



NCR Practitioner and Responder Workshops – Improving Recovery

September-October 2019

Findings Report

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1. Introduction

1.1 The National Centre for Resilience (NCR) is a partnership of expert organisations including, Universities, Scottish Government, responders and third sector groups. We support resilience professionals to find solutions to real life challenges when assisting Scotland’s communities during extreme weather events.

1.2 The NCR held three workshops across Scotland during September/October 2019 for resilience practitioners and responders. The first workshop was held in Glasgow, then Aberdeen and lastly Musselburgh, with over 50 attendees in total.

1.3 The purpose of the workshops was:

- For the NCR to engage with our stakeholders, initiating a conversation between practitioners and the NCR
- To explore Practitioner challenges
- To scope potential projects for the NCR.

1.4 The workshops were open to all responders and practitioners who are involved with natural hazard related emergencies, and particularly the recovery from these. There was a good and fairly even spread between the types of organisation represented at the events which can be seen in Figure 1 below.

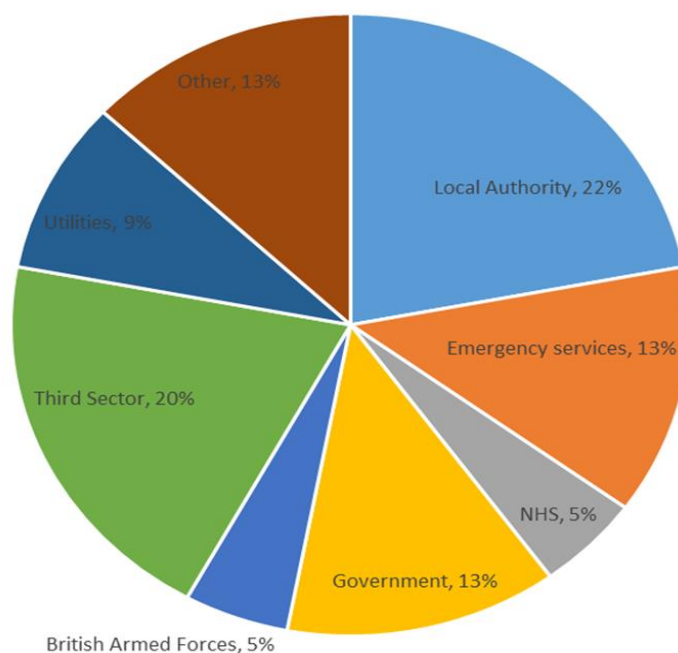


Figure 1

2. Workshop Questions

2.1 Delegates were given the opportunity to discuss their challenges and issues around the recovery phase of major incidents caused by natural hazards. We asked them three questions:

- What do we mean by recovery?
- Thinking about how we have defined recovery, what are your recurring issues?
- Thinking about the issues you have heard today, can you offer any ideas or examples of best practice to help overcome these?

2.2 We also released an online survey, for those who were unable to attend any of the workshops, and those who wished to add some further thoughts after the events. The survey again asked for practitioners to identify their greatest challenges in relation to recovery.

2.3 This report summarises the responses we received during the workshops and from the online survey, highlighting the most common challenges faced by the practitioners and responders in attendance. This report will not offer recommendations or attempt to prioritise the issues raised, instead the purpose of this report is to assist in these next steps, enabling the NCR to create its work plan for 2020/21 based on the workshops' outcomes.

3. What do we mean by recovery?

3.1 The purpose of this question was not to find a consensus on the definition of recovery, but for attendees to understand who was in the room, and what their or their organisation's idea of recovery is and the role that they play.

3.2 The following definitions were given at all three workshops:

Recovery is:

- Trying to get back to a state of normal – business-as-usual
- Long and short term considerations, including emotional recovery and mental health, the recovery of people and of the environment.

Other thoughts included:

- Business recovery – the return to a pre-loss position
- Recovery looks different depending on whether it is in an urban or rural setting
- Communities starting to grow again and to invest in the new
- Is recovery a phase on its own – or is it a part of response?
- Response and recovery should work together, or be part of the same, to ensure that the actions within response do not impinge recovery.
- Different for different organisations e.g. Ambulance service, recovery translates as body recovery.
- Community infrastructure will often recover quicker than its people.

4. Thinking about how we have defined recovery, what are your recurring issues?

4.1 This was an opportunity for attendees to discuss and compare the challenges they face, as part of their role as a responder/practitioner, during the recovery phase. We were looking to find out what hinders recovery and the people trying to deliver it.

