



A Winter's Tale

Winter arrived earlier ... and with a vengeance.

It came in waves from Siberia and then the Arctic – no sooner was one over than another icy blast appeared.

Across the country Strategic Co-ordination Groups (SCGs) met to determine appropriate action and support individual responder agencies in the effort to keep Scotland moving.

Additional demands were placed on many responders, sometimes at short notice. Credit goes to everyone who went the extra mile in responding to the significant challenges we have faced to date.

The [Ready Winter](#) web pages went live earlier in November – guiding the public to key sources of information to let them plan ahead and deal with problems when they arrived.

They proved very popular helping people get the advice quickly and easily from a variety of local and national websites. On peak days, there were more than

15,000 visitors.

Extraordinary efforts were made by police, ambulance and fire services.

They were joined by a vast array of voluntary



Photo: Mark Owens/Army

community groups and individuals helping each other through the freeze.

Units from the armed services joined in to clear the way for ambulances (as pictured, above, in Renfrewshire)

Planning ahead also meant being prepared for

the thaw – and potential flooding. The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) is running a floodline service with a [new website](#) alerting the public.

Nearly 200 staff worked in rotas during the freeze in the Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR) which supported activity across Scotland and updated Ministers in the Cabinet sub-committee on Resilience, which met daily over much of the period.

Stephen Woodhouse, Head of the Emergency Response Unit, said: "I am immensely grateful

for the support we received from SCGs and responders. And Ministers are very appreciative of the hard work put in across the piece to keep roads open, look after vulnerable people and so on. Many thanks to all concerned."

Consultation outlined on fire and police reforms

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill has announced consultation for the reform of Scotland's police and fire services.

He said a consultation will be launched in February to discuss three reform options for both services - eight separate

boards with enhanced collaboration; a regional structure with fewer boards; and a single service.

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Welcome

This edition of *Scottish Resilience News* comes in the wake of the most severe winter weather in a generation.

The resilience community has shown it is able to rise to the daunting challenges – keeping the country going, helping each other and getting on with the job.

All of this has underlined the importance of our work. Demands are now growing at a very rapid rate.

The work associated with SGoRR combined with a major programme of activity to review the future of the fire and rescue services has meant that we have decided to reorganise Scottish Resilience into two divisions whilst retaining the close working relationships and central functions.

Michael Kellet is joining us to take over as head of the Resilience Division. I will lead the Fire and Rescue Services Division.

More details about the structure of the two divisions will be sent out to stakeholders in due course.

I am enormously grateful for the support during my time as head of Scottish Resilience.

Michael and I both look forward to working with you over the next year.

Ian Walford

Focus on: Resilience volunteers in action

Red Cross volunteers played a crucial role at the outset of the big freeze in the Highlands – as they did last winter - and throughout 2010.

Its response teams in Northern Scotland comprise 150 volunteers, more than 40 specially adapted and equipped Land Rovers and other 4x4 vehicles, three swift water rescue boats, RIBs (rigid inflatable boats) and a state-of-the-art mobile communications command centre.

The teams have already handled more 230 calls to date this year helping more than 500 people. They were tested to the full in an exercise Delta 703 on the RAF bombing range at Tain, Easter Ross in October.

The scenario involved dealing simultaneously with a helicopter crash and then with people trapped on a beach with the tide racing in.

Ian Rideout, Red Cross operations director in Northern Scotland, said: "We hold major exercises like this twice a year, on top of regular training sessions. It is vital that our volunteers constantly practise and improve their skills in order to provide the highest quality support to the emergency services and other statutory agencies. Just because

they are volunteers does not mean they are amateurs.

"The scenarios are made as authentic as possible and the teams have no

in 2009 and we were in constant action during last winter's severe weather."

Noel Rehfish, of the SG's Community Resilience Unit, said: "The BRC is one of a range of voluntary organisations that provide vital support to statutory responders. Voluntary organisations can provide specialist skills and resources to comple-

More on [Red Cross](#) work in Scotland and a [video](#) of their teams in action.



Red Cross volunteers on Exercise Delta 703

ment the response, are becoming increasingly professionalised and often have vital local knowledge and resources."

