



For External Partners: What to Do in an Emergency

This document outlines **the step-by-step process** that the London Communities Emergencies Partnership (LCEP) follows when supporting partners to respond an emergency, from initial notification through to coordination, communication, and post-action evaluation.

This document is intended for anyone seeking support or coordination from charities and community groups during emergencies in London. Communities are advised to first contact their local authority or if life-threatening, to contact their emergency responders as usual. LCEP is typically alerted to emergencies through charities or community groups, statutory agencies, the London Resilience Forum, or by monitoring alerts from the Met Office, UKHSA, and other relevant bodies.

Step 1: Identify and Communicate the Emergency

- **1.1 Notify LCEP:** In an emergency¹, notify LCEP via **one of the following routes:**
 - email - info@lcep.london
 - phone or text - +44 7752 653010 (Emily Coatham, Partnership Manager) or +44 7355 604003 (Elizabeth Mayer, Programme Manager)
 - fill out the [request for support form](#)
 - message in the LCEP Emergency Response WhatsApp group (where applicable)
- **1.2 Provide Details:** Share as much information as possible about the emergency, including **location, nature of the emergency, and specific needs or challenges.**

Step 2: Await LCEP Reply

- **2.1 Initial Acknowledgment:** LCEP will acknowledge your notification and may request additional information.
 - During working hours, **we'll respond within an hour.** Outside these hours, replies may be delayed until the next business day as per our after-hours protocol outlined below.
- **2.2 A coordinated and supported response:** Please see below for LCEP activation information.

LCEP's Role and Actions in an Emergency

Out of Hours Emergency Protocol: During emergencies outside LCEP's regular hours (09:00-17:00, Mon-Fri), the British Red Cross (BRC) will endeavour to attend Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) or Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) meetings where voluntary sector presence has been requested. BRC will be alerted to an emergency through their 24/7 contact centre or London Resilience Unit Alerts. After being alerted they have access to the following LCEP communication channels to liaise with other charities and community groups when necessary:

- LCEP Community WhatsApp group for all LCEP partners
- LCEP Emergency Response WhatsApp group for emergency response charities

LCEP will assume responsibility as soon as possible.

Step 1: Initial Assessment and Activation Decision

- **1.1 LCEP Activation Assessment:** Upon notification and regularly throughout each emergency, LCEP quickly determines the required activation level by assessing the following conditions to understand how much support and gap-filling is needed:
 - Impact level
 - Perceived impact
 - Public profile

¹ According to the [UK Civil Protection Lexicon](#) an emergency is 'An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK, or the security of the UK or of a place in the UK.'



- Information sharing and coordination required
- Available human resources
- Local resources available
- Type of need
- Degree of coordination needed

Once the gaps are identified, LCEP will support where needed **to reduce the impact on communities**. In simplified terms, the level of impact and LCEP's activation is broken into three categories:

- Low: Support available locally, low profile, low perceived impact
- Medium: Some response and coordination support available locally, needs some two-way guidance and information, additional skills could reduce impact
- High: Significant impact, LCEP action required.

Step 2: LCEP Activation Level: Activation will be based on assessed severity and gaps identified, noting incidents may require mixed or changing levels of activation.

At minimum, once notified, LCEP monitors and assesses the situation continuously using partner updates, London Resilience Unit information, and external alerts/news, to continue adjusting LCEP's activation level appropriately.

- **2.1 First Level Action (Low):**

- LCEP will acknowledge the event and initiate communication with relevant partners via WhatsApp or email.
- LCEP will gather timely insights from voluntary and community sector partners to inform the wider multi-agency response and from emergency response and resilience colleagues to share with communities, ensuring effective information flow between agencies and strengthening overall response. LCEP will ensure that all colleagues involved receive regular status updates and details of actions taken, as appropriate.
- LCEP will ensure that any organisational learning is captured and is addressed as the operation develops.
- To improve the response and ensure communities' and vulnerable people's needs are met, LCEP will identify relevant contacts and resources via the Voluntary Sector Capabilities Document, the LCEP Internal Contact List, and wider organisations (light touch); and then connect those contacts to relevant responders.
- LCEP will communicate with relevant partners via appropriate channels, such as:
 1. Direct emails
 2. Telephone calls or 1:1 online meetings
 3. LCEP Community WhatsApp group for general updates
 4. LCEP Emergency Response WhatsApp group for emergency response charities
 5. Signposting on website and socials
- LCEP will reassess LCEP activation level as new information becomes available.

