

Northumbria Community Risk Register

2021-2023



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Northumbria Local Resilience Forum

The Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a multi - agency partnership consisting of Category 1 and Category 2 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), and organisations that are required to prepare for an emergency in the LRF area. It includes the emergency services, Local Authorities, Health Services, Environment Agency, Maritime Coastguard Agency volunteer agencies and utility companies to name a few.

Northumbria LRF aims to provide the necessary conditions for responding organisations to plan and prepare for emergencies so that we can deliver an effective and efficient response. In order to do this we work together to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to prevent or mitigate the impact of emergencies and ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency. We also develop and maintain plans to support communities and help their recovery.

The Northumbria LRF area shares a common boundary with the Northumbria Police Force and includes the County of Northumberland and the area of Tyne and Wear which comprises of Newcastle, North Tyneside, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland (as shown on the map) It also stretches from Berwick and the border with Scotland in the north to the City of Sunderland in the South and from North Sea Coast to the border with Cumbria in the west and has a border with County Durham in the South.

It is estimated that Northumbria has an overall population of 1,460,944 clustered mainly in and around the Tyne and Wear boroughs.

As well as being a large area geographically, there is a huge diversity between areas, the environment, and social groups.

The same range of diversity is true about the risks faced, whilst there are some risks which may affect anyone regardless of geography (pandemic influenza) there are some geographic areas where the risk is higher for certain incidents.

It is recognised in the National Risk Register that the wide range of risks outlined in this document could have a disproportionate impact on specific vulnerable and at - risk groups such as, those with pre-existing mental or physical health conditions or disabilities (whether living in the community or in long term care facilities), older adults, children, pregnant women, individuals from certain ethnic backgrounds, healthcare and other frontline workers, informal or self-employed workers, those in lower socio-economic groups or who are financially insecure, individuals exposed to abuse or violence, tourists, migrants, those who are socially isolated, individuals with less knowledge and experience to specific risks. This list is not exhaustive but illustrates the wide range of groups who could be considered (or could become) vulnerable in the context of a pandemic.

Individuals who might be considered vulnerable in the context of one risk might not be for another. An older adult for example might be more vulnerable to the health impacts of a pandemic but may be considered more resilient to certain aspects of a flooding scenario, if past experiences have helped them to prepare.

Every scenario is different but when planning for and responding to these risks, planners from national government, local government and community groups all have an important role to play in mitigating the disproportionate impact on these individuals.

Content from the National Risk Register 2020

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to this document. If you need this document in a different format or you cannot download it please email npreativeservices@icloud.com.

Introduction local profile

Northumbria LRF area

Northumberland

North Tyneside

Newcastle

South Tyneside

Gateshead

Sunderland

The Community Risk Register

The Northumbria Local Resilience Forum has a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) to produce a Community Risk Register (CRR) to enable the community to be better prepared to cope during an emergency and to recover more quickly. This document provides information on emergencies that could happen within the Northumbria area together with an assessment of how likely they are to happen and the impacts if they do.

This document aims to summarise the Community Risk Register in a format which is user friendly for residents and communities. It does not include every risk only the ones that are likely to happen.

The purpose of the Community Risk Register is to:

- Provide information on risks in the Northumbria area and how they are managed by the LRF
- Inform you of Emergency Management Steps
- Inform you about the highest risks in the Northumbria area and their consequences
- Detail steps that can be taken to become better prepared and more resilient in your home, business and community
- Provide you with links to organisations and websites to find out more information.

While certain risks are described it does not mean that they will definitely occur in the region. It means there is a possibility of them happening and therefore all agencies within the local resilience forum have plans in place to respond to such incidents.

Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (NLRF) has ensured that planning for concurrent events has been raised to one of their top priorities during the Covid 19 pandemic. Managing an emergency can be challenging and complex, even more so when faced with dealing with multiple events at the same time. NLRF have put in place a number of measures to ensure they can respond.

The Community Risk Register is the result of professional judgement from a range of contributors, historical evidence, scientific input and expert analysis in evaluating the key risks facing Northumbria.

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) Joint Doctrine: the interoperability framework sets out a standard approach to multi-agency working, along with training and awareness products.

Whilst the initial focus was on improving the response to major incidents, JESIP is scalable, so much so the five joint working principles and models can be applied to any type of multi-agency incident.

Applying simple principles for joint working are particularly important in the early stages of an incident, when clear, robust decisions and actions need to be taken with minimum delay, in an often rapidly changing environment.

Those principles are illustrated in the diagram shown here:

Co-locate

Co-locate with commanders as soon as practicably possible at a single, safe and easily identified location near to the scene.

Communicate

Communicate clearly using plain English.

Co-ordinate

Co-ordinate by agreeing the lead service. Identify priorities, resources and capabilities for an effective response, including the timing of further meetings.

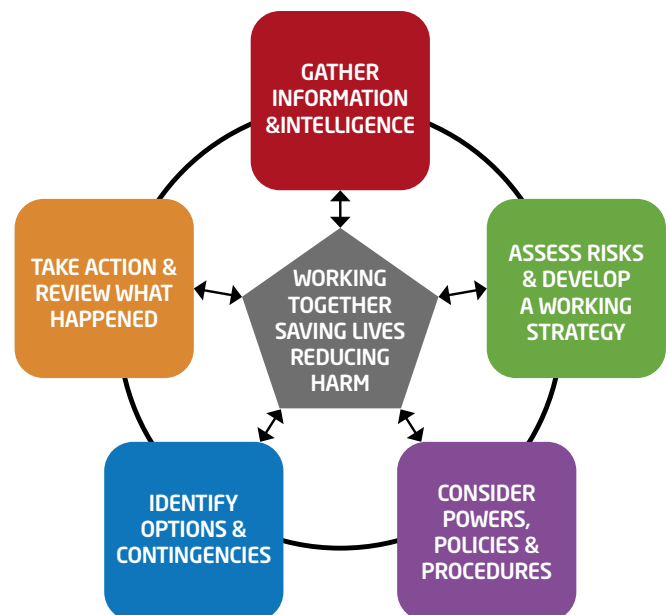
Jointly understand risk

Jointly understand risk by sharing information about the likelihood and potential impact of threats and hazards to agree potential control measures.

Shared situation awareness

Shared Situational Awareness established by using METHANE and the Joint Decision Model.

