub. This includes all information coming in from the community alongside the information that may come in from the local responding agencies.

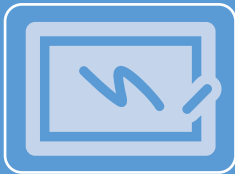
The Information Officer will need to ensure not only that all information is collected but that all relevant matters are displayed to the community. It is up to the volunteer group how this is done, but a common method will be to use display boards in/outside the hub. It may also be relevant to post certain information on community boards, or social media sites if appropriate.

If requests for information are made from responding agencies it is the role of the Information Officer to relay these to the Supervisor.





Key Tasks



Situation Board

- Display current information on the board.
- Display maps of the local area.
- Display key utility information and upcoming weather.



Keep tabs on what information you need to know

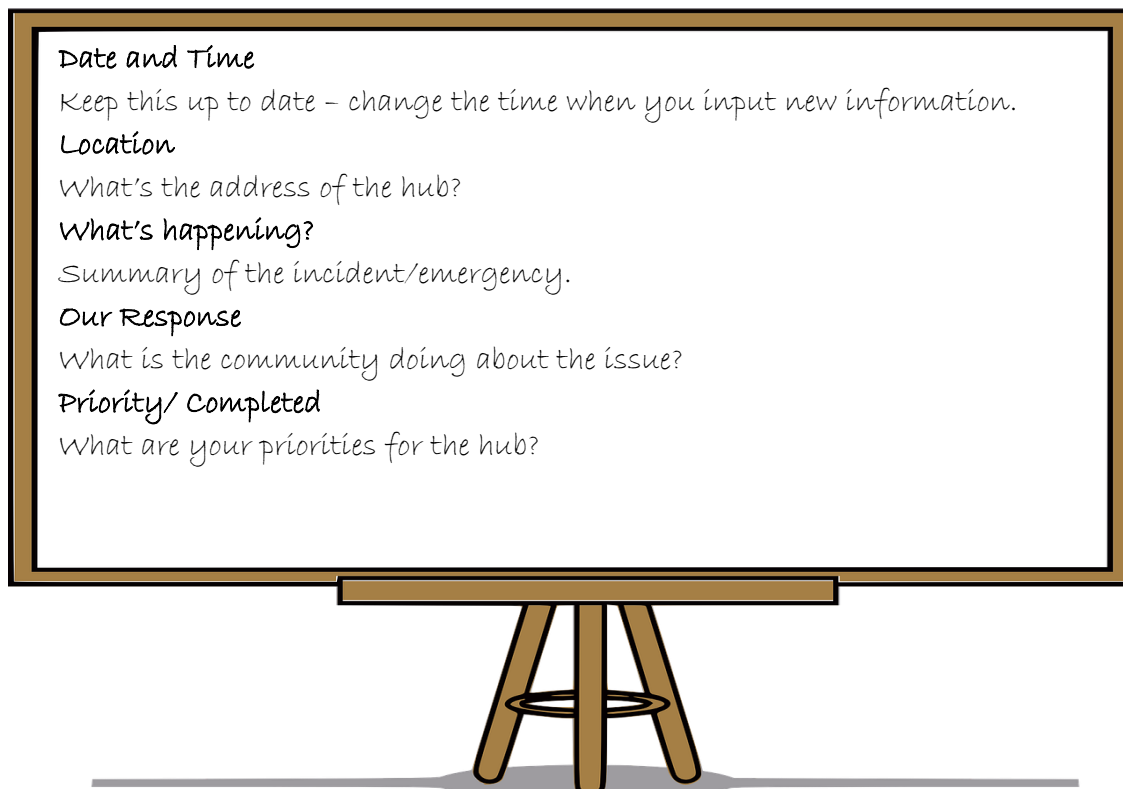
- What information do you require to get a better overview of the situation.
- Is there a specific area of the community you haven't heard from?



Manage all information and any volunteers

- Be the main source of information for the hub.
- Manage any extra information, volunteers and any related tasks.

Suggested Situation Board Layout





Receptionist

Anyone coming to the hub should be welcomed and provided with information on what the hub is for and what it can/can't provide. The reception needs to be located near the front of the hub and be easily identifiable.





