A Short Guide to Emergency Planning in Tower Hamlets

A Guide to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Pan London Emergency Planning Arrangements

Public Version

Contents

[**Protective Marking & Version Control** 3](#_Toc192082977)

[Civil Protection Coordinator Contacts 4](#_Toc192082978)

[LBTH Out of Hours Call Centre 4](#_Toc192082979)

[1. Introduction 5](#_Toc192082980)

[The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004 5](#_Toc192082981)

[London Emergency Planning 6](#_Toc192082982)

[Incident levels 6](#_Toc192082983)

[2. Tower Hamlets Emergency Planning 7](#_Toc192082984)

[Emergency Plans 7](#_Toc192082985)

[Business Continuity Management 7](#_Toc192082986)

[The Civil Contingencies Board 7](#_Toc192082987)

[Resilience Team Standby Arrangements 8](#_Toc192082988)

[Tower Hamlets Gold Arrangements – Director on Call (DoC) 8](#_Toc192082989)

[Resilience Reserves 9](#_Toc192082990)

[Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) Arrangements 9](#_Toc192082991)

[Humanitarian Assistance 9](#_Toc192082992)

[3. Resilience Forums 10](#_Toc192082993)

[Tower Hamlets Borough Resilience Forum (TH BRF) 11](#_Toc192082994)

[4. Command and Control 11](#_Toc192082995)

[5. Mutual Aid Agreement 12](#_Toc192082996)

[6. Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles 13](#_Toc192082997)

[7. London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP) 13](#_Toc192082998)

[8. Incident Debrief 13](#_Toc192082999)

[9. Advice to the Mayor/Members 13](#_Toc192083000)

[Ward Councillors 14](#_Toc192083001)

[10. Useful Links 14](#_Toc192083002)

**Protective Marking & Version Control**

**I. Version Control**

This plan is regularly reviewed and updated as and when necessary; it will be reviewed annually.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Owner** | LBTH Civil Protection Unit |
| **Version:** | V5 |
| **Date of issue:** | March 2025 |
| **Reviewed by/Date:** | Andrea Stone/Daisy Walton |
| **Next Review date:** | March 2027 |

**II. Protective Marking**

This version of the short guide to EP in Tower Hamlets is available to the public.

**III. Distribution List**

This is the redacted version with the contacts and internal links removed.

# Civil Protection Coordinator Contacts

Removed from Public Version

## LBTH Out of Hours Call Centre

Removed for public version

Civil Protection Unit

Removed for public version

# Introduction

This document aims to give an overview of the emergency planning arrangements across London and locally within Tower Hamlets. Emergency planning arrangements are regularly reviewed and updated following incidents and exercises and as such this is a live document.

## The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004

Nationally, emergency planning arrangements are based on the statutory duties laid out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA). The CCA was introduced in 2004 and is divided into two parts; Part 1 of the act outlines the definitions for an emergency and the key statutory duties for responders. Part 2 of the act allows for the making of temporary special legislation (emergency regulations) to help deal with the most serious of emergencies.

Category 1 & 2 responders

Category 1 responders, ‘core responders’, include the usual ‘blue light’ responders and agencies that would be directly involved in the response to a major incident:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Local Authorities | * NHS foundation trusts |
| * Fire Services | * NHS England |
| * Ambulance Services | * Public Health England |
| * Police forces | * Port health authorities |
| * HM Coastguard | * Environment Agency |
| * NHS hospital trusts |  |

Category 2 responders, ‘supporting agencies’, are key cooperating responders that support category 1 responders:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Electricity Distributors | * Highways England |
| * Gas Distributors | * Airport operators |
| * Water and Sewage companies | * Harbour authorities |
| * Network rail | * 4x4 response UK |
| * Train operating companies | * Transport for London |
| * London underground | * Health and safety executive |
| * Telephone service companies including mobile | * NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups |

Statutory Duties

Under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 Local Authorities have 7 duties:

* To cooperate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency
* Ensure information is shared with other local responders to enhance coordination
* Carry out risk assessments
* Have emergency plans in place
* Have business continuity management arrangements in place
* Have arrangements in place to be able to warn and inform the public in the event of an emergency
* Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations regarding business continuity management

## London Emergency Planning

Emergency planning in London is delivered by emergency planning teams across all category 1 responders. These include the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade Emergency Planning Authority, London Ambulance Service, Emergency Planning Resilience and Response and all 33 London Boroughs.