Since 2003 the Emergency Services have adopted the Joint Decision Model (JDM) to enable an understanding of each other's needs. It is used to improve communications and decision making. The JDM is a way of the emergency services working together to save lives in major incidents.



How are agencies across Northumbria working to ensure the effects of an emergency can be reduced?

- Understanding the risks, how they are caused and what impact they would have locally.
- Produce emergency plans to mitigate the impact of any risk on their local communities.
- Working with local communities

Preparedness - Being ready to respond to an incident.

- Understanding the impact and consequence of each risk
- Developing emergency plans and procedures for responding to the risks
- Training staff and testing procedures
- Matching our capabilities to the needs of each emergency
- Developing long term recovery plans
- Raising awareness of each organisations role and responsibilities
- Learning lessons from previous incidents

Response - Reacting in the event an incident

- Initial emergency activities (i.e. public safety, evacuation and shelter, limiting the spread of the incident, search and rescue).
- Initial damage assessment
- Multi - agency coordination
- Warning and Informing the public

Recovery - Reacting in the event of an incident

- Initial and long term recovery efforts
- Re - housing of displaced people
- Humanitarian assistance
- Regeneration

How can members of the public, community organisations and local businesses support their local communities before, during and after an emergency.

Before an emergency, members of the public, community organisations and local businesses can help to build the resilience of:

- Individuals, by raising awareness of risks and preparedness actions, e.g. through social media
- Households, by advising on property refurbishment such as property flood defence measures
- Communities, by identifying vulnerable people and helping them access support
- Organisations, by supporting business continuity planning
- Systems and networks, by building trusting relationships between different local and community organisations

During an emergency or crisis, the public can help – **if it's safe to do so** – by checking on neighbours and vulnerable people in the community to see if they need any help or assistance. Do not put yourself at risk and always consider contacting 999 in the first instance.

After the emergency, the public can also offer their help to clean up, help others to get back on their feet, or help their community to come to terms with the situation. Opportunities to volunteer might be available through one of the thousands of local organisations that already work at the heart of communities.

Content taken from the National Risk Register 2020.

Flooding

Flooding is one of the risks that can have significant impact on communities in our LRF area and across the UK.

Changes in weather patterns, increasing temperatures and rising sea levels are likely to increase the likelihood of flooding in the UK. By preparing in advance you can minimise the impact that flooding could have.

Flooding can occur near the coast from high natural tides and major storm surges (Tidal/Coastal Flooding), near rivers (Fluvial Flooding) following a sustained period of heavy rainfall and local surface water flooding where drainage systems are unable to cope with the volume of rainfall.

It can occur at any time of the year and can be a risk to national security, human welfare and critical infrastructure. Damage to essential services, particularly to critical infrastructure could make our communities more vulnerable to other risks, and some flooding may have significant impacts on industry, agriculture and our local economy.



Consequences

The consequences associated with flooding are widespread and can include:

- Risk to life
- Damage to homes, personal property businesses and infrastructure
- Displacement of people
- Short, medium and long term homelessness
- Long term economic decline in some affected areas
- Contamination of agricultural land with resulting loss of productive capacity
- Disruption of utilities and evacuation
- Long term health and psychological impacts

Who can be affected?

Those at risk of river flooding and coastal flooding are relatively easy to identify. Find out if your property is within the flood risk area by logging on to the Environment Agency website or calling the 24 hour Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or 0345 602 6340 (type talk). Surface water flooding has the potential to occur anywhere but is more common in built up areas.

What are we doing in Northumbria?

- Identification of where the flood water could go, and who/ what is at risk.
- Working with emergency services, local authorities and other agencies to develop flood response plans and procedures.
- Providing guidance to the public about flooding, including flood warnings and what people can do to help themselves.
- Production of multi-agency plans to assist with the evacuation of those communities who are at risk.
- Development of ways and means of alerting the public as early as possible when there is a significant flood risk.
- Developing flood rescue and assistance for those communities who become isolated by flooding. Training specialist staff in swift water rescue techniques.
- Environment agency flood defences and watercourse maintenance programme.
- Community owned Flood Warden Groups in Northumbria LRF area including Rothbury, Kielder, Otterburn, Corsenside, Morpeth, Hepscott, Wark, Ponteland, Greenhead, Haltwhistle, Warden, Acomb, Hexham, Corbridge, Riding Mill, Ovingham, Stocksfield, Prudhoe and Springwell Village
- Regular maintenance and clearing programs of gullies and culverts especially in the event of storm warnings.

What can you do?

If you are in an area liable to flooding then it's a good idea to start making a personal flood plan which can include the following points -

- Plan where you will go if you have to evacuate and how you will get there and prepare an emergency grab bag. This grab bag should also include a list of key emergency service numbers.
- Identify where your gas / electricity and water services come into your home and how to turn them off (stop cocks) in the event of an emergency.
- Consider putting together an emergency checklist of the actions and key contacts you will need in an emergency.
- Know what to do to protect your property and contents during a flood and have adequate insurance
- Identify neighbours who may need assistance or who may be able to provide assistance to you, in case of evacuation
- Ensure you are signed up to Flood Warning Direct if you are in a flood risk area. This is a free service and operated by the Environment Agency.
- Know what the different flood warnings mean. (please see overleaf)
- Report instances of flooding to the local council. Especially service flooding which they may not be aware of.
- Buy sandbags now – there will not be time in the event of an emergency.
- Do not drive, cycle or walk through flooded water.
- If you get advance warning of flooding, it's best to move your car to higher ground to reduce the risk of costly damage or hassle of an insurance claim.
- If you return to find your car standing in flood water its best to leave it and telephone for help or wait till the flood water subsides rather than try and get it and move it – unless the water is shallow, stationary and you can see the ground beneath the water at all points.
- If flood water has reached the floor height or got inside the vehicle its best to telephone for help before attempting to recover it.

In the event of a flood it is important to focus on the safety of you and your family. If you are about to flood, DO THESE THINGS IMMEDIATELY:

- Tune into your local radio station on a battery or wind up radio
- Switch off your electricity / gas supplies
- If you have a flood plan put this into action
- Where possible, move valuable or irreplaceable items to upper floors during times of flood risk.
- Don't forget to bring your pets if you leave your home.
- If evacuated take any urgent medication with you

Plan ahead, if you are at risk of flooding consider if you need the following:

- Flood boards
- Airbrick Covers
- Sandbags or alternative barriers
- Toilet bungs (only need for downstairs toilets)
- Any other flood product

You should be prepared to act quickly and get yourself to safety. Put the safety of people first and listen to the advice of the Police.

