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Regional Resilience Advisers
SCG Co-ordinators
Clerks to the fire and rescue boards
Chief Executive of Dumfries and Galloway Council
Chief Executive of Fife Council
Chief Officers
Chair, CFOA(S)
Members of the former Inland Water Rescue Stakeholder Group

Our ref: F3854383

6 July 2011

Dear Colleague

OPEN WATER AND FLOOD RESCUE IN SCOTLAND

I refer to my letter of 8 March 2011 in which I advised that the Inland Water Rescue Stakeholder Group had concluded its consideration of the recommendations in Paddy Tomkins' report of his independent review of open water and flood rescue in Scotland and had submitted its report to Ministers. I also advised that the Scottish Government response to the recommendations in Paddy's report had been published (the Stakeholder Group's report and the Scottish Government response are available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/swrc-review>). I am now writing to provide you with an update on progress with the recommendations and to outline our plans for the months ahead.

Over the last few months, we have focussed on the first few action points in the Stakeholder Group's suggested implementation timetable (page 6 of the Stakeholder Group's report):

- Commence discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT), National Water Safety Forum (NSWF) and Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) to explore options for the future funding of the Water Accident Database (WAiD).
- On conclusion of the Preparing Scotland guidance review, design and prepare guidance for the voluntary sector in respect of roles and responsibilities under civil contingencies legislation.
- Develop template for recording data in respect of inland water rescue capability and annual review system, in partnership with SCGs, and discuss potential role for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit (SFRAU) with the Head of the Unit.

Water Accident Database

Colleagues in the DfT have confirmed that they have undertaken to provide funding to the WAiD project for the duration of the current financial year. We have entered into discussions with the NWSF about the potential resource implications of an increase in the number of registered users for those bodies currently providing, free of charge, the staff resources to maintain the system: ROSPA; RNLI; the Maritime and Coastguard Agency; and BRM Consultancy Services.

We have identified a number of issues, relating to resources and data sharing, which will require to be explored further in the event that the Scottish Government decides to promote the utilisation of WAiD to Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services and Police Forces. In the meantime, we are working with CFOA(S) and ACPOS to determine the potential value of WAiD to the Fire and Rescue Services and Police Forces as a tool for recording and analysing data in respect of inland water incidents. This assessment will inform our future discussions with the NWSF.

Preparing Scotland Guidance

Work continues on clarifying, updating and condensing the core Preparing Scotland guidance. The draft revised core guidance will be circulated to responders for comment within the next few weeks with publication anticipated late August/early September. Once the guidance has been finalised, we will work with colleagues and stakeholders to develop bespoke guidance for the voluntary sector in respect of roles and responsibilities under civil contingencies legislation.

Inland Water Rescue Capability Template

In liaison with colleagues in Analytical Services (ASD) and SFRAU, we have been researching possible models for an inland water rescue asset template with the aim of convening a small working group in the autumn consisting of representatives from ASD, SFRAU and key stakeholders, to consider these and develop a template and supporting systems, including reporting requirements and quality assurance reviews, for rolling out to each Fire and Rescue Service. This would assist with consistency of information about inland water rescue assets across the country and would be the first step in developing proposals for local and national asset registers.

Public Education

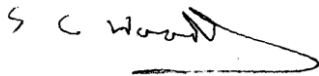
In addition to the above action points, we have been working with colleagues and stakeholders to promote water safety messages. As you may be aware, Scottish Ministers support Child Safety Week, the Child Accident Prevention Trust's (CAPT's) annual flagship community education campaign which aims to raise awareness of the number of accidents that seriously injure or kill children every year and the steps which can be taken to help prevent them. We were delighted that this year's campaign (which ran from 20 to 26 June) highlighted the importance of water safety messages for children - research commissioned by CAPT earlier this year, revealed that only 51% of Scottish parents have talked to their children about the dangers of swimming in lochs, rivers and other bodies of open water. This is a sobering statistic, especially as we enter the school holiday period and this week started with the news about the tragic death of a 15 year old boy in a reservoir in Strathclyde.

While working with CAPT helped to raise the profile of water safety messages for children during Child Safety Week, within Resilience Division, we have also been discussing with education policy colleagues the development of a “Resilience Education” package – the aim of which will be to ensure that teachers have access to a high quality resource which allows them to develop lessons on issues relating to preparedness and resilience as part of mainstream teaching through the Curriculum for Excellence. Proposals will shortly be developed for the package and consideration will be given to the inclusion of inland water safety messages.

Over the next few months, we will also be reviewing the content of the Ready Scotland pages of the Scottish Government website in respect of flood risk guidance.

I hope you find this update helpful in respect of work already underway and planned. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either myself on 0131 244 3397 or Johann MacDougall on 0131 244 3032.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S C Woodhouse". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator.

STEPHEN WOODHOUSE
Head of the Emergency Response Unit