



# Quick Reference Guide to Emergency Arrangements in Belfast

## Record of Alterations

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## Table of Contents

Record of Alterations .....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
1 Overview .....	4
2 Risk Assessment, Horizon Scanning & Monitoring Arrangements .....	5
2.1 <i>Belfast Local Risk Assessment</i> .....	5
2.2 <i>Belfast Incidents List</i> .....	5
2.3 <i>Belfast Events List</i> .....	5
2.4 <i>Pre-Designated Emergency Arrangements for Events</i> .....	6
2.5 <i>Cruise Ships</i> .....	6
2.6 <i>Tension Monitoring</i> .....	6
2.7 <i>Belfast Suicide Prevention Community Response Plan</i> .....	6
2.8 <i>Severe Weather Risk Assessment Protocol</i> .....	7
3 Response & Recovery Arrangements .....	8
3.1 <i>Belfast Resilience Emergency Contacts Directory</i> .....	8
3.2 <i>First Responders Framework</i> .....	8
3.3 <i>Belfast Resilience Flood Plan</i> .....	8
3.4 <i>Belfast Resilience Public Information &amp; Media Plan</i> .....	9
3.5 <i>Joint Protocol for the Co-ordination of Road Clearance Activities in Response to a Major Incident or Public Disorder</i> .....	9
3.6 <i>Joint Protocol for Strategic Road Network</i> .....	9
3.7 <i>Belfast Resilience Emergency Support Centres Plan &amp; Quick Reference Guide</i> .....	9
3.8 <i>Voluntary Sector Capabilities Summary</i> .....	10
3.9 <i>Business Capabilities Summary</i> .....	10
3.10 <i>Belfast Resilience Mass Fatalities Plan</i> .....	10
3.11 <i>Recovery Plan</i> .....	11
4 Site specific multi-agency plans .....	12
5 Escalation/Linkages to Regional Plans, Co-ordination and Guidance .....	13
5.1 <i>CCGNI Protocol for Multi-Agency Co-ordination of the Local Level Response</i> .....	13
5.2 <i>CCGNI Protocol for Escalation of the Multi-Agency Response</i> .....	13
5.3 <i>Additional CCGNI Protocols</i> .....	13
5.4 <i>Regional Plans</i> .....	14
6 Other documents of note .....	15

## 1 Overview

Organisations have always responded to emergencies individually and each organisation maintains responsibility for producing and maintaining its own emergency arrangements and internal business continuity plans.

By their nature, emergencies will often require a number of public service organisations to work together in a co-ordinated manner to deliver an effective and seamless response. It is recognised that the public and elected officials have increasingly high expectations that this will occur.

The work of Belfast Resilience members has helped organisations in Belfast to build a shared understanding of what each organisation can and cannot do to support the public and each other during emergencies. Much of this shared understanding has now been documented and multi-agency plans and protocols continue to be developed and reviewed to agree how the members of Belfast Resilience will seek to use their expertise and resources together in a co-ordinated way.

In recognition of the complexity of the topic it was agreed that this Quick Reference Guide should be developed to list the current multi-agency plans, protocols and arrangements. This should assist emergency planners, responders and the public to become more familiar with the existing arrangements in Belfast<sup>1</sup>.

If you require further information on any of the items listed in this plan, please contact the Belfast Resilience Programme Manager Claire Carleton on 028 90320202 ext 3767 or [carletonc@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:carletonc@belfastcity.gov.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this guide, Belfast is defined as all areas within the Belfast City Council boundaries.

## **2 Risk Assessment, Horizon Scanning & Monitoring Arrangements**

Rather than simply react when emergencies occur, a number of local arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the organisations in Belfast can pro-actively identify risks which they need to plan for, review their previous responses to incidents and horizon scan what is happening in Belfast that may lead to an emergency response being required. This section provides an overview of how this is currently undertaken.

### ***2.1 Belfast Local Risk Assessment***

The Belfast Local Risk Assessment provides an overview of all the generic hazards which have been identified as applicable to Belfast e.g. severe weather, industrial and transport accidents, human and animal health issues etc. The likelihood and impact of each risk is assessed and the risks are then plotted on a chart to identify current priority work-streams for the Belfast Resilience Forum.

