

# Scottish Resilience News

Issue 5: December 2009



## Welcome

Welcome to Scottish Resilience News. As well as the ScoRDS Update, this issue is accompanied by a new publication, Scottish Fire Services College News, and our latest organisational chart. I've also included a questionnaire which will inform the future development of the newsletter, and I encourage you to take a few moments to fill it in.

This has been another very busy period for Scottish Government and local responders, as last month's heavy rain brought flooding to several areas of Scotland.

Work also continues on pandemic flu. Many of you already know that recent figures suggest a significant drop in the number of new cases, in Scotland and across the UK. While this is clearly good news, there is still considerable additional pressure on the NHS, and we do not yet know if we will experience a third wave of the virus. So there are no plans yet to scale back our efforts on flu, and we are grateful for the continuing work by SCGs and responders. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and will review arrangements in the New Year.

In the meantime, I'd like to take the opportunity to wish you all a very happy and peaceful holiday.

Lorna Gibbs  
Head of Resilience Strategy

## Justice Secretary opens joint service

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill, paid an inaugural visit to the new Ayrshire Civil Contingencies Team offices at Glasgow Prestwick International Airport in November

Employees from North, South and East Ayrshire Councils, who were previously based in the emergency planning sections of their respective councils, have joined forces to form the new team.

The Scottish Government provided funding to enable the team to relocate and refurbish the office to meet their specialised needs. The team has been working together since last December.

Mr MacAskill said:

"Working together with local authorities, law enforcement agencies and other organisations, we are committed to enabling our communities to withstand emergencies of all shapes and sizes where these cannot be prevented. We must use resources flexibly and pragmatically, and promote resilience across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

"The Scottish Government was happy to

assist with the start-up costs for the Joint Ayrshire Civil Contingencies Team. This new service will ensure strategic priorities in Ayrshire can be identified together and decisions taken jointly about how the vital civil contingencies specialists are deployed.

"There has been a great deal of detailed work involved in creating this new service which will enable more effective multi-agency working and help the three Ayrshire Councils work together in preparing how they respond to any emergency incident in or affecting their council areas."

Scottish Resilience actively supports the establishment of joint civil contingencies services.

## In this issue

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Scottish Resilience



## Brave@Heart

Nominations are currently being accepted for attendance at the Brave@Heart First Minister's Reception.

Taking place next summer at Edinburgh Castle, it will be an opportunity for the First Minister, on behalf of the people of Scotland, to show his appreciation and gratitude for the selfless courage shown by blue-light service personnel and members of the public who put the safety of others before their own.

If you know of a specific act of bravery by an individual or team that you think should be nominated, please contact the regional Chief Constable or Chief Fire Officer, or the Scottish Ambulance Service Chief Executive.

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## ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Firelink roll out

Firelink has now been launched in one of Scotland's remotest communities, the Shetland Islands.

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) welcomed the installation of the resilient communications system, which will provide a communications capability equal to any major city. The system enables firefighters to communicate directly with incident command centres, police colleagues and other fire service vehicles throughout Scotland and Great Britain.

Despite some early technical difficulties, Phase B, the delivery and installation of radio and radio and data equipment in stations and vehicles, is now up and running in all eight FRSs.

Firelink is scheduled for full installation across over 1,200 fire and rescue service vehicles by April 2010.

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# Water rescue review concludes

The independent review of open water and flood rescue in Scotland reported to Fergus Ewing, Minister for Community Safety, this month.

The review was directed by Paddy Tomkins, former HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland. He consulted extensively with the wide range of agencies with a role in inland water rescue, including police, fire and rescue services, mountain rescue teams, HM Coast guard and the RNLI, to look at how Scotland's response could be improved.

"It very quickly became apparent that we had to distinguish between rescues in flood circumstances, and 'acute' water rescues from rivers and lochs, which require different techniques and capabilities," says Paddy. "Flood warnings provide some time to put plans and resources into action, but if someone falls into a loch or river, services will have minutes, rather than hours or days, to respond."

Scotland's geography presents another problem, as many of its rivers and lochs are in remote areas.

"Scotland's waterways,

like our mountains, are a fantastic recreational resource, and we want people to enjoy them," he says. "However, they need to be aware of the dangers. Our best hope is through education and awareness: we need to help people not to get into difficulty in the first place."