## Incident levels

Local incident

A local incident is a small-scale event which can be dealt with internally within LBTH, not requiring a multi-agency approach, such as a small fire or flood affecting 1 property where no residents are displaced. The local response to an incident is co-ordinated by the CPU or CPC, in consultation with relevant council officers. Depending on the incident, the Communications Service can be involved to support any necessary briefings to members and public. The Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) is not made operational unless additional support is required.

Large Scale Incident

Larger incidents require additional resources to support the CPC or CPU, such as a fire affecting several residential properties, a number of displaced residents or requiring the activation of a rest centre and overnight accommodation. Due to the extended response period, it may be necessary to either use additional staff or activate the voluntary services to assist. The initial response will be coordinated by the CPU/Duty CPC (tactical officer), in consultation with the Director on Call (Council Gold), coordination may be handed over to a relevant Director or Head of Service (Council Silver). A BECC may be activated if there are many service areas or contractors involved in the response, or where mutual aid arrangements are activated with neighbouring boroughs.

Major incident Declaration

A major incident is defined as an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency [(JESIP)](https://www.jesip.org.uk/joint-doctrine/definitions/). A major incident may be declared by one or more emergency services and in certain circumstances, such as flooding, the local authority may declare a major incident.

Major Incident – Borough, Multi Borough or Pan London

Some incidents may require a pan London response, such as terrorist attack, widespread urban flooding, widespread and prolonged loss of essential services, or a serious outbreak of human or animal disease. Such as the response to the 7th July 2005 bombings in London, the H1N1 Swine Flu pandemic, and covid-19 pandemic. The central government response to such an emergency would be co-ordinated from the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), under the leadership of the lead government department. Locally, our response would be similar to a larger scale incident.

# Tower Hamlets Emergency Planning

Emergency planning/Contingency planning in Tower Hamlets is delivered by the Civil Protection Unit (CPU) within the Communities Directorate. The CPU coordinate Tower Hamlets’ emergency planning, response & recovery. This includes coordination of internal business continuity arrangements, delivery of training and exercising to all staff, and engagement with resilience partners, responding agencies and voluntary & community sector organisations.

## Emergency Plans

The Civil Protection Unit produce, maintain and review the council’s generic Borough Major Emergency Plans (BMEP’s) and a number of risk-specific emergency plans and supporting documents. Emergency plans are regularly reviewed and exercised, with post incident learning incorporated.

**Part 1** - [Civil Protection Procedure](https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/asset-library/Business-continuity/borough-major-emergency-plan-1.docx)

**Part 2** - [Emergency Community Care Plan](https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/asset-library/Business-continuity/borough-major-emergency-plan-2.docx)

**Part 3** - [Business Continuity](https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/asset-library/Business-continuity/borough-major-emergency-plan-3.docx)

**Part 4** - [Recovery Plan](https://www.thebridge.towerhamlets.gov.uk/asset-library/Business-continuity/borough-major-emergency-plan-5.docx)

## Business Continuity Management

Business Continuity is the process by which we ensure our ability to keep functioning as a council, and to continue to be able to serve and support our residents through a process of impact assessment and planning.

Tower Hamlets Council recognises the necessity for effective Business Continuity Management (BCM) processes, as required by the CCA. The council is committed to ensuring that BCM is in place to enable essential services to be maintained for our residents, businesses, and the public in the event of major disruptions and/or major incidents. Each service level BC plan is owned at head of service level and maintained by service managers; all plans are approved at director level.

Service level BC plans are hosted on an external software, plans and impact assessments are subject to regular review. The CPU administrates and coordinates BCM on behalf of the council and can provide advice and guidance to local businesses and the voluntary & community sector.

