

Communities “exercise in a box”

Test your community emergency plan – before
the crisis!

Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day
21 Oct 2026



Somerset
Council

www. **Somerset**
Prepared .org.uk

Contents

- Introductions
- Ways to test your community emergency arrangements
- Workshop – group work
- Plenary
- Other help and support available



“No plan survives first contact with the enemy”

Introduction

The purpose of this “exercise in a box” is for communities and community leaders to test their emergency plans and ability to deal with the emergency situations.

Communities Prepared
Template Version 2.0 2024

For further tips and advice on creating a Community Emergency Plan visit:
www.SomersetPrepared.org.uk

Community Name:

Community Emergency Plan

Activation First Steps Action Card available on the reverse

Ownership

Address

Post Code Local Community Network

Issue Date **Update Due** **Version**

Contents

Contact Details	3
Resources & Skills.....	4
Shelter.....	5
Local Hazards & Risk	6
Community Mapping	8
Volunteer Action Card	9
Health and Safety Aide Memoir.....	11

Plan Aim

To enhance community resilience in a way that complements and supports the work of all responding agencies.

Plan Objectives

The aim of the plan is achieved through utilising local:
Resources
Skills
Knowledge

Simple Plans Safer Places ☒



“A plan is not a plan until it has been tested”

Methods for Testing Your Plan

- **Table-top exercise.** We would recommend this option first as you will be able to fine-tune your plan quickly. It will also give you the opportunity for key people to get to know each other.
- **Walk through.** This will enable key players to have an understanding of what is required of them before an actual test.
- **Contact / call-out exercise.** This is where you test that you can make contact with the people on your call-out list. But no one should deploy.
- **Live Play Exercise** This is the stage before an actual incident. This will test all areas of your plan from communication to deal with road closures and evacuation.
- **Live incident** This will test your plan which may be scrutinised at a later date.



Charlie says: “Remember to update your plan with any learning after every exercise or real incident.”

What You Need to Run a Table-Top Exercise



- Copies of your plan
- Maps of the area involved
- People who will implement the plan
- A room (this will vary in size according to numbers)
- Timings of how long the exercise will run for (agenda)
- Refreshments (optional)
- Pens, paper, laptops, flipcharts, projector
- A scenario.....

And the aim of the test!



Sally says: “A table-top exercise is to test the PLAN not the PEOPLE.”

Table-Top Exercise Scenarios



Each table will be given a table-top scenario. The scenarios include

1. Flooding
2. Total power outage
3. Severe weather
4. Food shortages

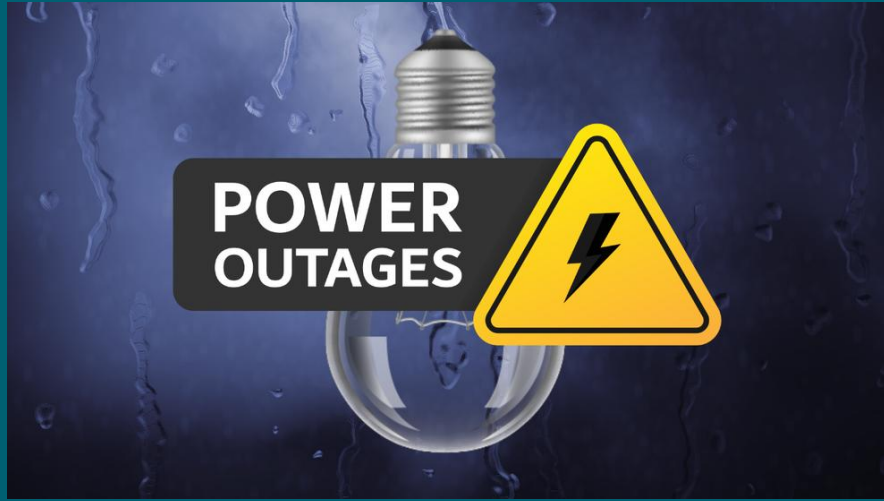


“A plan is not a plan until it has been tested.”



Flooding

- The Met Office have issued a severe weather warning for rain fall within the next 16 hours (at least 150mm in 24 hours).
- This will cause surface water flooding, and many rivers are expected to flood particular in low laying areas.
- Travel disruption is expected to occur.
- The public are encouraged to take the necessary action in these areas.



Power Outage

National Grid and SSE suffer a major power outage due to a software failure. This affects all of Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Dorset and Wiltshire.

There is no current indication of when power will be restored. Teams of engineers are working on the issue and will update date you in 6 hours.



Severe Weather

- A heavy snow fall is forecast for tomorrow
- At least 12 inches is expected to fall with some drifting
- It will cause major disruption to travel
- The weather is set to last for 72 hours
- Some areas may suffer power outages



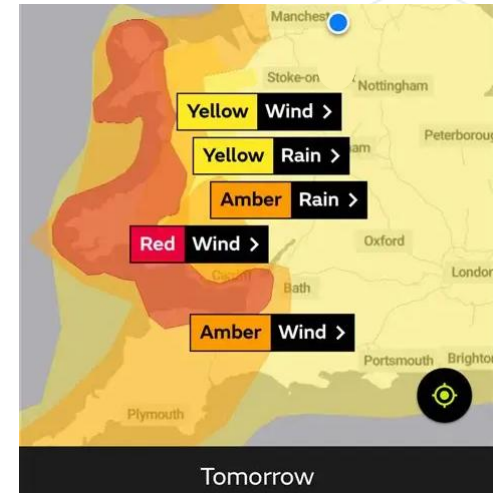
Food Shortages

- Due to an industrial dispute some basic food supplies are being severely disrupted
- Supermarkets are reporting members of the public panic buying
- Milk, Bread, Pasta, rice, toilet rolls and fresh produces are particularly affected
- Some supermarkets will start rationing
- Theft of food is becoming an issue

