

# Elected Members Guidance

## Emergency Planning & Response



Guidance Document developed by:



Under the umbrella of the Dyfed Powys Local Resilience Forum



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## INTRODUCTION

Elected Members have an important role to play before, during and after an emergency. Many people in the community rely on the skills, resources and knowledge of their elected members. Elected members awareness of civil protection, emergency preparedness and response arrangements will contribute to the successful outcomes of an emergency and ultimately the effective return to normality for their communities.

It is therefore important that you are aware of the responsibilities of the council under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) and that you have a good understanding of your role in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

### Aim

The aim of this guidance is to provide you with an understanding of civil contingency arrangements in your authority area and detail how you can assist.

The guide will provide Elected Members with a clear overview of:

- How emergencies are managed in your county and in the Dyfed Powys area
- The responsibilities of local authorities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The role Elected Members can play before, during and after an emergency

## CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT

Following the flooding, fuel crisis, foot and mouth outbreak in 2000 and the subsequent terrorist attacks in New York, the government undertook a review of emergency planning in England and Wales.

The outcome was the **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**, which provides a consistent and resilient approach to emergency planning, response and recovery in the UK.

The Act placed new duties and responsibilities on organisations and is divided in two parts:

- **Part 1** relates to local arrangements and places statutory duties on those organisations that have responsibilities to respond to major emergencies affecting communities
- **Part 2** covers emergency powers that can be used by central government



## Definition of an “Emergency”

The Act 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 UK.

## Category 1 & 2 responders

The Act divides responders to an emergency into two categories, depending on the extent of their involvement in civil protection work and places a set of duties on each.

### Category 1 Responders

These are the organisations at the core of an emergency response.

- Local authorities
- Police (including British Transport Police)
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Welsh Ambulance Service Trust
- Health Boards, Public Health Wales
- Natural Resources Wales
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

These ‘Category 1’ responders are subject to six duties:

- Carry out a risk assessment and contribute to the development of a community risk register.
- Plan for emergencies, including training and exercising.
- Ensure robust business continuity arrangements are in place to maintain service delivery.
- Ensure arrangements are in place to warn & inform the public both before and during emergencies.
- Co-operate with partner agencies to enhance coordination and efficiency.
- Share information with partner agencies.

In addition to these, local authorities have an additional statutory duty:

- To promote business continuity to local businesses and the voluntary sector.



## Category 2 responders

These are organisations which, although not 'primary' responders, could potentially have a significant role and be heavily involved in incidents that affect their sector. They are:

- Utilities (water companies, gas and electricity distributors and telecommunications companies)
- Transport (airport operators, railway operators, Network Rail, Highways Agency)
- Harbour authorities
- Health & Safety Executive

Category 2 responders have statutory duties to co-operate and share information with Category 1 responders in the planning and response to major emergencies.

