

# A Guide to Evacuation

in Northern Ireland



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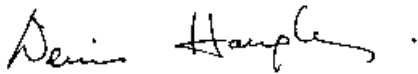
# A GUIDE TO EVACUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

## Foreword

This guidance document is the outcome of the work of the Evacuation Working Group, and its sub-groups, which examined in depth the various aspects of evacuation to ensure that the needs of organisations and evacuees were explored, problems examined and good practice identified. The Committee of the Centre considered the draft guidance and provided helpful comments.

The objective of the guidance is to encourage and facilitate the planning of an effective, co-ordinated public service response to an evacuation situation. It outlines the services required by evacuees, gives guidance on good practice in planning and providing a response, and indicates what communication and co-ordination arrangements need to be planned.

We are grateful to the many people from across the public services who contributed their own experience and professional expertise to this document.



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Evacuation is a process by which people are moved from a place where there is immediate or anticipated danger to a place of safety, offered appropriate temporary welfare facilities and enabled to return to their normal activities, or to make suitable alternative arrangements, when the threat to safety has gone. The emergency services and other public service organisations have key roles to play in ensuring that an evacuation is effective, safe, and comfortable for the people involved, and that they are given appropriate support to cope with any short-or long-term problems which may arise.
- 1.2. This guidance document is intended as an aid to planning, to:
  - Indicate what arrangements need to be made.
  - Give some insight into the needs of evacuees.
  - Set out good practice in meeting needs.
  - Guide organisations in the creation of their own plans and in integrating them with those of other responders.
- 1.3. This guidance refers specifically to situations where people need to be evacuated from a dangerous or potentially dangerous location and moved to a place of safety where their welfare needs can be met. Evacuees will not usually have been directly involved in an incident or emergency situation. The needs of survivors of incidents, whether injured or not, are somewhat different from those of people evacuated for their own safety and are not covered in detail in this guide.
- 1.4. Northern Ireland organisations are particularly familiar with evacuation in response to actual or threatened explosive devices. However, evacuation can be required in a range of circumstances:
  - Damage to property caused by severe weather, such as storms.
  - Serious flooding or the threat of flooding.
  - Threat of environmental contamination which could have detrimental affects on health, for example following an accident or fire involving chemicals.
  - Danger from spreading fire, either in domestic or commercial buildings or forest fires.
  - Threat of explosion, either from explosives, from gas pipelines or installations, or from chemicals involved in an accident or fire.
  - Loss of essential services such as power or safe water supplies.
- 1.5. In many emergency situations evacuation would not be required. Buildings give good shelter from threats such as smoke or chemical clouds and evacuating people would expose them to unnecessary risk. Also, the evacuation process carries its own potential problems, especially if large numbers of people try to leave the area all at once, or evacuees are already ill or infirm and would be adversely affected by being moved.

1.6. There are many variables involved in evacuations:

**Size** – An evacuation can involve anything from one person up to hundreds, and in extreme cases, thousands. Whilst the level and type of response will vary according to the number of people and size of area evacuated, the principles of planning and response are applicable across the full range of evacuations.

**Location** – It is almost impossible to predict where an emergency will occur which would require evacuation. Evacuations are more common in urban areas, as they tend to contain more risks, but rural areas can be involved too. Some areas are exposed to specific risks, eg from industrial activity or flooding, which should be taken account of in emergency plans. In urban areas the density of occupation will mean that evacuation of a given area is likely to involve many more people than an equivalent area of the countryside would.

**Property type** – Evacuation can be required of any type of property, including commercial and industrial premises, entertainment venues, parks and open spaces and domestic property. Evacuation planning tends to concentrate on domestic properties, but emergency and other services, plus commercial premises occupiers, owners of public spaces and event organisers should all have flexible plans which relate to risks identified.

**Timescale** – Evacuations can be required on a variety of timescales:

- Immediate evacuation in response to an imminent or existing threat. Little or no pre-planning possible.
- Evacuation required shortly – probably within hours - either in response to an imminent threat or as a precaution against escalation of an existing situation. Some basic planning possible, eg obtaining transport and arranging for Rest Centres to be opened.
- Evacuation is required but the timing is negotiable within a period of days or weeks. Detailed planning possible.
- Evacuation in response to long-term hazards. There may be a long period of research and consultation, during which time it should be possible to prepare contingency plans. Once the decision is taken to evacuate, the process ought to be able to go ahead with minimal delay.
- In some cases, the first indication which the public services have that an emergency exists is when people start to self-evacuate in response to a perceived or actual threat. In such circumstances no pre-planning would occur for providing services to self-evacuees, but consideration would have to be given as to whether the situation warranted a full, planned evacuation.

**Duration** – most evacuations last for a few hours and evacuees are then able to return to their properties. However, there is potential for some evacuations to last overnight or longer, for example where severe weather causes prolonged flooding of properties. In some cases, the immediate cause of the evacuation may pass quickly, but buildings and the infrastructure of an area may be so damaged that evacuees are unable to return until initial clearing-up and repair has taken place.

- 1.7. Because of this high degree of variability, it is especially important that emergency plans for responding to evacuation are flexible and can be applied to a large range of circumstances.
- 1.8. There are, however, some fixed-site hazards where a potential need for evacuation could be predicted, for example close to certain industrial premises, where flooding is liable to occur, or large-capacity entertainment or sport venues. Specific planning for responding to the need to evacuate such areas should be conducted alongside preparation of flexible evacuation plans.
- 1.9. Most evacuations are of relatively short duration – a few hours – and on a small scale. In these circumstances, people are often able to find their own temporary shelter, and would need little support from outside agencies. However, even these small events can represent serious emergencies for individuals, and planned, appropriate, support would significantly reduce the stress they experience. This document generally refers to planning for evacuations which are of sufficiently large size to require an integrated response from a range of organisations. However, the principles can, and should, be applied to evacuations of any scale or type.

## **Using this guide**

- 1.10. This guide breaks down the evacuation process into four functional areas. Four chapters, each dealing with one of these functional areas, make up the core of the document:
  - Chapter 3: The Event.
  - Chapter 4: Warning and Moving.
  - Chapter 5: Rest Centres.
  - Chapter 6: Resettlement, Return and Reconstruction.
- 1.11. Each of these core chapters is structured to allow readers to extract the information they need. They each consist of:
  - A summary of the key issues for that functional area of evacuation.
  - Detailed information on the needs of evacuees in that functional area, good practice in providing for those needs and co-ordination arrangements.
  - Checklists for planners and responders, as a quick aide-memoire.
- 1.12. Additional chapters deal with media relations and practical planning advice. A bibliography provides directions to other guidance and related emergency planning literature.
- 1.13. While this Guide has been written to be accessible to a wide audience, it does contain specialist emergency planning or Northern Ireland terminology and acronyms. As far as possible, terminology is explained and the full versions of acronyms are given the first time they appear in the text, but a glossary at Appendix A gives further information.

## CHAPTER 2

### STRUCTURE OF AN EVACUATION RESPONSE

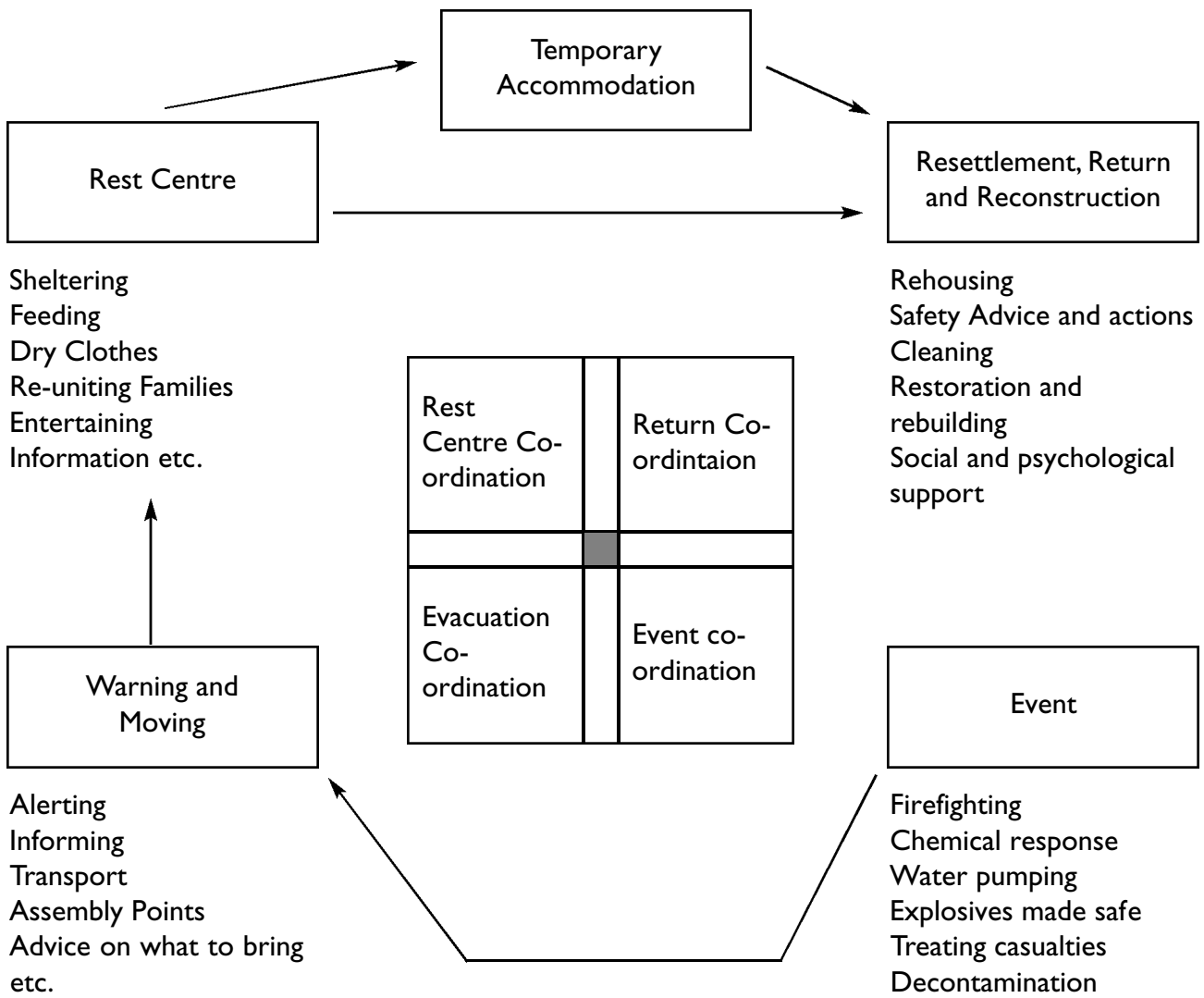
- 2.1. Many people engaged in planning for, and responding to, evacuations will be involved in only a small part of the overall picture. It is important that they know how their contribution fits into the overall response, and where their role interacts with the roles of others. This chapter sets out some of the basic principles of evacuation planning and response and suggests a structure within which people can place their own activities. It is not possible, however, to represent all aspects of evacuation in one model, so in using this chapter, planners should be aware that there may be other factors to be taken into account.
- 2.2. In particular, this guide deals with the evacuation process by separating out the individual functions involved. This allows organisations to see and understand where their services fit into the overall response, but can give the erroneous impression that everything will happen in an ordered sequence. The reality is that in many cases, functional areas will overlap and many responses will have to operate simultaneously. Plans should allow for, and responders be prepared for, critical pressures on time and a reasonable degree of chaos, especially in the early stages. Also, it is difficult to depict the web of inter-relationships which will exist between functions and between individual organisations. These relationships and the understandings and communication channels essential to their effective operation should be identified and agreed at the planning stage.

#### **The relationship between an emergency event and an evacuation.**

- 2.3. In considering the relationship between an emergency event and an associated evacuation, three observations can be made:
  - i. **An evacuation is not a stand-alone incident.** An evacuation only occurs because something else has happened, is happening or will happen. The nature and effects of the causative event will define the parameters of the evacuation (when, where, how big, how long etc).
  - ii. **An evacuation is not simply a sub-set of the response to the causative event.** Whilst the parameters of an evacuation are defined by the causative event, most of the evacuation activities proceed independently of the direct response to the event (firefighting, chemical response, floodwater control etc), and involve a different set of responders and different co-ordination arrangements.
  - iii. **An evacuation is not a single unified activity.** It is made up of many individual activities and groups of activities, undertaken by a wide range of organisations.

Evacuation is one facet of the response to an emergency situation. It will often occur simultaneously with other emergency response activities such as rescue, fire-fighting and decontamination.

- 2.4. **Diagram A** sets out a model for the structure of an evacuation. It is intended to represent the main division of functions and key relationships between them, but within each functional group there may be further breakdowns possible, with each sub-unit also requiring specific management and co-ordination arrangements.



■ = Overall incident co-ordination

**Diagram A: Structure of an Evacuation**

2.5. An evacuation situation divides into four functional areas:

- The event.
- Warning and moving.
- Rest Centres.
- Resettlement, return and reconstruction.

## **The event**

2.6. The sorts of events which would give rise to an evacuation are discussed in Chapter 1. Such events are normally responded to by the emergency services or a public service organisation with particular responsibility for the occurrence. The objective of the core response to the event would be to bring the emergency situation to a safe conclusion. If responders consider that evacuation is necessary, their primary concern would be that people are moved from the danger zone. However, the event does define the parameters of the evacuation – what the limits of the danger zone are, who should be evacuated, for how long, and what problems are likely to be encountered by people returning after the evacuation.

## **Warning and Moving**

2.7. The process of moving people out of a dangerous, or potentially dangerous, area to a place of safety is a complex and difficult one. It involves warning and informing people, identifying safe areas and providing some help for people to reach the safe areas. Often all this must be done at very short notice and in adverse conditions.

## **Rest Centres**

2.8. Rest Centres provide short-term shelter and other facilities for those evacuated. In them, evacuees would have access to appropriate physical necessities and welfare facilities and receive information on what was happening in the evacuation zone.

## **Resettlement, return and reconstruction**

2.9. Most evacuations are short-lived and have no long-term consequences, and evacuees can return to their properties within hours. However, in some situations the evacuation may last overnight or for a few days, in which case it would be helpful to find evacuees more comfortable temporary accommodation than the Rest Centre. For some people, the evacuation may be permanent. This may be because physical damage is too great to be repaired, they may be unable to return to independent living or they may be unwilling to live with an ongoing risk. Where an event has caused damage or loss of life, an area may need to be made safe before people return. On their return, evacuees may need to clean and repair their properties. Essential services such as electricity may be disrupted. The evacuation and the event which caused it may have increased stress levels in the community, resulting in health and social problems.

## Co-ordination and interaction

- 2.10. Co-ordination is required within and between each of the four functional areas of the overall incident (event, warning and moving, Rest Centre and resettlement/ returning). Participation in co-ordination arrangements is the responsibility of all responders, and they should plan accordingly.

### Co-ordination within functional areas

- 2.11. Each of the four functional areas will have its own co-ordination arrangements, led by an appropriate organisation. The lead organisation would be responsible for ensuring co-ordination of activities within the functional area, and would have a key role in participating in overall co-ordination arrangements. In general, co-ordination arrangements within phases, or functional areas, in a localised evacuation would be led by:

**Event** – the lead organisation for an emergency event would normally be the Police, although in certain circumstances the Fire Brigade or another public service organisation would take the lead in on-site management. Support would be provided by other emergency services, public service organisations and any commercial organisations involved in the event. In situations where an emergency response was not required, the lead may be taken by a government department or agency. In the absence of any immediately identifiable lead organisation, or after discussion with the Police, the local District Council Chief Executive may facilitate co-ordination.

**Warning or moving** – normally the Police would lead in this functional area. They would be supported by a range of organisations, including transport operators, press officers, the media, any organisations with manpower available to disseminate warnings, and organisations able to provide equipment or manpower needed to ensure a safe and speedy movement of people. In the case of a planned, non-emergency, evacuation the organisation with responsibility for planning the event would also co-ordinate warning and moving arrangements, although support from the emergency services and other organisations would be required to carry the evacuation through.

**Rest Centres** – Community HSS Trusts (including joint Acute and Community HSS Trusts, collectively referred to in this document as ‘Community Trusts’) would have overall lead responsibility for the delivery of welfare services to evacuees through the establishment of a Rest Centre and other associated arrangements. They would be supported by, among others, the emergency services, especially the Police, District Councils, other owners of Rest Centre premises (schools, churches etc), voluntary organisations and providers of practical support, such as caterers.

**Resettlement, return and reconstruction** – the Chief Executive of the District Council involved (or the Lead Chief Executive if more than one council area is affected), would normally co-ordinate multi-agency activities in the return and recovery phase, where an emergency had a detrimental effect on the community or environment. This would be in consultation with other relevant agencies and with the Police, who may have initial lead responsibility for co-ordinating the return of evacuees before agreeing with the Chief Executive when to hand over lead responsibility. The lead organisation would be supported by, among others, transport operators, press officers, the media, health and safety advisers,

engineers, the utilities, infrastructure organisations, voluntary organisations and the Department of the Environment (DOE) Planning Service.

