

Aberdeenshire Community Resilience Framework



Aberdeenshire in common with many communities across the country has faced several significant crisis events over the last decade where our collective response has been challenged; Storms Desmond and Frank in late 2015 and early 2016, our response to significant global events such as COVID-19, the tragic train derailment in August 2020 and most recently the winter storms of 2022/2023.

While each event is different, they all share common factors, which can happen with or without warning, Emergency services, and the Council can be stretched with competing demands for resources and a willingness by many people, be they volunteers or responders to step forward to help is vital.

This Framework document is designed to set out how we can collectively enhance resilience in Aberdeenshire over the next five years.



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Following the winter storms of 2022/23 there were excellent examples of resilience across Aberdeenshire both at an individual level and at a community level. There were examples where individuals or communities may have wanted to do more but weren't sure how they could best contribute.

Traditionally resilience has been viewed through the lens of services that the council, other responders, or community groups can provide.

However, the winter storms of 2021/2022 taught us that responders can also be affected by an emergency and as individuals and households we may need to be resilient ourselves.

Reflecting on those emergency events we recognise that across Aberdeenshire we need to collectively enhance resilience at Individual, Household, Family and Community levels.

Resilience can be thought of as the rungs of a ladder. The bottom rung is having individuals who are resilient, who have the basics skills and knowledge to manage on their own until help arrives, or the emergency is resolved. Those who live together can use their shared skills to make their home more resilient and using networks of friends and families to help each other manage. Finally, resilient individuals, households and families can come together with others to be resilient communities.

The Scottish Government¹ define resilience as:

“ Communities and individuals harnessing resources and expertise to help themselves prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, in a way that complements the work of the emergency responders”.



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Aberdeenshire Council Community Resilience Framework is to collectively enhance resilience by:

- Defining the role of Aberdeenshire Council and Responders before, during and after an emergency
- developing a strategic set of objectives to enhance community resilience
- fostering stronger partnerships between community groups, practitioners and responders
- developing the capability and capacity of individuals, households, families and communities to be more resilient
- increasing connectedness between individuals, households, neighbours and families
- guiding future resilience thinking and practice for Aberdeenshire.

BENEFITS

By having a Community Resilience Framework for Aberdeenshire, we will be able to:

- clarify the role of responders and their scope in developing resilience activities
- having a clear set of engagement principles for the Council
- develop policies and programmes that specifically enhance resilience activities in Aberdeenshire, offering opportunities for communities to influence emergency related outcomes
- lay the groundwork for an effective response and a strong and rapid recovery after an emergency event.

LINKS TO EXISTING PLANS OR FRAMEWORKS

Improving resilience is already identified by partners across Aberdeenshire as a key area of concern.

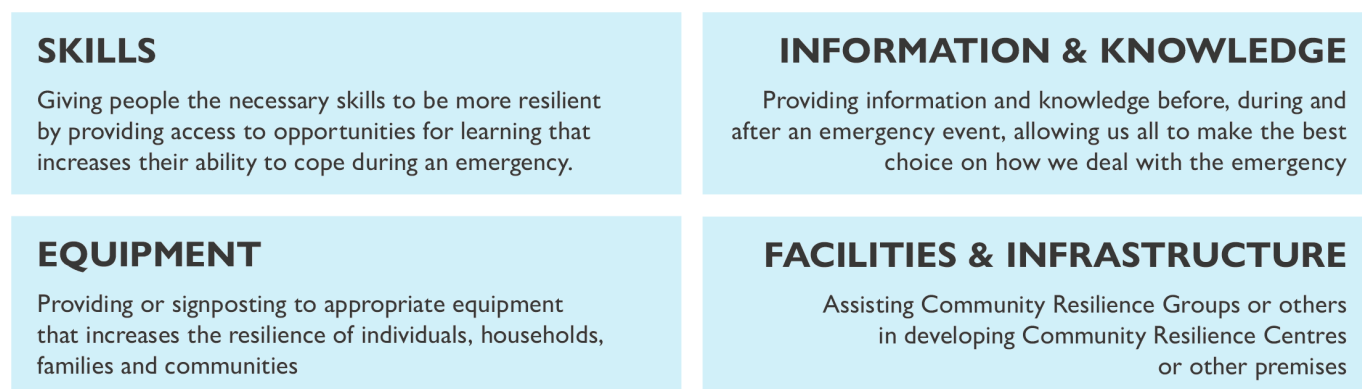
- Aberdeenshire Council Plan
 - Resilient Communities
 - Health & Wellbeing
 - Climate Change
- Aberdeenshire Local Policing Plan 2020/23
- Community Planning Partnership
 - Connected and cohesive communities
- SFRS Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2021
- NHS Grampian Strategic Plan 2022-2023
- Aberdeenshire H&SCP Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025
- Your area | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (firescotland.gov.uk)