4.2 The table below, at Figure 2, lists the challenges that were discussed. Those in **green** were issues raised at two different workshops, or at a workshop and in the survey, those in **red** were mentioned at all three workshops. The challenges have been organised by theme for usability, however it should be noted that some challenges would fit under more than one theme.

Theme	Challenge/Issue
Resources – finance, time, people etc	Lack of resources
	Lack of time
	Who can/should pay for resources or new solutions/developments?
	Lack of money – looking for the cheapest solution, not always the best.
	Not enough staff capacity
	Long-term process requiring long-term investment of resources.
	Third sector organisations are all bidding for the same funding pots.
Roles and Responsibilities	Managing expectations and conflicting priorities.
	How to identify the correct third sector organisation and at the right time.
	Emphasis from Scottish Government on community resilience – who's responsibility is this? And different communities organise themselves differently – what should their role and responsibilities be?
	Converting the doctrine into reality – lack of understanding of what different agencies can deliver.
	Those that can help are not always brought in at the right time (too late). Lack of knowledge of who to ask or a lack of outward focus – single agency decisions being made.
	Who has ownership over certain incidents? Who calls a 'major incident'?
	Community blame – expectations on Local Authorities.
Communications	Contact details out of date.
	How to engage private companies.
	How to manage/prioritise the press for the purpose of community engagement.
	How to find the balance between too much information to the public and not enough.
	Use of technical language and how best to communicate.
	Centralisation of services leading to the loss of local relationships and that communication channel.
	The harm that can be caused by social media – not always reporting the truth, causing panic and impossible to police.