Equally active from the outset of the big freeze were volunteers in Scotland's mountain rescue teams who brought their high altitude expertise and equipment down for good use in lowland locations.

They used their all-terrain vehicles to help nurses on home visits, transfer patients to hospital, ensure doctors and other key staff could get to work when roads were otherwise blocked. They also delivered meals on wheels and helped search for missing persons.

More here on [Mountain Rescue](#)

Budget plans set out for 2011/2012

The Scottish Resilience share of the Justice budget in 2011/12 has been reduced by 12 per cent from £20.8m to £18.3m.

Resources will be concentrated on training of fire service personnel at the Fire Services College and through a national learning and development fund

Continued investment will be made in the Firelink radio communications system and in national and local multi-agency shared service initiatives designed to help ensure that the public, private and voluntary sectors across

Scotland are prepared to deal with the consequences of an emergency, such as SCORDS.

We also plan to continue to invest over £1m in 2011-12 in direct support for the Strategic Co-ordinating Groups, particularly for funding the Regional Resilience Adviser and co-ordinator posts.

The vast majority of the savings will come from efficiencies in the delivery of the Firelink system and the national learning and development fund.

Nominate for honours

Scotland's police forces and fire & rescue services are once again invited to nominate individuals to receive the Queen's Police Medal (QPM), the Queen's Fire Service Medal (QFSM), and for the Birthday and New Year Honours.

The awards seek to recognise It is about outstanding and innovative service to others, which may be paid or unpaid. More info from:

Donna.bryce@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Responders pave the way for Climate Change challenges



Flooding is one of the rising risks of Climate Change.

Responder agencies across Scotland are already leading the way on climate change – ahead of the statutory duty on all public bodies which came into force this month.

This requires them to reduce carbon emissions, promote climate change adaptation and act sustainably.

But a lot of work has been done by fire and rescue services since the Climate Change (Scotland) Act received Royal Assent in 2009.

Many of these were highlighted in the Chief Fire Officers' Association Scotland published its first report on environmental performance,

Cycle to work schemes, greener vehicles, energy management, communications, procurement, waste management and recycling

All eight Scottish FRS, the Scottish Fire Service College and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service signed up to the

Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme to develop longer term strategies to reduce our carbon footprints over a five to ten year period.

And more recently Scottish Resilience has been working with stakeholders on action plan specifically for emergency and rescue services. This arises from work on Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Framework.

The plan includes a range of activities which are currently underway, or planned, to help minimise the negative consequences of climate change and maximise the opportunities.

These include the continued development of the Ready Scotland web portal, a Chief Fire Officers' Association Scotland working group to enhance severe weather capability through pre-planning and partnership and publication this spring of the Scottish Policing Assessment of the impact of environmental factors.

Guidance for Recovery from Emergencies

The [recovery guidance](#) was published on Ready Scotland in December.

SCG Chairs received a letter on 30 December recommending that the SCG consider and adopt the guidance, which recommends basing recovery work on a number of principles. The site clearance guidance has been withdrawn because it is too operational (although this is not to say it was not useful) and strategic issues are covered by the Recovery Guidance. The twin-SCG approach to CT responses is also being reviewed. A half-day workshop has been developed to introduce and raise awareness of the Guidance through facilitated group discussion and activities. The workshop targets those at the 'tactical' level, that is, people responsible for the management of recovery from emergencies in multi-agency settings, and will be delivered throughout Scotland during the first quarter of 2011.

UK Cabinet Office has many pages of detailed guidance relating to recovery on its website. However our approach to guidance is to recommend principles, rather than to prescribe operational matters, in line with integrated emergency management and subsidiarity. The Cabinet Office material remains a useful resource that can be drawn upon where appropriate.

Testing time for flooding in the North-east

Exercise Grampian Torrent, in October, was based on a severe weather, multiple flood scenario. The exercise planning team used real incidents and transcripts of actual calls made to the emergency services to ensure as much realism as possible.

It was a "command post" style exercise which ran for one day, and included a significant public communications element. Around 150 people participated from over 20 national and local responder organisations.