Whilst the Local Risk Assessment is protectively marked it can be provided to Belfast Resilience members on a need to know basis in hard copy.

A regional Risk Register is prepared by OFMdfM Civil Contingencies Policy Branch to support the emergency planning which is required at a Northern Ireland level. This document is also restricted. A National Risk Register for Civil Emergencies is prepared by the Cabinet Office and a public version is available online.

### ***2.2 Belfast Incidents List***

The Belfast Resilience First Responders Working Group maintains a list of incidents that have occurred in Belfast and which led to a multi-agency response beyond the normal day to day response of the emergency services. This enables organisations to have an overview of the type of incidents occurring in Belfast. A list of any lessons learned from these incidents is also maintained and used when updating plans and delivering multi-agency training.

### ***2.3 Belfast Events List***

A list of key events occurring in Belfast is emailed on a monthly basis to each member of the Forum who wishes to receive it. The list includes:

- Events in larger buildings e.g. Waterfront Hall, Ulster Hall, Grand Opera House, Odyssey Arena
- Parades
- Cruise ship visits
- Large scale sporting, cultural or community events.

### ***2.4 Pre-Designated Emergency Arrangements for Events***

Any group in the Forum can suggest that a large event requires pre-designated emergency arrangements. A template document is then completed to show:

- A summary of the event i.e. location, time, number of attendees, transport arrangements, road closures etc
- Emergency arrangements i.e. pre-agreed rendezvous points (RVPs), marshalling points, emergency support centres etc
- Contacts for the event organiser and emergency responders on duty at the time.

This document is then shared between the relevant responding organisations and the event organisers prior to the event.

### ***2.5 Cruise Ships***

Approximately 60-65 cruise ships visit Belfast each year, usually between March and October. Due to the numbers on board (up to 4,400) a list is prepared each month to show which large building would be available as an emergency support centre if the cruise ship was required to be evacuated for any reason. This list is shared with all the relevant agencies in advance.

### ***2.6 Tension Monitoring***

There is a multi-agency tension monitoring group in Belfast. If there are any issues which may lead to an emergency, they will liaise with the emergency planning representatives in the relevant organisations to keep them apprised of current tensions.

### ***2.7 Belfast Suicide Prevention Community Response Plan***

The Community Response Plan for Belfast has been developed by a multi-agency steering group to co-ordinate the response to suicides in the city and support families and local communities to deal with the aftermath of a death by suicide and where possible prevent

further deaths. If an individual or number of individuals in a community dies by suicide a multi-agency team will meet to respond and to provide support to the bereaved community. If they urgently require a building to do this, they can use the Belfast Resilience Emergency Support Centre Plan arrangements to identify and get a building opened quickly.

### ***2.8 Severe Weather Risk Assessment Protocol***

This protocol is enacted by the Met Office when they have concerns about an upcoming weather pattern. Under the protocol the Met Office requests Belfast City Council to organise a multi-agency conference call and all the participating organisations then discuss any actions which are required. The conference calls can then continue until co-ordination is no longer required.

### **3 Response & Recovery Arrangements**

This section lists the current emergency plans, protocols and site/location specific emergency plans which are in place in Belfast. All multi-agency arrangements should align with the relevant organisations single agency emergency response plans. Each participating organisation maintains responsibility for ensuring that this is the case.

#### ***3.1 Belfast Resilience Emergency Contacts Directory***

The Belfast Resilience Emergency Contacts Directory provides the contact details for approximately 60 organisations which could be involved in an emergency in Belfast. This includes office hours and out-of-hours contact arrangements as well as a brief summary of what the organisation can assist with in emergencies.

The Directory is updated twice yearly by Belfast City Council and is then shared with a pre-agreed list of organisations.

Similar directories exist in the other four First Responder Group areas outside Belfast.