OUR PRINCIPLES

We recognise that in most emergencies Community Resilience is delivered by those closest to the event and our role as responders is to give individuals and groups the tools, they need to be most effective and operate as enablers. We will do this by:



We will deliver this across Aberdeenshire by focusing on Skills, Information & Knowledge, Equipment, Facilities & Infrastructure



ONE SIZE DOESN'T SUIT ALL

A CONTINUUM OF ENGAGEMENT

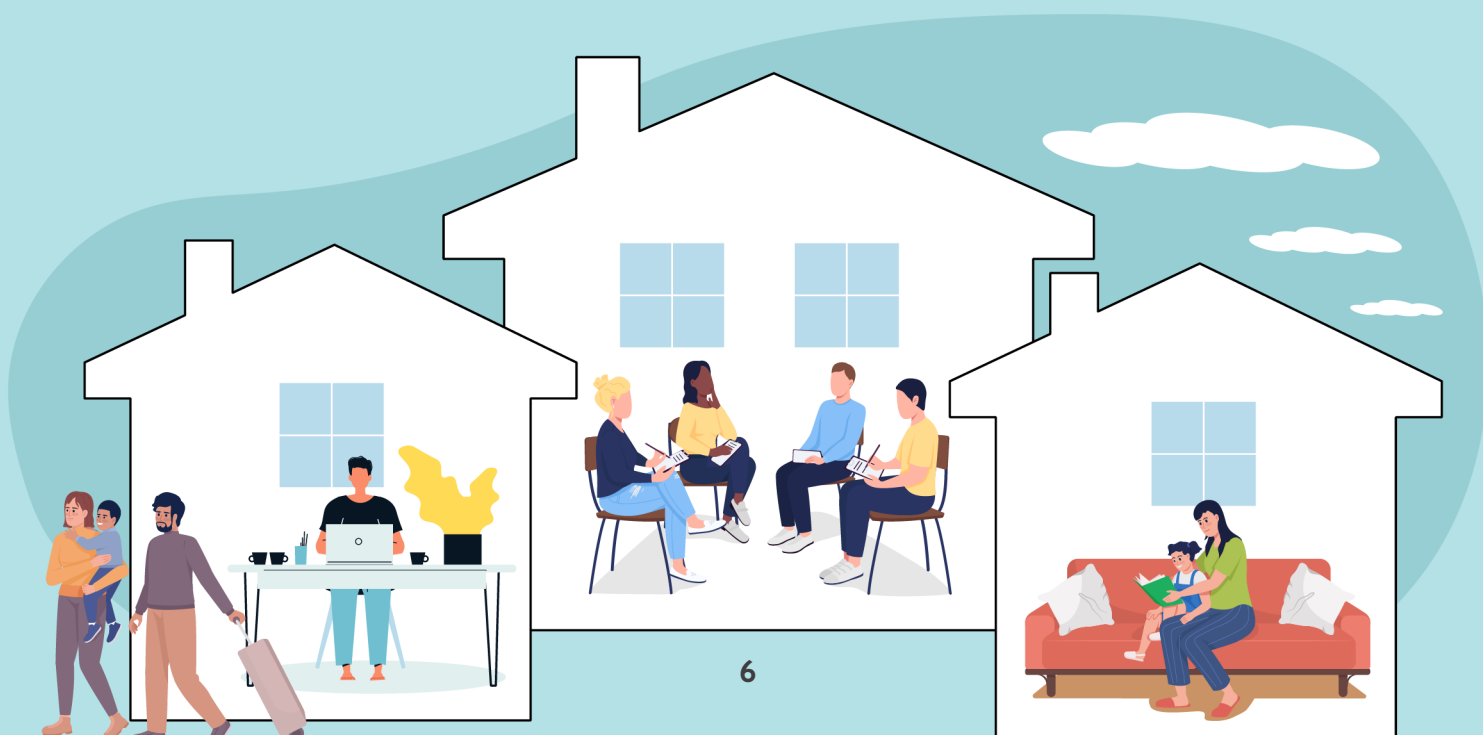
Individuals, Households, Families and Communities have competing priorities for their time, money, and energy and planning for something that may never happen isn't high on most people's list of personal priorities. Families also have differing levels of financial resources.