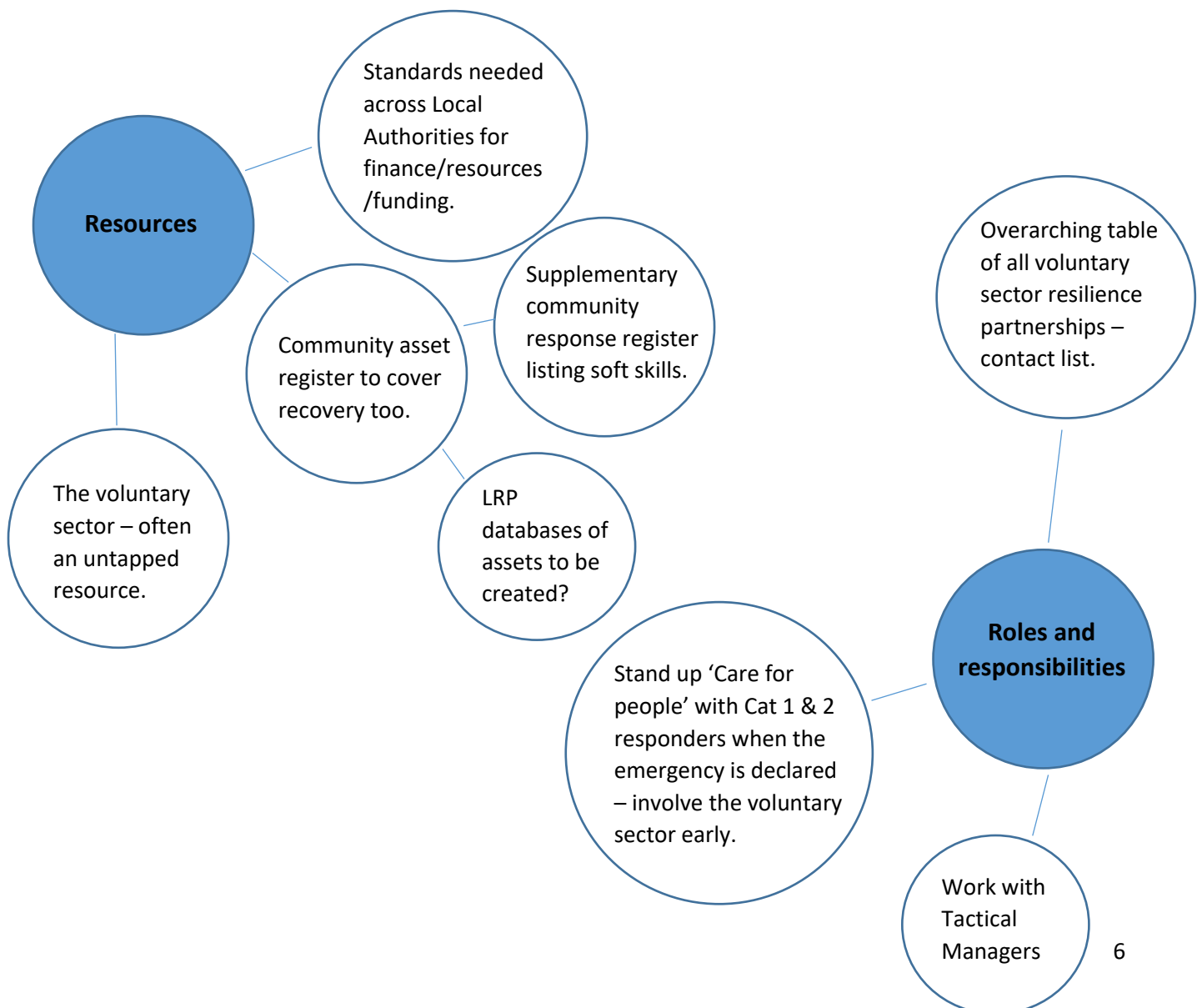
	<p>Once an agency is no longer working on an incident there is no awareness of the continuing recovery work.</p> <p>Communication between agencies – all are completing recovery at different times – updates are needed for all agencies throughout an incident (situational awareness).</p> <p>Engaging communities – do they know what support is available and how to access it?</p> <p>Connecting with communities – if there is no community infrastructure in place (ie community resilience groups) it can cause delays to recovery.</p> <p>Lack of multi-agency coordination.</p>
Public	<p>Householders not wanting to ask for/accept help.</p> <p>Community dynamics – leadership issues.</p> <p>Managing volunteers – organising, training, equipping.</p> <p>Public meetings can create a platform for hostility and raising other, unrelated, issues.</p> <p>People are more receptive immediately after an incident – this can lead to a lack of preparation ahead of an incident.</p>
Lessons	<p>How to identify good practice – and who has the authority to label it as good.</p> <p>Not learning lessons – how do we share this information?</p> <p>Corporate knowledge is protected and not shared – hierarchical.</p> <p>No accountability – no method to show how an organisation has applied lessons learned.</p> <p>Debriefs held too soon.</p> <p>Lessons not learned.</p> <p>Debriefs are not always seen as a safe space – fear of reputational damage/blame/accountability.</p>
Training	<p>Lack of training and exercising for recovery (planning and response).</p> <p>Culture of short term contracts and regular staff changes cause confusion over roles and responsibilities and how plans should be delivered.</p> <p>Lack of shared knowledge – too many single points of failure.</p> <p>Lack of succession planning within organisations.</p> <p>Not enough time spent on recovery – the least understood stage.</p>
Response or recovery?	<p>When does recovery start/end?</p> <p>When can agencies leave?</p> <p>Different risk appetites, therefore different priorities.</p> <p>Should recovery be a part of response? Is it hindering the process to class it as something different?</p>
Local vs National	<p>Local should be able to make decisions – not just national.</p> <p>The national perspective does not work for all – local needs.</p> <p>Cross-border conflict between Local Authorities – LAs each working differently and assigning resources differently.</p> <p>Lack of consistency between LRPs.</p>

Other	Insurance – will only fund return to normal, and not betterment. Hindering recovery in the future.
	Gap between schools and Local Authorities – they view themselves as separate.
	Recovery is difficult to plan for – depends what you're recovering from.
	Support needed for volunteers – mental and training.
	With a growing reliance on third sector organisations they need a more formal voice/more recognition.
	Interface between those who need help and those who provide it – the point of delivery can differ.