Recovery

Recovery from flooding can be prolonged, with the displacement of people, contamination of land and long-term health implications all possible. There could also be damage to critical infrastructure that could take a significant time to recover. The location of a severe weather event or flood will impact on the recovery time; urban areas are likely to take longer to recover than rural areas.



Flood Alert

Flooding is possible. Be prepared. When a flood alert is issued for your area you should:

- Be prepared.
- Prepare a grab bag of essential items.
- Monitor local water levels on the Environment Agency website.



Flood Warning

Flooding is expected. Immediate action required.

When a flood warning is issued for your area you should:

- Protect yourself, your family and help others.
- Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place.
- Keep your grab bag ready.
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if it is safe to do so.
- Put flood protection equipment in place.



Severe Flood Warning

Severe flooding. Danger to life. When a severe flood warning is issued for your area you should:

- Stay in a safe place with a means of escape.
- Be ready should you need to evacuate your home.
- Co-operate with the emergency services.
- Call 999 if you are in immediate danger.

Further information

- Environment Agency <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>
- Flood Information Service <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings>
- The Flood and Water Management Act (2010) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>
- Public Health England Flooding <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flooding-health-guidance-and-advice>
- The Blue pages - Flood products www.bluepages.org.uk/
- National Flood Forum - <https://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>



Adverse weather

The UK experiences some of the most dynamic weather patterns around. This is due to its maritime temperate climate and occasional continental and arctic influences.

These can bring with them heavy rain or snow strong winds and extreme temperatures. Severe weather can take a variety of forms and at times can cause significant problems and disruption to normal life.

There are many types of severe weather that can have a serious impact in the UK. The main types of severe weather that we need to plan for include storms, gales, low temperatures, heavy snow, heatwave and drought.

Consequences

Some of the impacts of severe weather are:

- Danger to life from windswept objects including falling trees and structural failures
- Damage to property
- Travel disruption
- Increased risk of road traffic collisions
- Damaged pylons and above ground utility structures which could result in power and water failure and damage to electricity and telephone lines.
- Risk of people particularly the vulnerable being affected by health threatening low temperatures.
- An increased number of admissions to hospital and consultations with GPs due to sunburn, heat exhaustion, respiratory problems and other illnesses such as food poisoning.

Who can be affected?

Vulnerable individuals such as elderly low income groups (as they cannot afford heating) high altitude communities, those travelling and businesses, which can suffer reduction in workforce, production, service and delivery.

What are we doing in Northumbria?

Some key steps include:-

- Working extremely closely with the Met Office so that emergency responders can obtain early warning that severe weather is due. The MET office provides advice for severe weather warnings which can be received in many ways (radio and internet)
- The local authorities lead on the preparation of extremely detailed winter plans to ensure that roads are ploughed and gritted.
- The health service gears up every autumn for the additional pressure which will be placed on their resources over the winter and particularly works with the local authorities to target elderly and vulnerable people.
- The NHS provides winter flu jabs and plans for expected surges in demand.
- The NHS and Public Health England provides heatwave advice
- Utility Companies provide a prioritised service for the elderly and vulnerable. Refer to page 29 for more information.

What can you do? - Plan ahead

- Ensure you keep up to date with the latest forecast and any National Severe Weather Warnings at www.metoffice.gov.uk. Depending on the level of warning follow instructions and advice given by authorities.

- Plan any journeys or activities with the weather in mind.
- Think before you leave the house. Is your journey essential? Remember that weather conditions can change very quickly and make sure that you are not caught unawares, therefore please avoid all non- essential travel.
- An obvious step is to ensure that you are prepared for winter both in terms of your own attire but also some common sense equipment in the boot of your car including shovels, non-slip mats, a good quality torch and a blanket.
- Check that elderly or vulnerable people you know or live to close to are supported.
- Encourage the vulnerable and elderly to register with the public utility companies who will attempt to prioritise them if their services are affected by the weather.
- If you are aware of property damage that may get worse in the event of strong winds get it fixed now.
- Likewise, it is important to recognise that during the summer any prolonged exposure to strong sunlight presents its own health hazards. Make sure that you and your family make sensible use of sunscreen at such times and keep hydrated for your own safety.

Recovery

Even after adverse weather, you still need to be vigilant. There may still be low lying roads where pools of water might catch you unawares. There may be damaged trees and shrubbery ready to fall into the road and potholes caused by cold weather, which can be dangerous for cyclists.

Further information

- [Met Office](#)
- [Northumberland County Council](#)
- [North Tyneside Council](#)
- [Gateshead Council](#)
- [Newcastle City Council](#)
- [South Tyneside Council](#)
- [Sunderland Council](#)
- [Public Health England - staying well during cold weather alerts](#)
- [Public Health England/DHSC - heatwave plan](#)

Human Disease

An influenza pandemic occurs when a new strain of flu emerges meaning there is no natural immunity to the virus, and it spreads easily from person to person. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death.

An influenza type pandemic remains the highest assessed natural hazard which could have a significant impact on our communities. The emergence of new infectious diseases – such as SARS and COVID 19 – are unpredictable as they can

spread quickly and erratically between geographic areas. Each pandemic is different, the nature of the virus, it's location and the time of year it emerges, and its impacts cannot be known in advance.



Consequences

As we have witnessed during the Covid 19 pandemic the consequences can be huge and wide ranging. Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the consequences

- Large numbers of the population maybe impacted
- Health and local authority social care services could become overloaded
- Normal life is likely to face widespread disruption, particularly due to staff shortages affecting the provision of essential services including production and transport of goods.
- Vulnerable people would be exposed to lower levels of care
- Longer and more frequent disruptions to essential utilities
- Reduced levels of emergency services cover
- Disruptions to businesses and organisations through staff shortages and supply chain interruptions
- Impacts on the national and local economy
- Excess deaths may occur

What are we doing in Northumbria?