***Note:*** *Full details of the councils BC arrangements can be found in Part 3 of the BMEP -* [*Business Continuity*](https://towerhamlets2.sharepoint.com/sites/Resilience/Shared%20Documents/11.%20Plans%20and%20Procedures/Local/Borough%20Major%20Emergency%20Plan%20-%20Pt%203%20-%20Business%20Continuity)

## The Civil Contingencies Board

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) are responsible for the strategic overview of the development & maintenance of the council’s civil contingencies arrangements, undertaken through the Civil Contingencies Board (CCB).

The CCB is made up of directorate resilience leads from each directorate (at 3rd tier Head of Service level) and nominated deputies, along with colleagues from key corporate services such as, IT, Risk Management and Facilities Management. The board is be chaired by the nominated Corporate Resilience Lead.

## Resilience Team Standby Arrangements

The Civil Protection Unit (CPU) maintains a constant 24/7 Resilience Team standby rota and leads the coordination of an incident.

Civil Protection Coordinator (CPC)

The CPC rota is made up of six officers, the four members of Civil Protection Unit and two officers from the Community Safety service area. The CPU/CPC is available to coordinate the council’s response to an incident at the tactical (silver) level. The CPU/CPC receives the initial notification of an incident from the emergency services via the Tower Hamlets CCTV Room.

**In-hours –** The coordination role is carried out by the four members of the CPU.

**Out of hours –** Coordination is carried out by a Civil Protection Coordinator (CPC).

***Note:*** *Full details of the councils Civil Protection arrangements can be found in Part 1 of the BMEP -* [*Civil Protection Procedure*](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_safety__crime_preve/emergencies/civil_emergency_plan.aspx)

The CPC is supported by a rota of officers trained in resilience team roles as below to assist in incident management.

Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALO)

During an incident the emergency services require council representation known as the LALO to attend the scene of the incident. The LALO is the ‘eyes & ears’ of the Council during the incident and continually liaises with the CPC and [BECC](#_Borough_Emergency_Control) (if activated) and receives requests for council assistance and advice from the emergency services.

Senior Humanitarian Assistance Officers (SHAO)

Humanitarian Assistance Officers, known as SHAO’s, support the CPC to ensure residents are who receiving a service from the borough are provided additional support, should they require it, during an incident. Post-incident, the SHAO ensures any resident requiring ongoing assistance is directed to the relevant council service.

Emergency Centre Manager (ECM)

Should an [Emergency Centre](#_Humanitarian_Assistance_2) be required, the ECM will ensure the centre is fully staffed from our pool of [Resilience Reserves](#_Resilience_Reserves). ECMs liaise closely with the SHAO to ensure that the needs of displaced residents are considered throughout.

## Tower Hamlets Gold Arrangements – Director on Call (DoC)

In hours, a relevant Corporate Director or Director will assume the role of gold (strategic Lead). Out of hours, the CPU maintains a rota of Corporate Directors & Directors, known as Director on Call (DoC), providing 24/7 cover. DoC is the strategic (gold) level representative for the borough. If required, they will liaise with the Mayor, Chief Executive and Cabinet Members, and liaise with strategic partners. They will also liaise with the Communications Service to approve communication lines.

## Resilience Reserves

These officers are a pool of Tower Hamlets employees who have been trained in various roles to volunteer within the BECC or in Emergency Centres.

## Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) Arrangements

If CPU or [Resilience Team](#_Resilience_Team_Standby) capacity is exceeded during an incident, and/or a more corporate coordinated approach is required, a physical or virtual Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) may be activated. The BECC is staffed by trained officers drawn from our pool of [Resilience Reserves](#_Resilience_Reserves) and directorate services. The CPU maintains resources for minimum 72-hour functioning.

The BECC is the central point for LBTH emergency management by:

* Locating the appropriately trained staff together
* Providing a single point for all relevant information and directives be distributed
* Maintaining situational awareness
* Ensuring all required protocols and procedures are maintained

A BECC is scalable, able to respond to the needs of the incident.

## Humanitarian Assistance

All London Local Authorities have signed up to the British Red Cross (BRC) memorandum of understanding (MoU) stating the BRC will provide support in emergency centres, including delivering training & exercising to London Local Authorities. The BRC will attend the Emergency Centre for the duration and offer support from assisting with refreshments and registration to trauma support.