Key Tasks



Greeting People

Be friendly and approachable and direct people to the areas or volunteers who can help with their query.



Stay Calm

Expect people to be upset, emotional or frustrated, so remaining calm is vitally important as you are their first contact with the hub.



Be Honest

If you don't know the answer, be honest and direct them to someone who might be able to help.



Public Information Officer

Sometimes the Information Officer might require some extra help and therefore this role has been created. However, in a small-scale incident it likely the Information Officer may be able to complete much of this work themselves.

The key part of this role is ensuring the situation board is kept up to date (as described under the Information Officer tab).





Key Tasks



Situation Board

Depending on how busy the hub is, it might be required to help out with the situation board. This could be keeping it up to date or collecting some information.



Assist with Media Enquires

Help the Supervisor out with any media enquiries. Remember, you can only give out publicly available information.



Display any leaflets or posters

Conspicuously display any posters or leaflets that might help the community during the incident.



Welfare Officer

People will use the hubs for many different things including help with specific tasks. However, one regularly neglected area of assistance can be general welfare. People often just need someone to talk to and comfort them.





Key Tasks



Be Visible

Being visible and approachable is important, as people need to know where to easily find you and feel comfortable in your presence.



Provide Comfort

Providing comfort comes in a variety of different forms and can simply be just having a conversation with someone or listening to their concerns. Either way, comforting community members is a vital part of response.



Refreshments

If refreshments are provided, it's important these are easily accessible and available.

Providing Comfort: Providing comfort is as simple as just having a conversation with the member of the community or helping them to air any of their issues. This should involve listening to them and then providing any information about the situation and helping them with their practical needs. It's important that you understand you are not a counselling service and that you do not try to delve into anyone's personal issues.

When providing comfort it's **important to:**

- Help people feel in control in making their own decisions.
- Listen respectfully to them.
- Encourage them to think about where any extra support can come from (family and friends).
- Take note of what they need.
- Remain supportive and do not take anything they say personally.

When providing comfort, **avoid:**

- Ordering people around/ telling them what to do.
- Tell them it will all be fine, when it might not.
- Being distracted - give them your full attention.
- Separating them from their friends and family.
- React to their emotions personally.

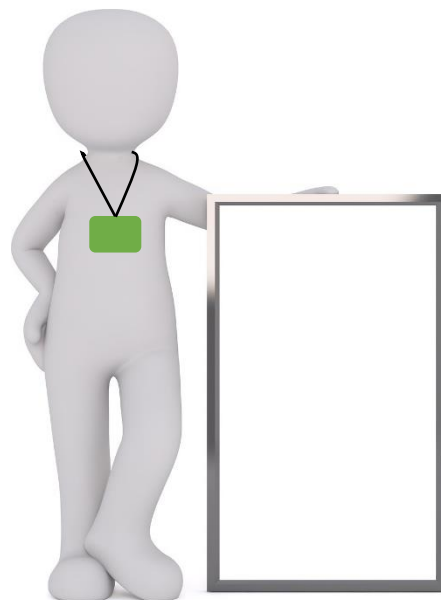


Needs and Offers Officer

As with any incident, the community will require different help for different situations, at the same time there will be plenty of people willing to help in any way they can.

There is a requirement for somebody to organise these different needs and requirements. One way to do this is to split the two into two different 'boards'; Needs and Offers. Therefore, one person might come and offer some assistance with clearing debris from a storm and another community member may come in asking for help to clear the footpath to their home.

It's imperative that someone manages this situation and matches key needs to offers. There will no doubt be many 'needs' that we do not have 'offers' of assistance for and this will then lead to matching responses to available resources or by escalating to emergency responders.



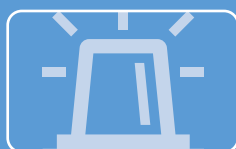


Life Threatening Needs:

- Contact the emergency services immediately on 999!
- Make sure the hub Supervisor is made aware.
- Pass information to any multi-agency responders on the scene.