- Working together to mitigate the risk; as one team within the LRF
- Public awareness and media to keep communities fully informed
- Management of the demand on the NHS and social care
- Ensuring vital supplies i.e. PPE etc reach those in need
- Distribution of anti-viral medication to the public
- Vaccination with the newly developed pandemic vaccine when it becomes available
- Management of an increased number of deaths
- Ensuring that individual LRF organisations have their own business continuity plans in place to cope in times of staff shortage
- Additional multi agency planning and exercising to ensure effectiveness and competence.

What can you do?

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle by washing your hands frequently with soapy water to reduce the spread of the virus and regularly clean surfaces with disinfectant
- Look out for and observe advice and guidance from the NHS about reducing the impact and spread of the virus
- Get vaccinated
- Identify a flu friend; someone who could collect medicine, food and supplies allowing you to stay at home if you become ill
- Keep small personal stocks of over the counter cold and flu medication to help relieve your symptoms.
- Catch it, Bin it, Kill it: Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Dispose of your tissues as soon as possible. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

Recovery

As we have seen with Co-vid 19 and as predicted an influenza pandemic it will come in multiple waves and that the arrival of a subsequent wave could hamper recovery from one wave. All of the LRF together with Health and the Government have worked tirelessly to try and flatten these waves during the COVID – 19 pandemic.

Further information

- NHS - Pandemic Flu <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pandemic-flu>
- Public Health England - [Health Protection](#)
- Public Health England - [infectious diseases](#)



Industrial Accident and Environmental Pollution

There are a number of industrial sites which undertake processing and the storage of dangerous substances within the Northumbria area that in the event of an incident could have offsite implications which affect the public and/or the environment.

Consequences

Issues that could arise from this include:

- Risk to life
- Damage to property and infrastructure
- Evacuation of the affected area and longer term accommodation needs
- Environmental contamination to the local environment and water courses
- Damage to the local economy

Who can be affected?

Most at risk are those who live or work within close proximity to industrial sites. Those with existing breathing problems may be at increased risk due to the potential smoke / chemicals that may be released in a major incident.

What are we doing in Northumbria?

- Sites which have larger quantities of dangerous substances fall under The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH) 2015, which aims to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and limit the consequences of incidents to people and the environment. The regulations are overseen jointly by the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency (Competent Authority)
- These sites are required to demonstrate precautions and safe operation. Sites are subject to planned inspection regimes. Some of the areas looked at are the sites COMAH safety report, control measures and the sites worst case scenarios
- These sites have specific arrangements and have internal emergency plans in place. There are also external emergency plans produced for sites that have the largest amount of dangerous substances (Upper Tier Sites). There is a statutory requirement for such plans to be regularly tested and exercised at suitable intervals not exceeding three years
- Testing an emergency plan may consist of a live exercise or a table-top exercise supported by the testing of other components including communication arrangements. A reasonable worst case scenario from the site will be chosen to ensure the exercise is realistic and provides a good test to validate the External Emergency Plan. All relevant staff across shifts in all the relevant organisations should be trained in their expected response in the event of an emergency.
- Upper Tier Sites are required to provide information about their major accident hazards and measures in place for people who could be affected by a major accident. They should also provide information about what the public should do in the event of a major accident. The people most likely to be affected fall within a Public Information Zone (PIZ) area around the establishment. The PIZ is determined by the HSE and Environment Agency (Competent Authority)
- Despite Covid - 19 restrictions the LRF have continued to exercise the control measures at these sites using new

technology in a virtual arena. This enables all stakeholders to have assurances that the sites are continuing to be managed safely.

- Industrial Sites that do not fall within the COMAH regulations are visited by Fire and Rescue personnel who consider potential hazards and may develop a specific response plan for them.

What can you do?

- Call the Environment Agency incident hotline to report environmental pollution on 0800 807060 24-hour service
- Know what major industrial sites are in your local area. Make sure you are familiar with any advice they or your local authority provide
- Do you live within a Public Information Zone (PIZ) area? If so take notice and familiarise yourself with the information contained in the letter received from your local Upper Tier COMAH site
- Be aware of the actions to be taken in the event of an emergency
- Seek shelter immediately. If you become aware of an incident at a local major industrial facility, go indoors, stay indoors and tune in. Close doors and windows switch off air conditioning to protect yourself from potential fumes and contaminants
- Tune In to local media for further information and follow the advice of the emergency services
- Produce a household Emergency Plan
- Put together a small grab bag of essential items / important contact information.

Further information

- [Guidance Preparing for Emergencies Preparing for emergencies - www.gov.uk](#)
- [Environment Agency Environment Agency](#)
- [Northumberland County Council](#)
- [Gateshead Council](#)
- [North Tyneside Council](#)
- [Sunderland City Council](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive](#)

Animal Disease

Some animal diseases may be passed to humans; others may only be passed from animal to animal.

One such disease in this category is foot and mouth disease. The 2001 outbreak resulted in over 10 million sheep and cattle being killed across the country. It is also likely that the whole of Great Britain would be declared a control area restricting the movement of all susceptible livestock unless licensed.



Consequences

The impacts of an animal disease outbreak could include:

- Risk to animal health (including pets)
- Risk to human health.
- Disruption to rural communities, local economies and the environment.
- Damage to the economy.
- Damage to tourism and recreational sectors.

Who can be affected?

Previous incidents have devastated rural economies and communities. However incidents can extend wider and impact upon tourism.

What are we doing in Northumbria?

- Local authority staff work on animal health activities in the LRF region (some directly funded by Defra under framework agreements). They provide education and advice, monitor compliance with legislation, and work closely with Defra/Animal Health on disease response.
- Working closely with Defra to make sure that lessons identified from previous incidents are incorporated into emergency plans.
- Animal Health legislation requiring notification of suspect disease and providing control powers, on animal movements so that the potential disease risks can be reduced.
- Maintaining quarantine procedures for animals coming into the UK from abroad.

What can you do?

If involved in farming:

- Register livestock with defra.
- Ensure sick animals are checked and reported.
- Vaccinate livestock where possible.
- If an outbreak is declared, follow Government advice to limit the spread of the disease and protect your livestock.

As a member of the public:

- Abide by restrictions in place to limit the spread of the disease e.g. closed footpaths in rural areas etc.
- If you suspect a notifiable animal disease you must report it immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301. In Scotland, contact your local Field Services Office. Failure to do so is an offence.