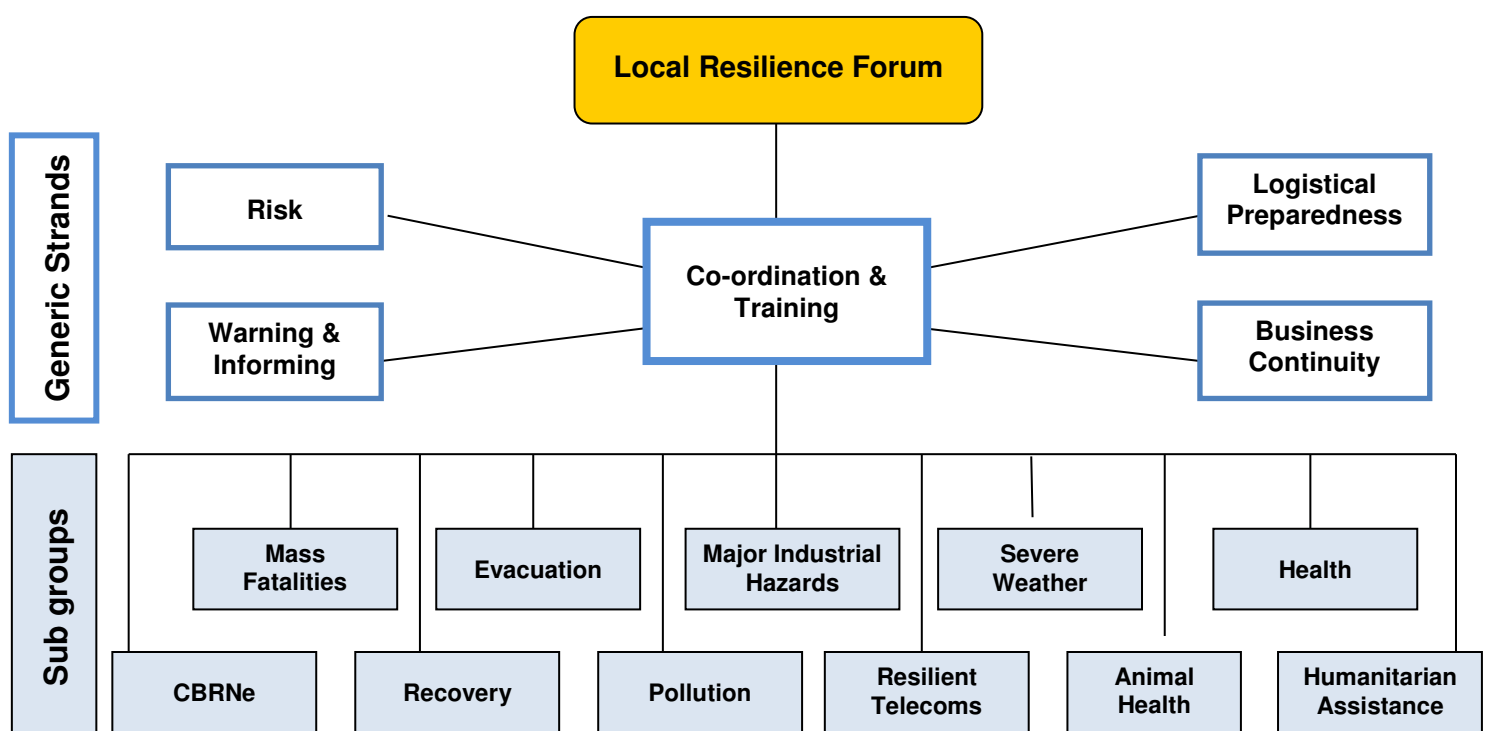
## DUTIES UNDER THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT

### The Dyfed Powys Local Resilience Forum (DPLRF)

Local Authorities, emergency services and other responders are required by law to form Local Resilience Forums (based on police force areas) to jointly plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) are multi agency partnerships made up of representatives from category 1 responders. The LRFs are supported by the category 2 responders and also work with the military and voluntary sectors.

LRFs aim to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. They work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities.

The Dyfed Powys Local Resilience Forum covers the counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys. The DPLRF is structured as follows:





The Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys Police chairs the lead group. Reporting to the DPLRF is a variety of groups and sub groups established to undertake specific activities. Officers from the Local Authorities are represented on each of the groups.

Local Resilience Forums are not a statutory body.

## Risk Assessment – Community Risk Register

Category 1 and 2 responders have produced a community risk register covering the area of Dyfed Powys. The register is a list of risks that may cause an emergency in the Dyfed Powys area. Inclusion of a risk in a community risk register doesn't mean it will happen. It means it is recognised as a possibility and organisations have made arrangements to plan for response to the incident and reduce its impact.

The Dyfed Powys risk assessments are reviewed annually, or as required if sooner, and takes account of both national guidance combined with local knowledge and expertise across our area. This information is then given to the LRF professional partners to assess, discuss and act upon to improve our capability to respond to any form of disruptive challenge.

The key risks include:

- Pandemic Flu
- Flooding
- Severe Weather
- Loss of infrastructure
- Pollution
- Animal disease
- Industrial incidents
- Transport incidents



A public version of the community risk register is available on the <http://walesresilience.gov.uk/> website or on request from the local authority.

## Emergency Planning

Emergency planning is a comprehensive, multi-agency process to identify and assess relevant risks, to plan and prepare, to train and exercise, to mitigate the effects and respond effectively to incidents, when they happen.

Emergency planning is undertaken at county, regional and national levels. Emergency response plans are produced at local resilience forum level and by each responder agencies to describe arrangements to respond to emergencies and/or specific risks as outlined in the community risk register. Officers are trained in the content of the plans and a series of exercises (multi agency and individual agency) are regularly organised to test the response.

Following training, exercises and incidents, plans are reviewed based on debrief and lessons learnt to ensure the response to future emergencies is more effective.