Strategic Co-ordinator Andrew Couper said: "Overall it was a successful test of the multi-agency command, control and coordination of an emergency affecting the Grampian area."

Fire and police reform consultation

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In his [statement](#) Mr MacAskill said the current structure of fire and police in Scotland was not tenable and must be changed to ensure local services in all of Scotland's communities are maintained in the face of the impending financial challenges imposed by Westminster.

Work will continue with stakeholders to build the detailed evidence to support each option. No decision will be made on future structures until the consultation is complete and until after the election in May.

We would encourage everyone associated with the two services to contribute to the consultation. We will keep our stakeholders fully appraised of all ongoing developments across both projects considering the future of the police and fire and rescue service in Scotland.

Scottish Resilience News

Scottish Resilience News is published every two months by the Scottish Government. It aims to keep those working in fire and civil contingencies up to date with what's happening at Scottish Government level and across the country.

Regular readers will be pleased to hear of the safe arrival of editor Joanna Swanson's baby. Edward David (Ted) was born on 24 November, at just over 8lbs, and he got home in the nick of time - ahead of the snow that might have kept them in hospital!

If you have any views or ideas you'd like to share please please contact the acting editor: chris.holme@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Scottish Resilience

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Personal view

Rod McKenzie, a weel-kent face in Scottish Resilience leaves us at the end of January. Here, he reflects on his secondment from the City of Edinburgh Council.....

I've really enjoyed working with Scottish Government over the last six years. I'd recommend to anyone in the resilience community to take the opportunity of working with SG – it's a great way to develop your skills and get a wider view of how it all works.

It was all quite exciting when I started here back in 2005. We were a wee team then and there was a chance to do a bit of everything, like living on an island and being postie, harbourmaster and a crofter. Well OK, and the CCA and Preparing Scotland, with breaks for "all hands to the pumps" around big events and a lot of near-miss/just-about emergencies - remember the G20s, Grangemouth, 'flu, volcanic ash? Seems so long ago already.

Enjoyable though all that was, Scottish Resilience has now grown-up and there is a real opportunity here for us to take the longer view and to have a joint think about the future. Tough times and diminishing resources lie ahead. Capacity is going to be big problem across the resilience community so we need to focus our resources where they will be most

effective.

To help with this Scottish Resilience is consulting on a programme to improve resilience risk management (including developing a Scottish Risk Register) for government and responders. We need to have a good look at the risks we face across Scotland and decide what we really do have to focus on and what we might just have to live with in terms of

risk tolerance. This needs to be done as part of an overall organisational service/business risk management strategy.

Community resilience needs to strike a balance of responsibility between government, public services and the people of Scotland themselves.

The general public need to be more aware of the risks we all face and what they can do themselves, then we are going to have to engage with them much more directly and effectively on what public services can and can't do.

Well, a lot left to do, but that's how it is, change, development and, I hope, some improvement. I've had a very good run for my money here. I have to go because of the rules (about time too – Ed.), but, I've particularly enjoyed the chance to help develop a good cause.



Resilience: an international outlook

Delegates from Scotland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada, England, the USA and Australia took part in a seminar on how to promote community resilience, in London in November.

Presentations described a number of diverse local examples – from the approach to emergency planning at Canary Wharf in London, which focussed on a "top-down" model of resilience based on risk awareness and business continuity; to a community-led approach to planning for emergencies adopted by the pioneering rural Suffolk community of Great Barton. Discussions highlighted the range of common issues faced by communities, and resilience practitioners and policy makers, around promoting the awareness of risks and what can

be done to mitigate them, and encouraging the local communities to take action as a result.

Scottish Resilience was represented by Noel Rehfisch and Ralph Throp of the Community Resilience Unit, who took the opportunity to feed in a number of examples of good practice in communities in Scotland. Ralph said "We were struck by just how similar the issues faced across the different nations were and those present were very keen to learn about some of the approaches being taken in Scotland. If there are examples of innovative community work out there please do share them with us by sending an email to ReadyScotland@scotland.gsi.gov.uk".