Further information

For further information about animal disease visit the DEFRA website at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/notifiable-diseases-in-animals



Wildfires

The UK experiences some of the most dynamic weather patterns around. This is due to its maritime temperate climate and occasional continental and arctic influences.

Periods of warm, dry weather can help support the development of large vegetation fires – fires which we call wildfires. Strong winds can also create ideal conditions for large wildfires to spread. While wildfires tend to be more common in the Spring and Summer, they can occur at any time of year.

Some wildfires start as the result of natural causes, such as lightning strikes. However, the majority of wildfires in the UK are started by human actions such as BBQs, campfires and open fires, carelessly discarded smoking materials, allowing controlled burns to get out of hand and arson.

Emergency responders and other partner agencies may need to mobilise significant resources to bring wildfires under control. There have been numerous wildfires in recent years in the Northumbria area which have burned for anywhere between a few hours to more than one month.

Wildfires can be extremely dangerous and challenging to extinguish. They can cause significant problems and disruption to normal life.

Consequences

Some of the potential impacts of wildfires are:

- Danger to life
- Damage to property
- Damage to infrastructure
- Damage to the natural environment and protected sites (including the damage and loss of important natural resources / assets such as peat and woodland)
- Environmental contamination of water courses and reservoirs from fire runoff
- Damage to the historic / heritage environment and protected sites
- Travel disruption for road, rail and air
- Increased risk of road traffic collisions due to smoke
- Damage to pylons and above ground utility structures, which could result in power and water failure and damage to electricity and telephone lines
- An increased number of admissions to hospital and consultations with GPs, due to respiratory problems from wildfire smoke
- Reduced levels of emergency services cover
- Evacuation of the affected area and associated accommodation needs
- Impacts on the local economy
- Medium- and long-term impacts associated with ground instability and soil erosion.

Who can be affected?

Wildfires can occur anywhere there is vegetation. They can occur in the uplands and lowlands, in grass fields and crops, in urban parks and on the coast. Residents, businesses and visitors to the countryside and open areas are therefore at the highest risk. Individuals with existing breathing / respiratory problems are at increased risk due to the smoke released during wildfires.

What are we doing in Northumbria?

Some key steps include:-

- Working extremely closely with the Met Office so that emergency responders can obtain early warning that wildfire risk is elevated
- Regular monitoring of the Met Office Fire Severity Index (FSI). The FSI shows the current day's wildfire severity and a forecast of likely fire severity over the coming five days
- Developing and delivering a wildfire communications plan to provide information on elevated wildfire risk to residents, businesses and visitors.
- Providing wildfire prevention and preparedness advice to residents, businesses and visitors
- The fire and rescue services maintain a highly skilled and trained group of specialist wildfire officers that can be

deployed to large wildfire incidents to provide specialist tactical advice and guidance to incident commanders

- The fire and rescue services lead on the preparation of extremely detailed fire plans for sites that are considered at highest risk of wildfires. These plans ensure that the fire and rescue services are well prepared if a wildfire occurs
- Develop and exercise multi-agency procedures to ensure an effective response to wildfires
- Joint working and collaborating on wildfire issues through the multiagency Northumberland Fire Group
- Cross-border working and collaboration on wildfire issues with neighbouring fire and rescue services and local wildfire groups.

What can you do?

- If you see a wildfire, make sure you are in a safe place and then call 999 immediately. Provide as much information as you can about the location and the direction the fire is travelling
- Under exceptional conditions, some areas of land (classified as open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000) may be temporarily closed to the public. Please do not go onto open access land that has been closed
- Make sure that you have suitable insurance and think about where you would go, and stay, if an emergency meant that you couldn't stay at home
- Tune in to local media for further information about any ongoing wildfire incidents and follow the advice of the emergency services.

We all have a responsibility to protect our countryside and open spaces for current and future generations. Everyone can play an important part in helping to prevent wildfires from starting in the first place:

- When you use or visit the countryside, always follow the Countryside Code. It includes the rules you must follow when you're enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside:
 - Remember to take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit
 - Take care with BBQs and do not light fires
 - Always keep dogs under control and in sight
 - Dog poo - bag it and bin it - any public waste bin will do
 - Care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance
- You must follow the signs in the countryside that tell you where you can go and who can use the right of way
- Never use sky lanterns - they can cause wildfires, injure livestock and pollute the environment
- If you undertake controlled / prescribed burning to manage your land, always abide by the Heather and Grass Burning Regulations and always follow the Heather and Grass Burning Code
- If you think your site or land is at higher risk of wildfire, contact your local fire and rescue service for further advice and guidance.

Recovery

Even after a wildfire has been extinguished, you still need to be vigilant. There may be damaged trees and shrubs and unstable ground.

The location of a wildfire will significantly impact the level of damage caused and the recovery time.

Recovery from wildfires can be prolonged. Wildfires can cause damage to property and critical infrastructure, which could take a significant time to recover. If peat is burned during a wildfire it will take an extremely long period to recover and may not ever recover.

Further information

- [The Countryside Code](#)
- [Follow the Signs and Symbols of the Countryside](#)
- [Met Office](#)
- [Met Office Fire Severity Index](#)
- [Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service - Keep safe outdoors](#)
- [Northumberland Fire Group](#)
- [National Fire Chief's Council Wildfire Prevention Toolkit](#)
- [Heather and Grass Burning Code](#)
- [Heather and Grass Burning etc. \(England\) Regulations 2021](#)
- [Public Health England](#)

Cyber

Cyber space has become central to our economy and our society. Increasing our reliance on cyber space brings new opportunities but also new threats. While cyber space fosters open markets and open societies, this very openness can also make us more vulnerable to criminals, hackers, foreign intelligence services who want to harm us by compromising or damaging our critical data and systems.

Worldwide interconnectivity and digitalisation is transforming how individuals, businesses and local authorities live and operate with a wide scale shift of services and capabilities online.



Consequences

- Impacts of cyber-attacks can cause fatalities and casualties should the NHS be specifically targeted.
- Financial loss is the most commonly seen impact resulting from cyber-attacks, both the direct theft of funds online, but also the recovery costs post attack.
- Loss/compromise of personal or corporate information
- Damage to business, the economy and reputation
- Loss of/interruption to supply of essential goods and services and communications network.

What are we doing in Northumbria?