## Business continuity

Business continuity is about planning to mitigate the effects of a potential disruption to vital public services, so that they can continue to be delivered during an emergency. Category 1 responders have a legal duty to have business continuity arrangements in place for their organisation, sharing best practice.

Whatever the incident, the local authority should strive as far as reasonable for “business as usual” in service delivery which is detailed in their Business Continuity Plan (BCP). This also involves ensuring that critical suppliers can still deliver in an emergency.

## Warning & Informing

Arrangements are in place on a multi agency basis and within each organisation to warn, inform and advise the public before and during an emergency. Documents and links have been placed on local authority’s websites giving information to the public about emergency planning and preparedness. During an incident, the local authority will work with relevant multi agency partners to ensure a common message is disseminated to the public and media on the response and its impact. Elected Members will have a role to play acting as a liaison between their communities and the council.

## Community Resilience

In addition to formal statutory duties, there is an increasing recognition that responders (local authorities especially) need to draw on the resources and abilities of their communities as part of emergency preparedness and response.

This is known as community resilience and can be defined as “communities and individuals harnessing resources and expertise to help themselves prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, in a way that complements the work of the emergency responders”. Elected Members can play a key role in encouraging communities to become more resilient notably through the production of community emergency plans. By becoming more resilient, individuals and communities can supplement the work of local responders and reduce the impact of the emergency both in the short and long term. For more information and guidance on the development of community emergency plans, contact Civil Contingencies or look at the Council’s website.



## KEY ROLE OF MAIN RESPONDERS



Dyfed Powys Police co-ordinates the multi-agency response to a major incident. The Police will lead in traffic management and evacuations in liaison with the local authority.

Mid & West Wales Fire Rescue Service role is fire fighting and prevention, along with rescue operations in order to save life and property and to render humanitarian services in



accordance with their established procedures.

The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust provides appropriate medical intervention, transport casualties, and assist medical staff where appropriate and liaise with hospitals and specialist NHS advice centres. They act as the 'gatekeeper' to other NHS services in the initial stages of a major incident.



The Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) is responsible for promoting and enforcing high standards of marine safety; minimising loss of life amongst seafarers and coastal users; responding to maritime emergencies; minimising the risk of pollution from ships, and where pollution occurs, minimising the impact on UK interests.

Natural Resources Wales has primary responsibility for the environmental protection of land, water and air in Wales and the conservation of the environment. For incidents involving actual or potential environmental damage, their role is to provide co-ordination and management of the environmental response to the incident.



Health boards ensure receiving hospitals have capacity to provide emergency treatment and specialist treatment is available for casualties. The board will also act as a conduit for information to primary care – doctors surgeries etc.

## ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

PCC is a highly significant Category 1 Responder and has a key role to play in planning for, responding to and recovering from an emergency or major incident. PCC's response to an emergency is outlined in its Major Incident Plan (**PCC Intranet Page: 4390**).

The principles that define an emergency in terms of the Act can be summarised as:

- where more than one of the council departments is involved in the response;
- where significant resources are required to respond effectively;
- where specific disruption to public service is incurred;
- where a response over and above day-to-day working practices is required.

The principal concerns of the local authority in the early stages of an emergency include support for the emergency services, support and care for the local and wider community and co-ordination of the response by organisations other than the emergency responders, e.g. the voluntary sector. As time goes on, and the emphasis switches to recovery and the return to normality, the local authority will take the lead role in coordinating the multi-agency management of impacts on local people, the economy, environment and infrastructure.



## The key functions of the Council during an incident are:

- Provide support to the emergency services
- Identifying vulnerable population and providing support
- Transport of evacuees and temporary shelter via establishment of Rest Centres
- Care & counselling & welfare support
- Humanitarian Assistance Centres for long term incidents
- Warning & Informing including setting up of a helpline
- Provision of plant, materials, personnel, expertise
- Road closures & signage
- Buildings assessment, maintenance & demolition
- Provision of temporary mortuary facilities
- Provision of advice: Environmental, Health & Safety, food safety, dangerous buildings



## Identifying vulnerable people

As part of the multi agency response to the incident, the local authority will identify known vulnerable people in the affected area. They will also rely on the community to assist in identifying vulnerable people, both existing and those made vulnerable by the incident. A multi agency approach will be adopted to support vulnerable people, existing and new, following an incident.

