Aberdeenshire Community Resilience Framework

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INTRODUCTION

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 recent winter storms and disruptive weather events. All of these events have the potential to impact on a community in both the long and short term. While each event is different, they all share common factors and 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 be a positioning document outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Services and Aberdeenshire Council; and how community resilience groups can contribute safely and effectively alongside these agencies.

In conjunction with this framework document a series of advice notes and templates have been produced to provide the operational or technical detail for community resilience groups. These can be accessed on the Aberdeenshire Council Website Ready communities - Aberdeenshire Council

The Council's emergency plan is an internal document which details how the council responds to any emergency and sets out the roles and responsibilities of council services, elected members and the structures to manage a response.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Following recent winter storms and disruptive weather events 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, recent disruptive weather events have 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.

The Scottish Government[1] 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".*

There are different levels of resilience, which can be built upon. The first level is to have individuals who are resilient, who have the basic skills and knowledge to manage on their own until help arrives, or the emergency is resolved. The next level is those who live together using 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.

Resilient Communities

Resilient Families

Resilient Households

Resilient Individuals
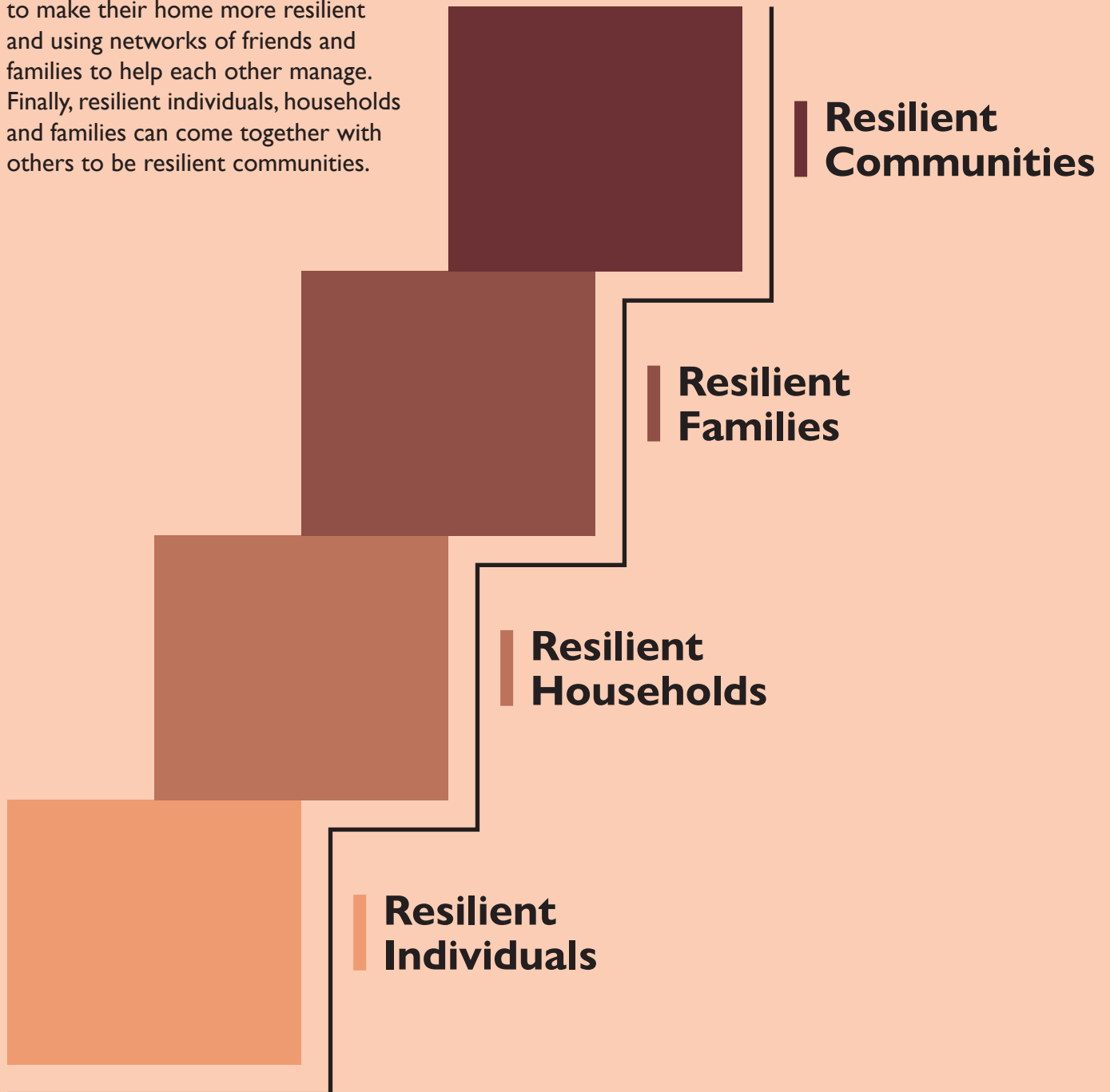
PURPOSE

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

- have a clear set of engagement principles for the council

- develop policies and programmes that specifically enhance resilience activities in Aberdeenshire, offering opportunities for resilience groups to support their community in an emergency

