Our community resilience toolkit
How far have we come and where are we going?
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This is a toolkit for helping community resilience groups understand and tell others about the difference their group makes.

Introduction

What and who is this toolkit for?
If you are involved in a community resilience (CR) group, or thinking about setting one up in your local area, this toolkit is for you. As you probably know, people don’t always understand what community resilience means or the many benefits having a local group can bring.

This toolkit guides you through simple processes that help explain and prove the difference your group makes and why it needs to continue.

Why should we bother using it?
The role of local community resilience groups is an increasingly important one and yet many people are unaware of their existence and what they do. Using this toolkit could help your group:

- Recognise and develop good practice that keeps your community as safe as possible
- Communicate the difference your work as a group makes and get others on board
- Demonstrate the need for your group that could lead to support from local partners or funders

How did it come about?
This toolkit has come out of a series of meetings with 9 community resilience groups across Scotland. The Scottish Government’s Community Resilience Team (SGCRT) partnered with Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) to find out about the successes and challenges that local groups experience.

Subsequently a dedicated CR group of volunteers, including 4 local young people and the CR council lead, gathered at Eyemouth fire station in the Borders to work with ESS on ideas for an evaluation toolkit. They identified their definition of community resilience and simple ways of capturing evidence of the difference they make. If you want to find out more, you can read the full report here which gives further information about who was involved, what was achieved and what we learnt.

This resource is by no means exhaustive and recognises that CR groups vary in size, environment and stage of development. There are links to the Evaluation Support Scotland website throughout for further support if you get stuck.
About community resilience

Scottish Government defines ‘community resilience’ as: Communities able to function well, socially, economically and environmentally when faced with uncertainty, change and adversity caused by emergencies.

People in community resilience groups describe it simply as:

- How a community responds to an emergency
- Using local knowledge and strengths
- Working together to help each other out
- Community spirit

Why do communities need to be resilient?

During an emergency first responders will prioritise helping the most vulnerable; in the meantime there is a lot that communities can do to help themselves. Scotland has over 300 CR groups that are able to act immediately when their community, or individuals within it, are in danger. Typical emergencies include: flooding, snow and icy conditions, power cuts and missing persons.

But being resilient goes beyond keeping people safe:

It also helps people to have stronger social connections to each other. So when we consider what the ingredients of a good CR group are, we also need to bear in mind the additional community benefits like: learning new skills, a sense of self-worth, and getting to know other people in your community. Even though this might happen anyway, your group plays an important role; acknowledging this helps bond the group and encourage others to get involved.

This isn’t about doing the job of the emergency services. It’s about supporting your community and those in it by making sensible preparations and using the skills and knowledge the community has.

Ready Scotland Website
Let’s get started

How you choose to use this toolkit will depend on a number of factors. Community resilience groups come in many different shapes and sizes with varying levels of activity, depending on:

- How likely it is and the frequency that emergencies happen
- The size of your community
- Who lives in your community e.g. older, younger or vulnerable people
- Or whether a sense of community and neighbourliness already exists.

Some of the groups we worked with were keen to grow, develop and branch out into other activities whereas others need to keep their CR activities as light touch as possible. We fully acknowledge that CR groups are run by local people who are prepared to give up their valuable time.

You therefore may not feel the need to read the guidance word for word or try all 4 of the tasks in this toolkit. Just have a go at the bits that feel appropriate and useful for your group.

There are links to the Evaluation Support Scotland website throughout for further support.

This toolkit is divided into 5 sections:

01: OUTCOMES
What difference does our group make?

02: INDICATORS
What changes will let us know we’re making a difference?

03: METHODS
What information would be useful to gather?

04: ANALYSIS
Where do we keep it and what are we learning from this information?

05: REPORTING
How will we tell others about the difference our group makes?
What are we measuring?

Before you can work out the difference your group is making – what’s working and where improvements could be made, it helps to agree simple statements that describe what you want to achieve. At ESS we call these outcomes. You can find further support with writing outcomes on our website here.