### **Overall incident co-ordination**

- 2.12. In addition to co-ordination **within** the different functional areas, there needs to be co-ordination **between** them, in order to ensure the smooth flow of information and to deal with any cross-functional problems which arise. This **overall incident co-ordination** would not interfere with the activities and co-ordination arrangements within functional areas, but would enable all organisations involved in the evacuation to:
- Share information which they have, and which is needed by others, without having to deal individually with organisations.
  - Collate information for briefing senior officers, elected public representatives and the press.
  - Share information on resource needs and availability, and agree mutual aid arrangements.
  - Respond quickly to any changes in circumstances, such as escalation of the event, which may affect their areas of operation.
  - Agree priorities, if it is not possible to carry out all desirable activities at the same time.
  - Look ahead to identify likely problems and agree actions to prevent, or mitigate the effects of, them.
- 2.13. This overall incident co-ordination would normally be undertaken by the Police during an emergency. The Council Chief Executive would be kept informed of events and it is likely that at an agreed time the Chief Executive would take over overall co-ordination. In the case of an event which does not involve the Police in the response, and where there is no obvious lead organisation, the District Council Chief Executive would consider taking on the overall co-ordination role. The details of how this would be managed are set out in the protocol agreed between the Police and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.
- 2.14. Almost all evacuations are localised events which would fall within the boundaries of a District Council or a small number of District Councils. Where two or more District Council areas are involved, a Lead Chief Executive will be agreed to undertake liaison with the Police and other organisations and to undertake an overall incident co-ordination role where appropriate.
- 2.15. In the rare event of a planned evacuation, overall co-ordination would be undertaken by the lead organisation for the event.
- 2.16. Very rarely, an incident may have such widespread or long-term implications, or an evacuation may be on such a scale, that central government becomes involved at strategic level. The activities undertaken by government departments or the Executive would be in addition to local response activities, although there would have to be very close liaison between the overall incident co-ordinator and any strategic co-ordination arrangements established at central government level.

- 2.17. The chapters on each of the functional areas include further information on co-ordination needs and the sort of information which needs to be shared between the functional areas.

## **Ministers, MLAs and other elected representatives**

- 2.18. In any incident involving the community, elected representatives will have a particular interest in the organisation of the response, including evacuation arrangements. Where Departments, or their agencies or NDPBs, are involved in the response, the relevant Ministers will wish, from an early stage, to be fully briefed on, and involved in, the situation. All organisations should therefore ensure that their plans include arrangements for briefing Ministers, the Executive, the Assembly and Assembly Committees as appropriate and for dealing with queries and requests from elected representatives.

# CHAPTER 3

## THE EVENT

### Summary

A range of different events may result in an evacuation to protect the public from a hazard. However, evacuations should not be undertaken lightly, as they are difficult to organise and carry through effectively. Organisations responding to an event should consider whether there are other options, such as sheltering, which would provide as good or better public protection, and whether the considerable material and social costs of evacuation would be justified by the level of risk. Evacuation can result in considerable stress to evacuees, loss of business, disruption to personal and work routines and a risk of accidents occurring during the process. These factors should be taken into account in deciding whether and when to evacuate.

In deciding whether evacuation is necessary, the organisation co-ordinating the response to the event should take advice from all available sources. However, it must be accepted that, in many cases of emergency evacuation, decisions would have to be taken on the basis of incomplete information and the professional expertise of the people immediately involved.

### Detail

3.1. Evacuation can happen as a result of a range of different events:

- A sudden event, happening in a specific area – most evacuation situations will fall into this category, including fires, floods and chemical incidents.
- A planned event which creates a danger zone around it, such as a large demolition project.
- A 'silent' emergency where responders are unaware of a situation until people begin to self-evacuate in response to a perceived or actual threat, for example in response to civil unrest or threats, or industrial activities which people believe to be posing an unacceptable level of risk.
- A long-term situation where there is a threat of future danger or where long-term exposure to a low-level hazard would be injurious to health, for example where properties are found to be on top of unstable mine workings, or where there is environmental pollution for which no effective remedial action is available.

The first three of these will be responsible for almost all evacuations, although the possibility of the fourth should always be kept in mind.

3.2. Where a response to an event is already underway by the time the need for evacuation becomes apparent, the usual principles of emergency response and of command, control and co-ordination will apply. Information on incident management can be found in 'Dealing With Disaster' and 'A Guide to Emergency Planning in Northern Ireland' (see Bibliography, Appendix B, for details).

## To evacuate or not?

- 3.3. The lead organisation for the co-ordination of response activities will normally take the decision on whether it is necessary to evacuate. This decision will be based on operational experience and the advice of specialists. Those with information and/or expertise which could be relevant to making a decision to evacuate include:
- The Fire Brigade, who can advise on the possible spread of fire or the effects of chemicals involved in an incident.
  - Property owners and operators, especially where hazardous or explosive chemicals are involved.
  - Drivers, operators, owners and chemical companies in the event of an incident involving the transport of hazardous materials.
  - Army Technical Officers, where explosive devices are involved or old ordnance is discovered.
  - The Met Office, which can supply information on wind speed and direction, rainfall etc to help determine the potential spread of pollution, smoke etc.
  - The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and the Industrial Research and Technology Unit, who may have access to chemical information and some knowledge of particular sites, although neither have a statutory emergency response capacity.
  - The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland can provide advice on ground conditions (liability to subside etc).
  - Public Health doctors, who can access information from national databases and obtain help through contracts with experts on the effects of chemicals on public health.
  - Environmental Health Officers.
  - Other government and academic organisations with specialist knowledge of pollution, flooding and other hazards.
  - Gas suppliers, whether mains or bottled, can advise on safety of their installations and products. This may be especially important if mains gas pipes are disrupted or threatened.
- 3.4. Which organisations are consulted, and how, will depend on the nature of the hazard and the time available for consultation and analysis of the situation. Ideally, a meeting of all parties with information to contribute should be held and a risk analysis made. However, it is often the case that time and full information are not available and the event response co-ordinator will have to make a decision based on the information available at the time and an informal risk assessment.
- 3.5. In situations where the danger is a long-term one, there will often be more time to analyse the risks and benefits of evacuation. It may be appropriate to consult people on the level of risk they are willing to tolerate and to provide information to enable them to make their own decision on evacuation.
- 3.6. In some situations, it may be advised that only a certain part of the population should be evacuated. For example, a fit person in a two-storey property may be able to sit out a

short-term flood, while the young and old, and occupiers of single-story properties, would be recommended to evacuate for their own comfort and safety. Similarly, pollution or contamination may affect some groups of people more than others, with children and pregnant women being particularly vulnerable to some hazards.

3.7. Factors which will influence the decision on whether or not to evacuate include:

- **Whether buildings would provide protection for the period the hazard is expected to last.** In most chemical emergency situations the preferred method of ensuring public safety would be to advise everyone to go indoors, close doors and windows and listen to the media for further information – the ‘Go in-Stay in-Tune in’ approach. Evacuation would only be advised where buildings did not give adequate protection, and there was a reasonable chance of evacuating people without exposing them to unacceptable danger levels. In the past it was considered that an explosive hazard should always lead to evacuation, but experience has shown that in some circumstances it may be safer to retreat to a strong area of a building, such as a stairwell.
- **Whether the evacuation can be carried out without exposing people to more danger than if they had stayed indoors.** The risk has to be assessed of the event reaching a critical stage, or escalating, while people are in the open and most exposed to danger. Evacuation can itself be a hazardous process. With many people moving at once, there is a danger of crushing or traffic accidents. The old, the young and the infirm may be adversely affected by having to move.
- **Whether the evacuation can be carried out without exposing responding staff to an unacceptable degree of danger.** Each organisation has a statutory responsibility for the health and safety of its staff. This requires them to assess the risks faced by their staff and to take all possible steps to mitigate them. This may involve ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate protective clothing or deciding that an area poses too great a threat to allow staff to enter.
- **Whether a situation currently not requiring evacuation has potential to reach a point where evacuation would be necessary.** Foresight permits forward planning, and thus facilitates an effective and safe evacuation. A precautionary evacuation may be considered desirable in order to protect people from escalation of the incident.
- **If precautionary evacuation is considered, whether the economic and social cost is justified by circumstances.** Evacuation disrupts people’s lives, shuts down businesses and interrupts the delivery of essential services. Moving and accommodating the evacuees is expensive, often to the detriment of budgets for everyday services. If time is available to plan an evacuation, opportunities for minimising the costs should be explored. For example, where the date of the evacuation can be set, a weekend is likely to cause less disruption to business and working lives, but more to personal and family lives.

## **Co-ordination and information requirements**

- 3.8. The response to the event would normally be co-ordinated by the lead organisation responsible for the function.
- 3.9. In many cases where the event is unpredicted, the lead organisation will be an emergency service, usually either the Police or Fire Brigade. There is a well-established principle that the Police would normally co-ordinate the interagency response to an incident, with the Fire Brigade having a particular response management role in the event of a fire, chemical accident or entrapment.
- 3.10. Where the response does not primarily involve the emergency services, as with flooding or some pollution incidents, or if the event is planned, as with controlled demolition, the co-ordinating organisation is likely to be a government department, agency or Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB). In the event of there being no immediately apparent lead organisation for the event, the District Council Chief Executive will consider whether co-ordination would be helpful, and if so, would undertake this function.
- 3.11. Information on the event would be required for the other functional areas of the evacuation:

### ***Warning and Moving***

The lead organisation for the event would play a key role in providing information on the nature of risks, the need to evacuate and the scope of the evacuation. It would normally be best placed to advise on where Rest Centres could be safely situated, for example, away from any danger from rising floodwater, changing wind directions or an escalating incident.

### ***Rest Centre***

The lead organisation for the event would also have a role in providing information for Rest Centre staff on the status of the event as it progressed and any specific damage or loss which occurred.

### ***Resettlement, Return and Reconstruction***

The lead organisation for the event would also need to provide information relevant to the return of evacuees, including actions required to make the area safe for re-occupation, any remedial action required, such as decontamination of buildings and their contents, chances of recurrence, mitigating actions which could be taken and possible long-term effects.

- 3.12. **Communication**, especially in an emergency situation, would often be best met by the event co-ordinator appointing a liaison officer to the overall incident co-ordinator.

# CHECKLIST: EVENTS

## Deciding to evacuate

Here are some of the questions which the person/organisation co-ordinating the response to an event should consider. Not all questions will be relevant to all situations.

Has this event public safety implications?

Where can more information be obtained?

- Police.
- Fire Brigade, including the hazardous material databases it can access.
- Property owners and operators.
- Vehicle drivers, transport and chemical companies.
- Army Technical Officers.
- Met Office.
- HSE(NI), IRTU.
- Public Health Doctors and other Health Service resources.
- Environmental Health Officers.
- Others.

Can public safety be reasonably assured by methods other than evacuation?

- Sheltering.
- Warnings on avoiding particular areas/behaviours.
- Advice to carry out certain tasks, eg boiling water, sandbagging.
- Making supplies available, eg drinking water, heaters.
- Changing/enhancing the emergency response.

Is there a risk of the event escalating?

- When?
- How far?
- What would be the effects?

Would the safety measures above (if any) still provide adequate protection?

Is evacuation necessary?

- When?
- Everyone, or just some?
- What area is affected/is likely to be affected?

What are the risks to people if they do evacuate? Are these less than the risks from not evacuating?

Can an evacuation be carried through without unacceptable risk to the staff involved in organising and implementing it?

What will be the potential economic and social costs of the evacuation?

What information is needed by organisations involved in other functions within the evacuation?

- Warning and Moving.
- Rest Centres.
- Resettlement, Return and Reconstruction.

How is liaison with the overall co-ordinator to be achieved?

# CHAPTER 4

## WARNING AND MOVING

### Summary

Once a decision has been taken that evacuation is necessary, consideration has to be given as to how it will be accomplished. Issues to be addressed include:

- When, where and how to evacuate.
- How the instruction to evacuate can be communicated effectively within the time-frame available. What instructions need to be given in order for people to respond effectively.
- How people will be enabled to carry out the instruction to evacuate, especially those without their own transport or those with restricted mobility.
- What special arrangements need to be made for the welfare of evacuees, particularly those with special needs, and of staff in responding organisations.
- What arrangements, if any, could be made to record who has evacuated, where they have gone to and how they can be contacted during the evacuation.

The overall objective of the evacuation would be to achieve a timely and safe clearance of all necessary people from an area, without exposing either them or emergency responders to unacceptable risks. Within this, the aims should be:

- To be comprehensive.
- To be as fast as the situation requires.
- To avoid panic, but to persuade people of the need to take action.
- To maintain order and prevent traffic congestion, crushing and accidents.
- To cater for special needs.
- To provide an integrated response involving transport, assistance and accommodation.

These issues having been considered, and difficulties resolved as far as possible, movement of people should proceed in an ordered and co-ordinated way. Where time permits, Rest Centres should be ready to receive evacuees as soon as they leave the danger zone.

### Detail

#### Deciding how to evacuate

4.1. Once a decision has been taken to evacuate, further decisions will have to be taken as to how the process will be carried out. These decisions include:

- When the evacuation should take place – immediately, within hours, on an agreed date etc.

- What exact areas are to be evacuated, allowing a suitable margin for uncertainty as to the extent of the hazard, but without disrupting people unnecessarily. In some situations it may be possible to identify areas most likely to be affected, eg from a risk analysis for a chemical plant or from historical flood data, but the particular circumstances of individual events should be taken into consideration in deciding evacuation zones.
- How information about the evacuation will be communicated to people.
- Whether special arrangements will be required for transporting or accommodating people.
- What resources will be required, or will realistically be available, for the evacuation process and how they will be accessed.
- What inter-agency co-ordination and evacuation management arrangements will be put in place.

4.2. The activities to put decisions into effect would be:

- Identify the exact geographical area to be evacuated. Printed or digital maps are helpful, especially if they carry postcode information. Some computerised systems will be able to estimate the population size and composition in the area, and/or identify buildings such as hospitals and schools likely to be occupied by people with particular needs.
- Alert people to the need to evacuate, being specific about the streets or areas to be involved. Postcodes can be useful as a means of identifying an area with accuracy.
- Inform people of when and how they should evacuate and what personal arrangements they need to make, such as bringing medicines with them and what to do with pets / livestock.
- Inform people of any Assembly Points or Rest Centres which have been established. If more than one Rest Centre has been established, people should be told a specific Centre to attend (eg on a geographical basis) to ensure that roughly equal numbers arrive at each.
- Ensure that as far as possible in the time available, these messages can be received and understood by people with special communication needs.
- Arrange the provision of transport, if required, especially for those with mobility difficulties.
- Where appropriate, provide evacuation staff to the area to help people, answer queries, give directions, keep traffic moving, and as far as possible ensure that the whole area has been evacuated.

4.3. Clearly, the organisation taking the lead in managing the movement of people is unlikely to have all the resources necessary to carry out all these activities, and will need input from a range of organisations.

4.4. In those situations where people self-evacuate without being advised to do so, the decision would have to be taken as to whether they were justified in doing so and whether the hazard warrants a formal evacuation. Since it takes a very strong sense of danger to

persuade people to leave their homes, businesses or entertainment, it is unlikely that most self-evacuees could be persuaded to return in the short term, even if an objective risk assessment indicated that evacuation was unnecessary. Arrangements should therefore be made to provide for their immediate needs.

## **When to move and where to**

- 4.5. The decision on when and where to evacuate will largely depend on the nature of the event which precipitates the evacuation.
- 4.6. In many cases there will be no difficulty making a decision on timing; people will need to be moved immediately. Wherever possible, the aim should be to evacuate before the hazard becomes critical, so that evacuees and staff of responding organisations are not put at risk. However, this strategy carries with it the risk that the evacuation will prove to have been unnecessary. The organisation making the decision to evacuate should weigh up the respective costs of evacuating or waiting to see how the situation develops. However, the costs, and legal implications, of failure to take an opportunity for safe evacuation should not be under-estimated.
- 4.7. Where people should be evacuated from and to will be determined by the likely spread of the hazard, as advised by specialist organisations involved in the response to the event, see Chapter 3. In order to avoid having to expand the evacuation zone and possibly having to re-evacuate some people, allowance should be made for the event to escalate. In particular, Assembly Points and Rest Centres should be chosen to be accessible from the evacuated area, but not likely to be overtaken by an escalating event.

## **Warning and Informing**

### **The message**

- 4.8. The first step towards moving people to a place of safety is to alert them to the danger and give them the information they need to make an appropriate response.

There are two types of information which need to be communicated to potential evacuees:

- Key information on who and where is being evacuated, why, and when.
  - Associated information on how the evacuation is to be carried out, what assistance is available, where people should evacuate to, what they need to bring with them (or leave behind), what arrangements should be made for pets and where further help and advice can be found.
- 4.9. The alert message should be clear and concise and should contain the 'who, where and when' information necessary to enable people to take appropriate action.
  - 4.10. The amount of associated information which can be got across will depend on the time available. The aim should be to get across, at minimum, information on where people could go for shelter and what essential supplies they should take with them.

