



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

**Emergency Response:
Handbook for
Elected Members**

December 2022

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1. Introduction & Context

The Isle of Anglesey County Council has a crucial role to play in responding to any major emergency or incident on the Island. Citizens expect councils to respond promptly and effectively together with partner organisations when there is an incident as well as continue to deliver front-line services.

Planning for emergencies is often overlooked until a disastrous situation occurs. However, if we make plans to prevent, prepare, and respond to emergencies, the impacts could be lessened; impacts such as flooding, loss of infrastructure and threats to life and the environment.

The North Wales Local Authorities has established a single Regional Emergency Planning Service which works alongside the local authorities to prepare for the Major Emergencies outlined below. The North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS) is hosted by Flintshire County Council on behalf of the five other authorities.

There is a duty upon local authorities to prepare for a response to emergency incidents and also recovery¹. Ensuring preparedness involves many parts but a fundamental part is a requirement for all involved to:

- understand their roles and responsibilities
- have the necessary experience, skills and support

Whilst operational responsibilities as regards civil resilience is a matter for Officers, Councillors of the Local Authority have an important political role to play in preparing for, responding to and recovering from significant crises like Covid-19. Elected Member contributions should complement the role of officers and thus avoid any duplication.

This important role of Members is clarified below in the form of checklists. These Standards set an expectation for the Leader and other Executive Members as well as Ward Members to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities regarding civil resilience. Also, they set out that support arrangements should be put in place to enable County Councillors to fulfil their roles effectively.

This Handbook has been prepared to improve awareness, and understanding, and assist our Elected Members to play a full and constructive role in emergency response and recovery situations. It provides a range of information relevant to County Councillors' roles in civil resilience:

¹ Civil Contingencies Act 2004

- overview of Local Authority responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004)
- guidance for the Leader and other Members of the Executive
- guidance for Ward Councillors

The handbook also supports Members in understanding their community support role in the event of a major emergency.

2. Local Authority Responsibilities for Civil Resilience

All Councils are “Category 1” responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. They have clearly defined responsibilities in civil emergencies and will typically lead the recovery from any emergency in their area. Category 1 responders must:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- put in place emergency plans
- put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements
- put communications arrangements in place 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 and cooperate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency

(This also includes Category 2 responders – see below)

- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity (Local Authority only)

As a Category 1 responder, the Isle of Anglesey County Council must perform its duties under the Act where:

- the emergency would be likely to seriously obstruct its ability to perform its functions
- it would consider it necessary to act to prevent, reduce, control, or mitigate the emergency’s effects, or otherwise take action; and it would be unable to act without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.

All responders work to a generic national framework for managing emergency response and recovery that applies regardless of the size, nature or cause of an emergency. The framework provides local flexibility for responders to make their own decisions about what emergency planning arrangements are appropriate to deliver their duties under the Act, based on local circumstances, priorities and risks. The North Wales Local Resilience Forum (NWLRF) is the key organisation for developing area-wide arrangements for responding to

emergencies and is responsible for producing community risk registers setting out specific local risks for their areas and local multi-agency emergency response plans.

Category 1 Responders include:

- Emergency Services: Police, Fire & Rescue/Ambulance Services, Maritime & Coastguard Agency.
- Local Authorities: All Principal Local Authorities and Port Health Authorities.
- Health Bodies: Local Health Boards and Public Health Wales
- Government Agencies: Natural Resources Wales.

Category 2 responders; Examples include:

Health & Safety Executive, Transportation & Utility companies are cooperating bodies that are less active in an emergency planning role but heavily involved in an incident affecting their sector.

How are Emergencies and Major Incidents defined?

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 defines an emergency as:

- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare
- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment; or
- War, or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom

A Major Incident is defined as:

“An event or situation, with a range of serious consequences, which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agencies”
(Cabinet Office 2016).

What kind of emergencies have North Wales Local Authorities responded to, and how might they contribute?

The main incidents that have occurred in North Wales in recent times that have required special coordination efforts between local Category 1 and 2 responders have included severe weather-related events such as flooding, heavy snow and wind-based storms. There have also been suspect package/ordnance-related incidents, management response issues with a former chemical manufacturing site, several Recycling Centre incidents and several major fires.

The Council will assist Category 1 and 2 emergency responders and ensure that the following resources are made available (not a definitive list):

- Road closures and diversions
- Provision of plant and equipment
- Clearance of debris & restoration of highways
- Emergency evacuation and Rest Centres
- Emergency Accommodation
- Building Safety Inspections on local authority properties
- Environmental health assessment, and related services
- Public Protection advice and guidance
- Public Helplines, and distribution of information to the public
- Media and Community liaison officers
- Appeal fund arrangements

North Wales has had a strong role in undertaking planned interventions tackling modern slavery and issues arising from unsafe houses of multiple occupations.