He sees a key role for SCGs in assessing the risks and local rescue capabilities, and helping to ensure that those who visit local lochs and rivers understand how dangerous they can be. There's also room for more partnerships between statutory agencies and the voluntary sector.

"Scotland is very fortunate in the amount of voluntary effort involved in safety and response – often as a direct result of a local tragedy," he continues. "Statutory responders should develop relationships with voluntary groups, to make use of their local knowledge and local surveillance,



and give them the support they need to develop their capacity."

"I believe the existing law is adequate. There's no need for new duties or changes in current operational arrangements. But there's room for better collaboration and coordination between statutory agencies, and between agencies and the voluntary sector."

The Scottish Government will now consider the findings, with a view to working with partners in local government and the emergency services to apply the recommendations where appropriate.

The review is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

## Focus on Dumfries and Galloway SCG: public information project

How do communities in urban and rural Scotland perceive the risks that face them? Who do they think is responsible for preparing for emergencies in their area? And how can local and national responders best communicate with the public in the run up to, and during, an emergency?

These were just some of the questions Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) sought answers to as part of their non-media public information project, which was sponsored by Scottish Government.

Beverley Kerr, who led the project, scoped best practice in warning and informing initiatives from across the UK. She used a questionnaire and focus groups to gauge the public's reaction to them, as well as their attitudes to risk and preparedness more generally. As a result of the project, a range of initiatives – including a dedicated emergency website, community presentations, fold-out information card and fridge magnets – are now being introduced in Dumfries and Galloway. These will be evaluated in the coming months and the lessons learned will be shared with Scottish Government and other SCGs. The report is available from [Beverley.Kerr@dg.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Beverley.Kerr@dg.pnn.police.uk).

# Safety study aims to reduce fire deaths

The most comprehensive study into the root causes of fires and fire deaths in Scotland was formally presented to the Scottish Government in November.

The study, "Scotland Together", was commissioned by Fergus Ewing, Minister for Community Safety, in partnership with COSLA, to better understand what can and needs to be done to reduce the human and economic toll of domestic fires. The study team, led by Brian Sweeney, Chief Fire Officer of Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, makes 37 recommendations across a

range of key issues, including legislation around self-extinguishing cigarettes; new regulations around domestic sprinkler systems; more effective mechanisms for the delivery of education and prevention in relation to community safety; and improved cross-agency arrangements to assist in identifying those people most at risk.

As an indication of the importance with which the Scottish Government views the study, a Parliamentary Debate was held on 12 November, giving MSPs the opportunity to

contribute their views on this critical matter. Fergus Ewing said: "While fire deaths continue to show a downward trend, the fact remains that too many people in Scotland are killed or injured by fires in the home. As part of the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing fires and fire deaths, I commissioned this report as it is important for me to understand the views, experiences and recommendations of those on the front line of fire prevention". To see the full study, go to [www.strathclydefire.org](http://www.strathclydefire.org).



## New vehicles enhance CBRN capability

The Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing, handed over four state-of-the-art Detection Identification and Monitoring vehicles to the fire and rescue service on 3 December. Funded through Scottish Resilience, the vehicles will be strategically located with services throughout Scotland and will significantly enhance the services' capability to provide specialist support in suspected or confirmed chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) attacks. Photograph shows the Minister (left) with (l to r) Cllr Barbara Grant, Community Safety Spokesperson for COSLA; Cllr Mike Bridgman, Chair of the Fire Conveners Forum and Deputy Chief Fire Officer Richard Haigh, Head of the Fire Resilience Board, Chief Fire Officers Association Scotland.

## Resilient telecoms

Resources for the Resilient Telecoms Strategy for Scotland have been refocused and alternative means of providing a resilient telecoms network are being looked at, using other public sector organisations' networks.

The purchase of Airwave for non-blue light Category 1 responders will continue, but the purchase of BGAN (Broadband Global Access) units is on hold for the foreseeable future.

Firelink is not affected in any way and its roll out continues apace (see opposite page). We'll keep you update on further developments with the strategy and Firelink as they happen.

