

Resilience through Partnership

Joint Resilience Unit Newsletter



Serving the City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Issue 3 - Spring 2012



Working together



Changes to the Joint Resilience Unit

About the Joint Resilience Unit (JRU)

The Joint Resilience Unit (JRU) is responsible for ensuring, on behalf of Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Local Authorities, that the impact of major emergencies affecting their communities is greatly reduced, so increasing the safety of their residents and visitors.

The JRU team consists of four members of staff and a manager. The team is based at The Quays, Briton Ferry, but also use office space at the Civic Centre, Swansea.

2011 was a challenging year for the Joint Resilience Unit (JRU), which brought about a number of changes to the team.

The JRU has reduced from six to four members of staff, with the team now managed by Shaun Burgess, NPT Corporate Health and Safety Manager.

The team has relocated to The Quays in Briton Ferry,

but retain a work space in Swansea Civic Centre, which is used regularly by the team.

Due to its reduced number of staff, the JRU are currently looking at smarter ways of delivering the service and improving the way in which the team interact with Local Authority Directorates and external agencies.

New contact details for the JRU can be found on the left-hand side of this page.

Other team news

In other news, the team will soon welcome back Andrea Jones from maternity leave. Andrea gave birth to a healthy baby girl, who she named Amelia Rose on 26th September 2011.

New JRU website and secure web application

Over recent months, the JRU have developed two new websites. A public facing site and a secure website.

Public facing website

The new public facing website contains useful information for residents and businesses in NPT and Swansea, such as advice on how to prepare and respond to local risks, for example, severe weather, flooding and industrial incidents. It also includes useful features such as a Met Office weather widget for latest weather information, latest news and a link to the new JRU Twitter feed.



Picture: The new JRU Public facing website

The JRU Twitter feed will be a useful tool to communicate with large numbers of people during incidents and to inform them of latest news.

The new website will assist the JRU in meeting its 'Warning and Informing' duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, but more importantly provide residents of Neath Port Talbot and Swansea with a useful

resource to enable them to know how to prepare and respond to an emergency, and to minimise the impact of the emergency on the community.

The website can be found at:

jointresilience.npt.gov.uk

Please take time to look at the website and let us know what you think!

Inside this issue:

- Changes to the Joint Resilience Unit **P1**
- New JRU website and secure web application **P1 & P2**
- Recent Incidents: Fforestfach Fire & Gleision Mine Tragedy **P2& P3**
- Exercise Incendia **P3**
- JRU Key Events Calendar 2012 **P4**

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New JRU website and secure web application

(Story continued from front page)

The new JRU secure website is nearing the end of its development phase and will be ready to use over coming weeks. The site will primarily act as a document management system that will replace the JRU Shared Area. The system will make editing, viewing and sharing plans much easier.

All plans will be updated online using the new system, which includes a number of standard templates for regularly used plans such as business continuity plans and emergency response plans.

The website will include a feature to allow users to share documents with colleagues from other organisations. In addition to these features, the website will also include an

e-learning section with interactive training on a variety of topics such as; An Introduction to Civil Contingencies, Business Continuity Planning and Silver Officer Training.

In addition to the new website, a phone application will be available by the summer, which will allow access to the website and its contents via mobile phones with 'smartphone' technology. This will be a useful tool when responding to an incident as it will allow remote access to emergency plans and contact details without needing to access a computer!

Comprehensive training on how to use the new system will be offered to staff over coming months.



Pictures: Screen shots of the JRU secure website



Recent Incidents:

Fforestfach Fire and Gleision Mine Tragedy

Over recent months, the Joint Resilience Unit have been involved in a number of incidents. Two of which were declared Major. Both incidents were demanding in different ways, with both presenting unique challenges for all agencies involved.

Fforestfach Fire

On 16th June 2011 at 13.05hrs, emergency services received reports of a large fire at a disused warehouse on Fforestfach Industrial Estate. Approximately 5,000 tonnes of 'tyre flock' was alight. Shortly after receiving the initial 999 call, a Major Incident was declared.



Picture: Fforestfach Fire

A multi-agency response was put in place involving Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, South Wales Police, City and County of Swansea, Environment Agency Wales, Public Health Wales and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board. Multi-Agency Silver and Gold Command Groups were established, at the Civic Centre,

Swansea and were chaired by the Local Authority.

The fire presented huge challenges for all concerned, particularly the Fire Service, as the material on fire could not be extinguished using traditional methods. The material had to be extracted from the building, submerged in water and left to cool. This meant extinguishing the fire was a long and difficult process. With assistance from local contractors, Cuddy, the site was cleared and returned to a safe state. Despite the huge demands on all agencies involved and the impact it had on the surrounding community, the shared approach to decision making and the co-ordinated approach

Recent Incidents: Fforestfach Fire and Gleision Mine Tragedy (continued from previous page)

to dealing with the incident helped ensure the fire was extinguished ahead of schedule.



Picture: Fforestfach fire site successfully cleared

Gleision Mine

On the morning of 15th September 2011, reports were received that four miners had become trapped at Gleision Colliery, near Rhos, Pontardawe.

Very quickly a multi-agency response was put in place, including emergency services, mines rescue, cave rescue and the Local Authority. Staff from the Joint Resilience Unit

provided support to the Gold Command Team based at The Quays throughout the incident.



Picture: The search and rescue operation at Gleision Colliery

A search and rescue operation was launched but despite the dedicated efforts of all concerned, the four trapped miners were found deceased the following day.

The incident generated international media interest and tributes were paid to the miners from the world of sport, media and politics.

The incident was the worst mining incident in Wales for decades and had a huge impact on the local community. In conjunction with the National Union of Mineworkers South Wales Area, Peter Hain MP launched the Swansea Valley Miners Appeal Fund to help the families affected by the tragedy. His Royal Highness Prince Charles is the Royal Patron for the Appeal Fund.

The Swansea Valley Miners Appeal fund is now closed and all money donated is being administered by Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO).

A joint investigation into the cause of the Gleision mine incident is being carried out by the Health and Safety Executive and South Wales Police.

Exercise Incendia / Command and Control Events

On 24th & 27th May 2011 the Joint Resilience Unit arranged and facilitated two table top exercises to test and evaluate the emergency response of each Directorate across the Local Authority.

All Directorates across the authorities participated with the support of Directors and Heads of Service. The exercise scenario involved a fire and explosion at an industrial site in a local, well developed area. Local Authority staff worked through a series of phases that challenged them with issues that may arise following such an incident. These were designed to test the delivery of Directorates' Emergency Response arrangements and maintenance of 'normal' services.

The event was organised following a review of the all Directorates' Emergency Response Plans. The aim of the exercise was to bring together Local Authority staff to test and evaluate each Directorate's Emergency Response in an incident whilst having an opportunity to understand the emergency response of the Local Authority as a whole. It was also designed to broaden the understanding of each others roles and responsibilities when responding to an incident in both the immediate response and throughout the incident.

The Scenario incorporated exercises to test the activation of the Directorate to an incident, to identify the appropriate officers to attend the Local Authority Emergency Control Centre, and provided clarification on the role of the 'Multi

Agency Bronze & Silver officers'.

Following exercise Incendia, a 'Command and Control' training event was held at the Richard Ley Development Centre on 26th January 2012. The event improved awareness of staff roles when responding to an incident as a Bronze or Silver Officers, and helped demonstrate how the Local Authority would interact with emergency services and other agencies during a major incident.

The event was well received by participants and will be offered to other staff from key services across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils.



For a comprehensive list of all forthcoming JRU events, please visit the JRU website:

<http://jointresilience.npt.gov.uk>