Regional North Wales Emergency Planning Arrangements and Structures

The Council is part of a regional North Wales Emergency Planning arrangement alongside the other 5 Councils. This regional service is hosted by Flintshire County Council. The regional service provides inputs into the following areas of emergency planning in support of the Local Authority's roles and core duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004:

- **Preparedness** (planning) – via internal service engagement and assisting with the preparation, review and exercising of the Council's Emergency Plans
- **Response** – attendance at internal operational, tactical and strategic meetings, horizon scanning, providing initial co-ordination of Local Authority mobilisation, contribution to multi-agency coordination of response, gathering – co-ordinate information in preparation for TCG/SCG meetings
- **Recovery** of significant and major emergencies – by supporting the Local Authority in the activation and development of our emergency recovery responsibilities under the National Recovery Guidance framework

Local Authority Emergency Management Arrangements

Local Authorities have established emergency management frameworks in place to plan for and respond to major emergencies.

The Council has an **Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT)**. The chair of the EMRT, or an appointed deputy, may be the first point of contact for the official notification of a major incident issued by the Emergency Services.

3. Role of Elected Members

This section of the Handbook aims to provide practical guidance to the County Council Leader, the Executive and Ward Members on how to discharge their civil resilience role. It covers the breadth of activity when preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

All operational civil resilience responsibilities lie with officers but Elected Members have a key political leadership role to play in preparing for, responding to and recovering from major emergencies or incidents. Also, members of the Executive have an important role in ensuring that business continuity plans are in place by the County Council. Members' contributions should complement the role of officers.

Keeping in Touch

In the event of an emergency, effective communication mechanisms will be essential aspects of the County Council's response arrangements. The communications strategy will include communication with key stakeholders including Elected Members. Communication channels with Elected Members will include:

- Daily information sharing via email to County Councillors and staff
- Regular briefings for Group Leaders
- Sharing of all published press releases

Base any information provided to constituents on confirmed messages from the County Council, North Wales Police, Public Health Wales, Welsh Government (and other relevant public agencies who are part of the North Wales Resilience Forum).

Responsible use of Social Media

Used smartly, social media can be a vital channel for communicating information to residents. Members should work with the Council's communications team and refer residents to messages posted by the Local Authority.

4. Guidance for the Leader and other Members of the Executive – A Checklist

During any emergency or major incident, Portfolio Members should:

- Always stay safe – any roles and responsibilities must be discharged concerning Welsh Government's latest public health advice and guidance
- Make contact with the Chief Executive to receive an initial briefing and agreement on urgent action to be taken
- Agree the Executive Member to take the following lead roles:
 - i. the "public face" of the County Council, as part of the County Council's civic leadership role

- ii. provide political support to initial recovery work
 - iii. business as usual functions
 - iv. Ward councillor engagement
- Liaise/work with the Council's communications team to ensure a coordinated approach with the press and media
 - Put arrangements in place for briefing Members during the response phase
 - Provide encouragement and support to County Council staff and partners involved in the emergency response
 - Keep a log of actions/events for use in debriefs, scrutiny committees and any formal enquiry
 - If required, lead on making representations for financial assistance to Welsh Government
 - Represent the Local Authority during formal visits ensuring that any visits are sensitive to the mood and needs of the local area
 - Consider the propriety of initiating a dialogue with the following to ensure a coordinated political response:
 - i. Leaders of other North Wales local authorities
 - ii. Member of Parliament and Assembly Member.

5. Guidance on the role of Ward Councillors – A Checklist

Ward Councillors' role is twofold during emergencies and other major incidents – as community leaders and also as community representatives, as follows:

Community Leadership

Demonstrate community leadership by taking a responsible approach to information shared and messages given and by following guidance received from the County Council.

- Always stay safe – any roles and responsibilities must be discharged concerning Welsh Government's latest public health advice and guidance
- Be a trusted, visible presence in local communities
- Advise Local Authority lead officers when providing direct support at the community level so that officers are aware of Councillor involvement and can arrange any briefings that may be required etc
- Communicate key messages and information from the Council to the residents
- Signpost residents and businesses to support services both in the Council and also to partner organisations
- Provide support/encouragement to Council staff and partner agencies involved in the response
- Provide local intelligence and information/ concerns to the Council

Community Representatives

- Presence in local communities to identify the needs of individual residents and also the wider community, referring to the Council when required
- Confirm the reliability of local information before forwarding it to the Council and partner agencies
- Avoid attempting to:
 - i. get involved in operational matters that may arise in responding to any emergency
 - ii. evaluate the effectiveness of the emergency response
- Keep a log of actions/events for use in debriefs, scrutiny committees and any formal enquiry.

6. Recovery

The focus of this part of the handbook is the specific role of Elected Members in the Council's work of leading and supporting communities of the Island in moving through the process of ending an incident and towards recovery and an evolving new Normal. The County Council plays the leading role in coordinating the Recovery.