***Note:*** *Full details of the councils humanitarian arrangements can be found in**Part 2 of the BMEP -* [*Emergency Community Care Plan*](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_safety__crime_preve/emergencies/civil_emergency_plan.aspx)

Survivor Reception Centres (SRC)

SRC’s are established and managed by the police and supported by the local authority following an incident, provided to collect information regarding the incident from survivors.

Reception Centres

Reception Centres are places of safety for those who have been evacuated but are uninjured. Usually set up in large premises such as schools, leisure centres and other public halls, the purpose of a Reception Centre is to provide a place of safety where both the immediate and longer-term requirements of evacuees can be assessed.

Rest Centres

Rest Centres are used to provide emergency sleeping accommodation for evacuees who are unable to return to their homes, have nowhere else to go, and where temporary accommodation cannot be found.

# Resilience Forums

All Category 1 and 2 responders meet regularly at resilience forums. In London this consists of the London Resilience Forum (LRF), six sub regional resilience forums (SRRF), an LRF & Borough Resilience Forum (BRF) Chairs Forum and 33 Borough Resilience Forums (BRF’s).

Pan London Resilience Structure

Figure 1: Spider diagram of the Pan-London Resilience Structure


Figure 1: The Pan-London Resilience Structure

The London Resilience Forum is not a legal entity and does not have powers to direct its members; however, it provides a means for responders to collaboratively discharge their responsibilities to plan and prepare for emergencies. The LRF is made up of several sector panels & working groups (See Figure 1).

## Tower Hamlets Borough Resilience Forum (TH BRF)

The TH BRF provides an opportunity to share knowledge and experience, bringing together Category 1 & 2 responders to ensure a multi-agency approach to the planning, response, and recovery from emergencies. Membership also includes representatives from the voluntary sector.

TH BRF Workstreams:

* Multi Agency Borough Risk Register - Assess local risks & identify key lead agencies
* Multi-agency plans and capabilities - Developed where necessary, building on existing plans, principles, and procedures
* Business Plan – Outlining areas of work, key tasks and milestones, and lead organisations, including response to new national guidance / direction or response to a wide-scale emergency
* Lessons Learned - Learning from previous incidents, ensuring plans and procedures are reviewed and a clear strategy is developed
* Information sharing - Share information & feed back to the Sub-Regional Resilience Forum (SRRF)

The main purpose of the forum is to discuss feedback, issues (plans, procedures, practices etc.) affecting local services, agencies, or organisations’ response to incidents.

The (quarterly) meetings are currently chaired by Tower Hamlets Local Authority and invitees/attendees include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Local Authority (Emergency Planning Officers & Public Health) | * Ministry of Defence (area Military Liaison Officer) |
| * London Fire Brigade | * Royal Navy |
| * London Ambulance Services * Metropolitan Police Service * British Transport Police * Bart’s & Royal London Hospital * British Red Cross * Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets * Tower Hamlets CVS * Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) | * Canal River Trust * Local Clergy (EP Co-ordinators) * Canary Wharf Group * Environment Agency * Thames Water * Docklands Light Railway * Local Universities * Transport for London * Registered Providers of Social Housing |
|  |  |

The attendance list is expanded continuously as more contacts are established.

# Command and Control

Operational (Bronze), Tactical (Silver), Strategic (Gold) are tiers of command used by each of the emergency services and responding organisations, including local authorities. LBTH Co-ordination structure reflects that of the emergency services to foster co-operation and liaison. By using these universal tiers of command responders can communicate effectively with one another.

Tactical Coordination Group (TCG)

The role of the tactical commander is to protect life, property, and the environment by ensuring that rapid and effective actions are implemented through a Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG). Tactical Commanders work between the strategic and operational levels of command, responsible for interpreting strategic direction and developing and co-ordinating the tactical plan.

Strategic Coordination Group (SCG)

The role of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) is to provide strategic direction or input where there is a financial, political, ethical, economic or reputational risk.