Key Tasks



Address Life Threatening needs immediately

Immediately contact the emergency services on 999!
Make the hub Supervisor aware.



Needs and Offers Boards

Set up a needs and offers board.
Record any needs or offers on separate sections.



Match Offers and Needs

Match any offers of help with anyone in need. This may include contacting each person to arrange the assistance.



Significant Offers

In some cases large offers may be made (from places like supermarkets). Work with the Supervisor to decide what to do with such offers.

Needs and Offers Boards: Consider the use of needs and offer boards (these are large boards that the public can see that identify needs and offers). However, these do not need to be conspicuously displayed.

Ensure that you record the time and dates of needs and offers, along with the people's contact details (not to be put on the display boards). If anyone is only available at certain times, it's also important to record this detail.

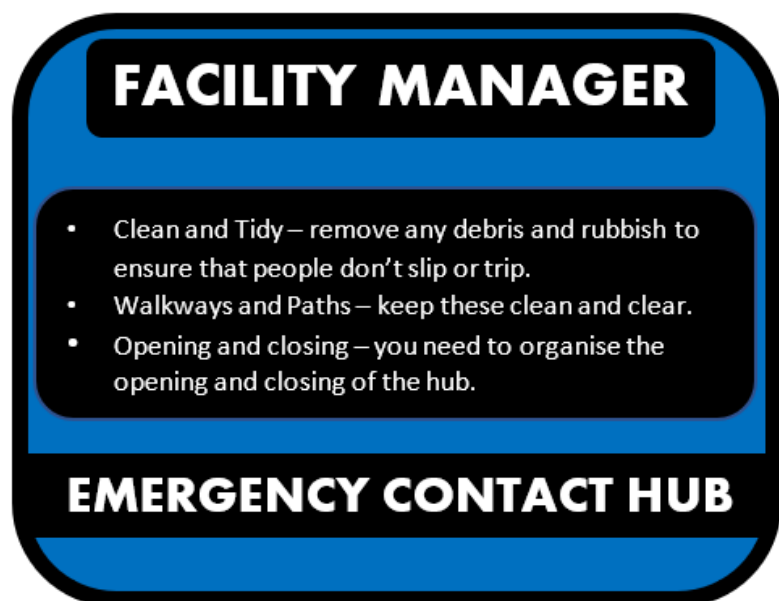
Match Offers and Needs: Match the offers and the needs of the community – try to group both to ease the process. Also, to encourage those offering help to have a broader remit. For example, it's better to have a general offer of help to clear debris, rather than a specific offer of help to clear branches on a footpath.

Keeping the boards up to date is vital to ensure accuracy and to avoid double counting



Facility Manager

Keeping the facility clean and tidy might not seem overly important, but you'd be surprised how important this actually is. Keeping it clean and tidy will also ensure that it is safe for the public and that people feel comfortable in the building.





Key Tasks



Clean and Tidy

Keeping the building clean and tidy, cleaning up any debris and rubbish making sure that people don't slip or trip on anything.



Walkways and Paths

Keeping footpaths clean and clear around the building. This could be just making sure they aren't obstructed or might involve clearing some ice and snow around the main entrance.



Opening and Closing

It's not necessarily the Facility Managers responsibility to open and close the hub, but the arrangements need to be known by FM.



SECTION 2

Setting up the hub



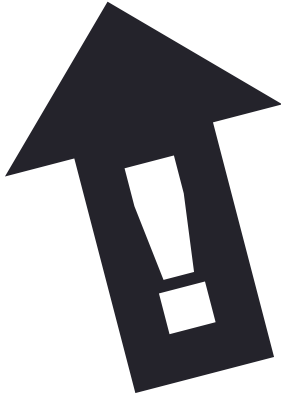
In this section:

- | |
|--------------------------------|
| Make sure all roles are filled |
| Set up situation board |
| Set up areas in hub |



