



Annual Report 2020/21

North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service

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North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS).

Isle of Anglesey County Council, Gwynedd Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council work together in a partnering relationship through the establishment in 2014 of a Regional Emergency Planning Service for North Wales. This Service undertakes the functions of the Councils in respect of civil contingencies and is accountable to an Executive Board that comprises senior representatives of those Councils. NWC-REPS provides a service to ensure the Local Authorities are compliant with the following legislation: -

- [Civil Contingencies Act, 2004](#)
- [Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations, 2015](#)
- [Pipeline Safety Regulations, 1996](#)
- [Radiation \(Emergency Preparedness and Public Information\) Regulations, 2019](#)

This is the annual North Wales Councils - Regional Emergency Planning Service report for the year 2020-2021. It covers the work carried out by NWC-REPS across the six local authorities in the region, as well as multi-agency activities undertaken to support North Wales Local Resilience Forum.

The Service works to:

- Reduce duplication and repetition of tasks
- Improve the harmonisation of the work and resilience of teams
- Improve deployment of available resources by sharing specialist support and common tasks
- Improve consistency of response between authorities
- Improve communication channels between the North Wales Resilience Forum and local authorities



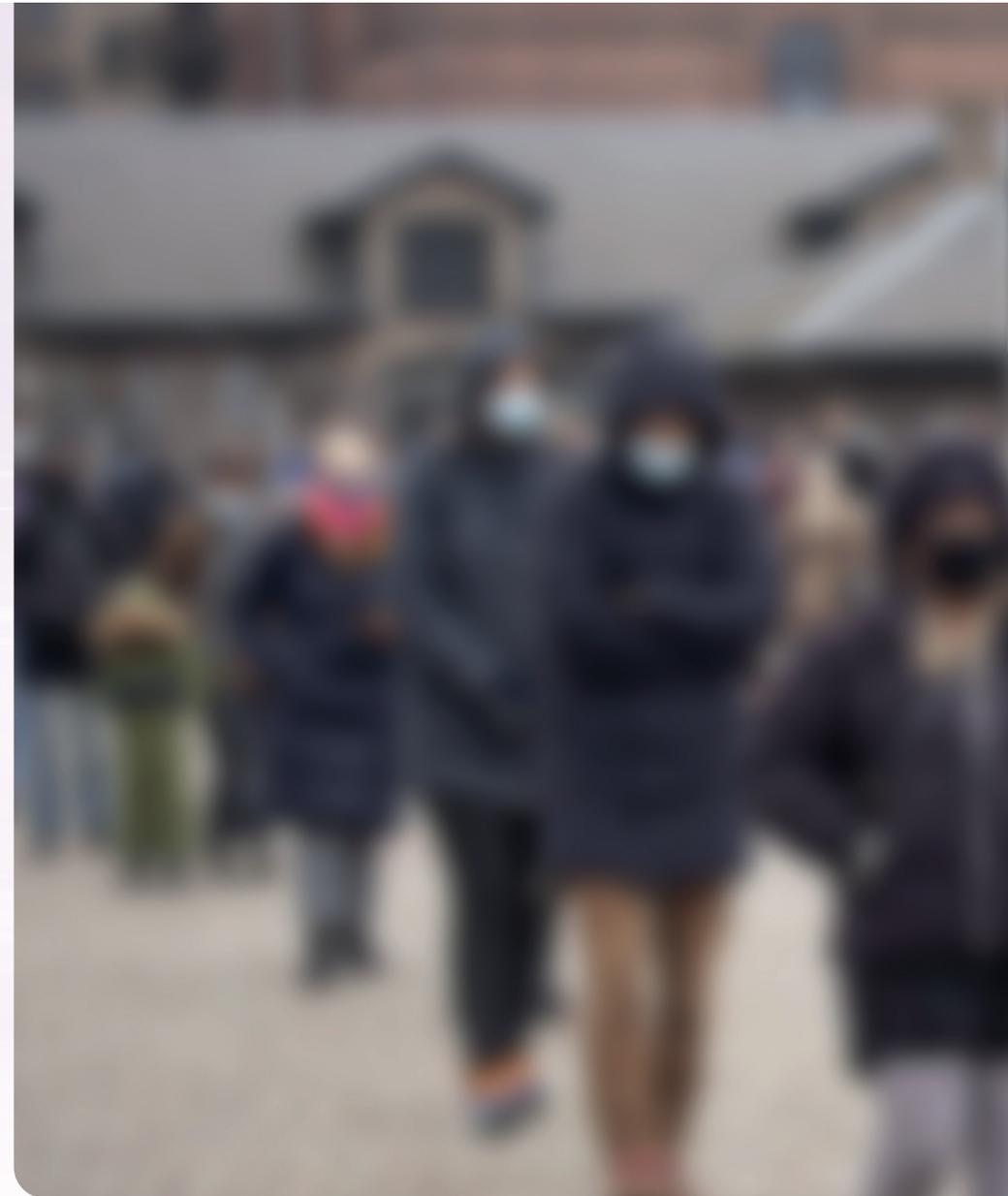
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