## The audience

4.11. There are a range of people with an interest in information on any evacuation:

- Potential evacuees, ie those living inside the evacuation zone.
- Nursing homes, hospitals, health centres, sheltered accommodation etc in the evacuation zone – for whom special instructions and arrangements may be necessary.
- Schools, which will need to be advised on how to best protect pupils and re-unite them with parents/guardians.
- Transport operators with buses, trains, taxis etc in the affected area – both so they know how to protect passengers and as resources for transporting evacuees.
- Owners of premises pre-designated for use as rest centres so that they can be prepared.
- Industrial premises and large employers, both inside and outside the evacuation zone. Inside, so that employees can be safely evacuated, and outside, so that employers can give information to their staff and allow for any unable to get to work.
- Friends and relatives of evacuees, who will be concerned about their safety, and may be able to offer temporary shelter.
- The media, who will be keen to get the story, but will also be a vital resource to disseminate information.

## Getting the message across

4.12. Alerting the public to the need to evacuate is a difficult process. The methods used will be dictated by:

- The urgency of the situation.
- The size and type of area involved – residential, industrial, retail, urban, rural.
- The time of day – working hours, evening, night.
- The population profile – schoolchildren, working adults, retired people, ethnic minorities etc.
- The resources available.

4.13. Traditionally, evacuation alerts have been broadcast by **door-to-door calling** and use of **loud hailers**. However, these methods have significant drawbacks. Door-to-door calling is a time-and-resource demanding process, especially if the area to be evacuated is a large one. The effectiveness of loud-hailers is limited by the generally poor quality of sound reproduction, and the prevalence of double-glazing. If the threat to safety is immediate, staff delivering the message may be exposed to an unacceptable level of risk. However, where conditions are favourable, these probably remain the most effective methods of getting a message across.

#### 4.14. Other communication methods which should be considered include:

- **Telephone** – systems are available which can deliver a recorded message to a large number of subscribers. These must be pre-installed and linked to computerised mapping systems. While they have a potential application in any evacuation, they would be most useful where there is a known hazard, such as a chemical site or an area prone to flooding. Such systems can be extremely effective in distributing warnings but are expensive to purchase and maintain. When using them, special arrangements need to be made for the hearing impaired, those unable to understand the contents of messages, and those properties without telephones.
- **Television and radio** – arrangements exist whereby emergency announcements may be made on BBC television and radio channels. Other broadcasters may also agree to put out emergency messages. Any organisation wishing to have an emergency broadcast made should contact its own press office, which will have the necessary contact details for the broadcasting organisations. At certain times of day, the broadcast media can reach a large part of the population, although the proliferation of satellite and cable channels dilutes the audience. However, at other times the number of people listening or watching can be small. Depending on the time of day, broadcasters may include unscheduled news bulletins or interviews with key people, which can be used to get information across to audiences. Organisational press offices will have appropriate contacts and be able to advise on how to get emergency messages across on the media.
- **Leaflet drop** – not as immediate as previous methods, but can guarantee a high degree of coverage and can accommodate a range of languages and special communication needs such as Braille and large print. Arrangements can be made through printers, mail sorting firms and Royal Mail.
- **Television Text Services and the Internet** – not for emergency alerts, but useful for posting fuller information than would be communicable by emergency calls or broadcasts.
- **Organisational PA and e-mail** systems, which can reach a large number of staff quickly.
- **Industrial sirens** – some industrial sites have emergency sirens or signals, primarily for warning their own staff. These could be used as a warning to neighbours also, but only if neighbours have been educated to distinguish between routine and emergency signals and instructed in what to do on hearing an emergency alert. The UK has no national siren warning system.

#### **Barriers to communication**

4.15. The problems associated with different means of communicating the evacuation message have already been discussed. In addition to these, other barriers exist to effective communication of key information:

**Language** – in any community there will be a number of people whose first language is not English. They may have no English, or insufficient to manage in an emergency situation. In some households the only English speakers will be children.

**Disability** – some people will have a limited ability to hear, read or comprehend information.

**Authority** – there is a natural reluctance to accept instructions - especially where people are being asked to do something unusual and difficult – without verifying the authenticity and authority of the message and its bearer. It can help if the message is conveyed by an organisation or figure of accepted authority, such as the BBC or a member of the emergency services in uniform, but many people will want to confirm the message by speaking directly to someone or seeking alternative sources of information. While engaged in this verification process they may not pay much attention to the contents of the message.

**Special needs** – the general message on evacuation may not be appropriate to people with special needs. Hospitals and nursing homes, for example, would only be evacuated in exceptional circumstances, as the danger to patients from moving is nearly always greater than the danger from which others are being evacuated. Suitable sheltering arrangements may be best for them, but they need to get the necessary information to make an informed decision on this. Similarly, elderly and infirm residents may not be able to evacuate using the preferred means, and may require specific information on how they can get help.

**System Failures** – the emergency event necessitating the evacuation may cause physical damage to power and communications systems, resulting in fewer people than normal having access to television, radio and telephones.

## **Overcoming barriers to communication**

4.16. In an emergency evacuation, there will be a limit to what can be done to overcome barriers to communication. Pre-planning can be of great assistance, and the more warning there is of the need to evacuate, the greater the importance of having effective communication strategies for groups with special communications needs. Steps which could be taken include:

- Use a range of communication methods to reinforce and confirm the message.
- Include in the alert message a request to ensure that neighbours are aware of the situation, especially those with communication difficulties.
- For known high-risk areas, residents with special communication needs can be identified, and possible solutions to problems discussed with them.
- Involve local authority figures at the earliest possible stage, for example the Council Chief Executive and local elected representatives. People are likely to contact them for verification, so it is important that they are briefed.
- For known risk areas, prepare generic warning messages and instructions in languages appropriate to the locality and in large print, Braille and on tape. If door-to-door calling or local announcements are used, staff should be equipped with supplies of these. Text messages for the TV in a range of languages may also be useful.
- Establish, as far as time permits, the location of people likely to have communications difficulties. Community Trusts, the NI Housing Executive and other welfare organisations may have records of customers, which could be used to target those with special needs, subject to the requirements of the data protection legislation. Education and Library Boards may have information on Special Schools.

- Local managers of organisations likely to be involved in an evacuation should be aware of the location of hospitals, nursing homes etc and appreciate their particular needs. As a matter of good practice, owners and managers of accommodation for sick, elderly or vulnerable people should have evacuation plans, which have been discussed and agreed with the emergency services.

## Moving

4.17. Putting an evacuation into effect involves activities in addition to warning and informing.

### Personal choice

4.18. There are very few circumstances where someone who is not causing an obstruction or breaking any laws can be compelled to evacuate premises. However, every effort should be made to ensure that people understand the risks, the reason they are being recommended to evacuate and the possible consequences of not evacuating.

4.19. There can be a number of reasons for people refusing to evacuate, including:

- Concern over the safety of property.
- Unwillingness to leave familiar surroundings.
- Disbelief that the danger exists.
- Desire to wait for the return of family members who are away from home.
- Complacency resulting from experiences of hoaxes and false alarms.
- Complacency from having sat out similar emergencies in the past.
- Unwillingness to close down a business or lose working time.
- Unwillingness to leave pets which cannot be located or are not easily transported, eg cats, exotic pets or fish.

4.20. The safety of people and property, and a desire to cling to the familiar, are legitimate concerns for evacuees. It is human nature to refuse to accept a theoretical risk, unless there is evidence, such as emergency service activity or news reports, that an emergency exists. It is also natural, if not logical, to think that if you were safe in the past, the same will hold again in the future. Evacuation fatigue is not a serious problem in Northern Ireland, except in localities particularly prone to bomb scares, but emergency responders should be aware of the possibility. Where there is opportunity, information issued to the public should take account of people's likely concerns, try to emphasise the seriousness of the situation, and reassure that security arrangements would be made for the evacuated area, accommodation and help would be available for evacuees, and that care would be taken of those evacuated from other places, including schools.

4.21. If people, having been given and having understood this information, still refuse to evacuate, little can be done beyond advising them of steps they should take to protect themselves and, where resources allow, supplying materials and helping them with any protective work required. Where time is available, consideration should be given to asking those who refuse to evacuate to sign a simple statement that they understand and accept the risks.

**Organisations likely to be involved in recommending or organising an evacuation should take legal advice on this issue.** Where possible, those refusing to evacuate should be given an emergency contact number in case the situation deteriorates or a sudden emergency occurs.

- 4.22. Many people may accept the need to evacuate but not want to go to a public Rest Centre. If the evacuation is likely to be short lived, or if they are being evacuated from work or an entertainment venue and can get transport home, most people will manage for themselves. Particularly in a close-knit community, shelter would be sought among friends and family in the locality. In longer evacuations, many people will stay with friends and relatives, probably spread across Northern Ireland, and some may choose to go to a hotel. There is no basis for compelling people to go to a Rest Centre. It would be useful for those involved in casualty bureau/missing persons inquiries, Rest Centres and organising the return, to have names, addresses and a contact telephone number for evacuees making their own arrangements, but in most cases the collection of this information would be impractical.

### **Transport**

- 4.23. In an emergency evacuation, most people will leave the danger area **on foot** or by **private vehicle**. This may cause problems, with traffic jams and crushes a possibility if large numbers of people are involved.
- 4.24. There will be a number of people who do not have the ability or resources to make their own way out of the danger zone. Where the situation is urgent, whatever vehicles are available will have to be used: private cars, emergency service vehicles and public transport vehicles.
- 4.25. When more time is available, it may be possible to develop a transport strategy which will take account of the range of needs which people will have for transport. Most people will still use their own private transport, but arrangements should be made for those without access to private transport, or for whom it would be inappropriate.
- 4.26. It may be necessary to direct evacuees to **Assembly Points** on the periphery of the evacuation zone, where they can meet up with friends and relatives, receive further information and be provided with directions or transport to a Rest Centre. These Assembly Points will be very ad hoc arrangements, probably established by the organisation co-ordinating the movement of people. For short evacuations, people may be content to wait at an Assembly Point or to return there at intervals for news. Assembly Points should, ideally, offer some form of shelter to evacuees who are waiting to return or for transport, but this will depend on the availability of suitable facilities at the time. Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be useful to have first aid personnel at the Assembly Points to deal with any minor injuries. It would also be useful to try to make a record of those present at the Assembly Point and their onward destination and contact details, but this will depend on the numbers of evacuees involved and the resources available to responders.
- 4.27. Some transport will be needed throughout the evacuation period, even after the area has been cleared. Evacuees may need transport between the Rest Centre and hospital, to visit injured friends or to attend outpatients clinics. Transport would also be required for those returning evacuees who have no personal transport.

**Buses** are the most available and flexible means of transporting large numbers of people. Many modern buses have low floors for easy access and space for wheelchairs and prams, making them suitable for most people with some mobility.

**Midi-and mini-buses** can get into tighter spaces than full size ones, which may be important in built-up areas. Many organisations own vehicles of this type which are especially adapted for use by people with disabilities, having, for example, wheelchair hoists.

**Emergency ambulances** would only be used in exceptional circumstances, as they have to be available to respond to 999 calls. However, should a hospital or nursing home have to be evacuated, ambulances may be required to move seriously ill patients. These could be supplied either by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service or one of the voluntary first aid organisations such as St John Ambulance. These organisations also have minibus-style vehicles which could be used in a general evacuation.

**Trains** can operate only on fixed routes, but they have large capacities. Where they run close to known hazard sites or to facilities such as hospitals, they may be a useful means of transport, providing rolling stock was available. In exceptional circumstances, where very large numbers of people have to be moved for long periods, trains could be used as a means of mass transport to accommodation, once evacuees have been assembled at temporary centres.

**Taxis and volunteer drivers** using their own cars are potential sources of additional transport, and may be appropriate for people with special needs which could not be met by public transport vehicles. However, issues surrounding insurance and payment of expenses would need to be discussed and agreed in advance.

**Aircraft** would only be contemplated as a means of evacuation transport for large numbers of people needing to be moved long distances, and it is hard to envisage circumstances where aircraft would be needed to evacuate people from Northern Ireland. However, arrangements may need to be made to receive and accommodate incoming evacuees arriving by plane, whether expatriates leaving a country which has become unsafe or refugees which the UK has agreed to accommodate. **Helicopters** have a specialised use in evacuating people from places without road access, including ships at sea, areas where the road system has been damaged, and sites best approached from above.

**Boats** may be necessary to evacuate island populations or may be a useful transport method where coastal, riverside or lakeside populations are more easily reached from the water. A number of resources would be potentially available, including ferries (for example the Ballycastle-Rathlin Island ferry), private craft, vessels owned by the emergency services and other public bodies, and lifeboats. The Police would liaise with HM Coastguard over the co-ordination of any water-based evacuation.

## **Obtaining transport resources**

4.28. The main source of emergency transport will almost certainly be Translink (Citybus, Ulsterbus and Northern Ireland Railways). Other potential sources of transport are:

- Health and Social Services Trusts.

- Voluntary organisations.
- Education and Library Boards.
- Private coach hire companies.
- Private vehicles already in the area.
- Taxi firms or associations.
- Military – not generally suitable transport for members of the public due to (among other things) access problems, but some vehicles will be able to go where others would have difficulty.

4.29. Particularly in Belfast, Translink would be able to provide not only vehicles, but management arrangements for them, either through Inspectors sent to the evacuation area, or the use of radio contact with a central control room. In general, transport resources will be harder to find in rural areas than urban. In some circumstances, it may be difficult to divert scheduled bus/train resources at short notice because to do so would leave regular passengers, such as schoolchildren, in a vulnerable position. However, Translink should normally be able to manage this situation.

4.30. Often, the type of vehicle used will be dictated by the time available. Where planning time is available, effort should be made to match the type of transport provided to the needs of evacuees. Community Trusts would have lists of people in an area with special needs. The NI Housing Executive and some of the voluntary welfare organisations may also be able to supply information. DOE Road Transport Licensing Division holds a register of organisations operating transport resources. In the preparation of plans at local level, a central register of transport resources and how they can be accessed would be useful.

### **Traffic control**

4.31. In any evacuation, arrangements should be made to try to keep traffic moving, at least along key routes. Information on the route to be used by evacuees should be included in the instructions for evacuation which are given to the public. Traffic movements will be particularly difficult in very built-up areas such as housing estates, and in rural areas with narrow roads. Police traffic units will probably be the main resources used for traffic control, employing a mixture of officers, Traffic Wardens and signed diversions, but where time is available, Roads Service and motoring organisations such as the AA may be able to help with signage and manpower.

4.32. Efforts should be made to devise and maintain separate routes for emergency vehicles going to the event site and for traffic evacuating the area.

### **Financial issues**

4.33. Transporting evacuees can be expensive, especially as it can be difficult to estimate the number of people who will require assistance. In emergency situations, vehicles used are likely to be already on the road, and the additional cost of using them will be minimal. The general principle, as with most emergency response, is that costs should lie where they fall, ie with the organisation providing the resources or service. Where transport is planned, responsibility for costs should be discussed and agreed at the planning stage. However,

concern over costs should not be allowed to interfere with measures essential to public health and safety.

- 4.34. Costs may also have to be incurred in order to prepare and distribute warnings and information. Plans should be clear on who has authority to authorise such expenditure, as the sums involved can be considerable. Press Officers should always be consulted, as they have contacts in the media and may have contracts for the production of publicity material.

## **Casualties**

- 4.35. If the event has caused casualties, or if accidents during the evacuation result in casualties, arrangements would have to be made to assess and transport the injured. Where it is safe for ambulance staff to enter an area, normal emergency casualty evacuation procedures would be used. In some cases it may be necessary for responders with access to appropriate protective equipment, usually the Fire Brigade, to evacuate casualties to a safe place where they can be met by paramedics or emergency medical teams. Walking wounded can often be moved by ordinary bus or cars either to first aid posts or directly to hospitals. Where possible, the advice of the Ambulance Incident Officer should be sought before walking wounded are moved, so that they can be sent to hospitals or clinics with appropriate facilities.
- 4.36. In some circumstances it may be necessary for first aid posts to be set up close to main evacuation routes in order to offer treatment and support to evacuees with medical needs. These could be staffed by either ambulance service staff or trained first-aiders from voluntary aid societies.
- 4.37. Where an event has resulted in large numbers of casualties, ambulance service and hospital major incident procedures will be activated. These will operate independently of the evacuation processes, which will cater primarily for uninjured evacuees who have not been directly involved in the initial event.
- 4.38. Where evacuees, whether injured or not, have been contaminated with potentially dangerous chemicals, special arrangements need to be made to transport, treat, accommodate and decontaminate them. They should not mix with uncontaminated evacuees or responders, in order to avoid spreading the contamination. The Ambulance Incident Officer and the Fire Brigade will be able to advise on the effects of chemicals and general management and decontamination procedures.