## Role of the Council's Emergency Planning Department

Powys County Council has an Emergency Planning Department, which is responsible for the coordination of the Council's emergency response.

The Emergency Planning Department co-ordinates the planning and preparation, training and exercises for emergencies. It will manage any minor emergencies, calling out relevant Council service areas, personnel, resources as appropriate. The Emergency Planning Department works in close collaboration with the emergency services, health, other government agencies, neighbouring authorities, volunteer groups and others, to ensure the response to a major emergency is co-ordinated between all the agencies involved.

The Emergency Planning Department provides a 24-hour Duty Emergency Planning Officer (Duty EPO) who is the first point of contact for the emergency services whenever they require support.

## Roles of specific local authority's service areas

Each service area has its own sphere of activity expertise, that may or may not be called into operation should an emergency occur. These are outlined in more detail in the PCC Major Incident Plan (**PCC Intranet Page: 4390**).

## DECLARATION, COMMAND, CONTROL & COORDINATION

Any member of the Local Authority, Police, Fire Service, Ambulance or MCA has the authority to declare a major incident, either as a result of an assessment at the scene, or as a result of a report from a reliable authority.

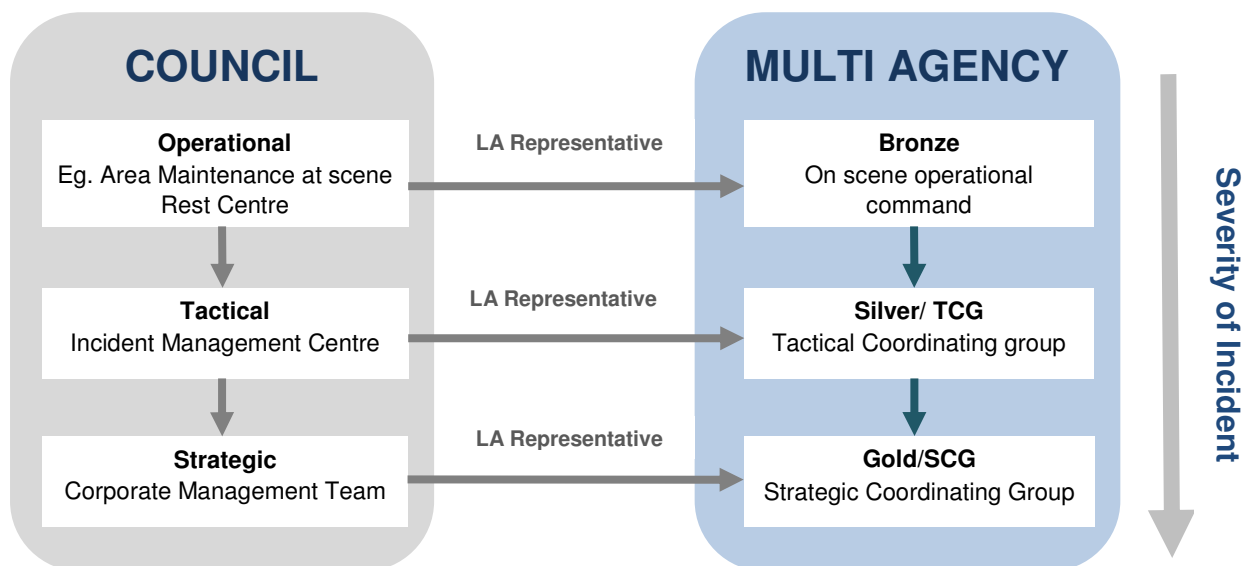
The Joint Major Incident Procedures Manual details the multi-agency arrangements to respond to major incident emergencies in the Dyfed Powys area.



If declared within office hours then the first point of contact for the emergency services will be the Emergency Planning Department. Out of hours, the Duty Emergency Planning Officer (Duty EPO) is likely to be the first point of contact and will notify appropriate officers to activate emergency procedures.

Incidents are managed and coordinated on a multi agency basis via the establishment of a Strategic, a Tactical and Operational coordinating groups often referred to as Gold, Silver & Bronze. The structure enables effective decision making. Each agency involved in the response is expected to provide an officer with the appropriate decision making powers to attend meetings for each of these groups.