#### ***3.2 First Responders Framework***

The First Responders Framework was developed by the emergency services to agree the multi-agency response procedures for emergencies. It covers:

- The definition, declaration and stages of an emergency/major incident
- Main functions of the emergency services and other organisations
- Command, control and communication
- Multi-agency co-ordination
- Scene assessment and management
- Support arrangements
- Stand-down procedures and transition to recovery.

#### ***3.3 Belfast Resilience Flood Plan***

The Belfast Resilience Flood Plan outlines how organisations will respond before, during and after a flooding incident. It covers:

- Weather monitoring and warnings
- The alert and initial response arrangements for a coastal/tidal flooding incident
- Types of flooding events

- Levels of response to flooding incidents
- Organisational roles and responsibilities
- Multi-agency response co-ordination
- Sandbag provision.

### ***3.4 Belfast Resilience Public Information & Media Plan***

The Public Information & Media Plan outlines how organisations will work together to warn and inform the public and work with the Media in emergencies. It includes topics such as:

- Holding statements
- Reassurances and spokespersons
- Controlling media access to the scene
- Creating an emergency media centre
- Working with local broadcasting organisations
- Social media arrangements
- Contact details for the media representatives from Belfast Resilience member organisations
- A link to the regional collaborative communications protocol for emergencies.

### ***3.5 Joint Protocol for the Co-ordination of Road Clearance Activities in Response to a Major Incident or Public Disorder***

This protocol outlines how NIFRS, PSNI, BCC and Roads Service will work together following a major incident or public disorder to ensure that roads in Belfast are made passable as soon as possible after an incident.

### ***3.6 Joint Protocol for Management of Major/Critical Incidents on the Strategic Road Network (Belfast Urban Region)***

This protocol between PSNI Urban Area and Roads Service Traffic Information Control Centre (TICC) outlines the actions to take to maintain the strategic road network in and around Belfast following a major/critical incident. It includes details of how to co-ordinate an effective and efficient response and outlines the arrangements for communications, the provision of joint information, command and control, traffic management and liaison with support services.

### ***3.7 Belfast Resilience Emergency Support Centres Plan & Quick Reference Guide***

Emergency Support Centres are buildings which are opened to provide assistance to the public during emergencies. There are three types:

- Emergency Rest Centre
- Survivor Reception Centre
- Friends & Relatives Reception Centre.

The plan outlines the functions of these centres and how they will be activated and operated. The quick reference guide then lists all the buildings in Belfast which have been pre-agreed and risk assessed as suitable for these purposes.

### **3.8 Voluntary Sector Capabilities Summary**

The Voluntary Sector Capabilities Summary provides an overview of what the participating voluntary organisations can do in an emergency e.g. provide food, shelter, transport, clothing etc. It is a useful quick reference guide to avoid having to contact a number of voluntary organisations to find out if they can provide practical support with a given issue in an emergency. It also clarifies what assistance will be provided free of charge and what will incur a cost.

### **3.9 Business Capabilities Summary**

The business capabilities summary is a new document which is currently being drafted. It will become a living document which is continually updated as private businesses choose to include their details on it. It will contain a list of services/products which these organisations could provide in an emergency and on what basis i.e. cost recovery, other terms and conditions. Examples include private buildings which could be used as Emergency Support Centres and retailers/accommodation providers which could list services they could provide in an emergency.

### **3.10 Belfast Resilience Mass Fatalities Plan**

The Belfast Resilience Mass Fatalities Plan outlines how organisations will work together to provide an efficient and timely recovery and identification of deceased victims, reunite them with family members and facilitate police, coronial and other investigations. It provides guidance on:

- The mass fatality process
- Activation
- Roles, responsibility and co-ordination
- The provision of a resilience mortuary at various levels of response.

### **3.11 Recovery Plan**

The Recovery Plan outlines how organisations will work together to recover from a major incident/emergency. The main plan provides an overview of the recovery processes, structures and the roles of various organisations. This is supplemented by a number of appendices providing detail on a range of specific issues such as:

- A template to agree the tactical recovery objectives, impact assessment and recovery action plan
- Providing community assistance centres
- Humanitarian needs, physical and psychological health issues
- Financial aid
- Building surveying and damage mapping
- Business and community recovery
- Utilities, waste and environmental impact.