## **Accounting for evacuees**

- 4.39. One of the most difficult aspects of evacuation, especially emergency or short-notice evacuation, is trying to keep track of evacuees. There are a number of reasons why it is desirable to do so:
- To check that everyone is accounted for and that no-one has been missed in the evacuation.
  - To help families trace missing members and to answer queries about the whereabouts of individuals. If more than one Rest Centre is established, families split between different Rest Centres will need to be identified and re-united.

- To eliminate from enquiries people reported as missing who turn up safe at Rest Centres, especially where there have been casualties or fatalities and where a Casualty Bureau has been established by the Police.
- To make sure that everyone is receiving the assistance they require.
- To avoid annoying people by repeatedly asking for the same information or offering the same services.
- To keep people informed of progress of the incident and arrangements for returning.
- To maintain accounting and anti-fraud measures.
- If follow-up is required, for example research into long-term effects of exposure to chemicals, information would be needed on those involved in the evacuation.

4.40. There are a number of opportunities for gathering information:

- Prior to a planned evacuation, all affected households can be approached, registered, and their intended destination recorded.
- As cars, buses or pedestrians leave an area, they could be stopped and basic details taken of name, home address, and contact address / phone number whilst evacuated.
- Information can be gathered from those attending Rest Centres. See Chapter 5 for further information on this.
- Evacuees who have made their own arrangements can be asked (usually via the media) to contact a specific telephone number, either the Police Casualty Bureau or a helpline set up for the purpose.
- Once the evacuation is over, information can be gathered through door-to-door calling or distribution of questionnaires.

4.41. In theory, gathering information is best done during the warning and moving phase, before people disperse. In reality, gathering information prior to the evacuation or during the moving phase is only likely to be practicable during a pre-planned, non-emergency evacuation. In such circumstances, recording information on evacuees should be included in plans.

4.42. The effectiveness of registration at Rest Centres (see Chapter 5) will depend on what proportion of evacuees attend. If, having registered those in Rest Centres, serious problems remain with accounting for people, it might be necessary to appeal for evacuees to make contact.

## **Security**

4.43. The evacuated area is at risk, not only from the effects of the event, but from thieves and looters. This is unlikely to be a major problem, but in order to provide reassurance to evacuees, the Police should take steps to control access to the evacuated area and to monitor the evacuation zone for any unauthorised activity. In order to do so, the Police may need to draw resources from other organisations, including military manpower and helicopters.

- 4.44. The area should also be monitored for any occupants who may have missed the evacuation message and be unaware of the situation.

## **Co-ordination and information requirements**

- 4.45. The process of moving people out of a danger area to a place of safety is a complex one, and often has to be carried out under adverse circumstances, either in severe weather or where a very immediate danger exists. In these circumstances the management of the processes and co-ordination of activities will usually be carried out by the emergency services, normally the Police for land-based evacuations. In this they would be supported by relevant experts on the effects of the event, communication and media relations and transport. It is likely that individual managers would be assigned responsibility for functions such as transport or traffic management.
- 4.46. A similar process would happen if the evacuation was pre-planned by a non-emergency service organisation: there would be a co-ordinator for the whole process of warning and moving people, with individual functions being managed and co-ordinated under their oversight.
- 4.47. Information on warning and moving would be required for the other functional areas of the evacuation:

### **Event**

The event co-ordinator will need to know when the evacuation starts and is completed as this may affect the response to the event.

### **Rest Centres**

The Rest Centre Manager will need to know:

- How many people are likely to be evacuated and some idea of demographics – families, schoolchildren, elderly people, tourists or travellers etc.
- When the evacuation will take place.
- Approximately how long it is likely to last (information required from the event managers).
- Whether evacuees are likely to have any particular needs, for example if they will be wet and will require a change of clothes.
- Where would be a safe area for a Rest Centre (information required from the event managers).
- Any known groups with special needs, for example residents of nursing homes or sheltered accommodation.

The amount of information available to Rest Centre Managers, and the opportunities for communicating it, will vary according to how much advance warning of the evacuation is available. In some situations the priority may be to get people into shelter, in which case a suitable building should be opened and the local Community Trust or District Council Chief

Executive should be informed of the evacuees' location as soon as possible. To allow for such situations, it is essential that local managers of organisations likely to be co-ordinating warning and movement, especially the Police, have copies of local Rest Centre lists and some basic information on how to select suitable premises.

### ***Resettlement, Return and Reconstruction***

Many of the arrangements made to warn and move people could be used for the return process, especially if the evacuation is of short duration. The co-ordinator for the return may well be the same as for the warning and moving phase, but if not, information should be provided (through the overall evacuation co-ordinator) on any lessons learnt in the moving phase and any special arrangements which were made for evacuees moving out and which should be replicated in the returning phase.

# CHECKLIST: WARNING AND MOVING

## Defining the evacuation requirements

These are questions which should be asked at the planning stage, but in most cases only basic principles or contact information can be incorporated into plans. Specific answers will be required when the questions are asked in the light of a potential or actual evacuation. Most of the questions are for the co-ordinator(s) of the warning and moving phase, but they should be addressed by all organisations with a potential to respond as they indicate where different organisations contribute to the response and what would be required.

When should the evacuation take place?

- Can it be done in this timeframe?
- Are there any alternatives?

What area should be evacuated? Does any allowance have to be made for potential escalation of the event?

How many people are likely to be involved?

What is the population structure of the area?

- Residential, workplace, educational, entertainment, transport properties.
- High proportion of elderly/infirm/young people.
- Area of high social need.
- Families.
- Ethnic groups.
- Affluent.

Are there any immediately obvious special need properties?

- Hospitals.
- Nursing Homes.
- Schools.
- Special Schools.
- Large-capacity entertainment venues, currently in use.

## Warning and informing

What message needs to go out? When?

- The area involved and the timescale.
- Additional information on routes to use, belongings to bring/leave etc.

What method(s) will be most effective within the existing constraints?

- Door-to-door, personal call or leaflets.
- Loud hailers.
- Telephone.
- Television.
- Radio.
- Television Text Services or Internet.
- Building PA systems and company e-mail systems.
- Sirens.

What barriers to effective communication are likely to be encountered?

- Language.
- Disability.
- Disbelief.
- Individuals/groups requiring tailored advice.
- Failures affecting the communication / broadcasting networks.
- The variety of TV and radio channels over which the audience is spread.

How can these problems be addressed?

- Text and verbal announcements on TV.
- Announcements made in languages relevant to the area.
- Leaflets in Braille, large print, relevant languages.
- Promoting neighbourliness.
- Providing contact details for obtaining further information.
- Using a variety of media.
- Using authority figures where possible.

## **Organising the evacuation**

What can be done to reassure those who have concerns about evacuating?

What will be done about people who refuse to evacuate?

How will people leave the danger zone?

Does transport need to be provided? If so, for how many people?

Is specialist transport needed, for example for people with restricted mobility?

Where can the necessary transport be obtained from within the existing timescale and constraints?  
Are there local or national registers of transport operators which could be used?

- Translink – Citybus, Ulsterbus, NI Railways.
- Health and Social Services Trusts.
- Voluntary organisations.
- Education and Library Boards.
- Private coach hire companies.
- Taxi firms.
- Military vehicles/helicopters.

How are transport resources going to be managed and co-ordinated?

Who will pay for any additional transport expenses?

How is special transport to be provided? What information on potential users is available?

What traffic management arrangements are required?

What organisations can help with traffic management or signage?

What arrangements can be made for transporting casualties? Where should they go?

Is it possible to check that everyone has left the evacuation zone?

Is there any option to count or register evacuees as they leave the area?

Where will evacuees go?

Who needs to be informed so that a Rest Centre can be set up?

How will evacuees be informed of the location of the Rest Centre?

Will additional transport be required to get people to the Rest Centre? What resources are available?

How is the event progressing? Is there any change to earlier predictions of effects?

How can the area be secured once the evacuation is complete?

# CHAPTER 5

## REST CENTRES

### Summary

Rest Centres are places where people evacuated from premises (including residential, industrial, commercial, entertainment and education properties) can go to receive appropriate shelter and welfare care until they can return to the evacuated area, or be otherwise accommodated.

Whilst informal accommodation of evacuees in commercial, catering or entertainment venues can be acceptable for some very short-term evacuations, it is more usual to provide evacuees with Rest Centre accommodation better suited to their needs. Pre-identification of potential Rest Centres, planning for their operation, training staff in Rest Centre procedures and exercising plans to test their effectiveness, can ensure that appropriate premises are chosen and facilities can be established quickly in emergency situations.

In planning for, and establishing, Rest Centres, issues to be addressed include:

- Convenience of buildings to known areas at risk.
- Even spread across an area, to allow for general risks.
- Availability, given that evacuations can occur at any time of day or night.
- Facilities, staff and equipment required for effective operation of a Rest Centre.
- Management arrangements.
- Provision of physical and welfare help which is appropriate to the situation and to the social/religious/cultural/physical/financial needs of evacuees.
- Keeping records.
- Safety of evacuees, staff and building contents.
- Triggers and mechanisms for identifying the need for a Rest Centre and initiating action to establish one.
- Preparation and integration of plans, including establishing understandings on roles, responsibilities and resources.

Planning and running Rest Centres requires a partnership approach between a number of organisations. Services provided to evacuees should be co-ordinated to ensure that everyone gets the help they need, when they need it.

## Detail

### Definition

- 5.1. Rest Centres are places where people evacuated from premises (including residential, industrial, commercial, entertainment and education properties) can go to receive appropriate shelter and welfare care until they can return to the evacuated area, or be otherwise accommodated. Evacuees are not casualties or survivors from the event, nor their friends and relatives, but rather are people not directly involved, but who have been moved away from danger or from damaged properties.
- 5.2. Those people who are directly involved in an event – casualties, walking wounded and uninjured survivors will require facilities to be made available, but their physical and welfare needs will be different from those of evacuees and, as far as feasible, they should be given their own, separate, accommodation.
- 5.3. Rest Centres should not be used to provide facilities for response staff taking breaks from their tasks.
- 5.4. **This chapter only gives an overview of Rest Centre arrangements. Organisations directly involved in planning and running Rest Centres should seek further information and training.**

### Planning for Rest Centres

- 5.5. It is the responsibility of Community Trusts to ensure that arrangements are in place to provide Rest Centre accommodation, and the necessary welfare services, for evacuees. In order for this to happen, a comprehensive list of potential Rest Centres should be collated and maintained. However, many of the buildings which could be used as Rest Centres belong to District Councils so they may, by local agreement with Community Trusts, compile the list. Whichever organisation prepares the composite list, all organisations with a potential involvement in Rest Centres, including Community Trusts, District Councils and the Police, must have access to it. However, effective Rest Centre planning goes well beyond having lists of suitable buildings.
- 5.6. Rest Centres represent a complex, multi-agency response to the needs of evacuees. Potentially involved are the local Community Trust, the District Council, the owner of the premises being used (if not one of the first two), voluntary first aid, welfare and advice organisations, the Police, other public service organisations which can provide help, advice and support, and private companies, such as catering firms, and transport operators. Elected representatives, friends and relatives of evacuees and the media will also have an interest in what is going on in a Rest Centre. Often Rest Centres have to be set up at short notice, outside normal office hours and under adverse conditions. The range of circumstances in which a Rest Centre can be required, the number of organisations potentially involved, and the short notice often given of the need for a Rest Centre, means that effective delivery of Rest Centre services can only be assured by advance planning, training and exercising.

- 5.7. In order to plan and respond effectively, organisations involved in Rest Centres will require:
- An understanding and acceptance of each-other's roles and responsibilities.
  - A co-ordinated list of potential Rest Centres, including information on access and setting up.
  - An agreed plan for receiving an alert that a Rest Centre may be needed, taking a decision on whether and where to open a Rest Centre, and communicating this information within and between organisations.
  - An agreed plan for the setting up and operation of each potential Rest Centre, including its overall management.
  - Alert and callout arrangements for staffing each Rest Centre.
- 5.8. Rest Centre plans should consist of two sections:
- A generic section, setting out responsibilities for deciding to open a Rest Centre, communication arrangements between organisations, the location of, and access arrangements for, pre-identified Rest Centres (and key actions for establishing ad hoc ones), overall management arrangements, and agreed roles, resources, capabilities and responsibilities. Call-out lists for key management staff should be included.
  - Individual operating plans for each pre-identified venue, which would include layout, health and safety information, information on the operation of essential pieces of equipment, and staffing arrangements, including call-out lists.
- 5.9. These plans should be agreed by the partner organisations and others with an interest in Rest Centres, especially the emergency services. They should be made widely available, at least in summary form, and kept up-to-date by regular review. They should be underpinned by internal organisational plans for staffing, management and communications, including how services to evacuees would be maintained over a period of time and how essential everyday activities would be maintained when resources were diverted to running a Rest Centre.
- 5.10. Changes to the structure, accessibility or use of buildings should be immediately reflected in the Rest Centre plans. Buildings pre-identified as Rest Centres should each have a detailed plan kept on the premises, containing both the generic Rest Centre management plan and a detailed operating procedure for the building. Details of how any equipment or resources required, but not readily available in-house, could be procured, should be included.
- 5.11. The risks in an area should be re-assessed at intervals to monitor changes in land use (new housing built in vulnerable areas, different farming practices giving rise to a greater risk of flooding) and hazards (chemical sites closed or expanded, a new concert venue) and Rest Centre plans amended to take account.
- 5.12. Rest Centre plans should also include flexible arrangements for providing basic services to ad hoc Rest Centres. The need for such flexibility may arise because there is no suitable pre-planned Rest Centre in the vicinity of the event, or because evacuees and people in the surrounding community have created their own Rest Centre before formal plans could be activated. It may turn out to be impractical or unnecessary to transport evacuees to one

of the pre-planned Rest Centres, but they may still need to have some practical and welfare services provided.

- 5.13. Staffing arrangements for Rest Centres should be planned and agreed, as this will enable arrangements to be activated at short notice. Some staff will be required wherever the Rest Centre is, others will be venue-specific. There will therefore need to be separate call-out lists for each pre-planned venue.
- 5.14. In planning for a Rest Centre, thought should be given to the make-up of the local community and any particular needs residents may have. For example, information signs may need to be in more than one language, and refreshments offered should meet people's cultural, religious and medical requirements.

### **Requirement**

- 5.15. A Rest Centre should be considered when people have been evacuated from the area or buildings they occupied. The greatest need for Rest Centres arises when people are evacuated from domestic property and need somewhere to shelter, especially if the evacuation lasts for longer than a few hours or occurs at night or in bad weather. However, evacuation of commercial or entertainment venues may also require the establishment of a Rest Centre, to provide shelter until the area can be re-occupied or evacuees can go home.
- 5.16. In localised, short-term evacuations, most people will take refuge with family, friends or neighbours or in public places such as shopping centres. However, a Rest Centre should always be established to provide for those who are unable to use these refuges or to provide longer-term accommodation should the situation be prolonged. Even if no-one initially turns up at a Rest Centre, it should be kept open and its location advertised. It may be used as a drop-in centre for evacuees requiring information, assistance or meals.

### **Location**

- 5.17. Pre-identifying potential Rest Centres allows for the suitability of facilities to be assessed and operating procedures to be drawn up, thus saving time in an emergency evacuation. In places where there is a known risk, for example close to Major Industrial Hazard sites or in areas prone to flooding, it should be possible to identify suitable Rest Centres in adjacent, but safe, areas and to incorporate these in response plans. However, there should also be a number of general-purpose Rest Centres identified across an area for use in less predictable emergencies.
- 5.18. Possible Rest Centre properties include:
  - Leisure centres, arts centres, community centres, civic buildings.
  - Day centres and other Community Trust or Health Trust properties which would not be required to treat casualties.
  - Schools.
  - Church and other (village, Community Group, Youth Organisation) halls.

- 5.19. Any building which is open to the public could potentially shelter evacuees. Supermarkets (especially 24-hour ones), theatres and concert venues (often open when other places are closed), restaurants and pubs (a particular favourite with short-term evacuees) may all find themselves dealing with an influx of displaced people. Such locations would not normally be regarded as suitable for anything other than very short-term accommodation

## Facilities

- 5.20. All nominated Rest Centres will require a range of facilities to be available. Exactly what is demanded of a Rest Centre will vary according to the length of the evacuation and the needs of the evacuees. Where a range of potential Rest Centre properties are available, those with the most facilities should be chosen: it is easier to scale down than to scale up. Facilities required include:

- Good access for vehicles, including buses and emergency service vehicles. Adequate turning, parking, set-down and pick-up facilities.
- Available at any time. Consideration should be given to what would be done about the regular occupants of the building if it is required during normal operating hours: adults can usually leave a leisure centre quickly and without difficulty, but schools would have to keep pupils until safe alternative arrangements were made.
- Disabled access and facilities.
- A variety of rooms, so that different groups (children, old people, families, smokers etc) can have their own areas.
- Heating systems which can be switched on outside their normal hours.
- Toilet / hygiene facilities, preferably including separate male/female facilities and washing facilities such as showers. Baby changing and nursing areas would also be desirable. The actual requirement will vary according to the length of the evacuation and its cause.
- Catering facilities which meet food hygiene and health and safety requirements. Minimum requirement would be the facility to prepare hot drinks and light snacks, but full kitchen facilities would be better.
- Seating adequate for the needs of evacuees. Soft, lounge-style chairs are preferable to hard, upright ones. Primary schools may have difficulty mustering sufficient adult-sized furniture (and toilet facilities).
- Some form of entertainment, usually at least one television. Also a radio to follow local news bulletins.
- Telephones, to enable evacuees to communicate with friends and relatives and for the use of Rest Centre staff. E-mail and internet access would be useful.
- Fax and photocopying facilities, available for use by Rest Centre staff.
- Free from serious safety risks, or capable of having dangerous areas, eg swimming pools, isolated or locked up. Buildings should meet appropriate health and safety and fire safety standards.
- Reasonable access control, for the safety of evacuees, their property and Rest Centre property.