Setting up the hub

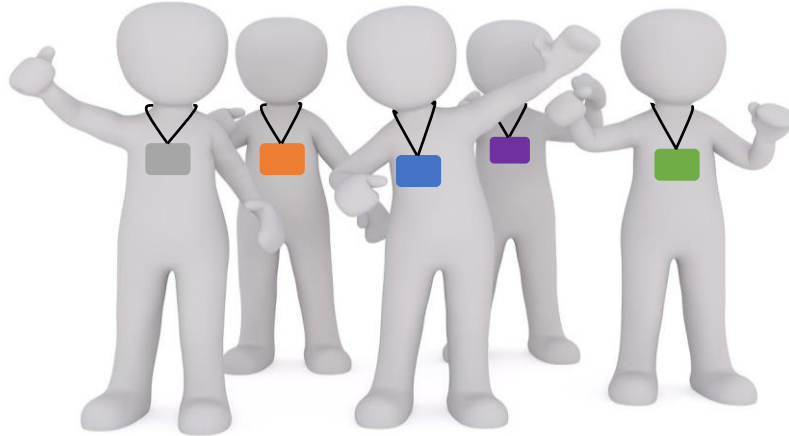
Now that all the roles have been assigned, it's important that the hub is set up. Each role can set up their own area, however some might require more help than others. The Supervisor should coordinate this process.



Make sure all roles are filled!

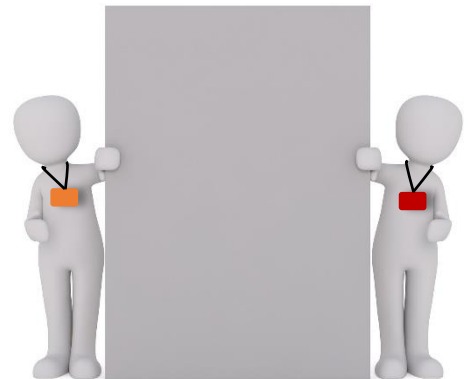
- Supervisor
- Information Officer
- Receptionist
- Public Information Officer
- Welfare Officer
- Needs and Offers Officer
- Facilities Manager

People may have more than one role depending on the size of the hub.



Set up the Situation Board

- The situation board maintains an overall picture of what is happening and is used to ensure the public can have a quick snapshot of the incident and community response.
- Should you have two boards, it can sometimes be useful to have one board inside and one outside (this will stop people coming in if they only want an update).





SECTION 3

Your community response



In this section:

Local ideas and solutions

Local resources

Vulnerabilities

Checking on people and local damage

Medical

Shelter

Water

Food

Sanitation

Key resource statements



Local ideas and Solutions

In an incident we are often able to think quickly on our feet and can make rapid decisions. However, it's also important to stop and think about what options are available and how they might help us.



Community Response Plans

Your community might have a Community Emergency Plan, it might be two sides long or it might be 50. There's no right or wrong length – but no matter what size or format the plan is in, it is sure to have some helpful information within it. Use this plan to help you answer some of the questions that might come up, but don't panic if it doesn't contain the answer. That's what's so great about a community response, someone is bound to know the answer or be able to help.

Not all communities have an Emergency Plan – that's fine. Hopefully, this document will help with some prompts and answers to questions you might have. Use your volunteer group to come up with the solutions to the issues presented.

Asking questions and problem solving together is the best part of working in a community group.

Life Threatening Situations

The main point is to not put yourself in danger, help if you can, but we don't want any extra casualties!

- **Attempt to contact the emergency services via 999 in an emergency!**
- If you are unable to contact 999, keep trying and see if there's anyone else available to help.
- Sometimes the only thing you can do is make others aware of the hazard, making sure they stay away from the area – this could be done by conning off an area or even helping with an evacuation.
- Should there be an emergency or dangerous hazard (once you've contact the emergency services), report back to the Emergency Contact Hub
 - What's the problem?
 - What has been done about it?
 - What still needs doing?



