



Communities Prepared: how we can help you

What is Communities Prepared?

Communities Prepared is a nationwide community resilience scheme led by community charity Groundwork in partnership with Cornwall Community Flood Forum and Cornwall College Business, working closely with the Environment Agency and other organisations. With backing from the National Lottery Community Fund until October 2021, we are helping communities across the country to develop their preparedness and resilience to challenges such as flooding, snow, severe weather, public health emergencies and utilities failures, by providing training, advice and support. This is available both in person and via our new online community resilience hub, which will be launched in September 2019.

As a result of the project's pilot phase, which ran from 2016 to 2018, there are now 300 volunteers from over 30 communities in South West England who have the knowledge, resources and confidence to be able to prepare for, respond to and recover from flooding and other emergencies.

"It was great to be part of such a massive team effort. We door knocked and handed out evacuation letters. We used the plan to book the hall and call on our tea ladies. The high-vis clothing is so cosy! The flood wardens got lots of compliments from the [emergency] services and residents!"

Cllr Joyce Duffin, Portreath Flood Group Coordinator, whose village was flooded shortly after the group completed their training and exercised their flood plan in December 2017

"You should be very pleased with the results of the activity. It made a huge difference and the whole process so much more responsive. A huge thank you from me. The group was awesome!"

Arthur Roberts, Resilience and Emergency Officer at Cornwall Council, in response to the same event

How can we help communities?

Communities Prepared takes a holistic approach by helping communities be better prepared, not only for flooding but for a range of emergencies that they might face. It does this in several ways, giving volunteers the resources, skills and confidence to cope with a variety of scenarios. Our approach is centred around in-person training and support, tailored to the needs and interests of each community we work with. The online hub will complement this, featuring a range of community resources, our adaptable and downloadable modular training and train the trainer programme, a members' forum, advice and support.

As part of the support on offer, we can assist communities to work effectively with other stakeholders (such as Category 1 and 2 responder agencies and the third sector) and to facilitate improved multi-agency cooperation in supporting community resilience, helping to make the task of dealing with multiple organisations less daunting for community groups working in this area.

We are also working with partners to trial and roll out a nationally recognised community resilience 'branding', so that the contribution of volunteers to the overall resilience family can be properly recognised and integrated in the planning, operational, and recovery phases.

What support will communities receive?

The table below sets out what we can offer, but this depends on what each community needs.

Item / activity	Description
Online hub membership area	All communities will be able to access all of our online resources (see below), simply by creating a free account on the website in order to become a member of the programme
Online hub members' forum	All members will have access to this, providing a safe, moderated space to share advice and experiences with other members and the project team
Online resources	All members will be able to access these for free, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downloadable and adaptable training modules, handbooks and other materials • Downloadable and adaptable train the trainer materials, teaching plans and tools • Advice on preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies • Example and template community flood and emergency action plans • Community development and fundraising advice • Communication resources, templates and examples • Community stories (case studies) • FAQs • Useful links to external sites • Interactive live map of Communities Prepared emergency volunteer groups nationwide
Live feeds and notifications	The website will provide live updates on weather and flooding from the Met Office and Environment Agency, as well as relevant social media feeds
E-store	We will be partnering with an external supplier for members to purchase items such as PPE, equipment and first aid kits. Printed training handbooks will also be available to purchase.
Face to face training and support	<p>This is provided by trained project staff or partners, either at a local venue and tailored to an individual community, or as a group session for several communities in a region.</p> <p>Communities Prepared training starts with two modules to give communities an overview of the wider emergency response family and a community group's role within this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident Management Part 1: Introduction to emergency response (delivered by Groundwork / emergency services) • Incident Management Part 2: Procedures and planning for Community Emergency Volunteers (delivered by Groundwork) <p>Each group can then choose additional training modules to suit their needs, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood Volunteer Training Part 1: Understanding Flooding (delivered by GW / EA) • Flood Volunteer Training Part 2: Flood Risk Awareness (delivered by GW / EA) • Snow Volunteer Training (delivered by GW / Highways Authority) • Utilities Volunteer Training (delivered by GW / Local Utilities Company) • Public Health (including Heatwaves / Drought) Volunteer Training (delivered by GW / Local Authority Public Health) • Highways Volunteer Training (delivered by GW / Highways Authority) • First Aid Training (delivered by British Red Cross / St Johns Ambulance) • Working with Vulnerable People (delivered by GW / Local Authority Public Health) • Major Incident Training (delivered by GW / local police / local FRS) • Crowd Marshal Training (delivered by GW / local authority emergency planning team) • Coordinator Training (delivered by GW) <p>Please contact the team for a full list of available modules.</p>