- Accommodation for pets which enables them to be safe but separate from evacuees for hygiene and safety reasons. Enclosed outdoor tennis / netball courts make acceptable dog pounds providing the weather is reasonable. In cold or wet conditions, some shelter will be required for pets. Animal welfare charities could be invited to become involved in planning for providing assistance with pets, as could owners of commercial boarding kennels. Farming organisations may be able to help with accommodation for larger animals, such as horses.
- Sleeping facilities – comfortable chairs, exercise mats or camp beds and sufficient rooms to give a reasonable degree of privacy.
- First aid facilities for people who take ill. In many cases the presence of a GP and/or pharmacist may be advisable to cater for evacuees who have not brought their medication with them.
- Large open spaces, indoors or out, where evacuees can get some exercise and children can let off steam safely.
- Quiet areas, especially for the elderly, the very young, the sick and anyone distressed by events.
- Entertainment areas with access to TV, radio, magazines, books, board games etc.

There will be some cases, especially in rural areas, where locations with limited facilities have to be accepted. In such situations, critical factors such as availability of heating and toilet facilities, safety and security and provision of catering should still be considered.

- 5.21. It will often be the case that Rest Centres receive the most vulnerable evacuees. These will include families with young children, and elderly, disabled and socially excluded people. Venues and facilities should be assessed with this in mind, to ensure that they provide suitable accommodation for the needs which these people will have.
- 5.22. Some evacuees, such as hospital patients or the residents of nursing homes, will require more specialised accommodation than any Rest Centre can provide. Community Trusts should liaise with the Ambulance Service, local Hospital Trusts and other healthcare providers to find suitable alternative accommodation for such evacuees.

## **Equipment**

- 5.23. Rest Centres require a range of equipment, not all of which would normally be available on-site. Items which may be required include:
- Signs for outside the building, to identify it as the Rest Centre.
  - Labels for corridors, doors and rooms within the building, to help people find their way about. Safety signage for any particular hazards such as swimming pools or raised stages.
  - Identity badges, armbands or tabards for Rest Centre staff, with information on both personal name (where appropriate), organisation, and role.
  - Forms for gathering information on evacuees.
  - Food and drinks (non-alcoholic), either pre-prepared or for use in on-site kitchens. These should be appropriate to the physical, cultural and religious needs of evacuees.

- Blankets, for warmth and if people have to stay overnight.
- A pre-printed information sheet for evacuees giving information on the organisations involved and their roles, facilities available, where to ask for assistance and some contact numbers for welfare agencies to keep when they return home.
- Extra televisions, video players and radios, if necessary. Video tapes suitable for family viewing. Magazines and books.
- Telephone cards or coins for call boxes. Telephone directories so that people can look up numbers of friends and relatives. Chargers and electrical sockets for the safe recharge of mobile phones.
- Clean, dry, clothes appropriate to the weather conditions, for people who need a change. Charity shops, local manufacturers and chain stores are good sources.
- Toiletries.
- Nappies and children's food.

5.24. It may be possible to pre-prepare and store some items, for example direction signs and room labels, on-site. Other articles, such as identity badges and forms for recording personal details may be best kept centrally, but available in a 'grab bag' for immediate use in an emergency. A third category of article would be bulky and/or expensive to store. These, including food, toiletries, clothing and blankets, are best sourced as required through pre-planned contacts and supply arrangements. Some supermarket chains, for example, offer 24-hour emergency access schemes for public bodies. Equipment and supplies may also be obtained from DHSSPS emergency stores or from the Central Services Agency.

## **Layout**

5.25. It is desirable that a Rest Centre should have a range of rooms of different sizes, or be capable of being partitioned to provide different areas for different activities or different groups of evacuees. Areas should be set aside for watching TV, for games and exercise and for quiet areas. It would normally be advisable to separate children from elderly people, or to give individual families their own areas. The number of evacuees and their religious and cultural needs will dictate how best to organise the space within the Rest Centre. Some options are:

- Keep everyone together – only possible in very short evacuations.
- Group people in families.
- Group people by age.
- Create male and female areas.
- Where some social, religious or cultural groups will not mix, consider providing them with separate spaces. Where it is necessary to provide separate facilities, either on one site or separate sites, each area or site should have the same services provided.

5.26. Where the evacuation has resulted in injury or loss of life, and a separate friends and relatives centre is not established, it may be necessary to give some evacuees their own space to wait for news or to come to terms with the situation.

- 5.27. Some people may be too unwell to adapt to communal life, or may require medical support such as oxygen or dialysis. Every effort should be made to find suitable hospital or nursing home accommodation for such people, but if this is not available, a quiet area should be set aside for their use, with appropriate first aid/medical supervision.
- 5.28. If evacuees have to stay in the Rest Centre overnight, and beds or mats can be provided, consideration should be given to setting aside separate night- and day-time accommodation.
- 5.29. Separate toilet, changing and washing facilities should be provided for males and females. Baby nursing facilities should also be offered.
- 5.30. For the comfort and safety of evacuees and staff, smoking should not be allowed in the main public areas. If the Rest Centre building has no designated smoking room, consideration should be given to setting aside a suitably ventilated area for smokers.

### **Health and safety**

- 5.31. In pre-planning Rest Centre locations, a risk assessment must be carried out on any building considered for use. Where hazards are identified which may pose safety problems, for example swimming pools, school science laboratories and stages in assembly halls, consideration should be given as to how evacuees could be protected from them, and the appropriate measures incorporated in the building's Rest Centre plan. Steps to remove or mitigate risks could include locking doors of individual rooms and approach corridors (providing they are not fire escape routes) to prevent access, or erecting warning signs and barriers. If it is not possible to adequately protect evacuees, the building should not be included in the Rest Centre list.
- 5.32. Care should be taken to ensure that the number of people in the Rest Centre does not exceed the maximum safe capacity of the building.
- 5.33. Kitchens or other areas where food is being prepared should meet relevant health and safety requirements. Staff working with food must have appropriate training.
- 5.34. Pets should not be allowed in the same accommodation as people. Arrangements should be made to keep domestic animals in a secure area.

### **Communications**

- 5.35. Evacuees will want to contact friends and relatives to confirm that they are safe and to arrange alternative accommodation. Phones should be made available, or phone cards or coins for on-site pay-phones. It may also be useful to have cards for pay-as-you-go mobiles and to make available chargers and sockets where mobile phones can be safely charged. There should be Rest Centre rules on where mobile phones can be switched on and used, to avoid annoying people.

## Roles and responsibilities

- 5.36. Running an effective Rest Centre requires a partnership approach from a range of organisations. No one organisation would have the facilities, staff and skills necessary to carry out all the tasks associated with a Rest Centre. The key organisations, and their main roles, would be:
- **Community Trusts** – overall Rest Centre management and appropriate social and psychological support.
  - **District Councils** – provision of staff, facilities and equipment. Contacts with a large range of local organisations. Co-ordination of overall incident response and recovery (in conjunction with the Police).
  - **Voluntary organisations** – provision of practical help and equipment/supplies and, in conjunction with Community Trusts, befriending and helping roles.
  - **Premises owners/operators** (who may be any of the first three, or other organisations, including schools and churches) – provision of buildings, services, equipment and staff.
  - **The Police**, especially if the evacuees are witnesses to the event or can contribute information to the Casualty Bureau. Police officers may also be present to provide security for the building and evacuees, and to relay information on progress of the event which gave rise to the evacuation.

## Management

- 5.37. Overall welfare of evacuees is the responsibility of Community Trusts, and they should have a key role in ensuring that adequate Rest Centre plans are made and that the delivery of services at Rest Centres is co-ordinated and managed. A key person would be the **Rest Centre Manager**, who would usually be an experienced manager from the local Community Trust.
- 5.38. The Rest Centre Manager would be supported by a small Management Team, consisting of managers from the organisations participating in the Rest Centre arrangements. The exact composition of this Team would vary depending on the needs of individual incidents and Rest Centres, but will always include the Rest Centre Facilities Manager (see below). The Management Team would meet at regular intervals to give and receive briefing on the situation in the Rest Centre and to deal with any management and co-ordination issues which arise.
- 5.39. The running of the Rest Centre building would normally remain with the owner/operator, who would appoint a **Rest Centre Facilities Manager** to deal with practical aspects of providing physical care to evacuees. The Rest Centre Facilities Manager should report to the overall Rest Centre Manager to ensure that the welfare needs of evacuees are met.
- 5.40. Each organisation within the above five groups should ensure that they have appropriate contacts with other organisations, and especially with Community Trusts, and have made firm agreements on roles and responsibilities within the Rest Centre.

## Staffing

5.41. In general, roles within the Rest Centre fall into two categories:

- Provision of physical care, such as chairs, heat, meals and toilet facilities.
- Provision of welfare care, including entertainment, reassurance, befriending, information about the situation and help to make contact with friends/relatives. Where the event has caused damage to property, people may also need help to make claims from insurance companies or the Social Security Agency.

5.42. **Physical care** is often best provided by the staff who normally run a building and are familiar with its systems. Facilities such as catering are often provided by in-house expertise, but other experienced caterers should be able to provide a service, using the building's facilities. Where some or all functions (catering, cleaning, facilities management etc) are contracted out by the organisation owning the building, roles and responsibilities in emergency situations should be included in contracts and service level agreements. It can be helpful to include a responsibility to contribute to an emergency response in the employment contracts of all staff in a nominated Rest Centre, whether directly employed by the building operator or contract staff.

5.43. If a building is being used for its normal function when the need for a Rest Centre arises, the regular staff will already be present when evacuees arrive, and they will inevitably be involved in setting up and running facilities, whether or not the Rest Centre plan includes them. In such circumstances, they would continue to work under their own managers, who should liaise with the Rest Centre Facilities Manager and the Rest Centre Manager. Those staff not needed for the Rest Centre in the long term should be allowed to return to their normal jobs or to go home as soon as possible. Care should be taken to ensure that they are given the same debriefing and aftercare facilities as planned Rest Centre staff. Facilities support staff, such as cleaners and caretakers, should not be overlooked.

5.44. If staff are not normally employed in a building, or where there is only a caretaker (for example a church or community hall or a building used by a voluntary organisation), it will be necessary to provide appropriate staff, either from other locations or through voluntary organisations. Local people familiar with the building and its facilities may be used, but if this is planned, a callout system should be established.

5.45. **Welfare care** may be provided by a range of organisations, including Community Trusts, voluntary organisations and clergy and faith community leaders. In order to ensure that people receive appropriate help at the right time, Community Trusts will co-ordinate the input of other organisations. In particular circumstances, these will need to be supplemented by specialist input, for example from the Social Security Agency, Compensation Agency or Citizen's Advice Bureau.

5.46. Evacuees may arrive at the Rest Centre disoriented, distressed, and angry. Staff with appropriate training should be available to help and comfort them. Every effort should be made to treat evacuees as individuals and to understand and meet their needs, within the constraints of the overall response.

- 5.47. Provision should be made for particular welfare requirements of evacuees, for example translators for hearing impaired and non-English speaking individuals.
- 5.48. Involvement in running the Rest Centre and dealing with evacuees may have an adverse psychological effect on staff (including volunteers and support staff) in the short-or long-term. They should therefore be offered appropriate psychological support, both at the time of the event and afterwards.

## **Volunteers**

- 5.49. Voluntary organisations are an essential source of assistance for many organisations dealing with evacuees. The established voluntary welfare organisations, such as the Red Cross or Salvation Army, have volunteers who are trained and experienced in providing physical and welfare assistance, ranging from provision of catering facilities to befriending. They already work closely with Community Trusts in many parts of Northern Ireland on day-to-day welfare work, and are therefore well-placed to provide support to Community Trusts in emergency situations. Any voluntary organisation which will supply key resources to a Rest Centre should:
- Have 24-hour contact arrangements, and a capacity to respond on a 24-hour basis. Otherwise the hours within which a voluntary organisation can provide resources should be clearly understood and written into the plan.
  - Be able to give an assured response from an agreed minimum number of volunteers. Plans could allow for the deployment of additional volunteers, should they be available.
  - Ensure that volunteers have the necessary clearances, for example for working with children, and are trained in health and safety requirements.
  - Have its own managers, who would work under the overall direction of the Rest Centre Manager, and who would be responsible for ensuring the health and safety of volunteers.
  - Be prepared to participate in training and exercises.
- 5.50. Such organisations should be fully involved in the planning process, and should be included in Rest Centre exercises and training.
- 5.51. In many situations, people will volunteer their services, without being part of a recognised organisation. Evacuees may themselves volunteer to help with Rest Centre activities. While extra pairs of hands are often welcome, Rest Centre plans should not depend on ad hoc volunteers for staff. Other issues to take into consideration with such volunteers are:
- Safety and security, especially if children or valuables are involved.
  - Hygiene and health and safety issues with untrained volunteers in hazardous locations such as kitchens.
  - Financial or legal liability, if ad hoc volunteers are injured (physically or psychologically) or if activities under their control experience problems.
  - Management and supervision arrangements, including debriefing afterwards.

- 5.52. In general, it may be better to sensitively refuse offers of help. However, where extra people are needed, or if some evacuees would benefit from having something to occupy their minds, an experienced member of staff should be appointed as Volunteer Manager to deploy and manage ad hoc volunteers, keeping in mind the issues above.

## Setting up a Rest Centre

- 5.53. The need for a Rest Centre would normally be notified to the nominated Rest Centre Co-ordinator (usually a contact within a Community Trust) by the overall incident co-ordinator using pre-planned arrangements. However, evacuation is not a tidy process, and people can be in need of shelter before official lines of communication convey the fact. Therefore, should any organisation involved with the welfare of evacuees identify a potential need for such a Centre they should contact the Rest Centre Co-ordinator. On receipt of notification, the Rest Centre Co-ordinator should establish:
- When the evacuation would commence, if it had not already done so.
  - How many people were likely to be involved.
  - What area was likely to be affected, both in the short and long terms.
  - Where people had gone/were going, if the evacuation had already started.
  - Any particular needs the evacuees were likely to have.
- 5.54. Agreement should be reached on what pre-planned Rest Centre would be best suited (or if none were suitable, what premises in the area could be used on an ad hoc basis), so that evacuees could be given directions. Special care should be taken that the number of evacuees would not exceed the maximum number permitted for the venue by safety regulations. The Rest Centre Co-ordinator should initiate the call-out cascade to alert relevant staff to the need to attend.
- 5.55. Ideally, a Rest Centre should be set up and staffed before evacuees arrive. In reality, staff will often arrive at the same time as, or after, the evacuees. It is especially important therefore, that staff know their roles and have practised them in an exercise situation, so that they can activate the full facilities, especially safety-related ones, in a short time and when under pressure.
- 5.56. Where an ad hoc Rest Centre has already been provided for people, the Rest Centre Co-ordinator will decide whether to move people to one of the pre-planned Rest Centres, or to provide services to the ad hoc Rest Centre.

## Records

- 5.57. As mentioned in Chapter 4, on Warning and Moving, efforts should be made to obtain a record of evacuees and their whereabouts. In a Rest Centre, there are additional reasons for wanting to know who is present:
- To ensure that the number accommodated is within the safe capacity for the venue.
  - To plan the delivery of services such as catering.

- To respond to people who enquire directly to the Rest Centre about friends or relatives.
- As a record in case evacuees want to claim in the future for loss or injury incurred in the Rest Centre.
- To ensure that people attending the Rest Centre are genuine evacuees. In the past there has been experience of people coming into the Rest Centre for free food and shelter.

5.58. Some form of registration of evacuees is therefore desirable. The longer the evacuation is likely to last, the more important it is to know who is present and what their needs are. How the registration is to be carried out should be part of the generic Rest Centre plan. Some guidelines are:

- Use a pre-prepared evacuee registration form, which will prompt staff to record all necessary information. The Police use a standard national Evacuee Form, but various other forms are used by other organisations in NI. Work is underway to produce a standardised form which would meet the needs of the key agencies involved, especially the Police and Community Trusts. If more than one organisation needs information from or about evacuees, the registration process should be co-ordinated so that evacuees are not repeatedly asked for information by different people.
- Don't try to gather information at the front door: queues will form outside. The priority is to get everyone under cover and settled comfortably.
- Everyone should be registered, even infants. Parents/guardians should fill in forms on behalf of children.
- Some way of easily checking who has been registered should be devised. Cloakroom tickets have been found useful as a way of keeping track of evacuees, but beware of people perceiving that they are being treated as 'just numbers'. Other methods which have been used include identifying evacuees already registered by giving them labels for their clothes or hospital-type arm-bands, to so as to avoid duplication.
- Information should be collected sensitively, especially if people are distressed. Staff collecting information should try to identify particular physical or psychological needs so that evacuees can be referred on for special help.
- The requirements of the data protection legislation should be understood and met.

