

Resilience through Partnership



Joint Resilience Unit Newsletter

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

Issue 6 - Autumn/Winter 2013



Working together



About the Joint Resilience Unit (JRU)

The 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 three 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.

Welcome to our Autumn/Winter edition of **Resilience through Partnership**. This issue is packed with articles from the JRU, City & County of Swansea and its partner agencies. The JRU would like to a big thank you to those who contributed articles.

We always welcome feedback from our readers. If you have any questions or comments please email joint_resilience@npt.gov.uk.

In addition, if you have any suggestions for articles of interest that you would like to see included in future issues, or you have some information you wish to share please email the address above.

Happy Reading!...

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Seasonal Flu - Protect Yourself and Others

Flu is a highly infectious respiratory illness caused by viruses which change every year. New vaccines are produced to try and match them. This gives people the best protection.



Flu spreads easily from person to person and is much worse than a bad cold. It is more commonly spread in Autumn and Winter, hence, why it is referred to as seasonal flu.

Symptoms in a healthy person can be severe, including fever, chills, headaches, aching muscles, a cough and sore throat. Most people feel better after a week from the onset of symptoms.

For those who already have a chronic health condition, the very young and the elderly it can cause serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia requiring hospital treatment. For some it can unfortunately have life threatening consequences.

Pregnant women are also at high risk because during pregnancy their immune system is reduced. This means mums-to-be don't have the immunity they normally have to fight viruses.

A flu vaccine is available free on the NHS for:

- ◆ Pregnant women
- ◆ Children aged between 2 and 3 years
- ◆ All children in School Year 7
- ◆ All children over 6 months and adults with a serious underlying health problem.
- ◆ All adults aged 65 or older
- ◆ All people living in a long-stay or nursing home
- ◆ Carers
- ◆ Community first responders

Dr Sara Hayes, ABM Director of Public Health, provides this message:

"It is important if you are in one of the high-risk groups for you to have your flu vaccination as soon as possible. You may feel fine at the moment but flu can be dangerous for you and for mums-to-be, including children and unborn babies".

If you get flu, use a tissue when you sneeze or cough and wash your hands to prevent the spread of flu.

For more information visit www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk or phone NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47. You can also speak to your doctor or nurse.

Article provided by ABMU Health Board

'Get Ready for Winter' Initiative

Make sure you're prepared when the weather changes and the temperature drops.

For dozens of tips on how to stay safe and warm this winter please visit

www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/get-ready-for-winter

The web pages highlight some very practical and straight forward advice to help individuals and communities prepare for a range of winter weathers and provide top tips on Health and Well-being, Protecting Your Home, Out and About, and; Communities, as well as identifying possible ways of saving money.

HM Government



Drive safely in South Wales this winter...



Driving conditions in the UK during the winter months can be both difficult and hazardous.

Motorists in South Wales are being urged to drive carefully with the change in the weather and the

darker nights rapidly approaching, when the clocks go back in October.

Police are asking drivers to slow down and drive according to the weather conditions. With the rapidly changing road conditions which occur in South Wales, especially in the Valley areas, drivers can expect wet spray, severe winds and slippery conditions. Motorists need to slow their speed, drive carefully and be patient with other road-users.

The South Wales Police Road Safety department representative said

“In bad weather conditions, it’s a good idea to leave earlier in the morning to allow for slower traffic movement on the roads and allow time in the morning to clear mist or ice from the windows.

Be safe, and slow down on the roads. Wet and windy weather gives dangerous driving conditions with slower braking times and risk of aquaplaning. Drive slowly through water and only if you know how deep it is.

Rain and water spray also cause poor visibility on the road so keep your headlights on throughout the day.

When weather turns to autumn and winter, it is always a good idea to check your vehicle’s condition, such as oil, water, tyres and brakes, and make sure that the windscreen and lights are free from dirt and debris.

Finally, you could face a hefty fine and between three and nine penalty points if police officers believe you were driving without reasonable consideration to other road users. Worst of all, if you cause a road traffic collision, you could kill or seriously injure an innocent driver, kill or injure yourself or your passengers”.

The message from South Wales Police is “drive safely in South Wales this Winter”.

Article provided by South Wales Police

Home Fire Safety Training

During September over 100 Officers from City & County of Swansea Housing received Home Fire Safety Training from Officers of the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS).

The fire service officers wanted to strengthen partnership working and raise awareness of the free Home Safety Checks they offer to all residents of Swansea. They are keen to get referrals to access as many households as possible, particularly those at high risk or vulnerable. The daily contact Housing staff have with a wide cross section of tenants means Housing, Rent, Sheltered and Tenancy Support Officers are ideally placed to communicate the Home Safety Check message.