First Phase - Activation



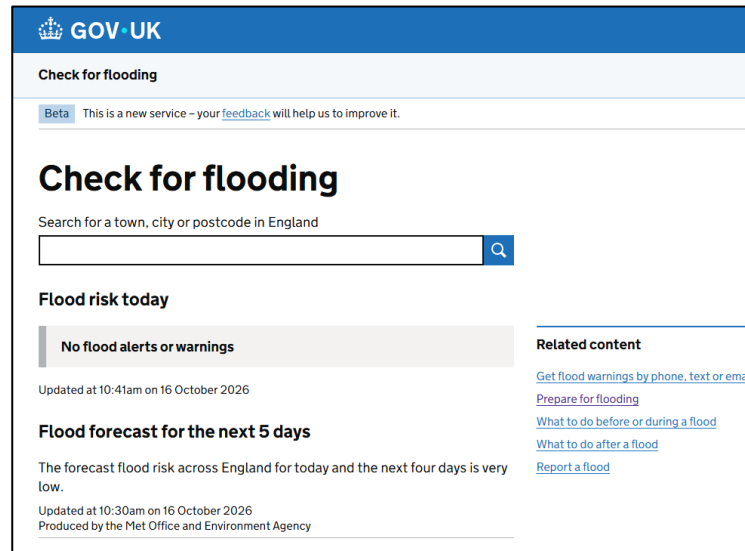
- What are the triggers to activate your plan?
- How will you inform the people listed in your plan?
- What are the first actions listed in your plan?



Second Phase - Response



- How will you inform your community?
- What resources are available to your community?
- Where will you get your information from?
- How will you keep everyone safe?



Third Phase – Stand Down & Recovery



- How will you know when the emergency is over?
- What should you do at the end of an incident?



Summary

- Build plan tests and exercising into your planning process.
- Be clear about the aim and objectives of any test or exercise.
- After the test, write down any learning and update your plan.



Sally says: “Think about ways to make the event fun! Why not make your plan test an event for the community?”

What is Your Plan Going Forward

- What would your plan encourage your community to do?
- How would you help your neighbours?
- How would you deal with the shortages?
- What can you put in place to help with shortages?
- How will keep your community informed?
- How would you look after vulnerable people within your community?



Template Version 2.0 2024

For further tips and advice on creating a
Community Emergency Plan visit:

www.SomersetPrepared.org.uk

Community
Name:

Community Emergency Plan

Activation **First Steps Action Card available on the reverse**

Ownership

Address

Post Code

Local Community
Network

Issue Date

Update Due

Version

Contents

Contact Details	3
Resources & Skills.....	4
Shelter.....	5
Local Hazards & Risk	6
Community Mapping	8
Volunteer Action Card	9
Health and Safety Aide Memoir.....	11

Plan Aim

To enhance community resilience in a way that complements and supports
the work of all responding agencies.

Plan Objectives

The aim of the plan is achieved through utilising local:
Resources
Skills
Knowledge

Simple Plans Safer Places ✓

Town & Parish Councils

There is no statutory responsibility for parish and town councils to plan for an emergency response **but** the Government encourages communities to consider risks and to make simple “self-help” contingency plans.

There are several aspects and levels of activity:

- **Basic Preparedness:** Town / Parish / City Council to check that a responsible person has the Somerset Council emergency numbers and that Somerset Council know how to reach the Clerk (or other nominated out of hours contacts) in the event of an emergency.
- **Better Preparedness:** Town / Parish / City Council to develop a plan for how it would coordinate its activities to respond to an emergency in the community.
- **Best Preparedness - Community and Societal Resilience:** Emergency plans plus development work with individual neighbourhoods and local communities within the town to support them to develop local resilience arrangements.

How We Can Support

- Emergency plan-writing workshops
- Somerset Prepared Small Grant Scheme
- Community Flood Action Fund
- Awareness & support events for residents
- Flooding and flood safety workshops in schools
- Formation of a Flood Group Network



How We Can Support

SOMERSET PREPARED RESILIENCE ROADSHOW

RESILIENCE DROP-IN 4-6PM

FLOOD WARDEN WORKSHOP 6.30 - 8.30PM

Tuesday 8 July 2025

West Coker Village Hall, Churlands Close,
94a High Street, West Coker, BA22 9AU

This event is your One-Stop-Shop for Emergency Preparedness and Resilience information. Drop in anytime between 4pm and 6pm to chat to experts and ask your resilience questions, and attend the Flood Warden workshop from 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

Somerset Prepared partners attending will include Somerset Council, Somerset Rivers Authority, the Environment Agency, EVAG, and Avon and Somerset Police.

If you are a resident, Flood Warden, Parish, Town, or City Councillor please join us for a cuppa & cake & learning.

Book the Flood Warden workshop here:



EMERGENCY
GRAB BAG

www.Somerset
Prepared.org.uk

Community Resilience Day 2026

Wednesday 21st October

9.15am - 4pm

Millfield School, Street, BA16 0ST

Help Somerset become stronger and more resilient.

Parish, Town, City Council and Community Group representatives are invited to attend this free resilience and emergency planning-focussed event. The day features a wide range of workshops networking opportunities and equipment demonstrations.

Book your free ticket here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-resilience-day-2026-tickets-1990766160175>

BOOK NOW



✉ somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk

www.somersetprepared.org.uk

Somerset
Prepared

Questions?

Contact: somersetprepared@somerset.gov.uk



Somerset
Council

www. **Somerset**
Prepared .org.uk