Consequently, one of the principles behind this Strategy is to enable individuals, households, families, and communities undertake as much preparation and preparedness as they are comfortable with. It will support everyone to take small steps towards preparedness. As people become increasingly engaged, they can access many other opportunities to connect with their community and enhance their resilience.

By facilitating a range of opportunities, some of which are entirely driven by the community, Aberdeenshire Council can connect with diverse interests and build resilience with different individuals and groups at different levels. By enabling individuals and organisations to decide what resilience solution is best for them, greater ownership of the outcome is produced. To achieve this, we will use existing networks as well as seeking out new partnerships.

Some people will have an affinity towards preparedness and will engage in activities that require significant time or money such as joining a Community Resilience Group or investing in strengthening their home. Others, perhaps the majority, will have minimal interest in preparedness and simply follow social media pages or sign up for warning alerts.

Volunteer time is precious, and this strategy is designed to support each person's preferred level of engagement as being right for them. The responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council and our partners is to provide a way for everyone to engage in a way that is appropriate for their interest and needs.

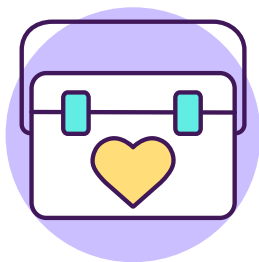


COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TOOLS

WHAT WE ARE ALREADY DOING

TOOLS FOR BUILDING CAPABILITY

When starting their resilience journey individuals, households, families and groups often feel overwhelmed. There can be many challenges and difficulties. In Aberdeenshire we have begun work to simplify the approach to resilience by producing a suite of documents that make it easy to develop resilience arrangements at any level. In addition to accessing information, we will instigate the following:



Household Emergency Packs for distribution in an emergency



Community Resilience Packs for use by Council and Community Responders



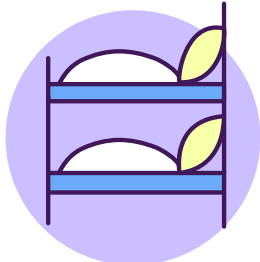
Develop Technical Communications Solutions



An example of already established resilience projects is the Publicly Accessible Defibrillator Scheme which is supported by Aberdeenshire Council. These devices are commonplace on Council buildings across Aberdeenshire and allow the public access to life saving equipment in an emergency.



Develop a series of guidance documents to help Community Groups set themselves up to be Resilient



Review our approach to the provision of council Rest Centres



Explore a Facilities Improvement Project to improve resilience infrastructure across Aberdeenshire

TOOLS FOR BUILDING CAPACITY

Building Capacity is about supporting anything that increases the knowledge, skills, resources and abilities of individuals and groups to develop resilience activities. In partnership with SSEN, Aberdeenshire Council has earmarked funding to allow Community Groups to bid for funds to establish resilience projects. Following Community Feedback, we are establishing a Skills Development Project as individuals may be more resilient during an emergency if they had basic skills in the following:



Digital skills for Community Groups



Winter Driving



First Aid



Interpreting weather warnings



Flood Prevention Workshops



Basic Household Maintenance



Sharing information on other training opportunities, which would improve resilience

TOOLS FOR INCREASING CONNECTEDNESS & CO-OPERATION

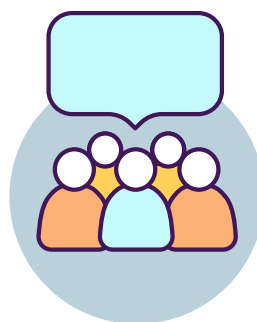
Through our post 2021 and 2022 Winter Storms engagement we established that while there was lots of good resilience practice many groups were unaware the experiences of their neighbours. We know that volunteer time is precious so we will:



Develop ways of sharing good resilience practice on a regular basis



Develop a dedicated resilience website for Aberdeenshire



Host an annual Resilience Conference to make it easier for individuals and groups to be active.

Increasing level of engagement

	Informed	Involved	Collaborative	Shared Leadership
Increasing Capability	Sign up to your local Community Resilience Social Media Page	Attend a skills development course e.g. winter driving	Set up a Community Resilience Group	
Increasing Capacity	Seek Emergency Preparedness Info Sign up for emergency text alerts	Purchase an Emergency Kit	Work with neighbouring community groups to increase the reach of projects	
Increasing Connectedness and Co-operation		Attend Resilience Briefing Conference	Groups have established Welfare Hubs	Present at a Resilience Conference

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL?

When an emergency occurs help will first be provided to those who need it most. Most of us will be prepared and able to cope on our own for some time. The better prepared we are as individuals, households, and families the greater the opportunity we will have to help others that do not have the same ability to cope.

Before an emergency we will:

- ✓ Provide consistent, easily accessible guidance on how to prepare for and be more resilient during an emergency
- ✓ Suggest reasonable ways where you can take steps to protect your home
- ✓ Work with Community Groups to help them develop their Resilience Plans for local areas
- ✓ Where possible provide information in advance of an emergency occurring particularly in relation to weather events
- ✓ Publish our Plans

During an emergency we will:

- ✓ Warn and inform those affected by the emergency
- ✓ Focus our response on the most vulnerable
- ✓ With partners prioritise where resources will go
- ✓ Establish Rest Centres for individuals displaced by an emergency
- ✓ Support Community Resilience Groups who choose to assist in the response
- ✓ Support the Emergency Services

Following and emergency we will:

- ✓ Learn from the collective experiences of all those involved
- ✓ Share the learning
- ✓ Promote recovery



THE EMERGENCY SERVICES (Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service) WILL

Roles and Responsibilities – Police

- Protect life
- Co-ordinate the multi-agency response in the absence of alternative co-ordination arrangements being agreed
- Protect and preserve the scene and investigate the incident
- Prevent crime and disorder
- Collate and disseminate casualty information

Roles and Responsibilities – Fire

- Save Life
- Protect the Environment
- Provide assistance in support of local communities
- Render humanitarian aid

Roles and Responsibilities – Ambulance

- Save Life and prevent further suffering
- Facilitate Patient Triage
- Provide casualty treatment and transport to the most appropriate facility
- Co-ordinate all health resources supporting the incident



WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM UTILITY COMPANIES

All utility companies have arrangements in place to support communities when disruption occurs. Like other responders it can take time for supplies to be restored or help to arrive. We strongly suggest that those who consider themselves vulnerable register as 'Priority Services Customers' with SSEN, Scottish Water and SGN.

You can register for all three PSR Schemes at one place 'Psrscotland.com'. Individuals can, households can, families can, communities can:

- Sign up for alerts from the Met Office, SEPA and Aberdeenshire Council
- Prepare a basic household resilience kit
- Improve your understanding of resilience
- Prepare a Home Emergency Plan
- Learn new skills to aid you in an emergency
- Prepare a Community Resilience Plan



WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Fire Safety Advice – including how what to do in a power cut

Register as a Priority Services Customer with your utility companies

Developing an Emergency Plan

SEPA Flood Advice