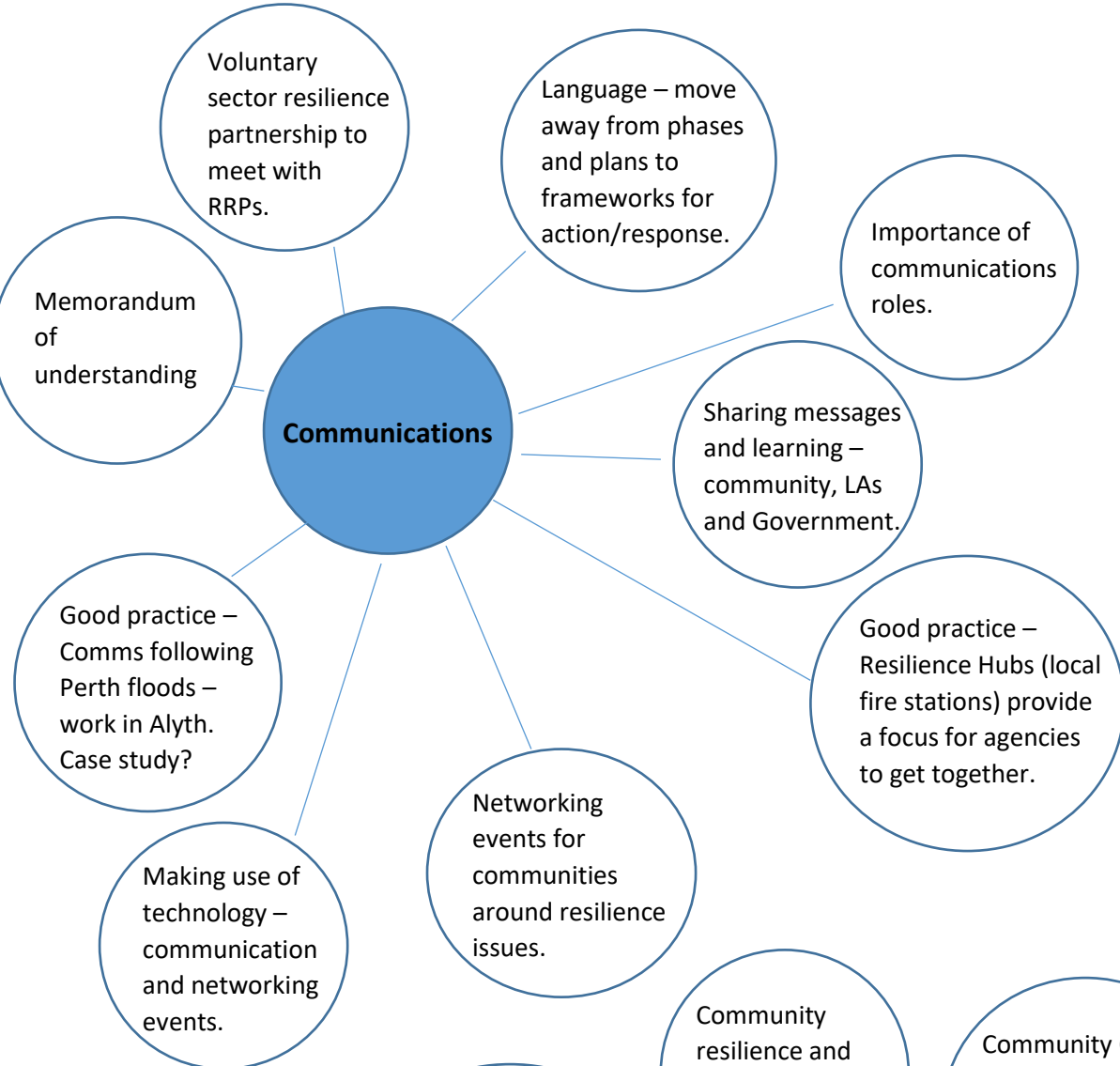
Figure 2

5. Thinking about the issues you have heard today, can you offer any ideas or examples of best practice to help overcome these?