#### **4 Site specific multi-agency plans**

A number of site specific multi-agency plans have been developed to provide additional detail on the specific issues and response arrangements in these locations:

- Belfast Harbour Emergency Plan (maintained by Belfast Harbour)
- George Best Belfast City Airport Emergency Orders Part 1 & 2 (maintained by George Best Belfast City Airport)
- Casement Park Emergency Plan (maintained by PSNI A District)
- River Lagan Major Incident Plan (maintained by the River Manager, River Lagan)
- The Queen's University Belfast Major Incident Plan (maintained by QUB)
- Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Offsite Plans (maintained via HSENI by their contractor)
- Premier Transmissions External Procedure (maintained by Premier Transmissions).

These plans also align with the generic emergency plans outlined in the section above.

## **5 Escalation/Linkages to Regional Plans, Co-ordination and Guidance**

### ***5.1 Civil Contingencies Group (NI) (CCG(NI)) Protocol for Multi-Agency Co-ordination of the Local Level Response***

This protocol notes that where a lead agency, district council, emergency responder or essential service provider becomes aware of an emergency with multi-agency impacts they can convene a Belfast (or other sub-regional) multi-agency emergency response group.

This would be convened and chaired by PSNI if the emergency services (first responders) have a primary role in responding to the incident or there is a threat to life. In all other circumstances it would be convened and chaired by Belfast City Council unless it is agreed that it is more appropriate for it to be convened and chaired by another organisation e.g. the Public Health Agency. When PSNI is chairing, if a need is identified Belfast City Council can co-ordinate the contributions of responding organisations not directly concerned with the main strands of the response.

### ***5.2 CCGNI Protocol for Escalation of the Multi-Agency Response***

Escalation arrangements from a local to a strategic response are provided via the CCG(NI) Protocols. If two or more relevant organisations identify the potential need for escalation to the strategic level they can make a request through the Civil Contingencies Policy Branch of OFMdFM or if more appropriate through the Lead Government Department. Either route will convene a multi-agency assessment group which will determine if regional strategic co-ordination should be established through activation of the NI Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA) Protocol.

### ***5.3 Additional CCG(NI) Protocols***

The following protocols were also developed by CCG(NI) and should be implemented in Belfast in an emergency:

- Toolkit on Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable People – a protocol to assess the impact of the emergency on vulnerable people and identify any actions required. This toolkit also covers the use of Land and Property Services Spatial NI GIS mapping system to provide information on vulnerable people in emergencies. Spatial NI already contains a range of information which is of use to emergency responders and additional data can be added during an emergency if it can be provided in a suitable format.

- The Collaborative Communications Protocol which outlines how the Executive Information Service (EIS) can assist the lead co-ordinating organisations with public information and media arrangements.

### **5.4 Regional Plans**

A range of regional plans also exist, which may require a local response in Belfast including:

- For human health emergencies, the DHSSPS Emergency Response Plan (strategic) or the Public Health Agency/HSCB/BSO Joint Response Emergency Plan (tactical) which are maintained by DHSSPS and PHA/HSCB/BSO respectively and linked to the Health & Social Care Trust Major Incident Plans (operational)
- The Northern Ireland HSC Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response Guidance (maintained by DHSSPS)
- Anti-Viral Collection Points MoU (maintained by HSCB)
- For incidents involving epizootic diseases, the General Contingency Plan for Epizootic Disease and the DARD & Council Epizootic Diseases MoU (maintained by DARD)
- Northern Ireland Fuel Plan (maintained by DETI)
- Council Mutual Aid Protocol (maintained via LGEMG)
- For BCC to obtain additional contractor support in recovery, the NIHE Call-off Contracts (maintained via LGEMG).

## 6 Other documents of note

The following national documents have been produced in relation to specific topics but would be referred to in Belfast:

- **The needs of faith communities in major emergencies: some guidelines** – this document provides an overview of the needs of various faiths in emergencies and is a valuable reference document
- **Military Aid to the Civil Authorities** – subject to availability and Ministerial approval, this outlines services which could be provided by the MoD in civil emergencies.