The SCG includes representatives of all emergency services, the health services, and utilities.



Figure 2: Command levels and terms used. Right-hand column displaying terms that may be used for command level meetings.

London Local Authority Gold Arrangements (LLAG)

London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) arrangements comprise a rota of Chief Executives providing 24/7 ‘on-call’ support. In the event of a large-scale major incident, the ‘on-call’ Chief Executive can provide strategic local authority input into the wider Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) and manage the collective response to a major incident on behalf of all boroughs.

London Local Authority Coordination Centre

The LLACC supports the 33 London Boroughs by providing coordinated direction and situational awareness and mutual aid requests during a major incident.

# Mutual Aid Agreement

During an incident, mutual aid can be requested from other (neighbouring) local authorities by the Chief Executive or the [CPC](#_Civil_Protection_on_1). During a ‘major incident’ the London Local Authority Control Centre (LLACC) would be activated to co-ordinate the response of all London LA’s and any requests for aid would be made via this facility.

Mutual aid provision comprises any service or product that can be spared at the time of the emergency, including some or all of the following:

* Premises
* Staff (and their service)
* Transport
* Equipment – bedding, flood bags etc.

# Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principals (JESIP) is a practical guide to help improve multi-agency response, comprising of the joint doctrine and the interoperability framework, which sets out a standardised approach to multi-agency working. This doctrine provides a standardised language across emergency response agencies, alongside training and awareness to provide consistency around briefings and decision making.

For more information, visit: [JESIP Principles](https://www.jesip.org.uk/principles)

# London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP)

LESLP was developed to ensure the effective joint operation of emergency services in London. The LESLP Major Incident Procedure Manual lays out the management of a major incident including roles and responsibilities of all category 1 responders and specific category 2 responders.

For more information, visit: [LESLP Manual](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/leslp_mip_v11.5_dec_2021_-_public.pdf)

# Incident Debrief

Following a significant incident, the CPU will facilitate an incident debrief, which can be internal or multi-agency, involving all those involved in the response. Feedback from the debrief will be used to support and reinforce actions and help to improve processes in the future. The debrief outcomes form an action plan of learning & implementing change.

# Advice to the Mayor/Members

The immediate management of the Council’s response will remain with the Chief Executive and the Chief Officers; however, it may be necessary for the Mayor and members to consider the wider implications for the council and the borough as a whole.

The Elected Mayor

* Lead Member for this purpose and will involve member colleagues as appropriate
* Will determine wider, longer-term impacts and risks with strategic implications
* Members may be required to speak to the media but will do this as arranged by the Council’s Communications Service.

All Members

Factual information will be relayed to members via the Communications Service as appropriate. There are, however, two important points to note:

* General information on any major incident is always best obtained from a verified source such as; rolling news services on either radio, TV (BBC 24, Sky News etc.),
* The need to keep members informed must be balanced against other requirements of an emergency situation, where the safety of residents and the preservation of the borough infrastructure are the first considerations.

Ward Councillors

Ward councillors have an important role because of their knowledge of residents, businesses, community representatives and the geographical area. They are also known locally and respected as community leaders. The role of ward members can therefore include:

* Visiting Rest / Reception Centres,
* Helping to identify vulnerable residents,
* Helping to communicate with community groups,
* Gather the views and concerns of the community, and feed them into the recovery process, and
* Provide support and reassurance to the local community, by listening or visiting those affected.

Members should always ensure contact is made via the Communications Service or Director on Call before making visits to the BECC and should also ensure they carry their council ID card and mobile phone, to facilitate communication.

# Useful Links

* [Local Authorities’ Preparedness for Civil Emergencies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authorities-preparedness-for-civil-emergencies)
* [Civil Resilience Handbook for London Councillors](https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/download/file/fid/26359)
* [A Councillor’s Guide to Civil Emergencies](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Publications%20-%2010.26%20A%20councillor%27s%20guide%20to%20civil%20emergencies_05.1.pdf#:~:text=A%20councillor%E2%80%99s%20guide%20to%20civil%20emergencies%205%20Core,relies%20heavily%20on%20established%20doctrine%20and%20procedures%20which)