- **2.2 Second Level Action (Medium):**

- When a Resilience Partnership meeting, SCG or TCG meeting is convened, LCEP or an appointed representative partner will attend as required to ensure formal representation of the voluntary and community sector, supporting multi-agency strategic and tactical coordination and enabling a two-way flow of information.
- **Includes all actions from the First Level (Low) - usually more comprehensive and detailed.**

- **2.3 Third Level Action (High):**

- LCEP will convene relevant voluntary, community and faith sector organisations for coordinated action as needed; frequency dependent on the emergency's severity.
- In addition to attending the London Resilience SCG and TCG meetings, LCEP or LCEP representatives will actively engage with multi-agency partners as needed for solving unique issues caused by the emergency, including but not limited to:



1. Attending Topical sub-groups created by the SCG or TCG
 2. Attending the Recovery Working Group
 3. Co-locating with partners
- LCEP will set up a dedicated WhatsApp group and add relevant contacts for operational coordination
 - Mobilise resources to partners who meet emergency criteria
 - **Includes all actions from the Second Level (Medium) and, by extension, the First Level (Low).**

Step 3: Post-Emergency Process (only for Medium or High Activation levels)

- **3.1 After Action Review²:**
 - LCEP will hold an external After Action Review session with partners involved in the response to discuss the emergency response and gather feedback.
 - LCEP will hold an internal After-Action Review session to evaluate the effectiveness of the response and identify areas for improvement.
- **3.2 Learnings:**
 - LCEP will gather learnings from AAR sessions, London Resilience meetings, and other sources. Where relevant, LCEP will share them with LCEP partners, London Resilience and emergency response partners, and feed identified actions into the LCEP planning and London Resilience systems.

Examples of recent LCEP activation

Below are a few examples of the emergencies for which LCEP has been activated between July – Sept 2025. Out of 11 emergencies, 7 triggered a low activation, and two triggered low – medium.

Emergency	LCEP activity	Outcome
Yellow Heat Alert (Low)	WhatsApp ER comms; emails to partnership alerting of the warning and some important resources	LCEP partners were well-informed about the heat alert, potential impacts on their communities, and available resources. This also helped build knowledge and preparedness for future heat alerts throughout the summer.
Grassfires/wildfires (Low-Medium)	Worked with partners for messaging, gave feedback in LRCG, and met with LFB outreach staff.	Communities previously impacted by wildfires received critical information from LFB on preventing compost fires, guidance that had not been available before. LCEP amplified community concerns and fed their voice into the London Resilience Communications Group (LRCG), ensuring their needs were represented in official communications.
Rising community tensions (Low-Medium)	LCEP fed into anti-hostilities migrants resource document email and online signposting, shared with London Resilience partnership. Gathered information and advocacy messages from partners. Advocated community needs with senior decision makers in local and national government. Contributed insight in London Resilience Teleconferences;	Communities and partners received clear guidance and resources to address rising tensions. LCEP ensured that community concerns were represented in official discussions and communications, strengthening trust and coordination between agencies and affected groups. LCEP also fed these insights into planning by hosting a hate crime partnership meeting, creating space for collaboration and proactive measures to reduce hostility.

² An After Action Review (AAR) is a qualitative review process to assess actions taken in response to an emergency. Its purpose is to identify best practices, gaps, and lessons learned. This process helps in systematically identifying what worked and what didn't, and how to make improvements.



	regular check-ins with VCSEP team.	
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