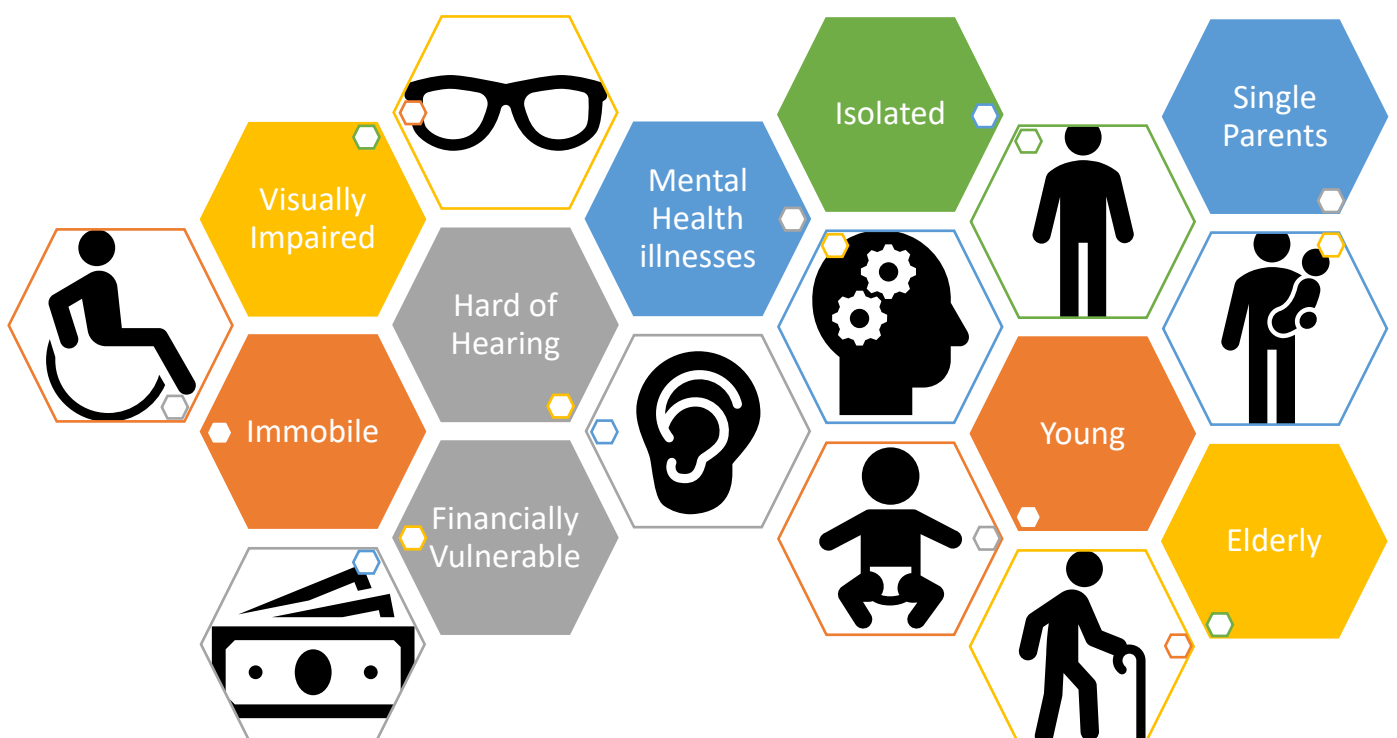
Local Resources

During an emergency it's important to understand what local resources you might have in your area. This is a list of possible resources you might want to consider. There's a high chance that your community has some of these or you might be able to share them with another local area. It doesn't matter if you don't have them all, the list is there more as a prompt to trigger your thought processes.

Local Vulnerabilities

People

During a community response it's important to identify potential vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities are sometimes easy to see and at other times are completely blind to the eye. It's important to understand what vulnerabilities could be in your community. Some examples are shown below.





Consider the different groups available to you who work with vulnerable community members. These might be mother and baby groups, the local coffee morning, the local nurse, the local WI, or local places of worship.

Many people consider themselves to be vulnerable, but equally many also do not. Just because you are elderly, young, or a single parent does not mean you consider yourself to be vulnerable. Therefore, it's important we are careful not to call everyone 'vulnerable' or put them in categories they do not associate with. Sometimes it's easier to think of people as those that might require extra help rather than just vulnerable.

Infrastructure

It's not just people who are vulnerable. Organisations or infrastructure can also be considered in this category. You might have buildings that are vulnerable to flooding as they are in a flood zone, or you might have a care home that's purely vulnerable as the staff can't get to it in a snowstorm.