The Fire Officers outlined some of the basic checks they undertake within the home and what they can offer, especially to those at high risk of experiencing an accidental fire e.g. heavy smokers, hoarders, and drug and alcohol abusers.



The Housing Teams were shown what the Fire Teams look for in terms of hazards e.g. old block plugs, chip pans, electric blankets, clutter on stairways, 3 bar electric fires, and what they can offer in terms of equipment and advice. They were also shown a very high impact video of how quickly a fire can spread and images of the devastation it leaves behind in a typical family home.

The Fire Service offers a free testing and replacement service for electric blankets – they also have a supply of free smoke alarms (although all CCS housing has hard wired alarms in place) , a limited supply of carbon monoxide alarms and will replace chip pans only if there has already been a fire as they are low on stock. They can also supply fire retardant bedding to high risk residents and are trialling a new Aqua Mist domestic sprinkler system in a few high risk properties.

As a result of the training, articles are being placed in the quarterly tenant Open House magazine, High Rise Newsletter and the Housing Officers have already made several referrals to the Home Fire Safety Team for visits.

**Article provided by Ann Smith
Resilience Coordinator for
City & County of Swansea Housing**

Community Resilience

Building community resilience is something that many communities already do. It is not about creating a new community network but rather a way to improve the emergency preparedness that possibly already exists in your area.



What is Community Resilience & why is it important?

Emergencies happen. Your local emergency responders will always have to prioritise those in greatest need during an emergency, especially where life is in danger. There will be times when you may be affected by an emergency but your life is not in immediate danger.

During this time, individuals and communities may need to rely on their own resources to ensure that they can manage with the consequences of an emergency.

Many communities already help one another in times of need, but if you spend time planning and preparing for such emergencies you will be equipped to cope better and recover more quickly.

Benefits of community resilience

How resilient is your community? Your ward, borough, village or street? Your sports club or other community group? And what can you do to help build this resilience?

By building on existing local relationships and networks, using local knowledge and preparing for risks, your community will be better able to cope during and after an emergency.

Local people who are prepared and able to respond effectively and recover quickly from emergencies show how successful community resilience can be.

What you can do to help

- ◆ Make your contribution
- ◆ Work in partnership with local emergency responders
- ◆ Don't put yourself at risk
- ◆ Talk to each other

What does a resilience community look like?

Resilient communities:

- ◆ Are aware of risks that may affect them (nationally and locally) and how vulnerable they are to such risks.
- ◆ Work in partnership with local emergency responders and other organisations before, during and after an emergency.
- ◆ Use existing knowledge and resources to prepare for, and deal with, the consequences of emergencies.

5 steps to getting started

1. Begin by considering who your community is and which communities you belong to
2. Get in touch with existing local networks you can work with
3. Choose a community representative for your emergency plan
4. Establish a Community Emergency Group
5. Develop a Community Emergency Plan

For more information and a template plan please visit at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/communityresilience

Source: Cabinet Office, Preparing for Emergencies - Guide for Communities

Exercise SMOKE PLUME

Summer 2013 saw the City & County of Swansea Housing Service hold a bespoke Training Event to test its response and preparedness in the event of a Major Incident affecting the council's Housing Stock and Tenants.



The tabletop emergency exercise was attended by 18 of the Senior Housing Managers, 1 Corporate Building and Property Services (CPBS) Manager and 1 Joint Resilience Unit Officer.

The scenario involved a major fire in Cwmdru Industrial Estate (a similar incident to the real Mettoys Fire that took place in 2011), but this event required large scale evacuation of the immediate area and significant road closures.

To make the test a bit more challenging three of the teams whom we would rely upon to assist in an emergency situation were severely affected in the scenario – losing access to their offices/ and equipment. The Homes Preparation Unit, CBPS and Furniture Store Managers were all then forced to utilise alternative solutions and actions to cope with the situation within a scenario that developed over a 2

day period.

The event aimed to test two main areas:-

- ◆ Our immediate response to the incident
- ◆ Our business continuity plans

The general feedback from attendees suggested they found the event very useful. The event highlighted a few issues we needed to address in order to further strengthen our immediate response and contingency plans and an action plan was developed after the event in order to take these forward.

*Article provided by Ann Smith
Resilience Co-ordinator for City
& County of Swansea Housing*

Flooding - Be Prepared!

During the winter months heavy rainfall can cause havoc across the UK.



Be prepared for flooding by visiting the Natural Resources Wales Flooding and Alerts web pages at naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

...it could save your life and your property!

Information includes:

- ◆ Flood warnings in your area
- ◆ What to do before, during and after a flood
- ◆ Predicted flood risks in your area

The Joint Resilience Unit and partnership agencies are working with residents across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot to reduce flood risk.

We have developed a flood response plan for those agencies who will respond to flooding incidents.



The JRU would like to wish you a Merry
Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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