### **Gold - Strategic Coordinating Group – (SCG)**

This Strategic level group typically comes together if the major emergency is likely to be protracted or require the deployment of extensive resources and expenditure. The group is usually chaired by the Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys and will be held at the Strategic Coordinating Centre in Carmarthen. Chief Officer level representatives from each agency/organisation are required to attend (in person or virtual) to oversee the overall response and authorise expenditure. For PCC this would be the Chief Executive or nominated deputy.

The group sets strategic priorities and deals with strategic requirements of the incident.

### **Silver - Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG)**

This Tactical level group is made up of senior level representatives from each organisation involved in the response. It manages and co-ordinates the overall response of all the organisations to the incident and makes decisions on how best to safeguard the public and mitigate the effects of the emergency.

The group deals with tactical considerations of incident and is normally located at nearest designated police station.

### **Bronze – Operational Coordinating Group**

This is the Operational command at the scene of the emergency and deals with the immediate requirements of the incident. This group is made up of the most senior representatives from each organisation on site; they command and deploy resources at and around the scene of the emergency.

### **Local Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC)**

A STAC (or Local STAC) may form where there is a requirement for coordinated scientific or technical advice at multi-agency TCG or SCG level. Membership may vary, depending on the nature of the incident, but is likely to include advisors from public health and environmental bodies. For incidents with implications for public health, a senior health professional will chair a STAC and will lead on the formulation of public health advice.

The STAC will agree with the SCG / TCG the advice to be given to the public regarding health aspects and actions to protect the public, including the consequences of evacuation or containment policies.

### Warning & Informing Group

Due to the speed of news and social media, it is essential that the media response is coordinated as swiftly as possible. An effective response will help to prevent misinformation and speculation, thereby minimising unnecessary alarm to communities.

A Media Group will be set up physically or virtually comprising press officers from the different agencies involved in the response.



### Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG)

It may be appropriate to set up a RCG, chaired by the local authority at an early stage. The group will be responsible for developing and implementing the strategy for recovery and site clearance. This may run alongside the SCG / TCG during the response phase. Once the emergency is over, the lead for coordination of the incident will be handed to the local authority for the recovery phase.

Responsibilities of the Recovery Coordinating Group:

- Assess impact of incident on the community and the environment
- Agree remedial measures to prevent and mitigate further damage to human health and the environment
- Assess restoration and clean up priorities and measures
- Manage resources
- Provide long term humanitarian assistance measures to persons and families affected by the incident



## EMERGENCY FUNDING

The local authority has a responsibility to deal with emergencies. Depending on the scale and nature of the emergency, the government may make grants available in respect of some expenses.



## ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELECTED MEMBER

### Role of Elected Members before an emergency

In the planning and preparation period, prior to an emergency occurring, Elected Members have a number of vital roles. These include ensuring that an effective Emergency Planning service is in place, monitoring the activities to ensure that the right plans are prepared, that all staff are being trained; that arrangements are being tested rigorously through effective simulation exercises and the local authority is meeting its statutory duties.



Also, Elected Members provide a vital interface with the communities they serve and are well placed to pass information to and from local people affected by the risks and hazards for which plans are prepared. Essentially, the key role of Elected Members before an emergency embraces:

- being aware of the Council's responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other legislation
- maintaining an awareness of the hazards and risks in their own local area (see the Community Risk Register section above)
- providing advice to members of the public and directing them to the expertise provided by the local authority's Emergency Planning Dept
- passing on local knowledge to the local authority regarding risks and hazards in the community
- gaining an understanding of the emergency planning arrangements in their county that enables a successful multi-agency response
- contributing to raising the awareness of Emergency Planning amongst the community
- considering reports provided on Emergency Planning topics

### Role of Elected Members during an Emergency

Emergencies, by their nature, tend to be chaotic. In the early stages, there may be a degree of confusion and apparent disarray. This should pass quickly, not least because of the calm assurance of civic leaders such as County Councillors. In times of emergency the community looks to their elected representatives for assurance and leadership. In this role, the Elected Member is well placed to pass important safety information and other advice from emergency managers directly into affected communities.

For the areas affected by an emergency, Members can contribute to the response in a number of important ways. The Leader or Deputy Leader will be briefed by the Chief Executive or nominated deputy in conjunction with the media cell. Members will then be briefed by the Leader or Deputy Leader. This will ensure that everyone is working with accurate up-to-date information on the response and on the concerns of affected communities.