NWC-REPS provides a 24/7 year-round Duty Officer to act as the initial point of contact for emergency response.

In 2020/21, NWC-REPS assisted in this role in the following ways: -

- Receiving and assessing 152 Flood Alerts and 9 Flood Warnings.
- Receiving, and assessing 28 Weather Warnings - issued by the MET Office
- Receiving and responding to a number of incident reports that included: -
 - Ardagh Group Chemical Incident April 2020
 - Hafod Landfill Fire May 2020
 - Motorbike Gathering May 2020
 - Storm Francis August 2020
 - Storm Christoph January 2021
 - Flood warning river Cefni, Llangefni February 2021

Of these incidents, 2 required the opening of an Emergency Rest Centres by the relevant Council, with NWC-REPS support. We responded to other incidents but utilised hotels in favour of rest centres due to Covid restrictions and public safety. Over the course of the year, NWC-REPS represented and support local authorities at Multi-Agency Tactical Coordination Groups at a number of the incidents above.



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

From April 2020 and currently ongoing saw activities around the multi-agency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This required active redeployment of the team onto a range of work streams that included :-

- Supporting Councils own internal emergency response arrangements
- Advising Councils on Business/Service Continuity matters
- Supporting partners with solutions to their business continuity needs
- Participating on the multi-agency Strategic Coordination Group and Tactical Coordination Group work streams
- Coordinating the local distribution of data between Welsh Government and Councils in relation to the Shielding scheme
- NWC-REPS staff continue to provide project support to COVID-19 Prevention & Surveillance groups as part of the authorities local statutory infectious disease compliance work streams;
- Chairing the North Wales Excess Deaths Group and
 1. Leading on proving a specific Covid-19 excess Deaths Response Plan
 2. Chairing a Funeral Directors Liaison sub group.
 3. Providing weekly information on body storage capacities
 4. Liaising with Welsh Government all Wales excess death response team.
 5. Briefing the Strategic Coordination Group on the stand down of regional body storage resources



WORKING TOGETHER

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Multi Agency meetings were taking place on a daily basis. One mutual aid request came to NWC-REPS from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). While many Health services across the Country had stopped, midwifery services had to be maintained with routine appointments, pre and post-natal check-ups.

As COVID-19 cases were rising across North Wales, and patients were being admitted to local community hospitals, BCUHB could no longer ask their pre and post-natal clients to attend COVID-19 premises. Working collaboratively and effectively NWC-REPS facilitated the ground work to identify alternative, suitable buildings in collaboration with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Local Authorities. Leisure Centres, Schools and Community halls across North Wales were transformed to clinical settings to enable midwives to maintain their services and ensure that their clients continued to receive the care and attention they required during the pandemic.