	<p>These courses each last approximately 1.5 hours and can be combined into half day, evening or full day sessions, depending on what each community would like to cover.</p> <p>Further support and advice can also be provided on the following areas as required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance • Risk assessments • Volunteer recruitment and roles • Writing, updating or exercising an emergency plan • Property level protection • Communicating activities and achievements to a wider audience • Fundraising • Digital inclusion, including use of the online hub • Wider community development issues <p>As part of the support on offer, meetings or calls will take place between project staff, the community coordinator and other local partners to understand the local interest and need, plan for and review the training, and identify any requirements for further support or refresher training.</p> <p>In addition, we will also offer an annual webinar to communities who have received our support, providing an opportunity to check in on each group's progress and plans, and to share experiences with others.</p>
Refresher training	<p>Refresher training can either be run in person or as an online module, featuring a reminder of the training courses, and a simple multiple choice test for groups to remind themselves of what was covered during the training above and identify any further support needs. Certificates will be awarded on completion of this training.</p>
Face to face train the trainer workshops for coordinators	<p>These are delivered by trained project staff or partners, to a small group of community coordinators. The training can either be held locally and tailored to a specific area or delivered in a central location to a group of coordinators from across a wider region.</p> <p>Both options provide an opportunity for coordinators to learn how to train new community volunteers in the topics set out above, and to meet and share experiences with each other.</p>
Wider awareness raising meetings and events	<p>We can also work with our partners to organise and run local community awareness raising events, helping community members to understand the potential risks and impacts of flooding and other emergencies, and how to become better prepared for this. These can be tailored to different audiences, from school children through to Parish Councillors or local businesses, and can be a useful precursor to the in depth training and support. It can also be a good way of generating more interest in a community emergency / flood volunteer group, for example if there is a need to recruit more members.</p>
Online volunteer database and training record	<p>The online hub will include a restricted access database for coordinators to keep volunteer training records, ensuring that they are aware of each volunteer's capabilities, and enabling reminders for refresher training to be issued. Volunteers' next of kin details can also be stored here (with permission), should an incident happen to the volunteer on duty. With permission, partner Cat 1 & 2 agencies can also be given limited access to this database, to provide them with contact details of coordinators and information on volunteer availability and training records, for use during emergency call-outs and to assist in arranging training.</p>
Access to advice line and email	<p>During office hours (Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm), project staff will be available to provide advice and support on the areas listed above via phone, email or the members' forum. Contact details will be made available for all members on the website.</p>

How much will this support cost?

Every community that would like support from the programme will need to become a member by completing a simple online registration process. At the basic level this will be completely free – meaning that if, for example, a coordinator would like to look around the website, download training resources to adapt and use in the community and share experiences with other members they can do that at no cost.

However, we recognise that in many cases communities will need more support than this. They might have the makings of an emergency volunteer group but really need help with recruiting more members and working out what their roles will be. Or a group may be in place but have no idea where to start with writing an emergency action plan, or only have an out of date plan that was written years ago. They might even have a plan that looks great on paper but have never exercised it to make sure it actually works, or shared it with other relevant stakeholders.

Communities Prepared can help communities to address these challenges and more, through flexible membership packages tailored to local priorities and needs. Our most comprehensive training and support offer can help a fledgling community volunteer group get off the ground, become well established with clearly defined roles, understand their local risks, write and exercise an emergency plan, know what other organisations are responsible for in an emergency and how to work with them, be kitted out with PPE and other equipment, and learn how to train new members in the future, as well as offering ongoing tailored support and advice including refresher training.

For each community that would like our support, we can build a package tailored to local needs and work with the group to identify and secure funding to enable them to access it – meaning the costs won't come out of the community's own pocket. Please contact us to find out more.

How much time will it require?

This really depends on the support needed and what the community wants to do. As an illustration, an existing flood or emergency volunteer group which signs up for our introductory training modules and support with their community emergency plan could expect to make the following commitment:

Time required for initial training and group set-up tasks		
Activity	Coordinator hours	Volunteer hours
Initial planning meeting / call with project team	1	0
Introductory event in the community	3	2
Follow up call to agree next steps and support required	1	0
Intro training session part 1	2.5	1.5
Intro training session part 2	2.5	1.5
Follow up call to agree further support required	1	0
Writing / updating emergency plan	8	2
Exercising / testing the plan	3	2
TOTAL HOURS	22	9

(N.B. this is likely to be over a 4-5 month period)

Beyond this, the following kind of commitment could be expected:

Time required for training and general admin moving forward		
Activity	Coordinator hours	Volunteer hours
Training module (each)	2.5	1.5
Group admin (this depends on the number of roles)	1/week	0
Train the trainer and coordinator networking sessions	6/annually	0
Refresher training / further support as required	4/annually	3/annually

Of course, if a group is at the stage where it still needs to secure insurance, write risk assessments and develop communications materials, or wishes to set up monthly training sessions in order to cover a variety of topics, this will require more time – the timings above are guidelines.

What's next?

Communities Prepared currently runs until October 2021, but we are working to secure funding to continue to operate over the longer term. The online hub will be launched in September 2019 but we are inviting some communities to help us test the resource before it goes live, and our in-person training and support is available now – so please get in touch to discuss how we can help you.

Where can I find out more?

To find out more and discuss the support available, please email the Communities Prepared team at communitiesprepared@groundwork.org.uk or give us a call on 01179 103930.

You can also:

- Visit the Groundwork South website: www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/south/pages/communities-prepared-south
- Sign up to our newsletter for all the latest information: <http://bit.ly/CPrepared>
- Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/communitiesprep>
- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/CommunitiesPrepared