Members for the areas affected by an emergency can contribute to their Council's response in the following ways:

- Provide support and encouragement for the efforts of officers of all services
- Attend identified locations as a familiar "face" of the Council
- Participate as a member of any emergency committee which may be established
- Focus on lifting morale both amongst staff and the affected community
- Acquire information and relay the perspectives and priorities of local people
- Keep a record of significant actions for use in subsequent debriefings and any official inquiries related to the emergency
- Maintain close links with local communities and ensure their views are fed back to emergency planners
- Undertake roles in community response, e.g. by being a trustee for a disaster fund
- Greet VIPs such as Members of the Royal Family or government ministers
- Receive delegations of representatives from other areas
- Meet representatives of the victims of the emergency
- Represent the local community at memorial services and other events

**Members must not issue press statements or undertake interviews without being cleared by the Leader or Media / Press Officer to do so, in order to ensure consistent and clear messages. See section on Media.**

### Arrangements for the safety of Elected Members

The scene of an emergency can of course be a dangerous place. For safety, Elected Members must observe the following instructions:

- do not approach the scene of an emergency without the advice and support of the emergency services or unless under the supervision of a local authority Emergency Planning Officer
- respect cordons established by the emergency services
- maintain continuous surveillance for possible dangers, seeking advice as necessary from the emergency services personnel, the Emergency Control Centre, or the local authority's Emergency Planning Department
- ensure all incident related movements or site visits are communicated to the appropriate officer
- consider seeking advice on debriefing and emotional support services

## Role of Elected Members after an Emergency

The coordination of the incident will be handed to the local authority once the incident moves from emergency to recovery phase. Elected Members can make a significant difference to the lives of their community during the long-term recovery after an emergency and assist the local authority to return the community to normality quickly.

They can do this by:

- being a source of strength, inspiration and leadership for the local community in the return to normality
- participating in the administration of funds from any disaster appeal
- participating in community self-help groups set up to support those affected by the emergency
- meeting MPs, MEPs and AMs to lobby for financial aid
- approving regeneration issues and helping in the repair and reconstruction of the affected community
- participating in any public meetings about the emergency
- attending any memorial/remembrance service as appropriate
- ensuring that the lessons learnt from the response to the emergency are incorporated into emergency plans
- assisting in civil litigations and criminal proceedings

## Media

Media relations in an emergency incident are crucial and can often be an important factor in determining how well (or otherwise) the local authority and all responder agencies are dealing with the situation.

Elected Members may be approached to give media statements and interviews. They should be aware that the media may be looking for back-door access to information that is not being made available to them. It is essential that councillors do not make specific comments about the incident itself or how it is being handled.

Therefore, all enquiries from the media asking for information about an incident should be dealt with by the local authority's media / press officer who will co-ordinate suitable responses from the Chief Executive/Leader of the Council and Local Member. The local authority's media / press officer will also ensure that a consistent and accurate message is given in accordance with agreed multi agency procedures and messages.

It may, however, be of considerable benefit for councillors to give messages of reassurance, sympathy and support directly to the public following guidance from the local authority's media / press officer and highlight their own role.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### Responders:

Local Authorities:	<a href="http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk">www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk">www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk">www.ceredigion.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.powys.gov.uk">www.powys.gov.uk</a>
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Police:	<a href="http://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk">http://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk</a>
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Fire Service:	<a href="http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk">http://www.mawwfire.gov.uk</a>
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Ambulance:	<a href="http://www.was-tr.wales.nhs.uk">http://www.was-tr.wales.nhs.uk</a>
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Coastguards:	<a href="http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home">http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home</a>
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Health :	<a href="http://www.hywelddahb.wales.nhs.uk">http://www.hywelddahb.wales.nhs.uk</a>
	<a href="http://www.powysthb.wales.nhs.uk">http://www.powysthb.wales.nhs.uk</a>
	<a href="http://www.publichealthwales.wales.nhs.uk">http://www.publichealthwales.wales.nhs.uk</a>

### National Website:

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) – website to find government services and information. Look at emergency preparedness and emergency response and recovery

[www.walesresilience.gov.uk](http://www.walesresilience.gov.uk) - Wales Resilience is owned and operated jointly by the Wales Resilience Forum and the Local Resilience Forums of North Wales, South Wales, Dyfed-Powys and Gwent.

[www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk) – The Welsh Government Association represents the views of local authorities in Wales

For further information, contact:  
**PCC Emergency Planning Department**  
Contact Details at PCC Intranet Page 3977