The people we worked with talked about the practical challenges of keeping the group going and what was important to achieve. They summed this up as:

**Our CR group is strong and well organised**

They also talked about the impact of their group on the local community and what they hoped to achieve for them:

**Our community feels safe and is prepared for emergencies**

And they also felt it was important to measure the added benefits around building ‘neighbourliness’:

**Local people become more community-spirited**
TASK ONE: Writing outcomes

Set aside some time for your group and consider together what you want to achieve:

a) For your group to enable it to keep going and

b) For your community to develop its resilience

Agree a statement or outcome for each. Feel free to use the examples in this toolkit if they work for you.

Top tips:

- Use simple language
- Avoid too many outcomes – we would recommend no more than 3
- Keep them short and to the point
What does success look like?
We asked the working group to use the examples on the previous page and come up with ‘success statements’ that would let them know they were achieving these outcomes. These are sometimes called indicators. Your indicators help you decide what information you will need to collect. You can find further support with writing indicators on our website [here](#).

The working group came up with a lot of indicators, so to avoid creating too much work, the group selected 4 statements for each outcome that they felt were the most appropriate and relevant for them. Your group may have different indicators depending on your particular community’s needs.

**Please note:** No one expects you to become evaluation experts. By choosing your indicators it will give you a broad idea of what to listen and look out for and what feedback to ask for from the community. This will help you measure to what extent your group is achieving its outcomes.
TASK TWO: Writing indicators

Take the third outcome example: **Local people become more community spirited** and have a go at filling in the indicators. You may want to brainstorm all the statements you can think of between you, then prioritise 4 that are the most appropriate and relevant for your group.

Or if you prefer you can do the same with your own outcome/s.
Measuring community-spirit?

CR group members tell us that local people are friendly and helpful anyway, especially when an emergency hits. However, your group plays an important role in developing community spirit even further, and without it your job would be a lot harder.

When we asked the working group what kept them involved, answers included:

“*It makes me feel good that I’m making a contribution to the community.*”

“*Being respected for helping.*”

“*Knowing we are making a difference.*”

The young people in the group in particular talked about building their confidence and taking pride in helping their community. By capturing evidence of this in your own group you are more likely to encourage others to get involved and also to fundraise if you’re hoping to build your group’s resources.

The working group came up with the indicators below. You may have come up with some of your own in task two.

- People know who needs an extra helping hand
- People are friendly and helpful
- Our community looks out for each other
- People take a pride in where they live
- Young people are involved and included
Case study: How and why would we measure ‘looking out for each other’?

By capturing what difference it makes to be community-spirited, it can inspire others to get involved in keeping the community happy and safe.

Example:
A CR group in an isolated rural area (where all residents are over 55) held a storytelling session on the theme of weather. 18 people attended between 55 and 95 years old to have a cup of tea and swap stories about their memories of being snowed in and long power cuts dating back to the 1940s.

Capturing the benefit
The CR group members listened and observed, taking simple notes about: how people enjoyed themselves, shared practical tips, and generally wanted to be more involved with the CR group – offering whatever help they could from driving a tractor to making the tea.

As a result, the group wrote about the session for the local newspaper adding quotes and pictures. A local businessman approached the group and offered to donate £1000 towards a defibrillator. The local school invited group members to come and talk about how to keep safe in an emergency, and 3 young people agreed to join the group.
What information do we need to collect to work out if we’re making a difference?

Gathering feedback about what your CR group is achieving can give you lots of useful information about how to continually develop and improve, get others involved, and bring more resources into the group. This is the evidence that your group is making a difference.

There are many different methods for gathering evidence that don’t have to be complicated or take up too much time. You might find it easiest to think about the various activities your group does, then choose an appropriate method. You can find lots of different methods and tools on the ESS website here and there are more examples coming up over the next few pages.

It can help to think about who is interested in community resilience and what your group does. These may include:

- Local people
- Local groups
- The Council
- Emergency services
- Other CR groups

We have a debrief after every emergency response involving everyone in the group young and old. We also invite other partners and ask the community for their feedback. Community resilience is everyone’s business.

Jemma Landels
Eyemouth Response Team Coordinator
What information can we gather after responding to an emergency?