The Councillor leadership role

Much of the previous guidance is also very relevant to the Recovery process. Over the following months, County Councillors will still be acting as community leaders. It is envisaged that there is a more involved role for Elected Members as the emergency response moves towards the Recovery stage. Emergency response is usually short, intensive efforts led by the blue light services with Local Authorities responsible for leading the Recovery stage. This stage requires democratic and community input to ensure recovery at a local level

As the Local Authority and local communities on the Island move towards the recovery stage, political leaders will need to maintain both a visible and hands-on leadership role to oversee a range of important activities. In supporting recovery in local communities, the Council needs to demonstrate good cross-party leadership.

7. Recovery Stage Checklist for the Leader and other Members of the Executive

Portfolio Members should:

- Seek assurance that the Council working with its partners continues to fulfil its role and deploy resources effectively and efficiently across all of the response and recovery activities required whilst aiming to resume business as usual as soon as is possible

- Ensure that the necessary steps are being taken to support recovery which includes developing a strategic approach and support for individuals made vulnerable or those who are more vulnerable as a result of the incident
Oversee the delivery of the Council's Recovery Plan
- Ensure all Elected Members are kept fully briefed and up to speed about developments and actions taken so that they can contribute to shaping recovery
- Ensure effective protocols are in place for political involvement and communication at all levels (national, regional, and local including Town and Community Councils)
- Strive for open, transparent and inclusive in decision making which maximises ownership of the direction of travel and uses Scrutiny as a tool to maximise involvement and participation
- Enable engagement of communities through regular communication with residents and partners including the 3rd sector

8. Recovery Stage Checklist for Ward Councillors

All County Councillors have a significant role to play in shaping recovery, enabling local communities to build on the opportunity to strengthen community resilience and improve local areas. This role includes:

- Shaping and agreeing on recovery strategies
- Leading and representing communities and the Council
- Supporting individual residents and providing a link between residents and public services
- Embed community resilience-building on the community support groups
- Support community cohesion
- Holding to account through Scrutiny
- Strengthening the County Council's democratic processes by embedding any changes and innovations.
- Maintaining health and well-being to ensure a balance with the work involved in serving local communities.

Post Incident Issues

Other issues that may need to be addressed as part of the Recovery process, requiring careful management, can include:

- Civil litigation
- Criminal proceedings
- Public Inquiries
- Loss of income for the Council
- Insurance claims
- Tourism
- Government funding claims
- Business and infrastructure regeneration

- Long-term effects on the Community
- Long-term impacts on the workforce e.g. recruitment & retention

What Number Can You Call in a major emergency?

If you need to report an issue related to the declared emergency, please remember 3 key points you can do to help –

- 1. Call the right number**
- 2. Provide clear information**
- 3. Be patient.**

Threat to Life; - 999

Power Cut; - 105

Natural Resources Wales; - Flooding / Environmental Incidents- 0300 065 3000, 24hrs

Isle of Anglesey County Council;-

The main number is **01248 750057**.

Emergency Council phone numbers to use out of hours;-

1. For emergencies regarding social services, call 01248 353551
2. For emergencies relating to housing, Street scene services and property issues, call 08081 685652

Please don't call individual Council officers to report issues. Using the correct numbers above will help free up responding supervisors - they need to coordinate efforts on the ground, deploying our resources where they're needed.

The following websites can also provide more information about local and national emergency management matters:

E-learning courses:

Welsh-[Isle of Anglesey Council: Darganfod Cyrsiau \(learningpool.com\)](https://www.learningpool.com/courses/welsh-isle-of-anglesey-council-darganfod-cyrsiau)

English- [Isle of Anglesey Council: Find Learning \(learningpool.com\)](https://www.learningpool.com/courses/english-isle-of-anglesey-council-find-learning)

Natural Resources Wales- Flood Warning Information;
<https://naturalresources.wales/flooding/?lang=en>

Natural Resources Wales - Environmental Incident;
<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us/report-an-environmental-incident/>

National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-register-2020>

Emergencies: responsibilities of responder agencies and others:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preparation-and-planning-for-emergencies-responsibilities-of-responder-agencies-and-others>

Wales Resilience Forums: <https://gov.wales/wales-resilience/what-we-do>

A councillor's guide to civil emergencies: <https://local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-civil-emergencies>

NWC-REPS - About Us - <https://www.nwc-reps.org.uk/en/About-Us.aspx>

For more information on the wide range of hazards identified and planned for by the North Wales Local Resilience Forum partners, please download the North Wales Community Risk Register

<https://www.anglesey.gov.wales/documents/Docs-en/Community-safety-and-emergencies/Community-Risk-Register.pdf>

For more information on the Council's Emergency Planning and Corporate Resilience work plan, please contact the North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS) at 01352 702124 or via email: enquiries@nwc-reps.org.uk.

NWC-REPS can provide emergency management training for elected Members on an annual basis, so please ensure you register your interest in attending a future session with NWC-REPS) on 01352 702124 or via email: enquiries@nwc-reps.org.uk

Contacts

For more information regarding emergency planning, please use the below contacts. Note they are in hours contacts only.

Susan Owen Jones - Executive Manager (LT): SusanJones4@ynysmon.llyw.cymru

Jon Zalot – Emergency Planning Officer: jon.zalot@nwc-reps.org.uk