Consider what infrastructure you have in your area and whether it may be vulnerable in the incident you are now experiencing, good examples are:

- Care Homes.
- Doctors Surgery.
- Schools.
- Buildings near a river.
- Nurseries.



Medical Assistance

Community members may sometimes need medical help and should always be directed to the most suitable professional medical care.

There are a variety of options available to assist with medical queries:







Every hub will have an emergency first aid handbook and all hubs should also have an accessible first aid kit. Outside of this, the following options are available and should be followed. As a community you might need to assist one another with each option (e.g., calling NHS 111 for someone or taking them to a walk-in centre).

Should you have a community member with medical training or a first aid qualification they can help by assisting in the initial care of a community member.

However, it is essential that anyone requiring urgent treatment is assessed by qualified professionals in a health care facility as soon as possible.





	Minor cuts and grazes	Colds Bruises, Minor Sprains	Self care Stock up on medicines
	Minor illnesses Headaches	Bites and stings Stomach upsets	Pharmacy
	Feeling unwell? Anxious?	Unsure? Need help?	NHS 111 You can call us 24/7
	Long term conditions	Chronic pain Persistent symptoms	GP Advice
	Skin rashes and infections	Suspected broken limbs Minor scalds and burns	Urgent Treatment Centre Walk-in and book via 111
	Serious bleeding	Blacking out Choking, Chest pain	A&E or 999 Emergencies only

Shelter

In some instances, people's homes and places of residence may be damaged and it's important to ensure they have somewhere safe to stay whilst repairs are being undertaken.

Repairs: Although carrying out repairs on a neighbour's or local community residence is a fantastic help, it's important to remember that this must be done at no increase of risk to yourself or anyone else helping. Repairs must also be carried out by a responsible person to ensure they don't make the problem any worse.

Leaving property: Should anyone need to leave their home and it's not a danger to do so, they should consider picking up any blankets and bedding to ensure they are kept warm and comfortable in a neighbour's house. It is also important not to advertise which homes people have vacated, to ensure no opportunist criminals are given an open invitation.

Shelter: Most people will stay with family or friends if possible when having to leave their home. It is normally a last resort to have to sleep in a hall, therefore consider all of those options first. The Local Authority will do their best to look after those made homeless, but any assistance by the community is incredibly helpful, especially in the immediate aftermath of an incident.



SECTION 4

Recovery



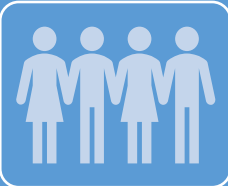


Considering Recovery

Recovery is something many of us forget about in an incident. All of the effort and resources are thrown into response and then many feel a huge sense of relief when it moves into recovery. Depending on the size of the incident depends on how large or long the recovery will be. Either way, it's important to not forget about the recovery. Life rarely goes straight back to normal after an incident.

It is vitally important that as you move into recovery you do not lose that great sense of community that has been created in response. It is therefore critical that everyone still works and stays together and consolidates what they have built and achieved during response.

Key steps in recovery are:



Working Together

- Keeping the great energy from the response going.
- Share and promote success stories between the community.
- Don't forget that people need help after the 'storm' has left.



Staying Connected

- Build upon and cement existing and newly formed relationships.
- Maintain contact with anyone evacuated or in temporary accommodation.
- Set up email and/or whatsapp groups or phone 'trees'.



Wellbeing

- Give yourselves time to adjust and breath after the incident.
- Consider that everyone's needs are different.
- Remember, it's ok to ask for help.



Common Voice

- Look for common goals that will help the community.
- Come together to produce an action plan to move forward.
- Be inclusive - everyone's needs are different, make sure you don't dismiss anyone's.

Recovery is not a perfect art. Everyone does it differently and it is important to remember that recovery is as much a human aspect as it is a structural or environmental one. The Emergency Contact Hub is likely to have stood down by the time of the recovery. However, the relationships formed and experiences had will run through into the recovery phase and should serve to make the community stronger.



Notes