The majority of CR groups in Scotland haven’t had to respond to an actual emergency and in the following pages you will see ways that you can reflect on how effective your group is through other activities. However, in the event of an emergency, it is good practice to evaluate how well your group responded and what could be improved next time.

Eyemouth Response Team are no stranger to emergencies, mainly sea flooding. They find that having a debrief session with the whole group and relevant partners helps them continually improve and bond as a team.

They put up 3 questions on flipchart, discuss them as a group and write up the answers:

- What went well?
- What could be improved next time?
- What do we need to do to make that happen?

The young people decided that wellies were always involved in some way in their CR activities; they drew a welly for each indicator that could be scored red, amber or green according to the level they felt they had achieved it.

- **Red** = not achieved
- **Amber** = partially achieved
- **Green** = achieved

They decided they would take a photo each time they had a debrief session and repeat the same exercise next time to see how they had improved.
It's not just about emergencies...

Your group is no doubt getting up to other useful things, even without an emergency in sight. As we have established, community resilience is about being prepared and local people looking after each other. The next few pages will explore different ways you can gauge just how useful your activities are.

What information can we gather at our meetings?
Your CR meetings are a great opportunity to stop and take stock of your progress. The first outcome and set of indicators are about how good your group’s processes are:

- We are good at recruiting and retaining volunteers
- We are prepared
- We have the resources we need
- We have effective training sessions

If you have chosen some indicators for your group, these can be helpful for tracking the group’s progress by asking yourselves: to what extent are we achieving these?

Writing meeting minutes can enable you to reflect back on the journey of change your group has been on - what worked and what didn’t along the way.

What information can we gather at our training sessions?
Indicator: We have effective training sessions

These sessions are a fantastic opportunity to get feedback from a captive audience. The purpose of the training is to give participants a new skill. You can ‘test’ to what extent they have achieved that skill through:

a) Demonstrating it (e.g. CPR training)
   Method: take photos
b) Asking for feedback
   Methods: simple questionnaire, verbal feedback (capture quotes) or post-it comments
c) Scoring (to what extent is the training successful)
   Method: scoring wheel, before and after scale with simple questions
What information can we gather through our social media?

**Indicators:**
- People know who and where to go for help
- We keep people informed of what’s happening
- Young people are involved and included

Social media platforms like Facebook are an excellent way to keep in touch with your community. The young people in the working group took charge of their Facebook page and created a logo. People post their opinions, pictures and general feedback which enables you to know how well your group is doing. You can then lift quotes and pictures from the Facebook feed that support your indicators.

Example facebook comments:

“Before the group was set up I wouldn’t have known where to get sandbags from.”

“Thanks to our local response team for keeping us calm and informed during the flooding.”

“Check out our new group logo and visit our website”
Jo, young people’s CR representative
What information can we gather from our local partners?

**Indicators:**
- We work well with other local groups and services
- People know who needs an extra helping hand

The success of your group also depends on the quality of relationships with groups and services that help you to do your job effectively. E.g. other groups may have access to more vulnerable people in your community.

It helps to understand what makes good partnership working. Often it’s in conversation with partners that you get the best feedback and that just requires writing comments down from time to time.

More formal methods could include: Survey Monkey, a focus group of local partners, or a 'structured conversation' with specific questions.

What information can we gather when acting out an emergency?

**Indicator:** People are prepared for an emergency

Groups tell us that practice sessions can create a real buzz and are a great opportunity to both promote your group and get valuable feedback. You could:

- **a) Take photos**
  These are not only a record of an event but can be used to stimulate discussion through social media or at a future meeting.

- **b) Debrief after the session**
  This can just be a conversation with someone taking notes, or you could make it more interactive by getting people to write comments on post-its or flipchart

And don’t underestimate the power of a good story...

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Jim Fraser, Emergency Planning Officer
What information can we gather through our other community activities?

**Indicator:** People take a pride in where they live

Keeping a group going in the absence of an actual emergency happening is a challenge. CR Coordinators told us they keep up momentum by organising community events including litter picks and clearing drains to minimise problems in the event of rain.

The same methods for getting feedback can be used here as for the practice sessions on page 16.

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What information can we gather when working with young people?