- 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 2023/26

- SFRS Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2024 Currently being updated
- NHS Grampian Strategic Plan 2022-2028
- Aberdeenshire H&SCP Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025

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:

CAPABILITY

We will work to improve the ability of individuals, households, families and communities to be resilient by giving the skills, information and knowledge to be more effective in their response.

1.

CAPACITY

We will support individuals and groups who wish to build and improve their skills, information and knowledge, also by the provision of equipment, facilities, and infrastructure

2.

4C's

Our framework will build on the four 'C's approach of Capability, Capacity, Connectedness & Cooperation.

CONNECTEDNESS

Supporting activities that create and strengthen relationships, foster trust, subsidiarity, reciprocity, and interdependence by facilitating opportunities to improve resilience.

3.

Increasing connectedness is the process of creating and strengthening relationships between individuals and organisations that result in stronger communities. Aberdeenshire Council will support, but not lead, traditional, non-emergency related community development activities that improve resilience.

CO-OPERATION

4.

Fostering cooperation is the process of bringing diverse individuals, organisations, and communities together for a common emergency-related purpose. Aberdeenshire Council will work with everyone who has a stake in building resilient individuals and communities to create and/or facilitate outcomes that improve the abilities of individuals, households, families, and communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from an emergency event.

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

SKILLS

Giving people the necessary skills to be more resilient by providing access to opportunities for learning that increases their ability to cope during an emergency.

INFORMATION & KNOWLEDGE

Providing information and knowledge before, during and after an emergency event, allowing us all to make the best choice on how we deal with the emergency

EQUIPMENT

Providing or signposting to appropriate equipment that increases the resilience of individuals, households, families and communities

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Assisting Community Resilience Groups or others in developing Community Resilience Centres or other premises

ONE SIZE DOESN'T SUIT ALL
A CONTINUUM OF ENGAGEMENT

Individuals, households, families and communities have competing priorities for their time, money, and energy. 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 Framework 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 empowering 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.

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	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

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:

Develop technical communications solutions

Develop a series of guidance documents to help community groups set themselves up to be resilient
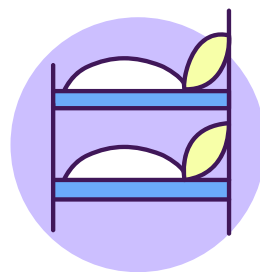
Review our approach to the provision of council rest centres

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

It is important that volunteers know how to keep themselves safe in an emergency by not exceeding their capability, understanding risks and not becoming part of the emergency. Further guidance is available in advice notes on Ready communities - Aberdeenshire Council

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 which will facilitate skills development in areas identified by Community Resilience Groups as being important for increasing individual and community resilience in any emergency.

## TOOLS FOR INCREASING CONNECTEDNESS & CO-OPERATION

Through debriefs and workshops following disruptive weather events we established that while there was lots of good resilience practice many groups were unaware of 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
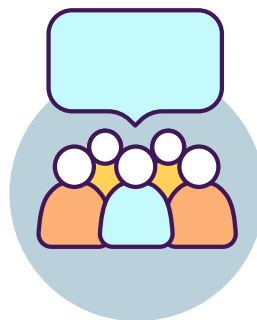
Host an annual Resilience Conference

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

DURING AN INCIDENT THE EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PARTNERS WORK TO A SET OF COMMON OBJECTIVES.

Generally, they are:

- **To save life and reduce harm**
- **Mitigate/minimise the impact of the incident**
- **Support a return to a new normality**

In addition, each agency has specific areas of responsibility.

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 all 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 an 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

- ☑ protect 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

There are a range of other services which may be called in to support an emergency by the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (GLRP); this may include the Coastguard, Armed Forces and voluntary sector organisations such as COTAG or the British Red Cross.

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 Scottish Gas Network..

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?

Please click on the following links for more information

Ready Aberdeenshire - Aberdeenshire Council

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

Register as a Priority Services Customer with your utility companies

Developing an Emergency Plan

SEPA Flood Advice