## **Security**

5.59. Some form of access control should be exercised. New arrivals should be welcomed, given information on the Centre and directed to relevant services. Names and forwarding address/telephone number of people leaving to take up offers of shelter elsewhere should be recorded, so that they can be taken off Rest Centre records and enquiries re-directed. Journalists should be referred to the organisation co-ordinating the media response – normally the Police or the District Council, although Community Trust Press Officers may also be involved. They should not be permitted access unless this has been previously arranged (see Chapter 7). The bona fides of people claiming to be staff or helpers should be checked. Informal volunteers should be referred to the Rest Centre Manager, or the Volunteer Manager, if there is one.

- 5.60. Some evacuees will bring valuables with them, which will be difficult to protect in communal areas. Rest Centre plans need to consider whether there is secure storage available, and if so, where liability would fall for anything put in safe storage which subsequently is reported missing.
- 5.61. It is desirable to have a Police presence at the Rest Centre, to:
- Gather any information needed for the Casualty Bureau or other investigations.
  - Provide liaison with Police activities in relation to the overall incident.
  - Protect evacuees from the media or other intrusions.
  - Deal with any incidents which may arise. It can be expected that some evacuees may be carrying knives or other dangerous weapons, or may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 5.62. Where a nominated Rest Centre building already has its own security arrangements, the plan should include how, if at all, private security guards should be used, and how they should interact with the Police.
- 5.63. Facilities at a Rest Centre will never be ideal, especially where the evacuation extends beyond a few hours. Concern about the event and about property, coupled with the inevitable stresses of Rest Centre life, can lead to people becoming uncharacteristically distressed or aggressive. Staff should be aware of this possibility and, where possible, some should have training in techniques of reducing stress and defusing conflict situations.

### **Voluntary donations in kind**

- 5.64. Some events will cause loss or damage to evacuees' personal property, including clothing. For immediate welfare purposes, Rest Centre plans should include arrangements to supply evacuees with clean, dry clothes and toiletries.
- 5.65. Broadcast appeals for donations in kind should not be made. Rather, if particular items are urgently required, commercial or voluntary sources should be individually approached. Charities which run shops can often supply a wide range of goods from warehouses and local premises. However, news reports of loss or damage, or of distress caused to children, will often result in offers of replacement goods, clothes, toys etc. In general, such offers should be tactfully discouraged, perhaps by messages in the media that all the evacuees' immediate needs are being met. It is impossible to be sure that donated goods meet legal safety standards, sorting and storage of donations is space- and time-consuming and it is difficult to achieve an equitable distribution.
- 5.66. If goods are donated, sorting and distribution of donations should not be allowed to interfere with the delivery of core welfare services. As no specialist training or knowledge is required to unpack and sort donations, staff in Community Trusts, Councils etc with no input to make to the welfare of evacuees can be asked to help. Finance or personnel branches can be good sources of staff. Alternatively, many charitable organisations regularly receive and sort donations, either for charity shops or for distribution abroad, and they may be willing to undertake this role during an evacuation also. Some local charities also have experience of distributing donated goods to people in need in the community, and their expertise and local knowledge should not be overlooked.

## **Closing down**

- 5.67. A Rest Centre should not be shut down until all evacuees are able to either return safely to their properties or be moved to more suitable temporary accommodation. The fact that an area is available for re-occupation may not mean that everyone can leave the Rest Centre. Where large numbers are evacuated, the return will have to be staged to prevent traffic problems and to ensure security of property. Property may have been damaged and be unsuitable for immediate re-occupation, utilities may have been disrupted and people may need to have return transport arranged for them.
- 5.68. It may be valuable to keep the Rest Centre open as a feeding or drop-in centre until properties are fit for occupation, essential utilities restored, and local support services resumed. Depending on its location and everyday function, the Rest Centre building may have a medium-and long-term role as a focus for the continued supply of welfare services and practical assistance to the affected community. Management of the Centre in this case would fall to an organisation involved in long-term issues, probably the District Council or Community Trust.
- 5.69. Once an evacuation is over, and the building no longer required, every effort should be made to leave the Rest Centre property in a clean and orderly state.

## **Finance issues**

- 5.70. Rest Centre plans should include clear information on which organisations will be responsible for purchase of Rest Centre supplies and equipment, either in advance of or during an incident, and on financial responsibility for any minor work which may be needed to potential Rest Centre buildings to ensure their suitability.
- 5.71. It would be inequitable for building owners/operators to have to bear all the costs of evacuees, such as catering and food costs, additional cleaning and repair of any damage caused. Especially if the building is owned by a community or voluntary organisation, it would be reasonable for any additional costs incurred to be covered by the main public service organisation involved, probably the Community Trust. Where the building is owned by a public service organisation, some incidental expenses, such as extra heating, electricity and overtime payments to building staff could reasonably be carried by the building operator. However, items like additional cleaning costs may still need to be reimbursed. Responsibility for costs, and acceptable accounting procedures, should be agreed between Community Trusts and building operators as part of the planning process.
- 5.72. Costs may also be incurred outside the Rest Centre, for example for evacuees in hotel or Bed and Breakfast accommodation (which, in the case of homeless persons, would fall to the NI Housing Executive) or in private nursing homes. There may also be costs incurred for keeping pets, if they are sent to kennels. Responsibility for these costs should also be agreed at the planning stage, so as to avoid public disagreements over payments after an evacuation.

## **Debriefing**

- 5.73. Following the use of any building as a Rest Centre, all the organisations involved should hold debriefing sessions to identify lessons learned from the experience which could be used to improve future performance, either on that particular site or with Rest Centres generally. The Community Trust should arrange for a multi-agency Rest Centre debrief to be held, if this is not explicitly covered by any general post-incident debrief organised by an emergency service, lead organisation or District Council.

## **Co-ordination and information requirements**

- 5.74. The Rest Centre Manager will co-ordinate all activities within the Rest Centre. This would normally be through meetings of a management team, in which each of the organisations involved in Rest Centre arrangements would participate.
- 5.75. In order to effectively manage the Rest Centre and to anticipate and mitigate problems, the management team will need access to a range of information:
- How many people are in the Rest Centre, what their current and future needs are and what arrangements need to be made to meet them.
  - How the event is progressing.
  - An estimate of when evacuees would be able to return home.
  - What arrangements are being made for the return.
  - Whether any further evacuees can be expected.

### ***Warning and Moving***

The Rest Centre Manager will need to know when the evacuation is complete and whether any further evacuees are likely to require assistance. Information may be required from evacuees on people unaccounted for who may still be in the evacuation zone, and the location of people who may need special assistance to move.

### ***Resettlement, return and reconstruction***

If the evacuation is likely to last more than 24 hours, Community Trusts should contact the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) at the earliest possible stage, to discuss what more suitable temporary accommodation could be made available. Where small numbers are evacuated, NIHE may be able to provide accommodation for periods of less than 24 hours, especially if the evacuation is overnight and families are involved.

- 5.76. There will need to be particularly close liaison between the Rest Centre and the resettlement, return and reconstruction functions. The District Council Chief Executive is likely to have a key role in ensuring this.

# **CHECKLIST: REST CENTRES**

## **Planning for Rest Centres**

What organisation will co-ordinate Rest Centre planning?

What other organisations need to be involved?

Is there a generic plan for activation of Rest Centre arrangements, provision of services and management? What does it need to cover?

Is there a detailed plan for setting up and running each Rest Centre?

How will each Rest Centre be staffed? Are there up-to-date callout lists for each?

Have both generic and individual building plans been updated in accordance with agreed schedules? Have buildings or organisations changed since the plans were last written/revised?

## **Identifying and equipping Rest Centres**

What buildings would make suitable Rest Centres?

- Available and accessible.
- Adequate parking space.
- Disabled access and facilities.
- Sufficient rooms to give different groups their own space.
- Adequate heating.
- Toilet / hygiene facilities.
- Catering facilities – health and safety requirements.
- Adequate and suitable seating and other furniture.
- Entertainment facilities.
- Telephones, fax, e-mail facilities.
- Photocopying and other office facilities.
- Safety risks absent/controllable.
- Access control and security arrangements.
- Pet accommodation.
- Space for sleeping facilities.
- First aid facilities.
- Exercise space, especially for children.
- Quiet areas.

What equipment is required?

- Signs and room labels.
- Identity badges/tabards/armbands for staff.
- Evacuee registration forms.
- Food and drinks.
- Blankets.
- Information sheets on Rest Centre facilities.
- Additional entertainment equipment – computer games, books, magazines, etc.
- Telephone cards or coins for payphones. Telephone directories. Charging points for mobile phones.
- Replacement clothes.
- Toiletries.
- Nappies, baby food and milk, sterilised bottles.

How will evacuees be organised within the Rest Centre?

- Family groups.
- Age groups.
- Single-sex groups.
- Entertainment areas.
- Quiet areas.
- Nurseries.

Have foreseeable social/cultural/religious/language/medical needs been catered for?

Has a risk assessment been carried out for the use of the building as a Rest Centre? Is the Rest Centre safe and secure? Can health and safety and fire safety requirements be met?

How can evacuees communicate with friends / relatives? How can they make enquiries to the Casualty Bureau, if there is one, and how can they be eliminated from Casualty Bureau enquiries?

Who will compile and update Rest Centre lists?

Who should have copies?

## **Activating and running Rest Centres**

How might information on the need to establish a Rest Centre be received?

Who should be informed once any organisation becomes aware of the need?

Once information has been received that a Rest Centre is required, consider:

- How many people are being evacuated and when?
- How long is the evacuation likely to last?
- Is there any indication of how many will require Rest Centre accommodation?
- Has an ad hoc Rest Centre already been opened?
- Where is the most appropriate pre-planned Rest Centre?
- Who has keys and can carry out the initial opening up of the building?
- Who needs to be told? What staff will be required?
- What facilities do the evacuees require?
- Are any arrangements required which are not in the plan? How can they be provided?

What information should be gathered on evacuees, when and how?

Have social/cultural/religious/language/medical needs of evacuees been identified and catered for?

What is being done with any personal possessions evacuees have brought with them?

What arrangements are being made for pets?

What entertainment arrangements are necessary? Do some individuals/groups have particular needs (football matches, soap operas?).

How are the contributions of all organisations being co-ordinated to make sure that no-one is missed or receiving too much attention?

What is being done about informal and ad hoc volunteers? Are there jobs they can safely do? Who will manage them?

Are any material donations being received? What can be done to discourage them (unless they are genuinely needed) and who will store and sort them?

Are shift-working arrangements being made for staff if the situation is likely to continue?

Can alternative, more comfortable, arrangements, other than a Rest Centre, be made for some or all evacuees?

How can evacuees be kept informed of progress with the event which caused the evacuations? What other information do they need and how can it be delivered effectively?

What arrangements are necessary for providing psychological support to evacuees, especially if people are dead or missing or property has been damaged?

What practical support do people need now? What will they need when they are able to return to their properties?

Is it safe for evacuees to return? How will they get back to their property if they have no personal transport?

Does the Rest Centre need to stay open after evacuees have gone, for example to provide catering?

What additional expenses have been incurred by responding organisations, including the building owners/operators? How will they be covered?

Have staff involved in the Rest Centre (including support staff such as cleaners) been debriefed and offered appropriate psychological support?

## CHAPTER 6

### RESETTLEMENT, RETURN AND RECONSTRUCTION

#### Summary

Evacuation itself has few long-term effects on people. However, the event leading to the evacuation can cause damage to buildings and possessions and contamination of the environment. Some people will be unable to return to the evacuated area and they will need to be facilitated to find appropriate alternative accommodation. Before evacuees are permitted to return, public services need to ensure that the area is safe. Damage to the infrastructure of an area: utilities, shops, banks, transport facilities, may result in measures having to be taken by public service and voluntary organisations to help returning evacuees. People returning after an evacuation may need practical and psychological support to enable them to repair and clean their properties and to resume normal life. Possible long-term consequences of the event should be considered and measures put in place to assess and respond to them.

A Public Information Centre, convenient to the area evacuated and staffed by representatives of all the public service and voluntary agencies with services to offer to returned evacuees, is an effective means of providing a co-ordinated 'one-stop-shop' to facilitate recovery of the community.

#### Detail

- 6.1. Most evacuations last a few hours and have no long-term consequences. The evacuees return home and normality is resumed.
- 6.2. Some evacuations are the result of events which alter to some extent the physical or social structure of an area. In such cases, the objective of the responding services will still be to return the area to normality, but it will be a slightly different normality to that experienced before the incident.
- 6.3. This section focuses on situations where an event has caused extensive contamination or physical damage to properties and the infrastructure. However, the principles may also be applied to situations where minor damage has occurred, but where individual property-holders lack the resources to cope with loss or damage on even a small scale. The principles outlined would be valid whether or not the event had led to an evacuation.

#### Resettlement

- 6.4. Some people may be unable to return to their original homes, for physical or psychological reasons. These would include:
  - Vulnerable people who were only just coping prior to the event.
  - People who lack the resources required to repair and restore their properties.
  - People who do not wish to return to their original home area, because of civil disorder.

- Those whose homes are unsafe, or perceived to be unsafe, owing to long-term risk factors.
- 6.5. In these circumstances, evacuees should be helped to find suitable alternative accommodation. The primary responsibility for homeless people falls to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), but input could also come from:
- Community Trusts.
  - Housing Associations.
  - The Social Security Agency.
  - Insurance companies.
  - Voluntary organisations.
  - Relatives and friends.
- 6.6. Some people will be able to eventually return to their properties after a delay of weeks or months. While they are waiting for clearance, they will need very similar support to those who are permanently displaced, and they will also possibly need help with re-occupation when the time comes.

## **Return**

- 6.7. In preparing to return evacuees to their properties, the following issues need to be considered:
- Any forensic or Police investigations which need to be carried out before the area is re-occupied.
  - A damage survey and risk assessment should be carried out to identify hazards to the public, and any remedial action should be taken.
  - Delays in allowing people to return can result in additional losses to property owners, for example through weather damage and loss of business. A realistic balance therefore needs to be struck between safety requirements and the need to facilitate people in getting their lives back to normal.
  - Key infrastructure services (water, electricity, telecommunications) should be available before, or soon after, re-occupation.
  - Plans should be made for a controlled, safe and secure return to evacuated premises.
  - An information campaign may be necessary to inform dispersed evacuees of return arrangements and any actions they need to take for their own health and safety on return. Information should be distributed through Rest Centres, the media and leaflet distribution.

## **Reconstruction**

- 6.8. Reconstruction needs and activities fall outside the scope of this document, as they are common to all emergencies which cause loss of life, injury, damage or pollution, whether or

not evacuation was involved. However, the following should be taken into consideration after an evacuation:

- Where significant damage has been caused, buildings may have to be demolished or substantially rebuilt. This may offer opportunity to make adjustments to the layout of the area or to take actions which would reduce the threat of similar events happening in the future. If it is intended to make changes, the community should be consulted and involved in the decision-making processes. However, experience suggests that it is very difficult to reconstruct buildings and localities except in the same format as previously.
- Materials and manpower may have to be made available to assist with cleaning and decontamination of buildings (inside and out) and the environment, and to remove debris. District Council Environmental Health Officers should be able to advise on suitable materials and procedures.
- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive will repair and restore its own properties, but may also be able to provide emergency safety and weatherproofing services to private landlords and owner/occupiers. Such services, where available, would be subject to the agreement of the property owner and their insurers.
- Not everyone will be able to immediately replace essential belongings lost or damaged. People may need assistance to make insurance or compensation claims and emergency finance should be made available for immediate needs such as food, clothes and fuel. Donation of goods by the general public should be sensitively discouraged as discussed in Chapter 5.
- Access to medical facilities should be provided.
- Actions should be considered to reduce the risk of a repeat occurrence or to mitigate the effects of one.
- Whether or not physical damage or injury is involved, evacuation, and the event leading to it, can cause distress. Formal psychological support is a specialist subject, and should only be provided by, or in association with, Community Trusts.
- Families, communities and social/cultural/religious groups provide informal caring and support networks which will be the first resort for most people. Where these networks are available and active, the statutory and voluntary organisations offering psychological welfare services should seek to support and complement them.
- Some individuals or groups in the community will be less able than others to undertake recovery activities such as house cleaning, or to access services. Effort should be made to tailor post-evacuation support to meet the needs of these individuals and groups.
- The provision of psychological support requires a long-term commitment to individuals and the affected community.
- Children may need special support, including help to come to terms with changes and with integrating back into their schools.
- Staff who have been working on the event, the evacuation and the aftermath can be distressed by what they have seen and heard and stressed by all the extra demands placed on them. Arrangements should be made to offer them psychological support appropriate to their needs and reassurance on confidentiality and employer support.