**Indicator:** Young people are involved and included

You may have the opportunity to reach young people, either through the local school or youth club. Generally young people aren’t keen on filling in questionnaires but you could still score their learning in more creative ways.

Examples for a first aid training session:

a) Do a quiz
b) Use a game or group activity with questions
c) Give them a scenario to discuss in small groups and decide how they would respond
d) A simple show of hands in response to true/false questions.

The age of the young people you are working with will dictate the kind of method you use – and don’t forget the motivating power of snacks!
Case study: Beth’s story

Jemma is the Coordinator of the Eyemouth Response Team (ERT). Her niece, Beth, is 15 and has been volunteering with the group for the past year. Beth has learnt basic First Aid and CPR as a result.

One afternoon she was having tea and cake with her Aunt. Jemma started to choke on a piece of cake and Beth didn’t hesitate. She calmly applied her first aid training and saved her Aunt’s life.

Since then she has decided she wants to train to be a paramedic, something she had always wanted to do but didn’t have the confidence to pursue.

Beth Cromarty was shortlisted for Young Hero of the Year at the Scottish First Aid Awards in Glasgow.
TASK THREE: Let’s get feedback

a) Think of an activity that is coming up for your group soon and decide what you want to achieve with this activity (which of your outcome/s).

For example:
Activity: Family fun day to fundraise for a defibrillator for the community centre

Outcomes: Our community resilience group is strong and well organised
          Our community looks out for each other

b) Now decide which of your indicators will help you know whether your activity is a success or not.

For example:
Indicators: We have the resources we need
          People are friendly and helpful

c) What different ways can you think of that you could gather information about your activity that would tell you how well you did?

For example:
- Number of donations and total amount raised
- A graffiti wall to write messages about the day
- Young people make a video diary of the day and do short interviews
All this information but what do we do with it?

When we use words like ‘analysis’ it can sound a bit daunting or scientific, but it doesn’t have to be complicated. The most important thing is that you discuss the information you are gathering as you go so you can reflect on how the group is getting on and if there’s anything useful to be learnt.

To enable your group to keep the information you are gathering where it’s easy for everyone to find, it’s helpful to agree how and where you are going to store it. This might include:

- A spreadsheet or folder on your computer files
- A paper record kept in one place
- A ‘success’ or ‘celebration’ folder
- An album or scrap book with pictures and quotes
- Videos / vox pop kept on sound files
- Social media feeds

If you want to learn more about storing information effectively you can find it on the ESS website here.

How do we go about learning from this information?

There is no set way to make sense of the feedback and information you have gathered; simply looking through it and discussing common themes can be enough. It helps to have a few people involved to ensure different perspectives are taken into account.

You may find it helpful to start with some questions about:

- What difference you made (your outcomes)
- What you did that worked
- Which activities or processes were most effective or important
- Whether things worked in the way you expected.
Example: making sense of all the information

3 adult and 2 teenage CR group members spend time looking at the range of information they have gathered from the previous six months. They take outcomes they had agreed at the start of the project and write them on flipchart paper. Then they gather their information. This includes meeting notes, surveys, notes from community gatherings, photographs from an event, Facebook likes, shares and comments, and numbers attending meetings, training and other activities.

They give each outcome a colour code and use coloured sticky dots to decide which bits of information tell them something about how well they have achieved their different outcomes.

They also discover excellent information about an unexpected outcome that might help them get more funding for a new project.

In a local survey, 27 out of 32 local people said they felt a lot safer since the group became active. (Evidence: survey results)

At a community meeting about the gala day, the CR group was mentioned positively several times and asked to provide an information stall. (Evidence: quotes from local people and picture of the information stall)

Over the course of 6 months the CR group’s Facebook page has 157 followers and over 12000 likes. There are 398 positive comments relating to people feeling safer. (Evidence: statistics and quotes)

The CR group members have been making a note of local people’s comments during casual conversations. (Evidence: quotes) ESS method sheet: Capturing casual moments is here.

Opposite is the evidence they gathered about their outcome: The community feels safer…
TASK FOUR: Making sense of our information

Set aside a couple of hours for a few of your group (and anyone else you think might be useful to include). Gather together all the information you have been collecting and make sure you have plenty of tea and biscuits to keep you going!