- Assess the local consequences of malicious threats in line with UK Government guidance
- Develop and exercise multi-agency plans to ensure an effective response to and manage the consequences of malicious attacks
- Communicating advice to the public and businesses, and support government awareness campaigns
- Encourage all LRF organisations to review and demonstrate that where possible they have responsible cyber resilience strategies

What can you do?

- Install internet security on your laptop/tablet/PC, there's a wide range of paid for and free programmes available
- Consider the websites you use; some are more likely to be targeted by criminals
- Don't reuse the same password for your social media accounts, email addresses and other online accounts. Also consider using fake answers for memorable questions
- Review your social media privacy settings to see what other internet users can see about you

Recovery

The range of impacts caused by malicious cyber activity can be wide ranging and recovery can be a long and expensive process. The capability of attackers is uncertain, and the time taken to recover from a cyber-attack is entirely dependent on the scale and the effectiveness of any recovery plans.

Further information

- [National Cyber Security Centre](#)
- [Top tips for staying secure online](#)



Malicious attacks

The Government's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST is an integrated approach based on four main work streams, each with a clear objective to try and stop terrorist attacks occurring or, when they do, to mitigate their impact. The CONTEST work streams outlined alongside:

- Pursue: stopping terrorist attacks
- Protect: strengthening our protection against attack
- Prepare: mitigating the impact of attacks
- Prevent: stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism

Attacks are rare but the issue of terrorist attacks is regularly in the news and remind us all of the terrorist threat we face. The police and Security service have been working constantly to foil terrorist attacks for years.

Terrorism threat levels

- The threat level indicates the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the UK. There are five levels of threat:
- LOW means an attack is highly unlikely
- MODERATE means an attack is possible, but not likely
- SUBSTANTIAL means an attack is likely
- SEVERE means an attack is highly likely
- CRITICAL means an attack is highly likely in the near future

The level is set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and the Security Service (MI5). Threat levels don't have an expiry date. They can change at any time as different information becomes available to security agents.

What are we doing in Northumbria?

The government will issue a warning to the public if that's the best way to protect a community or a place facing a specific threat. Police and security agencies are working tirelessly to protect the public. As a group of local responders, the LRF is focussed on preparing for the consequences of any emergency, regardless of cause, and our plans try and set out generic capabilities that can be used in any emergency situation.

What can you do?

We are not complacent about keeping you safe and people are understandably concerned about a firearms or weapons attack. These attacks are very rare but in the event of such an attack, it helps to be prepared.

Stay safe, and just remember the words: RUN. HIDE. TELL.

- Run. To a place of safety, this is a far better option than to surrender or negotiate, if there's nowhere else to go then: -
- Hide. It's better to hide than to confront. Remember to turn your phone to silent and turn off vibrate. Barricade yourself in if you can. Then finally and only when it's safe to do so: -
- Tell. The police by calling 999.

Everyone is asked to remain vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour or activity to the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321 or in an emergency, 999.

Become a CT Citizen - ACT Awareness eLearning is an online training package available to the public. The package will provide nationally recognised counter terrorism guidance to help people better understand, and mitigate against, current terrorist methodology. ACT Awareness Elearning (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/act-awareness-elearning>)

Recovery

The impact of a terrorist attack can be wide ranging and in some cases recovery can be a long and expensive process. The capability of attackers is under continuous review and the police alongside partners and private organisation prepare strategies to mitigate, manage and recover from a terrorist attack.

Further information

- [National Counter Terrorism Security Office](#)
- [Report suspicious activity to MI5](#)
- To get more information about terrorism levels in the UK MI5 Website. [gov.uk/what-to-look-for](https://www.gov.uk/what-to-look-for)
- National public Referral Tool for Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit -[The iREPORTitApp](#)



Utilities Failure

No matter the cause, a loss of utilities can be difficult to handle when underprepared. Following the advice on this page will help you be prepared if your property is affected.

Gas

- Turn off all gas appliances; check that they are definitely off.
- If you can smell gas or suspect a leak, leave the property and call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999
- Put out any naked flames and don't smoke or strike any matches
- Don't use any gas appliances until they have been checked by an engineer.
- Turn off your electrical appliances, and avoid turning any switches on or off.
- Open your doors and windows.
- Keep other people away from the area.
- More information available from Northern Gas Network northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/gas-emergencies/

Electricity

- In a power cut you can contact your local provider by dialling 105. It's free and you will be put through to a local network operator who can give you help and advice.

What should I do during a power cut?

- Switch off all electrical appliances, ready for when the power comes back on.
- Leave a light on so you know when the power outage has been resolved.
- Check to see if your neighbours are okay.
- Wrap up warm
- Report the power cut, if you are unsure who your operator is, call 105.
- more information available from Northern Powergrid www.northernpowergrid.com/what-to-do-in-a-power-cut
- A live map of power cuts, can be accessed from any internet enabled phone www.northernpowergrid.com/power-cuts

How can I prepare for a Power Cut?

- Keep a torch handy – It's much safer than using candles
- Get a battery- powered or wind up radio (useful for keeping up to date with relevant local news)
- Keep Warm – keep a blanket and warm clothing handy and fill a vacuum flask or hot water bottle.
- Stock your cupboard with food and drink that doesn't require electricity to prepare it.
- Keep your mobile phone and laptop fully charged.
- Check network operators website or social media channels for updates.

Water

- Know how to check if the problem is internal or external to your property
- Store bottles of water in an accessible place that you can use to keep yourself and your family hydrated during a loss of water event.
- Wrap-up your pipes - pipes can be exposed to freezing temperatures if they're in a part of your home that isn't heated. Water companies recommend that any water pipes which are exposed to cold temperatures (such as those in the loft or in outside buildings like garages and out-houses, or your outside tap) should be protected with lagging. This helps to keep your pipes cosy and warm, reducing the risk of them freezing and bursting.
- Find your stop tap - if there's a burst pipe at home, the fastest way to stop the flow is to turn your stop tap off. Normally they're under the kitchen sink or in the downstairs toilet - but may also be in a utility room or garage.
- More information available from Northumbrian Water <https://www.nwl.co.uk/services/water/water-supply/no-water>

Priority Scheme - Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register is a free service provided by suppliers and network operators. Each energy supplier and network operator maintains its own register. To register and to check eligibility, you need to contact your utility suppliers.

