Identifying the Vulnerable During an Emergency

Not protectively marked

Version: 1.0

Date: September 2014
Version control

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<th>Version and draft status</th>
<th>Final 1.0</th>
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<td>Intended audience</td>
<td>Category 1 and 2 Responders in Sussex</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOG/SRF sign off date</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Document date</td>
<td>22 September 2014</td>
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<td>Review date</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
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**RECORD OF AMENDMENTS**

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**Plan Approval**

This plan relies on Local Health Resilience Partnership, Sussex Resilience Forum Executive ensuring that their members are aware of the requirements and processes to share information following an emergency and to collate formal sign off by responsible executive officers from each agency.
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Sussex Resilience Forum Vulnerable People Plan

Identifying the Vulnerable during an Emergency

1 Introduction

This plan will be activated following a risk assessment which includes a community impact assessment, highlighting that vulnerable people may have unmet needs because of a developing or actual emergency.

This plan sets out the operational framework for how organisations will work together to align a response to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the planning, response and recovery phases of an emergency. It also establishes how the public will be asked to alert professional partners to identify unsupported needs, to enable efficient multi-agency working, planning and response.

The legal duty to cooperate and share information on vulnerable people is set out in the following documents:

- Cabinet Office 2006 Emergency Preparedness (5.101)
- NHS Commissioning Board Emergency Preparedness Framework 2013 (9.6)

2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this plan is to outline and provide a framework from which vulnerable people may be identified throughout the Sussex Resilience Forum area: either following an emergency or to alert them to an impending emergency, and to share that information.

The objectives of this plan are to:

- Define vulnerability
- Set out the triggers for activating the plan and the activation process
- Describe the additional roles and responsibilities of organisations, relating to identifying vulnerable people, in addition to those in the Sussex Emergency, Response and Recovery document (SERR)
- Describe how vulnerable people will be identified
- Describe the coordination arrangements for providing support to the vulnerable, and the link to other SRF plans
- Identify the need for training and exercising of this plan, setting out in particular need for frontline Police / Fire / Ambulance staff to understand the plan, data sharing protocols and sensitivities
3 Scope

This plan relates to the process relating to the identification of individuals who might be considered vulnerable depending on the nature of the incident. It does not set out to identify the individual needs of those people. Agencies responsible for known vulnerable individuals will already have processes for meeting their needs.

This plan will not assist where no database exists to identify those people who may be involved, such as an incident involving gridlock. Specific arrangements for the welfare of people set out in risk specific plans will need to be activated.

Part 2 plans exist in each top tier local authority area to identify vulnerable people. This part one plan will only be activated where an incident spans more than one local authority area.

4 Defining Vulnerability

There is no single definition of who is a vulnerable person in this context. However, for the purpose of this document it is possible to use four different groupings together:

4.1 Pre-identified vulnerable groups

Vulnerable people who are known and can be identified during the planning process. These will include schools and other educational establishments, nurseries and early years’ settings, care homes, hospitals, children’s homes, hostels and similar types of premises.

4.2 ‘Known’ vulnerable individuals

‘Known’ defines the individual known as a service user of the Health or Local Authority or Voluntary Sector services. It is not possible to identify lists of vulnerable individuals prior to any incident, as this list will change frequently. However, this plan establishes a process by which this information can be accessed in an emergency.

The process commonly used throughout Sussex is a ‘lists of lists’ approach. This involves organisations and SRF partners knowing where to find sources of information on people that may be vulnerable due to the incident type. At the time when it is needed, depending on the nature of the threat or hazard, agencies will be requested to compile from their data sources a definitive list of people who may be affected and have unmet needs.

Broadly, people who fall into these categories will include:

a) Those that, for whatever reason, have mobility difficulties, including people with physical disabilities or a medical condition and pregnant women
b) Those with mental health difficulties or other medically dependent people; and

c) Others who are dependent, such as children

4.3 Vulnerable due to the incident type

There will also be a proportion of people who will become vulnerable purely by the nature of that incident. This would include people who are normally independent but due to the nature of the incident have become vulnerable. It is therefore important that specific emergency plans identify and document, through dynamic risk assessment, what it is about that incident type that could make people vulnerable.

4.4 ‘Unknown’ vulnerable people

This last category defines vulnerable people who are not normally in contact with Authorities. It may be that they receive informal care from a friend or relative or that they are able to live a relatively independent life through an informal support network.

This may also include people who are vulnerable but choose not to be documented as such, homeless people, and visitors to the area including itinerant rough sleepers

4.5 Triggers

Any incident may require the activation of this plan. For example:

- Request from any SRF partner for support in identifying vulnerable people in a defined geographical area that spans more than one top tier local authority area
- Request for mutual aid to support vulnerable people
- Requirement for evacuation of an area

Activation of this plan is NOT dependant on a Major Incident or Emergency (as defined) being declared.

4.6 Activation

Any SRF partner identifying that triggers have been met can activate the plan by contacting the County or City Council in the affected area.

5 Sharing of Personal Data

The policy and process for sharing personal data and the legislation that applies is set out in detail in ‘The Information Sharing Protocol’.
6 Coordination Arrangements

To enable an integrated and efficient approach to the task of identifying vulnerable people during an incident, a sub group of the Tactical Coordinating Group will be responsible for their identification utilising the ‘lists of lists’ approach, and allocating support to those affected within their geographic area.

Part 2 plans will set out the local arrangements. These may operate either ‘virtually’ or physically depending on the scale and duration of the response. A number of responder organisations hold details of vulnerable people and can be contacted if necessary.

6.1 Responder Organisations

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<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Utility Companies</th>
<th>Voluntary/ Faith Organisations</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Other Category 1 Responders</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adur and Worthing Council</td>
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<td>British Red Cross</td>
<td>Clinical Commissioning Groups</td>
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These are detailed in the Sussex Emergency Response and Recovery document and supplemented by local arrangements contained in ‘part 2’ plans held by West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council.

Incident commanders need to be aware that any request to identify vulnerable people can be a time consuming process as there is a need to search databases across lists of lists, compiling and aligning data sets and removing duplications.

### 6.2 Public Awareness Campaigns

The use of public awareness and education campaigns will help people to prepare for emergencies themselves and build resilience within a community. Including an explanation about why and how Responders seek to identify the vulnerable during an emergency will help to allay any public concerns. It is also important to consider the delivery and format in which such campaigns are presented, keeping in mind the needs of those who may have sight or hearing impairments, do not speak English or have learning difficulties.

### 7 Training Needs Analysis

All organisations that are signatories to this plan have a responsibility to ensure that all relevant staff understand the plan, aligned part 2 plans, and their implementation, including the requirements of the data protection act.

### 8 Awareness and Exercising

Plan awareness presentations will be developed for use by SRF agencies, and included in any exercises as appropriate. Every opportunity should be taken to combine an “identifying vulnerable people” element into SRF exercises.

### 9 References