1. Remind yourselves of your original outcomes.
2. Have a general read through / look at what has been collected.
3. Discuss what the information is telling you about how well you are achieving your outcomes.
4. Agree some common themes that are emerging.
5. Decide who will make notes about what people are noticing.
6. Colour code each outcome and theme and use coloured pens, dots or post-its to pick out quotes, results, statistics and pictures etc. that relate to each outcome or theme.
7. Decide if anything unexpected has emerged – either good or bad.
8. Discuss what you have learnt, what your conclusions are and how you might do things differently.
9. Ask your note-taker very nicely to write up the above.

You can learn more about how to analyse information on the ESS website [here](#).
How do we tell others about the difference we are making?

At the start of this toolkit we suggested that knowing the difference your CR group makes helps you to:

a) Recognise and develop good practice that keeps your community as safe as possible

b) Communicate the difference your work as a group makes and get others on board

c) Demonstrate the need for your group that could lead to support from local partners or funders.

Depending on which of these you want to achieve will help you decide what evidence you need. For example:

a) Practical feedback about the speed and efficiency of your group’s response to an emergency will help you to know what has worked well and what hasn’t to enable you to develop and improve.

b) If you want to recruit more volunteers they may be interested in hearing about the rewards of helping their community and training opportunities.

c) Funders are likely to be interested in the numbers as well as the anecdotal evidence. E.g.
   - how many local (especially vulnerable) people supported
   - How many volunteers recruited and trained
   - Case studies / success stories.
What methods of reporting could we use?

There are lots of different ways to communicate information about your CR group from the formal to the informal. These could include:

- A newsletter
- Posters and flyers
- Annual report
- Articles in the newspaper
- Facebook and other social media
- Community noticeboards
- Word of mouth
- Presenting at community gatherings
- Running a community event
- Storytelling sessions
- Videos and photography

You can find further support with writing reports on the ESS website [here](#).
RECAP: USING THIS TOOLKIT STEP BY STEP

01: OUTCOMES
What difference does our group make?

02: INDICATORS
What changes will let us know we’re making a difference?

03: METHODS
What information would be useful to gather?

04: ANALYSIS
Where do we keep it and what are we learning from this information?

05: REPORTING
How will we tell others about the difference our group makes?

Step 1:
Agree simple outcomes that express the difference you want to make through your group’s activities. Not too many and keep them simple!

Step 2:
Identify a few simple statements or measures that will help you know if you are making the difference you intended to. Ask yourselves: what would success look like?

Step 3:
Decide what difference you want to demonstrate and to who. This will help you decide what information you need to collect. Save time by building this into your group’s normal activities.

Step 4:
Agree a simple way of storing information. Look through your information together and decide what it’s telling you about what you set out to do. What worked, what could be improved?

Step 5:
Decide what you want to achieve: improve your practice, get others on board or raise funds. This will help you decide who needs to know what. Consider the best method to reach your audience.
### EXAMPLE: EVALUATION ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we want to achieve (outcome)</th>
<th>How we'll know it’s achieved (indicator)</th>
<th>Activity (What we do to achieve it)</th>
<th>How we’ll get feedback (method)</th>
<th>Where we’ll keep it (storage)</th>
</tr>
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| Our community feels safe and is prepared for an emergency | People know where to go for help  
We keep people informed  
People know how to keep themselves and others safe in an emergency | Website  
Local events  
Training | Facebook comments  
Comments on post-its/flipchart  
Debrief session and simple evaluation form  
Photos | Notes on computer  
Photos of flipchart  
Training folder  
Group scrapbook |
Resources

For general information and resources relating to Community Resilience please visit: http://www.readyscotland.org/

For further information and resources relating to evaluation please visit: http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/

A huge thank you to the Eyemouth Response Team, Hutton and Paxton Community Resilience Group, Jim Fraser (Emergency Planning Officer for Scottish Borders Council) and Eyemouth Fire Service for their contribution to this toolkit.

For further support and assistance with this resource please contact:

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