Who is eligible?

You could be eligible if you:

- are of pensionable age
- are disabled or chronically sick
- have a long-term medical condition
- have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs
- are in a vulnerable situation

How to get on the register

You need to contact your utility suppliers to get on the Priority Services Register. Each energy supplier and network operator maintains its own register.

You can ask your supplier to pass your details on to your network operator, especially if you are dependent on your supply for medical reasons or if you have children under five years old. If you have a different supplier for your gas and electricity, you need to contact them both.

If you switch supplier, you'll need to register for the service again with them.

Help you can get by being on the register

- Advance notice of planned power cuts. If you rely medically on your energy supply you can arrange for the company that runs the local energy network (the network operator) to give you advance notice of planned power cuts. For example, when they plan to carry out engineering work.
- Priority support in an emergency. This could involve the local network operator providing alternative heating and cooking facilities in the event of a supply interruption. In a loss of water event you could receive bottled water to your door
- Identification scheme. This is to reassure you that callers, for example meter readers, are genuine. Suppliers have to provide additional support to help you identify someone acting on behalf of their company. This could include arranging a password or showing an agreed picture card upon visit.
- Nominee scheme. Customers can ask their supplier to send communications (such as account statements or bills) to someone you have nominated who agrees to receive them. For example, this could be a family member, carer or someone you trust.
- Arrangements to ensure that it's safe and practical for you to use your prepayment meter. For example moving a prepayment meter if you are unable to access it safely to top it up.
- Meter reading services at appropriate intervals. If nobody living at your property is able to read the meter and there isn't anyone else you can nominate to read the meter on your behalf, your supplier may be able to read it for you.
- Accessible information. Account and bill information in an accessible format, for example in larger print or braille.

Further information

- Power Cut Advice in all areas <http://www.powercut105.com>
- Preparing for Emergencies Guidance <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-emergencies/preparing-for-emergencies#prepare-yourself-for-emergencies>
- National Emergency Plan for Electricity <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-emergency-plan-downstream-gas-and-electricity-2016>
- Northumbrian Water Priority Services Register <http://www.nwl.co.uk/services/extra-support/priority-services/>
- Scottish Power Energy Networks (Northumberland North and Bedford) <http://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/power-cuts>
- [Northern Gas Networks](#)
- [Northern Power Grid](#)

How can your local community be prepared?

Wide-scale emergencies can and do happen. In the last 5 years the UK has seen events such as heavy snow, flooding, chemical incidents, drought, riots utility failures, fuel shortages and a pandemic.



**BE
PREPARED**

What is a community emergency plan?

A community emergency plan provides advice and guidance to a local community (this may be the parish council, neighborhood watch area or even a single street) both in advance of and during any significant emergency. To see if a community emergency plan exists in your area please visit your local authority web site.

Why have a community emergency plan?

The purpose of community resilience is to encourage people to plan and be prepared to put in place a self-help response within a community which is affected by an emergency.

Experience has shown that, sometimes due to the scale and nature of an emergency, the normal response provided by the emergency services and the local authorities can be delayed. On these occasions anything which the local community can do to support each other will help them deal with the emergency more effectively.

How to get started

Community resilience measures can be as little as designating a point of contact within the community to receive warnings and messages from emergency services and local authorities. The plan can grow over time to include areas such as:

- A parish emergency team
- Community buildings which can be used as emergency evacuation facilities
- Knowledge of skills and expertise within the community
- knowledge of special equipment or vehicles within the community
- Identification of vulnerable premises and people within the local area specific actions based on specific risks.

Further information

[A new page on GOV.UK - Preparing for emergencies, signposts users to key public facing content which is useful for individual, business and community resilience.](#)

Planning for an emergency

Some emergencies require evacuation; some require staying in and sheltering - are you ready?

In the case of most major emergencies, the simple advice is to go inside, stay inside, and tune into local radio.

We use local radio to broadcast emergency warnings and information. It is one of the most accessible means of communication as it can be received in homes, businesses and cars.

Radio is very reliable as it can still broadcast and be received during a power cut by using a wind-up or battery powered radio. With most incidents the safest place to be is indoors, and with correct preparation you should be able to stay there safely for some time. Remember, in the case of a fire in a building you are in - get out, stay out and call the Fire and Rescue Service out.

Knowing what to do during an emergency is an important part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.

To prepare for an emergency you should take time to find out -

- Where and how to turn off water, gas and electricity supplies in your home.
- The emergency procedures for your children at school.
- The emergency procedures at your workplace.
- How your family will stay in contact in the event of an emergency.
- If any elderly or vulnerable neighbours will need your help.
- How to tune in to your local radio station.
- A list of useful phone numbers, e.g. for your doctor and close relatives.
- Where you would go if you were asked to evacuate.

Having a C.L.E.A.R plan (Check, List, Emergency Bag, Act, Recover) will mean you are prepared for when the unexpected happens, so you can respond safely and recover quickly.

Check:

Always check the radio, television, social media or internet for weather warnings and news.

Local radio and television

- Reliable Sources of information
- Set the following radio stations for your area:

Radio station	Frequency
BBC Newcastle	FM 95.4 MHz
Heart North East	FM: 101.8 MHz
Capital North East	FM 106.4 MHz
Radio Borders	FM 102.3 MHz
Smooth Radio	FM 97.5 MHz
Metro Radio	FM 97.1 MHz

Look for verified social media accounts which are official sources of information are more reliable. Add the emergency services, local council, Met Office and the Environment Agency to your social media networks.

Social media
Facebook
Twitter

List:

Make a list of medication you take; important phone numbers and insurance policy no. & carry at all times.

- Keep important documents i.e. birth certificates and passports, above flood levels in a fireproof box if possible.
- Keep computer information on an external storage device.
- Keep all these in one place, to quickly take these with you in an emergency.
- Save useful numbers in your mobile phone and keep a list in your wallet / purse

Have you put ICE (In Case of Emergencies) contacts in your mobile phone?

ICE allows the emergency services to contact someone if you are unable to. An appropriate ICE contact is important because they may need to give consent for medical treatment. You can download ICE apps for your mobile; alternatively, you can keep the same information on a card in your wallet/purse.

Emergency Bag:

An Emergency Bag is useful, especially if you have to leave your home quickly / stay indoors without power for a few days.

