

Case Study - Exercising Emergency Plans

Background

Filey is a relatively small town within the Borough of Scarborough in North Yorkshire. It has a residency nearing 7000 and of these some 28% of people are aged over 60 (national average is approx 21%). According to the multi-agency flood response plan, up to 240 properties are at flood risk.

In August 2002 Filey was badly affected by flooding. Filey also flooded again in 2007.

Summary

The Mayor and Councillors were concerned, after the flooding in 2002, when they discovered their local Emergency Plan dated back to the days of Civil Defence and nuclear fall out shelters. A decision was made to have an immediate review of the plan and bring it up to date with current legislation and needs of the town and its residents. This was done and the plan was regularly updated and reviewed until it was tested for real during the 2007 floods.

Following the 2007 floods, it was apparent that for the plan to be effective people need to be trained and the plan needs to be exercised at regular intervals. Operation Storm was set up and the plan was tested using a table top exercise. This exercise included the Councils and the Emergency Services.

Volunteers and community members in Filey felt that they would have also benefitted from this type of training and experience, so in April 2011 Exercise Sudden Shock was implemented. This was a live, role play style exercise where the whole community became involved in testing the emergency plan.

Who was involved and what were the outcomes?

Many of the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum partners participated in the exercise. These included Police, Fire, Ambulance, North Yorkshire County Council Emergency Planning Unit, Scarborough Borough Council and voluntary organisations.

The day was a success. A good level of participation from partner agencies was achieved and similarly from the Town Council and wider community. All those who attended agreed that the exercise was worthwhile and that they now felt more prepared and resilient as a community should flooding or any other emergency occur in their area.

Key Learning Points

- It is essential that emergency plans are kept up to date, regularly reviewed, trained and exercised.
- Exercises such as Sudden Shock not only benefit the community but the emergency services and other responding agencies. These professional partners now have a greater knowledge of the local area and what the community has to offer in terms of assistance.
- Involving members of the public in the plan exercise is not only reassuring to the community that their Council has planned for emergencies; it is beneficial to the plan itself. The public can provide an additional view point for the Town Council and represent what would be useful for the wider community.

Next Steps

- Exercise Sudden Shock highlighted area's of the plan that needed amending and this will be completed by the Town Council.
- The Town Council will participate in further training and exercises as and when it is appropriate, according to their exercise schedule.

Further information

Filey Town Council are willing to share their experience and knowledge with other Town/Parish Councils. If you would like to speak to Filey then please use the contact details below.

Contact details

Katie Speed

Emergency Planning Officer

NYLRF lead for Personal and Community Resilience

North Yorkshire County Council Emergency Planning Unit

Katie.speed@northyorks.gov.uk

01609 532713 / 07891 587364