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## Ready Scotland

Work has begun to build a new national resilience web portal. 'Ready Scotland' will raise awareness among the general public of the risks Scotland faces, and offer practical, commonsense advice on what people can do to protect themselves, their homes, families, and businesses, from all kinds of emergencies.

The portal, which will be part of the Scottish Government website, was on the agenda at the October steering group meeting between Scottish Resilience and SCG public communications group chairs, who were asked to provide information about local links to include.

The meeting also agreed proposals from ScoRDS to hold communications-specific training in each of the SCGs next year.

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## Secondment to MRCS

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill, has approved an 18 month seconded post from Scottish Resilience to the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (MRCS), to assist and promote mountain rescue liaison with the emergency services. John Craig's secondment will begin next April, and will be fully funded by Scottish Government. Although the post will cover the whole of Scotland, Fife Fire and Rescue Service will provide an office base in St Andrews.

MRCS teams are playing an increasingly important role, not just in isolated incidents on the hills, but also in working with other public and voluntary sector agencies in exercising for and responding to major incidents – such as urban search and rescue – and as first responders in rural communities. Further information about the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland is available at: <http://www.mrcofs.org/>

### ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Mobile phone access

A new system that maintains access to the mobile phone networks for emergency responders, even if networks are congested, went live in Scotland in November.

MTPAS (Mobile Telecommunications Privileged Access Scheme) replaces ACCOLC (Access Overload Class).

The main differences between the systems are that MTPAS is simpler to administer, there is a set procedure for notifying telecoms companies of an incident, and there will be an annual audit exercise to ensure that organisations' MTPAS records match those held by the telecoms companies.

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# Your Scotland, Your Voice

Monday 30 November 2009 saw the publication of "Your Scotland, Your Voice", the Scottish Government's White Paper which paves the way for the people of Scotland to be given the right to choose their constitutional future in a referendum. Scottish Ministers believe that independence delivers a new 21st century partnership of equals between Scotland and England – including giving the Scottish Government and Parliament the responsibilities needed to fight recession, support jobs, and maximise the opportunities that will come with recovery.

As well as setting out the case for independence the White Paper also examines

the other constitutional options open to Scotland: the status quo, the proposals of the Commission on Scottish Devolution (Calman Commission), and maximum devolution including fiscal autonomy.

Scottish Resilience has been working on the defence and security aspects of the national conversation over recent months. Given the clear relationship between defence, security and resilience, there was a natural fit with the existing work of Scottish Resilience. Analysis and research into the models offered by other similar nations, and a discussion of the opportunities associated

with an independent Scotland have all formed part of the work that has been undertaken.

A key element of the work that has been done was to incorporate the thinking of the Working Group: Scotland Without Nuclear Weapons. Chaired by the Minister for Parliamentary Business, the group concluded its work in summer 2009 and both the working group's report and the Scottish Government response were published in November.

For further information contact Kirsty Baker ([Kirsty.baker@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Kirsty.baker@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)) or go online at: [www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/11/27154409](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/11/27154409).

## Civil Contingencies Act Enhancement Programme

The Cabinet Office is conducting a review of Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and the statutory guidance, 'Emergency Preparedness'.

The review is being delivered through the Civil Contingencies Act Enhancement Programme (CCAEP), which began in December last year. Phase 1, which focused on improving the implementation of the existing CCA framework, has now closed. Phase 2, which aims to identify and explore recommendations for improvement to the CCA, the associated Regulations and statutory guidance, is underway.

John Craig is leading on the review for Scottish Resilience. He says:

"Scottish Resilience and Cabinet Office are working closely together to ensure responders in Scotland are involved in policy development in Phase 2.

"CCAEP has six integrated projects in Phase 2: refining the existing CCA duties; broadening the scope of the CCA duties; reviewing responders and responder categories; national and

regional resilience arrangements; better responder engagement and collaborative working; and improving compliance and performance development."

Look out for more information in future issues of Scottish Resilience News, or visit the CCAEP website at:

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/preparedness/ccact.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/preparedness/ccact.aspx)."

*Scottish Resilience News* is published every two months by the Scottish Government. The newsletter aims to keep the resilience community up-to-date with what's happening at Scottish Government level and across Scotland. If you have comments or ideas for future issues, please contact the editor at [Joanna.Swanson@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Joanna.Swanson@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

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