

Community Engagement Guidance

1.0 Introduction:

This guidance aims to offer general advice to support responsible authority staff who are new to engaging flood risk communities or anyone wanting a refresher.

The guidance will provide responsible authority staff with guidelines, templates, information, advice and good practice case studies on engaging flood risk communities.

Responsible authorities already develop and deliver a vast area of services in partnership with the people and communities. There is a great deal of excellent practice in partnership working and the good examples will almost always make use of the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#). This guidance is based on the national standards with principles adapted for a wide range engagement with flood risk communities. There is already a wide range of good practice in engaging flood risk communities to draw on and this provides a sound platform to build improved engagement around the flood risk management plans.

The model below adapted from Scottish Government guidance on [building community resilience](#) can help to understand the engagement cycle with flood risk communities. This includes various actions to respond, recover and build community resilience to flooding.

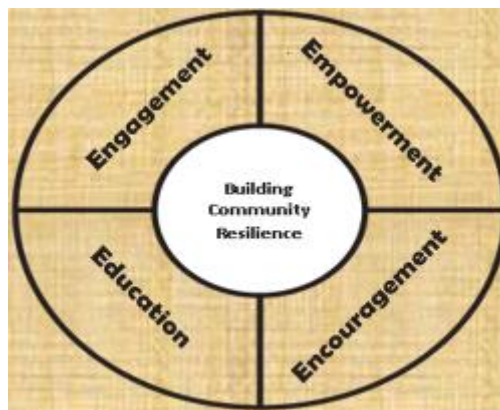


Figure 1: Engaging Flood Risk Communities

1.1 What is Good Practice?

As the actions in the [flood risk management plans](#) are implemented it's likely that responsible authority staff will invest more time engaging with flood risk communities. There is no agreed definition of what good practice looks like when engaging a flood risk community, so the following description is offered as a draft starting point for discussion.

'Good practice when engaging flood risk communities involves developing actions before, during or after flooding that helps communities manage flood risks.

Learning The Lessons. Engaging Flood Risk Communities To Reduce Flood Risks

Supported by:



Good practice can also involve actions to engage, develop or empower individuals and communities to act for themselves and work in partnership with responsible authorities'.

A draft set of good practice principles to support community engagement are included in this guidance.

1.2 Who is this good practice guidance for?

This guidance is primarily aimed at new staff that have responsibility for flooding and those who wish a refresher in community engagement. This guidance may also be useful to for staff such as emergency responders and resilience staff that are aiming to engage flood risk communities.

1.3 How to use the guidance?

The guidance intends to offer soft guidance to support engagement with flood risk communities and is divided into the following sections.

- Introduction
- Background information about community engagement and building partnerships
- Helpful templates and checklists
- Information notes for use with communities
- Case studies of community engagement in flood risk area"

1.4 What is community engagement?

Community engagement means different things to different people and many people use the phrase to describe very different approaches. The term is used, often interchangeably, with others such as *'involvement'* and *'participation'*, and to describe a range of activities. This good practice guidance subscribes to and advocates the following definition of community engagement from the [Scottish Community Development Centre](#)

The National Standards define community engagement as:

'Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences'.

It is now accepted that public services that involve their users are likely to be of higher quality and more relevant to the communities they serve. Engaging flood risk communities can also help with the best use of resources.

The Scottish Government has built the principle of community engagement into policy and guidance to public services. This is most notable for Community Planning through which the Local Government Scotland Act requires all public services to work together. The guidance on the act states:

'Community Planning is essentially a process to secure greater engagement from communities in the planning and delivery of services'.

1.5 The benefits of engaging flood risk communities

When working well, good engagement with flood risk communities can deliver clear benefits for responsible authorities.

Learning The Lessons. Engaging Flood Risk Communities To Reduce Flood Risks

Supported by:



The benefits of effective engagement for everyone can include:

- Increased flood risk awareness
- Increased flood resilience individually and collectively
- Improved partnership working
- Stronger relationships with flood risk communities
- Improved skills, knowledge and experience
- Safer flood risk communities
- Better communication between responsible authorities and flood risk communities
- Informed and knowledgeable flood risk communities who have skills and confidence to influence and work in partnership
- Increased job satisfaction for responsible authority staff
- Responsible authority staff and flood risk communities being more aware of each other's perspectives
- Building mutual respect and understanding
- Greater added value and best use of resources.

The benefits of engaging flood risk communities will not happen overnight and will evolve over time as relationships, links and partnerships develop. They can be fully developed when they are committed to and agreed as part of local flood risk management plans.

Learning The Lessons. Engaging Flood Risk Communities To Reduce Flood Risks

Supported by:

