

Report



meeting

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH
DEPARTMENTAL BRIEFING

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REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR (STRATEGIC SERVICES)

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE CENTRES AND THE ROLE OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH IN EMERGENCY PLANNING

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the emergency planning arrangements in place within Adult Social Care and Health.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the fuel crisis and the severe flooding in the autumn and winter of 2000 the Government announced a review of emergency planning arrangements. The review concluded that existing legislation no longer provided an adequate framework for modern civil protection efforts and that new legislation was needed. This led to the **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**.
- 2.2 The Act delivers a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Act is separated into two substantive parts: local arrangements for civil protection (Part 1) and emergency powers (Part 2).
- 2.3 The Act focuses on three types of threat:
- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare
 - an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment
 - war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.
- 2.4 The purpose of Part 1 of the Act is to establish a new statutory framework for civil protection at a local level and sets out clear expectations and responsibilities for responders to ensure they are fully prepared to deal effectively with the wide range of emergencies from localised incidents through to catastrophic emergencies. It divides local responders into two categories:

2.5 **Category 1** responders which include Local Authorities, Government agencies, Emergency Services and most NHS organisations who have duties placed upon them to:

- assess local risks, including the development and maintenance of a Community Risk Register, and use this to inform emergency planning
- put in place emergency plans
- put in place business continuity management arrangements
- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

2.6 **Category 2** organisations (utilities, transport, government, strategic health authorities) are placed under the lesser duties of co-operating with Category 1 organisations and sharing relevant information.

2.7 Category 1 and 2 organisations come together to form 'Local Resilience Forums' (based on police areas) which help co-ordination and co-operation between responders at the local level.

2.8 The **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum** is the senior management group for the co-ordination of emergency planning within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The Forum meets regularly, is led by Nottinghamshire Police, and is made up of senior managers from the principal emergency planning and response organisations, including the Service Director (Strategic Services).

2.9 The Forum is concerned with overall direction and policies of emergency planning and preparation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The Forum also forms the basis of the strategic multi-agency group that leads the overall response to any major emergency.

3. Adult Social Care and Health responsibilities

3.1 Adult Social Care and Health have been involved in responding to emergencies over a number of years and contribute to Nottinghamshire County Council's duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as a category 1 responder to emergencies. The Service Director (Strategic Services) is a member of the corporate Risk and Emergency Management group which ensures plans and processes are in place to fulfil the duties required of the department.

3.2 Over the past years there have been numerous incidents in Nottinghamshire where social care services have responded to emergencies, from the Kegworth air disaster in January 1989, the Nottinghamshire response to the Hillsborough football disaster in April 1989, extensive flooding in November

2000 and more recently in June 2007. In addition, there are numerous other smaller but none the less significant incidents, where rest centres have been set up and business continuity issues responded to.

- 3.3 The department has clear and well tested emergency plans in place to ensure its preparedness to respond to emergencies, as well as business continuity plans with a specific plan dedicated to pandemic flu.

4. Rest Centres

- 4.1 Adult Social Care and Health have a responsibility to manage rest centres. During or following an incident, the Emergency Services may need to evacuate a populated area. If there are a number of evacuees, a Rest Centre would be opened as a temporary “place of safety”. This is determined by the Police who in turn contact the Emergency Planning Officer who will contact a Service Director in Adult Social Care and Health. The purpose of a Rest Centre is to:

- address and manage the immediate needs of evacuees (this may include medication, clothing, care of pets, liaising with relatives etc)
- to provide a multi-agency approach to ensure the general care and welfare needs of evacuees are addressed (co-ordinating the services provided by the voluntary sector e.g. WRVS, Red Cross)
- to provide a welfare function to those affected directly by emergencies and their families.

5. Business Continuity

- 5.1 Business continuity plans are in place throughout the department to ensure that Nottinghamshire continues to provide a social care service. Such incidents in the past have included flooding of office accommodation at Sir John Robinson Way and County Hall, where staff had to evacuate the building, but still provide services to the community.
- 5.2 More recently, following unprecedented rainfall in June 2007 an estimated 1,400 homes were flooded across the county. Silver and bronze commands were established by the local authority. The Service Director (Strategic Services) is currently gold and silver command trained and this responsibly will in the future be extended to other Service Directors to ensure sustained capacity.
- 5.3 During the floods four Rest Centres were set up as a place of safety for evacuees, one of which was staffed over a 24 hour period for over 2 days. There were 300 meals supplied by the department to the Rest Centres.
- 5.4 Over 60 staff from the department were involved over a 14 day period. This included administrative staff, home care staff, social workers, occupational therapy staff, team managers, service managers and locality managers out in the localities around the county. There were also non-operational staff based at County Hall headquarters supporting and responding to localities and the departments own residential homes and managers receiving older people

who were evacuated and in need of temporary support and accommodation. Some 500 service users were supported by the localities during this time, with many more members of the public being advised and supported at Rest Centres and within the localities.

- 5.5 The locality staff responded to individual and community needs and worked closely with colleagues in Health (PCTs and Trusts), District Councils, transport, independent sector providers of care and the voluntary sector.
- 5.6 The Welfare Rights Service set up a "Flood Advice Line" to respond to calls from the public on benefits, particularly those who are not insured. This help line was operational for 3 weeks.
- 5.7 Other staff involved included the department's catering and meals staff who supplied extra meals for evacuees and staff at Rest Centres and to an independent sector residential home whose kitchen had been flooded.
- 5.8 The response from the independent sector home care organisations is to be commended. It is the responsibility of Category 1 responders to work in partnership with those with whom they contract. Each year the department provides information and advice on protecting health and reducing harm from extreme heat and heat waves to vulnerable people at risk and staff of care homes. The Department of Health requires local authorities to have in place a Pandemic Influenza plan and the department has also provided business continuity briefings on pandemic flu to care homes and home care organisations. The Service Director is also a member of the Local Resilience Health and Social Care sub-group on pandemic flu.

6. Humanitarian Assistance Centres

- 6.1 Following the London bombings in July 2005, the Secretary of State requested that each local authority put in place a Humanitarian Assistance Centre plan. A Humanitarian Assistance Centre is a focal point for information and assistance to families and friends of those missing, injured or killed and to survivors to all those directly affected by an emergency or major incident.
- 6.2 Early 2006 the Service Director (Strategic Services) was asked to lead the work on the Humanitarian Assistance Centre on behalf of the County Council. A steering group was set up and the inaugural meeting took place on 7th July 2006. The multi-agency group consists of the County Council (Emergency Planners and Adults and Children's social care services); City Council (Emergency planners and Adults and Children's social care services); City Housing Department; EMAS; British Red Cross; WRVS; St. Johns Ambulance; Salvation Army; Nottinghamshire PCT; Newark and Sherwood District Council; Notts Mental Health Trust; Faith Groups; Notts Police, Health Protection Agency.
- 6.3 An action plan was produced and included identification of agencies to be involved and clarity on roles and responsibilities; research and lessons learnt following the London bombings and from the Cabinet Office Emergency

Planning College; a series of task and finish groups; a communications and media strategy; health and safety and security arrangements; emotional and psychological support etc.

- 6.4 The outcome was to build an effective capability within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire for planning, establishing and managing a Humanitarian Assistance Centre in the event of a major emergency. The plan was accepted by the Local Resilience Forum in June 2007. The launch of the plan will be held across the City and County (two events) and a media briefing held in October. The plan is being tested and training provided.
- 6.5 A report will be taken to Cabinet for approval of the Nottinghamshire County Council's Humanitarian Assistance Centre plan.

7. Impact on Performance and Budget

- 7.1 Following any incident there is always a review to look at lessons learnt, to reflect on the efficiency of the plans as well as the impact on the staff of the department and the County Council.
- 7.2 Responding to emergencies and providing 'business as usual' during major incidents can be resource intensive – both financial and human. The response to the floods in June was exceptional in terms of the length of time, the number of Rest Centres operational at any one time and the number of staff involved. There is a mutual support agreement whereby each local authority agrees to support each other during serious and sustained emergencies. However, although Nottinghamshire County Council was on standby to support Rotherham and a further 1,000 evacuees at the Rest Centres, the department's resources were already fully stretched; indeed within Bassetlaw all staff were engaged in the response to the floods. However, there is always a willingness of staff to respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - often at a cost to personal commitments. There is evidence of where staff, whose own homes were flooded, still continued with their home care visit to vulnerable older people and those with disabilities. There are also the staff who work extra hours to provide services in the normal way throughout Nottinghamshire whilst their colleagues respond to emergencies.
- 7.3 These additional staffing costs, extra meals provided, transport costs etc. will impact on the department's budget for 2007/08, but there is a need to ensure the department's performance is not adversely affected.
- 7.4 During 2006 Nottinghamshire County Council were awarded Beacon Council status for its emergency planning arrangements. Adult Social Care and Health contributed to this achievement in its partnership role with the Emergency Planning team and work on the Humanitarian Assistance Centre.

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