Staff carrying extra routine work in order to release colleagues should receive regular briefing on what is happening, and the extra stress they experience should be acknowledged.

- Material and psychological welfare are inter-related. In general, the restoration of physical normality should reduce stress on people and promote psychological healing. However, for those who have suffered bereavement, restoring normality may be seen as denying their loss.
- Where an event has had a significant impact on a community, it is normal to acknowledge it with a commemoration event, memorial and/or subscription fund for the benefit of those affected. Anyone involved with providing these should take advice from those with experience of them, and ensure that the whole affected community is given the opportunity to be involved.

## Public Information Centre

- 6.9. Experience has shown that a particularly effective means of co-ordinating the response of organisations in the recovery phase of an emergency is to bring them together in a location which is accessible to those affected, where they can set up temporary offices to deal with immediate needs. Organisations which could be invited to participate in the Public Information Centre include Community Trusts, the District Council, voluntary welfare organisations, the Social Security Agency, Insurance firms, Citizens Advice Bureau or other advice agencies, legal advice services, consumer advice services, and the Compensation Agency (for terrorist incidents only). This 'one-stop-shop' approach allows people to deal with a range of issues without having to attend, or phone, different locations for each organisation. It also allows organisations to meet together and agree their approach to meeting the needs of the community, especially in areas of policy or practice where there are overlaps, 'grey areas' and conflicts of interest. Providing that the Rest Centre is close to the affected area, and readily accessible from it, it may be possible to continue to use that building as a Public Information Centre after evacuees have left. Otherwise an alternative building, with space available for a medium-to-long-term operation should be identified.
- 6.10. The Council Chief Executive would be well-placed to co-ordinate arrangements for a Public Information Centre.
- 6.11. The facilities available at the Public Information Centre should be widely publicised in the community and to community leaders and elected representatives.

## Co-ordination and information requirements

- 6.12. Arrangements for the **return** of evacuees may be co-ordinated by a number of organisations, according to circumstances. Especially if the evacuation is short-term, or related to an emergency event, the Police are likely to play a lead role. For planned evacuations, the lead organisation should plan the return arrangements as part of the overall operation. Where the evacuation goes on for a period of days, it is more likely that the return arrangements will be co-ordinated by the local District Council Chief Executive. Responsibility for co-ordinating the return activities should be agreed by participating organisations as well in advance of the return as possible.

- 6.13. Activities to promote the **recovery** of a local community will normally be co-ordinated by the District Council Chief Executive. The Council Chief Executive is well placed, with local contacts and input from elected members and community groups, to facilitate the coming together of all relevant organisations to make a co-ordinated response to the needs of the community. Some plans for Council responses to emergencies are being developed on a Group basis. Other organisations involved with the response to, and the aftermath of, major local emergencies should ensure that their plans are integrated with those of the Councils. Appendix C sets out the District Council Groups for emergency planning purposes.
- 6.14. In addition to the overall co-ordination role of the Chief Executive there are likely to be a number of subsidiary arrangements required. For example, material and psychological welfare arrangements are likely to be co-ordinated by Community Trusts, while public safety issues may well fall to the Environmental Health and Building Control sections of the Council.
- 6.15. Information on arrangements for resettlement, return and reconstruction would be required for the other functional areas of the evacuation, and in turn those involved in these functions will require information about resettlement and return arrangements:

### **Event**

There are two ways in which the initiating event can influence the recovery phase:

- There may be residual contamination which would have the potential to affect public health or restrict land use.
- There may be an ongoing threat of a repeat incident which would give rise to anxiety in the community.

Information on these factors needs to be taken into account in the recovery phase, especially in deciding what medium-to-long term measures should be considered.

### **Rest Centre**

Information on conditions in the evacuated area and on return arrangements needs to be passed to the Rest Centre Manager, for distribution to evacuees and so that plans can be made to close the Rest Centre, or to continue to provide facilities such as hot meals, if there is damage to buildings or the local infrastructure.

# **CHECKLIST: RESETTLEMENT, RETURN AND RECONSTRUCTION**

## **Resettlement**

Has the NI Housing Executive been consulted at an early stage?

Are there people who cannot return to their properties?

- Immediately.
- In the short-term.
- At all.

What are their options?

- Rest Centre.
- Hotel / B&B.
- Sheltered accommodation (for those unable to resume independent living).
- Alternative housing on a temporary or long-term basis.
- Relatives and friends.

## **Returning**

Are any forensic, technical or criminal investigations complete?

Are there any unsafe structures or serious contamination which have to be dealt with before people return? Who will carry out any remedial work?

Does the return need to be staged to ensure security of property?

Should there be a limited return to enable clearing up, emergency repair or salvage work to be carried out?

Do evacuees need transport?

How can evacuees not in Rest Centres be informed of return arrangements?

## **Practical support**

What practical support do returnees need? What advice can be given to them on safety and public health issues?

How can sources of help and assistance and their locations be communicated to returning evacuees?

Should a multi-agency Public Information Centre be established?

- Location.
- Who should manage and co-ordinate it?
- What organisations should participate?
- How long should it operate for?

If the basic infrastructure is damaged, what help do people need?

- Food.
- Clean water.
- Communications facilities.
- Help with shopping, banking.
- Transport, to visit hospital, the information centre, offices etc.
- Representation.

What organisations have resources or expertise to contribute?

Where can supplies of cleaning materials be obtained?

What advice do people need to help them avoid unscrupulous builders or suppliers?

What immediate financial needs do people have? How can they be met within statutory guidelines?

How can insurance companies help?

## **Psychological support?**

What support services are likely to be required?

Who has the necessary expertise? Who will co-ordinate delivery of services?

How can people be offered help in a culturally appropriate way?

How can information about services and facilities be effectively distributed?

What plans and allowances need to be made for memorial services, anniversaries and similar occurrences?

How is the restoration of the physical environment likely to affect people's psychological welfare? What services need to be provided and advertised?

What long-term arrangements need to be made to support the community?

Have all staff involved been debriefed and offered access to psychological support?

## CHAPTER 7

### THE MEDIA AND EVACUATIONS

- 7.1. Anything but the smallest evacuation will attract media attention. The larger or more significant the event or the evacuation, the greater will be the demand for information and interviews. The public services in Northern Ireland nearly all employ professional Press Officers to manage their day-to-day media relationships. These are also available to assist in dealing with the media in an emergency situation.
- 7.2. The emergency services have well-developed media arrangements. In particular, the Police have a large and experienced Press Office which would normally undertake co-ordination of press activity during the emergency phase of any evacuation. HSS Boards and Trusts and District Councils have media liaison arrangements, although not all would have dedicated Press Officers.
- 7.3. It is important that all organisations responding to an event and/or evacuation co-ordinate their media responses to ensure that a coherent picture emerges. The overall incident co-ordinator, who would usually be either the Police or the District Council Chief Executive, will normally be responsible for co-ordinating local media relations. This does not, however, prevent individual organisations dealing with the press on their own functional responsibilities, provided that the overall press co-ordinator is aware, and that lines to be taken and policy on the release of information are agreed.
- 7.4. Individuals in organisations who are approached by the media for information or an interview should always refer the enquiry to their organisational Press Officer or the overall Press Co-ordinator. Press Offices will arrange to make the necessary communications facilities and accommodation available to the media.
- 7.5. Whatever the cause and location of the evacuation, Northern Ireland Ministers are likely to have an interest in the event, both as to how their departments and agencies respond and as to the effects of the incident and evacuation on constituents. They may want to engage with the media, or may want to be prepared to deal with any media interest which is directed at them, especially if they are 'out-and-about' when an incident happens. Therefore, Press Officers and others who may receive news of an evacuation event (eg the NIO Duty Officer) should ensure that Ministerial Private Offices are notified at an early stage in the evacuation and updated regularly on progress.
- 7.6. Central government Press Officers are divided between a central Executive Information Service (EIS) and departmental Press Officers, out-posted from the EIS to work with a specific department and build up expertise and specialist contacts in that area. The Northern Ireland Information Service (NIIS) provides media services to the Secretary of State and Northern Ireland Office.
- 7.7. If the event falls within the responsibilities of a particular department, or if central government becomes involved at a strategic level, government Press Officers will take the lead in responding to central government media enquiries, in close liaison with Police

and/or District Council Press Officers. If the event becomes too large for a departmental Press Officer(s) to manage, the resources of the EIS are made available. The EIS, NIS and departmental Press Officers provide out-of-hours Duty Press Officer resources.

- 7.8. In an evacuation, the media are an important ally in getting information across to the population. Information strategy will vary depending on circumstances and the phase of the evacuation: details of information which needs to go out, and how it can be distributed, are discussed in the relevant chapters. There is not generally any reason to regard the media as unwelcome, at least as far as the evacuation goes, so the emphasis should be on maintaining a positive relationship with the media representatives who arrive or ask for information. Problems can arise, however, where the numbers of media representatives become overwhelming (and Northern Ireland has a bigger press corps than most places) or where the event leading to the evacuation has caused loss or distress to evacuees.
- 7.9. In most cases of evacuation, the media focus will be on the event which caused the evacuation and the immediate response to it. However, evacuation is in itself a good public interest story and the media will want to cover the Rest Centre and interview the evacuees. The degree to which the media should be given access to buildings and evacuees will depend on the circumstances surrounding the evacuation. Where no particular trauma is involved for evacuees, allowing controlled media access to the Rest Centre and giving evacuees the opportunity to volunteer to be interviewed can take the pressure off other organisations and give the evacuees something to watch and participate in. Care should be taken to give all evacuees the opportunity to participate in or to avoid media approaches, particularly where people may have personal, religious or cultural objections to being filmed or interviewed.
- 7.10. Where there has been loss of life, severe damage to property or evacuees are under particular stress, media access to Rest Centres should be rigorously controlled to protect the welfare and privacy of the evacuees. It may be advisable to have an experienced Press Officer based at the Rest Centre, with Police back-up if necessary. However, outside the Rest Centre no-one has authority to prevent evacuees speaking to media representatives should they wish to do so.
- 7.11. Especially where there has been extensive damage, or where the evacuation has been prolonged, the return of evacuees will be a newsworthy event. Where possible, plans for the media to cover the return should be prepared in advance.
- 7.12. Whilst TV, radio and daily papers are the most immediate means of delivering information in the short term, other communication media can be useful in distributing medium-or longer-term information. Weekly papers, especially those which are delivered free within a particular locality, can reach a wide audience with information on return arrangements after a prolonged evacuation, availability of practical help with recovery activities or how to access psychological support services. Similarly, public places where people go regularly, including shopping centres, community centres and healthcare facilities can display posters, make leaflets available and give space to help desks. A range of options are available for producing and delivering information leaflets to houses and businesses, even at relatively short notice. Web sites and Television Text Services are good methods of getting detailed information across, but not everyone has access to them. However, the media make extensive use of the Web and it can be particularly useful to post information for them, such as press releases and background briefing.

7.13. Some basic principles for dealing with media interest are:

- Maintain good day-to-day working relationships with local media representatives.
- Have an up-to-date information pack available on your organisation and its work to hand out as a first response to the media.
- Make sure that information given to the press is co-ordinated with other organisations. Be careful about releasing information which other organisations may have valid reasons for keeping back.
- Never lie to the media.
- Make interactions positive. Use the media to get your message across, but don't expect them to accept what you say without testing and challenging it.
- If you want something broadcast or printed exactly as you have prepared it, expect to have to pay commercial rates for advertisements and information bulletins.
- Plan for what you can, eg draft initial press statements, draft advertisements and leaflets, contracts with advertising agencies and leaflet printers/distributors, emergency web-sites and television text services pages.

## CHAPTER 8

### PREPARING EVACUATION PLANS

- 8.1. Emergency plans are not dusty documents which sit on a shelf and have no relevance for daily life. Rather, they are dynamic statements of how an organisation will deal with an emergency, what resources it will deploy and how, what management arrangements would apply and how the organisation would interact with other responders.

#### The planning cycle

- 8.2. The initial input to the planning cycle is a draft plan. This may be based on day-to-day operational procedures, the experiences of staff who have responded to an emergency or a plan produced by an organisation with similar responsibilities. The draft plan should be circulated within an organisation and all those who would be involved in responding to an emergency, whether on an operational or management level, should be included to provide comments and input.
- 8.3. When the organisation itself is happy that the plan would be effective, it should be shared as widely as possible with the emergency services and other organisations likely to be involved in the response to the emergency or outcome envisaged. They should be invited to comment both on the plan itself (many will have extensive planning experience) and on how it would interact with their own plans. If it became apparent that there was the potential for overlap or conflict with the response of another organisation, the situation should be resolved by discussion and the agreed procedures or actions written into all relevant plans. It may be advisable to draw up concordats or memoranda of understanding to cover those areas where the action of one organisation has a critical effect on the ability of another organisation to fulfil its role, or where the interaction between two organisations is particularly close.
- 8.4. Once any changes agreed with other organisations have been incorporated into the plan, the final version should be circulated to everyone involved, both inside and outside the organisation. A system should be established to regularly review the plan to ensure that staffing, organisational or accommodation changes are incorporated. All changes should be circulated to the original recipients of the plan (or their successors where the postholder has changed). Recipients should exercise good document security, ie old material should be destroyed as soon as replacement updates are circulated, and copies of plans should not be made or circulated to other people without the permission of the plan owner. More information on preparing plans is available in the Central Emergency Planning Unit document, 'A Guide to Plan Preparation' (see Appendix B: Bibliography).
- 8.5. The plan should not be regarded as complete until it has been tested. There are a variety of ways of testing a plan, mostly involving exercises of some sort. In most cases it would not be appropriate to organise a live exercise of the full plan as a first step in the testing procedure. It may be more advisable to test the plan in parts through a mixture of exercise types before going to the expense of a full live exercise. 'Why Exercise Your Disaster response?', 'The Exercise Planner's Guide' and 'A Guide to Emergency Planning in Northern Ireland' (see Appendix B: Bibliography) contain more information on exercising.

- 8.6. After every exercise, the experience of the exercise players should be recorded and their comments gathered in a debriefing session. The insights gained from the exercise should then be used to review the plan and decide whether changes are necessary to make it more effective. Proposed changes should be discussed with all other organisations involved, in case they have knock-on effects on their plans. Once changes are agreed, the revised plan should be circulated to all original recipients.
- 8.7. Following a real incident, no matter how small, the same process of debriefing and review of the plan should be carried out.

## **Some basic planning principles**

- 8.8. The basic principles underlying emergency planning and response are those of Integrated Emergency Management (IEM). Please refer to 'Dealing With Disaster' and 'A Guide to Emergency Planning in Northern Ireland' for detailed information. In summary, IEM requires plans to:
- Focus on responding to the outcomes rather than the cause of emergencies.
  - Reflect in emergency response activities the day-to-day responsibilities of organisations, including, but not confined to, statutory requirements.
  - Be sufficiently flexible to cover a range of types and scales of emergency, with provision to scale up or down the response as required.
  - Use normal procedures and management arrangements as far as feasible, as these are what responders are familiar with.
  - Be integrated between different parts of an organisation.
  - Be integrated between organisations.

## **Plan contents**

- 8.9. There is no single format which would suit all plans. They should, at minimum, contain:
- A summary of the role of the organisation producing the plan, its management structure and areas of responsibility.
  - A statement of the circumstances covered by the plan, and what the plan aims to achieve.
  - An indication of the events or circumstances which would trigger activation of the plan, how the organisation would learn about an incident, and how a decision to implement would be communicated to the necessary staff.
  - An outline (by post, not name) of individual roles and responsibilities within the plan, with contact details for each.
  - Details of actions to be taken, appropriate to the purpose and aims of the plan.
  - Management arrangements.
  - Arrangements for scaling up or down activities in response to need.

- Arrangements for working with other organisations, including co-ordination arrangements.
- Arrangements for working with the media.
- Arrangements for concluding the emergency response, including consideration of long-term effects of the incident and implementation of any changes which need to be made to everyday or emergency procedures.
- Details of how the plan is to be validated and reviewed, including any training programme required to equip staff to fulfil their roles in the planned response.

## Planning co-ordination

8.10. Evacuation is a complex response to an emergency situation, potentially involving a very large number of organisations from a range of disciplines. The key to providing an effective service to evacuees from the time the decision is taken to evacuate until they are safely resettled either in new accommodation or their pre-evacuation premises is co-ordination. As already indicated in this guide, a number of separate, but interlinked co-ordination arrangements will be required.

8.11. **Co-ordination does not happen spontaneously.** It needs to be planned and practised, not just by those organisations likely to take a lead role but by all responders. However, organisations likely to have lead roles to play in the different functional areas of an evacuation have a particular responsibility to make sure that they can discharge their functions. Organisations most likely to be involved in **overall incident co-ordination** are:

- The emergency services, especially the Police.
- District Council Chief Executives, within their local overall co-ordination remit and as representatives of the community.