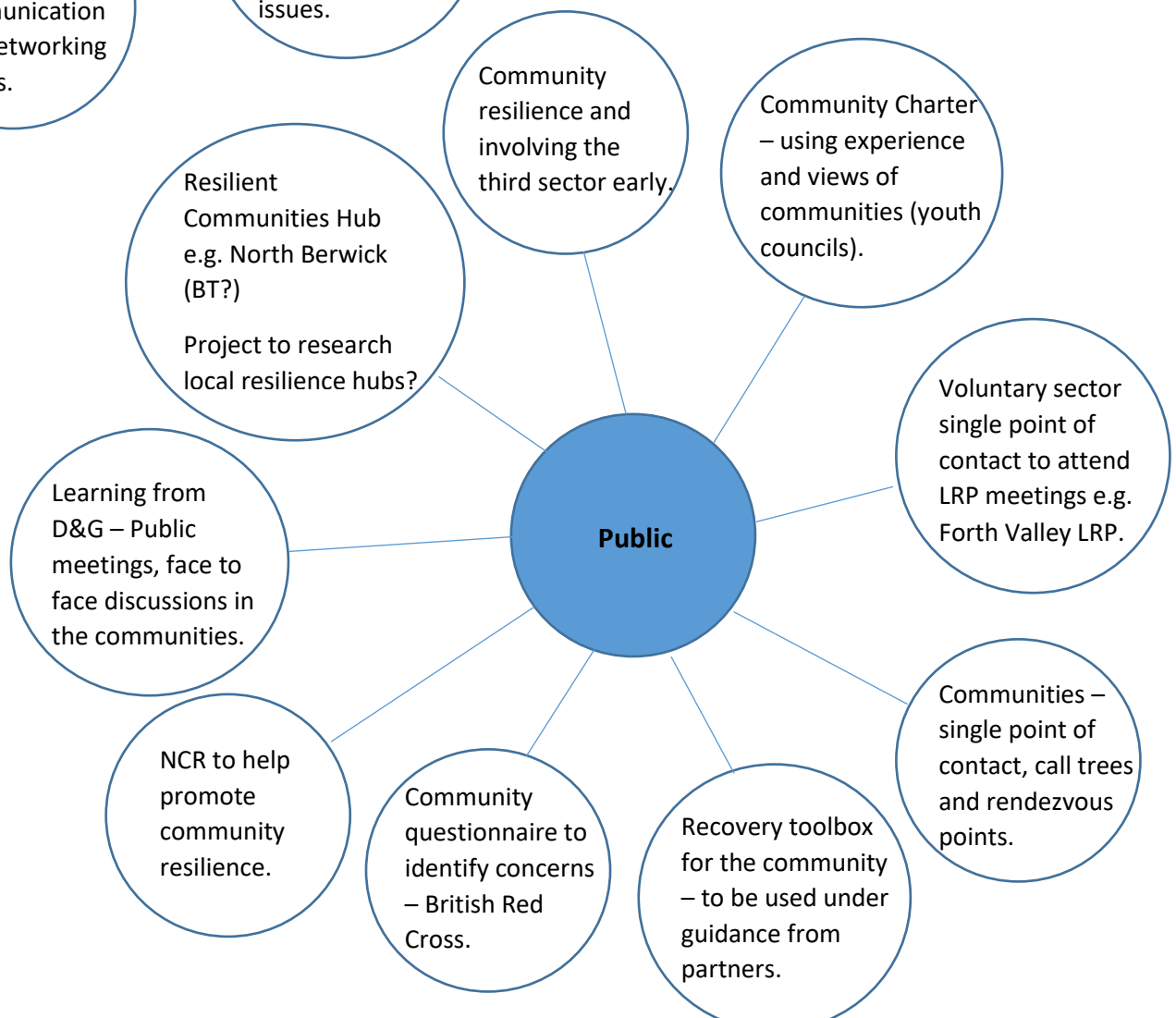
5.1 Below are the ideas and best practice examples discussed at our workshops or mentioned in the online survey. They have been grouped into the same themes as the issues raised. Although they might not directly answer all or any of the specific challenges listed above, each suggestion might go some way to improving things in each of the following areas:



Communications



Public





Local vs National

Rescue Groups (North) – could that be rolled out nationally?

Focus and consideration needed beyond statutory duties.

Redevelopment of Integrated Emergency Management (IEM) activities – do they meet today's needs?

Redesign IEM in partnership with communities – plain language.

If recovery was run in line during the response phase this could help with wellbeing.

Short term working groups – holistic working.

Response or recovery?

Other

Business continuity plan – recovery guidance available.

East Lothian Council – Strategic Safety Advisor Group.

Research – what do urban areas regard as recovery and how can they contribute to it?

British Red Cross – how can they use their shops as part of response/recovery effort? Use of infrastructure.

Further work into the position of psychosocial care and mental health support.

6. Next steps

6.1 This report lists the issues raised by the practitioners and responders who attended our workshops or answered our online survey. It highlights the most common challenges arising during the recovery phase after a major incident. It also demonstrates the number of ideas and the amount of best practice which already exists in these areas.

6.2 The NCR will now look to use this information to create gap analysis. Initially we will look across Scotland to identify the people and the work already examining the challenges and questions raised, but also find where information is lacking. This will then help us to formulate our work plan for 2020/2021 in an attempt to either apply the information which already exists or to commission work to fill the gaps. In turn we hope to begin addressing some of the issues listed here, assisting the resilience community to work together and with researchers and academic institutions to ultimately solve these problems, and others, making Scotland more resilient and better able to recover from natural hazard events.

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November 2019