The bag should be small enough to carry. Check it regularly to ensure it has everything you need and items like torches work. Consider leaving the batteries out until you need to use it. Consider putting dried & tinned food as well as candles and matches in a separate box. You will need this if you have to stay indoors for a few days.

Your bag could contain:

- Household emergency plan
- Toiletries, sanitary supplies and any regularly medication
- First aid kit
- Wind up radio / torch with spare batteries
- Cash and credit cards
- Essential keys (House and Car keys)
- Mobile phone and a charger and a spare charged up power pack
- Baby food and care items where necessary
- Warm waterproof clothing and blankets
- Bottles of water, ready to eat food (e.g. tinned food) and a bottle / tin opener
- Gather important documents in a waterproof wallet (such as personal ID, banking card and insurance documents)
- Items for pets

Act:

Should an emergency happen, act when you need to.

If the danger is outside – STAY IN: TUNE IN

- Stay there until you are told the emergency is over or you are advised to leave.
- Listen to your local radio or TV news for updates.

If the danger is inside (or you are told to evacuate) – STAY OUT:

If it is safe and you have time:

- Take the items you need (incl. your emergency bag).

- Turn off electricity, gas and water supplies, unplug appliances and lock all doors and windows.
- Go to a safe place.
- If you leave by car take bottled water and blankets
- Take your pets (with suitable carriers or leads) and pet food
- Inform the emergency services where you have gone and how you can be contacted
- Tune into local radio for emergency advice and instructions
- Ensure that you take all health related items including glasses, hearing aids and any prescribed medication.

Safe Places

- Know the quickest / safest routes out your house.
- Arrange a safe place to meet if separated.
- Tell someone if you stay with friends.

Flooding

- Move valuable items and pets to safety; with plenty of food & water.
- Stay safe when travelling
- Listen to emergency services advice.
- Stay out of flood water.

Recover:

Taking the CLEAR steps in this guide will help you recover and get back to normal much quicker.

After major incidents like flooding, there may also be recovery surgeries and drop in sessions which will provide you with further advice. Look out for information in the local media from your council.

What to do when returning home?

- Listen to advice of emergency services or local authorities.
- Be wary of anyone offering to carry out building work (check their credentials).

Contact your local authority for support.

Business Continuity Management

Business continuity is based on a very simple idea which, surprisingly, many firms and businesses do not embrace.

At its simplest, it means having a plan for when something goes wrong so that you maintain the essential parts of your business and recovery as quickly as possible by having a 'work around' for predicted impacts.

What could be easier than that? The reality is that a huge number of people who experience a business disruption never recover from it. It might be a fire, a flood or you might just lose your staff for some reason. Business continuity means doing some thinking in advance about what you would do if a crisis like this occurred.

A workable business continuity could be as simple as:-

- A simple impact analysis that lists the staff, equipment and premises that you need as a minimum to continue to operate even a basic service.
- A contact list both for your customers and suppliers but also for your staff – the average duration of ownership of a mobile phone in the UK is less than 12 months.
- An action card with the first 10 things that you need to do if the business is under threat. This will not be anything obscure, but will get you through the first couple of hours of the emergency.
- Simple plans of any key buildings showing electricity and utility cut-offs.

The only thing left to do is make sure that your colleagues and partners know about the plan and that you take it out of the drawer and test it in some form once in a while.

Frequency asked questions

What is the Community Risk Register (CRR)?

It details some of the key emergencies that might happen in the Northumbria LRF area. It is a requirement under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 that this information is available to local communities. The idea is that if people know what might happen, they can take sensible precautions to protect themselves.

What is the CRR based on?

Every two years the government publishes a National Risk Register based on a mass of data including historic, scientific and specialist analysis to assess the risks to the UK as a whole and allocate them some sort of priority. We look at this data in a local context so that we can provide members of the public with simple, understandable and relevant information about risk.

Why do I need to know about community risks?

The intention is not to scare you – but rather to put you in a better position to cope in the event of an incident. Again, a common misunderstanding is that this is the job of the emergency services and has little to do with the general members of the public. It has been demonstrated time after time that when communities come together to support each other during an emergency they can be hugely effective.

Is this not all just common sense?

The document is intended to bring together in a readable format a lot of information that some people may be partly aware of and other people may have much less understanding of the problems that could arise. Airline pilots do not work from a checklist because they do not know how to fly – they work from a checklist, so nothing gets missed!

Is this not a bit extreme?

Unfortunately not. Major and serious incidents are comparatively rare in this country, but we are still better placed by understanding what might happen so that we can respond effectively.

Will the emergency services understand what we are doing?

Absolutely. Let's take one example – flooding – and think about what you can do to help. You have the local knowledge, you know where the most vulnerable people live, you may be able to offer somebody hospitality for a couple of hours and, mostly, you care about your community. In the early stages of a serious incident, the emergency services will probably be stretched and greatly welcome your support.

Personal information page

Useful contacts	Name	Details
Schools		
Work		
Electricity		
Gas		
Water		
Telephone		
Insurance		
Doctor		
Other		
Other		
Other		

If evacuated, where could you stay?

Useful contacts	Name	Contact details	Location
First choice			
Second choice			

Useful contacts

Environment Agency Incident Hotline

0800 80 70 60

NHS 111

Gas leaks

0800 111 999 -

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and have a minicom or textphone call 0800 371787

Electricity Power Outage 105

Northumbrian Water

0345 717 1100

North East Ambulance Service

999 for life-threatening emergencies or

111 When it's less urgent than 999

Northumbria Police

999 in an emergency if not **101**

Tyne and Wear Fire Service

999 in emergency -

if not **0191 444 1500**

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service

999 in an emergency if not

01670 621111

Mountain Rescue (Accident or lost / missing person in the hills or forest)

999 ask for the Police who in turn will contact Mountain Rescue

Northumberland County Council

0345 600 6400

North Tyneside Council

0345 2000 101

Newcastle City Council

0191 278 7878

Gateshead Council

0191 433 3000

South Tyneside Council

0191 427 7000

Sunderland City Council

0191 520 5555

Northern Power Grid

0800 66 88 77

Northern Gas Networks

0800 040 7766

and press option 3

Age Concern

0800 678 1602

Carers Trust

Tel: 0300 772 9600

Email: info@carers.org

Citizens Advice

0800 144 8848