Other organisations which would **support** these overall incident co-ordinators by co-ordinating within individual functional areas and/or by contributing to the overall co-ordination arrangements are:

- Other emergency services.
- Organisations owning property or operating sites where there is potential for a hazardous situation to develop, or engaged in activities which carry risks of causing a hazardous situation to develop.
- Community Trusts, with their general duty of care for the welfare of the population.
- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, as a major landlord and with responsibility for housing the homeless.
- Government departments, agencies and NDPBs which deliver services with potential to develop emergency situations and/or which have strategic responsibility for public welfare and safety.
- Voluntary organisations.

8.12. In preparing their own plans, all these organisations should identify the situations in which they could take a lead role and agree these, at local level where appropriate, with the other organisations likely to become involved in an evacuation response. Plans of all organisations should include co-ordination arrangements within relevant functional areas, and arrangements for interaction with the overall incident co-ordinator.

## Practical co-ordination

8.13. Co-ordination of emergency responses can happen on three levels:

- **Operational** (Bronze) – active, hands on response, providing direct services to bring the incident to an end and ensure public safety and welfare.
- **Tactical** (Silver) – management support to operational service providers, ensuring that they have the equipment and manpower required and considering issues such as health and safety of responders.
- **Strategic** (Gold) – medium-to-long term issues about policy, responsibilities and activities of organisations, effects on budgets and future prevention / mitigation strategies.

8.14. Where more than one level of co-ordination is established, information must flow not only within co-ordination groups, but between groups at different levels.

8.15. Many evacuations, even quite large ones, will be dealt with at operational level or operational and tactical levels. The co-ordination discussed throughout this document almost always falls into these two categories.

8.16. In most emergency situations, co-ordination is best achieved by bringing together representatives of organisations involved under the chairmanship of a lead organisation. In most cases, physically meeting is the most efficient means of sharing information and discussing emergency responses, but it is possible to achieve co-ordination by phone contact or correspondence, if time allows. Co-ordination is not about telling individual organisations how to do their own work. It is about:

- Sharing information efficiently and effectively with all organisations with information needs.
- Collating information for briefing senior officers, elected public representatives and the media.
- Sharing information on resource needs and availability and agreeing mutual aid arrangements.
- Agreeing response roles and activities, within the parameters agreed at the planning stage, but taking account of the particular situation encountered.
- Responding quickly to any changes in circumstances, such as escalation of the event.
- Agreeing priorities, if it is not possible to carry out all desirable activities at the same time.
- Looking ahead to identify likely problems and agreeing action to prevent, or mitigate the effects of, them.

- 8.17. For a localised incident (as almost all evacuations are) the Police have agreed a protocol with District Council Chief Executives, which sets out how they will interact in providing overall incident co-ordination during an emergency. This involves the Chief Executive in any tactical co-ordination group formed by the Police during an incident, and allows for the handing of the lead co-ordination role to the Chief Executive at an appropriate point. It is expected that similar protocols will be developed between Council Chief Executives and other organisations, such as Community Trusts. As these are agreed, their contents should be incorporated into evacuation plans and arrangements.
- 8.18. **All co-ordination arrangements should be flexible** and able to respond to situations outside those envisaged in plans or risk assessments. Therefore all organisations should be continually assessing their involvement in co-ordination arrangements during an incident and whether changes need to be made to the membership or chairmanship of co-ordination groups.
- 8.19. The whole process of co-ordination during evacuations can be greatly enhanced by giving local managers the opportunity to meet and establish personal relationships before anything happens. This can be achieved through:
- Regular emergency planning co-ordination meetings held by Council Chief Executives or Council Group emergency planning co-ordinators.
  - Multi-agency participation in local exercises.
  - Inviting other local managers to emergency planning training or awareness-raising events held by individual organisations.
  - Including other organisations in planning activities, for example, not just sending them copies of plans to comment on, but inviting them to meet to discuss them.



### GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

**Assembly Point** – place on the periphery of an evacuation zone where evacuees can gather to get further information, await directions for, or transport to, a Rest Centre and meet up with friends and relatives.

**Business Continuity** - maintaining the viability of a business during a period of disruption due to an emergency situation by ensuring that customers and suppliers continue to receive an acceptable level of service.

**Casualty** – any person who is killed or physically or mentally injured as a result of an emergency situation (this is the definition of ‘casualty’ used in this document: there are other, different, definitions in use, especially in maritime circles, so care should be taken when using the term).

**Casualty Bureau** - central Police Service of Northern Ireland-managed contact and information point for reporting and identification of people thought to be involved in an incident, whether injured or not.

**Casualty Clearing Station** - an area set up at a major incident where casualties are taken for assessment and initial treatment prior to transport to hospitals or other medical facilities.

**CEPU** – Central Emergency Planning Unit, a Unit within the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, which promotes the development of effective Civil Protection arrangements in the public sector in Northern Ireland.

**Civil Contingencies Committee** – a Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Home Secretary which oversees central government emergency planning in England and Wales and which would have strategic oversight of the response to a large-scale emergency affecting the United Kingdom.

**Civil Contingencies Secretariat** – a Unit within the Cabinet Office which has policy responsibility for Civil Protection, specifically for England and Wales but also for trans-UK issues.

**CMG** - Crisis Management Group - the Northern Ireland central government strategic management group in a major emergency.

**Community Trust** – a Health and Social Services Trust which delivers welfare services to the community. The term ‘Community Trust’ is used throughout this document to refer to both a stand-alone Community Trust and a joint Hospital and Community Trust.

**Control** - the authority to direct strategic and tactical operations in order to complete an assigned function, including the ability to direct the activities of other agencies engaged in the completion of that function. The control of the assigned function also carries with it a responsibility for the health and safety of those involved.

**Co-ordination** - the harmonious integration of the expertise of all the agencies involved, with the object of effectively and efficiently bringing the incident to a successful conclusion.

**Cordon** - line defining an area of restricted access at the site of an incident.

**Coroner** - a legal official charged, along with a coroner's jury, with ascertaining the cause of death in cases of accidental or unexpected death or death in suspicious circumstances.

**DARD** - the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

**DCAL** – the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

**DE** – Department of Education.

**Dealing with Disaster** - a Cabinet Office publication outlining UK central government policy on emergency management and offering advice on good practice. Concentrates on emergency management for England and Wales, but the principles apply to NI.

**DEL** – the Department for Employment and Learning.

**DETI** - the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

**DFP** – the Department of Finance and Personnel.

**DHSSPS** - the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

**Disaster Appeal Scheme (DAS)** - a scheme run by the British Red Cross for setting up a disaster appeal quickly, but having regard for all the legal requirements and with prearranged systems for collection of donations.

**District Council** – any one of the 26 local Councils in Northern Ireland, including those normally called City or Borough Councils.

**DOE** - the Department of the Environment.

**Domiciliary care** - care given in the home to the elderly and disabled, including home helps, meals on wheels and attendance by care assistants.

**DRD** – the Department for Regional Development.

**DSD** – the Department for Social Development.

**Emergency event** – an incident or occurrence which requires an immediate response (usually one beyond the normal abilities of a single organisation to deliver) to bring the situation under control and restore normality, and which can threaten the health or safety of those involved, responders and people in the surrounding area.

**EPPoG** - the Emergency Planning Policy Group - a strategic public service emergency planning policy forum.

**Evacuation** - the process by which people are moved away from a place where there is immediate or anticipated danger to a place of safety, offered appropriate temporary welfare facilities and enabled to return to their normal accommodation / activities when the threat to safety has gone, or to make suitable alternative arrangements.

**EIS** – the Executive Information Service, which supplies central Press Office services for the Northern Ireland Departments, as a supplement to those provided by Departmental Press Offices.

**Facilities Manager** – see Rest Centre Facilities Manager.

**HMCG** - Her Majesty's Coastguard, a part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

**IEM** - Integrated Emergency Management, a structured approach to civil protection, the principles of which are set out in 'Dealing With Disaster'.

**Lead organisation** - the organisation which has primary responsibility for providing the response to an emergency and for co-ordination of the input of other responding organisations.

**LGEMG** – the Local Government Emergency Management Group, the policy co-ordinating group for District Council emergency planning.

**Media Liaison Point** - an identified point where media representatives arriving to cover an incident can get initial briefing and find out where to go to be accredited, what facilities are being provided and how the media response is being managed.

**MLA** – Member of the [Northern Ireland] Legislative Assembly.

**NDPB** - Non Departmental Public Body, a body which has a role in the processes of national government, but which is not a government department, or part of one, and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arms length from Ministers. Different types of NDPB exist. In emergency planning terms the most important are executive NDPBs which carry out a wide range of administrative, regulatory, executive or commercial functions on behalf of Government.

**NIAS** - Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

**NIFB** - Northern Ireland Fire Brigade.

**NIHE** – the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, responsible for the provision of public housing and accommodation for homeless persons.

**NIIS** - the Northern Ireland Information Service, the Northern Ireland Office Press Office.

**OFM/DFM** – the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

**Operational Control** - the control and co-ordination mechanism for the direct operational response to an incident. Also called the **Bronze Control**.

**Operational response** – the active, hands-on response to an incident, providing direct services to bring an incident to an end and ensure public safety. Also called **Bronze response**.

**Police Incident Commander (PIC)** – the senior Police Officer in charge of co-ordinating the response to an incident.

**PSNI** - Police Service of Northern Ireland, referred to throughout this document as ‘the Police’.

**Public Information Centre** - a place where people affected by an emergency can go to get advice on how to deal with practical and welfare problems.

**Rest Centre** - building where people evacuated from premises can go to receive appropriate shelter and welfare care until they can return to the evacuated area or be otherwise accommodated.

**Rest Centre Co-ordinator** – the person or contact point, usually from a Community Trust, nominated by the Community Trust to co-ordinate the setting up of a Rest Centre on receipt of notification of the need, or potential need, for one to be established.

**Rest Centre Facilities Manager** – the person, usually someone responsible for the day-to-day management of the premises involved, who manages the provision of physical services such as heating and on-site furnishings and equipment, in a Rest Centre. The Rest Centre Facilities Manager would work closely with the overall Rest Centre Manager.

**Rest Centre Manager** – the person, usually from a Community Trust, who has overall responsibility for the delivery and co-ordination of welfare services to evacuees in a Rest Centre.

**Rivers Agency** – an Executive Agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development responsible for flood defence and land drainage.

**RNLI** - the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a voluntary organisation which provides lifeboats round the coasts of the British Isles, and on Lough Erne.

**Roads Service** - an Agency of the Department for Regional Development, responsible for road building and maintenance.

**RV Points** - rendezvous points, where emergency services vehicles congregate at the scene of an incident. May be set up by the initial response vehicle on an ad hoc basis or may be predetermined for a fixed site.

**SCG** - Emergency Services Senior Co-ordinating Group - the Northern Ireland emergency services’ strategic policy group.

**SOLACE** - the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.

**Strategic Control** - the control and co-ordination mechanism for providing strategic policy support to an incident. Also called **Gold Control**.

**Strategic Response** – the response to an incident which considers medium to long term issues about policy, responsibilities and activities of organisations, effects on budgets and future prevention / mitigation strategies. Also known as **Gold response**.

**Tactical Control** - the control and co-ordination mechanism for providing tactical support to the operational control. Also called **Silver Control**.

**Tactical Response** – the response to an incident which provides management support to operational service providers, ensuring that they have the equipment and manpower required and considering issues such as health and safety of responders. Also known as **Silver response**.

**Telecommunications** - in this document includes the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), internal networks such as those managed by the NI Civil Service and the Police Service, mobile telephone networks and data links for fax, electronic mail and communications between computers.

**Translink** – publicly-owned transport company operating Citybus, Ulsterbus and Northern Ireland Railways.

**Utility** - a company supplying an essential service to the public - usually taken as electricity, gas, drinking water and sewage disposal and emergency telephone services.

**Volunteer Manager** – someone appointed, usually by the Rest Centre Manager, to co-ordinate the input of volunteers, especially ad hoc volunteers, into the running of a Rest Centre or other activities.

**Water Service** – an Agency of the Department for Regional Development, providing water and sewage services.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following documents contain further information on general principles of emergency planning.

**Dealing With Disaster**, Third Edition, the Cabinet Office (ISBN 185 893 9208), available from: Brodie Publishing, 110 – 114 Duke Street, Liverpool, tel 0151 707 2323. Price £7.50 plus £2.00 p&p, or the Cabinet Office UK Resilience publications site:  
[www.ukresilience.info/contingencies/cont\\_publications.htm](http://www.ukresilience.info/contingencies/cont_publications.htm)

**A Guide to Emergency Planning in Northern Ireland**, available from the Central Emergency Planning Unit, Northern Ireland, 1st Floor, Arches Centre, 11-13 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5HD, tel 028 9052 8862, or on the CEPU website: <http://cepu.nics.gov.uk>

**Northern Ireland Standards in Civil Protection**, available from the Central Emergency Planning Unit, Northern Ireland, 1st Floor, Arches Centre, 11-13 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5HD, tel 028 9052 8862, or on the CEPU website: <http://cepu.nics.gov.uk>

Guidance on specific aspects of planning is available from:

**A Guide to Plan Preparation**, available from the Central Emergency Planning Unit, details as for 'A Guide to Emergency Planning in Northern Ireland'.

**Disasters: Planning for a Caring Response**, Disasters Working Party. The Stationary Office (ISBN 0 11 3213700).

**Wise Before the Event: coping with crises in schools**, by William Yule and Anne Gold. Published by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, London, 1993.

The following are available on the Cabinet Office UK Resilience publications site:  
[www.ukresilience.info/contingencies/cont\\_publications.htm](http://www.ukresilience.info/contingencies/cont_publications.htm)

**Standards for Civil Protection in England and Wales.**

**Civil Protection Magazine.**

The following are available on the Cabinet Office UK Resilience business advice site:  
[www.ukresilience.info/contingencies/cont\\_bus.htm](http://www.ukresilience.info/contingencies/cont_bus.htm)

**How Resilient is Your Business to Disaster?**

**Why Exercise your Disaster Response?**

**Exercise Planner's Guide.**

**Recovery: an Emergency Management Guide.**

**Business Continuity Management – Preventing Chaos in a Crisis.**

The following are available from The Emergency Planning Society, Northumberland House, 11 The Pavement, Popes Lane, London, W5 4NG, e-mail [headquarters@emergplansoc.org.uk](mailto:headquarters@emergplansoc.org.uk).

**Peoples Rights - Organisational Wrongs** (Conference Transcript), Price £10 members / £15 non-members inc p&p

**Responding to Disaster, the Human Aspects**, Price £10 inc p&p

**Transportation of Dangerous Goods – the emergency response.** Price £5 members / £10 non-members inc p&p.

Other useful publications:

**Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.** The Stationery Office. ISBN 0 11 300095 2

**The Event Safety Guide:** a guide to health, safety and welfare at music and similar events. The Stationery Office. ISBN 0 7176 2453 6

**Guide to Fire Precautions in Existing Places of Entertainment and Like Premises.** The Stationery Office. ISBN 0 11 340907 9

### DISTRICT COUNCIL GROUPINGS FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING

Within the Local Government Emergency Management Group (LGEMG - the co-ordinating group for overall District Council policy and practice in emergency planning), the Northern Ireland District Councils are represented on the basis of Groups, based on the Environmental Health Groups. This should assist other organisations with identifying appropriate emergency planning contacts in District Councils. However, even if some District Councils group together for emergency planning purposes, individual Chief Executives will continue to have responsibility for some planning and all response activities within their own Council areas.

Organisations likely to be involved in any aspect of emergency planning and response are encouraged to contact both the Groups and individual Chief Executives to ensure that roles, responsibilities and co-ordination arrangements are clearly defined. The Groups are represented on LGEMG by Group Chief Environmental Health Officers and the Chief Executives of the Employer Councils for Environmental Health purposes, and Belfast City Council is represented by the equivalent officers.

The Groups are:

**Belfast City Council** – because of the large population and concentration of risks within the Belfast City Council area, the Council has its own planning process and Emergency Co-ordination Officer. For further information contact the Emergency Co-ordination Officer on 028 9027 0428.

**Northern Group:** Ballymena Borough Council\*, Ballymoney Borough Council, Moyle District Council, Coleraine Borough Council, Larne Borough Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council, Newtownabbey Borough Council, Antrim Borough Council, Magherafelt District Council, Cookstown District Council. For further information contact the Group Chief Environmental Health Officer on 028 2565 0190 (Group switchboard).

**Southern Group:** Armagh City and District Council\*, Craigavon Borough Council, Banbridge District Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council, Newry and Mourne District Council. For further information contact the Group Chief Environmental Health Officer on 028 3751 5800 (Group switchboard)

**Western Group:** Omagh District Council\*, Strabane District Council, Derry City Council, Limavady Borough Council, Fermanagh District Council. For further information contact the Group Chief Environmental Health Officer on 028 8224 5321 (Council switchboard).

**Eastern Group:** Castlereagh Borough Council\*, Ards Borough Council, Lisburn Borough Council, Down District Council, North Down Borough Council. For further information, contact the group Chief Environmental Health Officer on 028 9049 4570 (Group switchboard).

\* denotes Employer Councils for Environmental Health Groups.