Mass Vaccination Centres and Local Vaccination Centres

Multi agency working continued when SCG representatives agreed the location of three large Mass Vaccination Centres sites in North Wales. This would give access to members of the public to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

NWC-REPS continued to work in close partnership with BCUHB and the Local Authorities to identify smaller 'Local' Vaccination Centres. These centres are located within communities to accommodate the local community and assist in the delivery of the vaccine to greater numbers of people. Numerous site visits took place across North Wales, to assess the suitability and accessibility of Community halls, Leisure Centres and Theatres. In total, NWC-REPS helped to identify 21 Local Vaccination Centres across the region and responded effectively to all the challenges and requests made by BCUHB.



“Good
exercise
well
done”

“Realistic.
Some exercises
are ‘over done’ this
was more likely to
be what would
occur in reality.”

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

2020/21 Learning & Development was reduced due to Local Authority staff prioritising response to COVID-19. Due to this NWC-REPS facilitated training and exercising for specific needs. Please see details of Exercise we have undertaken during this time detailed below. As a team we have also been working on moving to an online platform to be able to deliver training via ELearning until face to face training can resume safely. An Emergency Planning Officer has been an integral part of JESIP training to provide information on Local Authorities perspective when dealing with incidents.

COMAH Exercise Barrage (for FMC Agro Ltd, Deeside)

A statutory set of exercises was delivered in August and September 2020, to validate Flintshire County Council's external emergency plan for the Deeside based agricultural chemical manufacturer; NWC-REPS coordinate the multi-agency work required in order to maintain and test the off-site emergency plan on behalf of the authority, for it to remain compliant under the COMAH 2015 legislation. Exercise Barrage was delivered virtually, culminating on 4th September 2020 in a multi-agency site familiarisation/accident scenario desktop exercise. The exercise was completed within statutory timescales and therefore fulfilled the authority's legislative compliance requirements.

COMAH Exercise Aether (for Synthite Ltd, Mold)

Planning for the statutory set of exercises to validate Flintshire County Council's external emergency plan for the Mold based chemical manufacturer began in November 2020; NWC-REPS coordinate the multi-agency work required in order to maintain and test the off-site emergency plan on behalf of the authority, for it to remain compliant under the COMAH 2015 legislation. Exercise Aether will be delivered virtually over three dates between March and May 2021.



COMAH External Emergency Plan development and testing (for Great Bear Distribution Ltd, Deeside)

In response to the demand placed on the UK's chemical industry by the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increased national supply chain demand for consumer grade bleach. This demand resulted in the Great Bear Distribution warehouse site in Deeside, moving to Upper Tier COMAH status, in order to store increased stocks of the product.

The service delivered a virtual site familiarisation session and virtual major accident declaration briefing session over two dates in Q4 2020 for key site health and safety personnel, to initiate the emergency planning and exercising work. The service expects to conclude the development of the external emergency plan for the site and validate it via two virtual emergency exercises with multi-agency partners during the next financial year, in order to ensure the authority is compliant with the COMAH legislation.

Denbighshire County Council Operations Team Exercise

On the 13th January 2021, NWC-REPS conducted an operations team exercise looking at the impact of COVID-19 during a severe weather event. The exercise tested the team on how they would ensure they had an adequate amount of staff to assist in the severe weather whilst also maintaining social distancing.



Exercise Cooper

Throughout the year, NWC-REPS have ensured that a critical component of the Councils ability to respond - the Emergency Contacts Directory - is maintained and up to date. One of the ways that this has been done is a test of the content by calling the numbers within the Directories. The test took place out of hours. In doing the test, an assessment of the ability to produce an effective response is also gained, with results of these tests regularly reported back to the Councils. Exercise Cooper test was undertaken in October 2020. 41 contacts within the directories were checked in these tests and the programme of Exercise Cooper tests will continue into 2021/22. This will be undertaken on a quarterly basis including our External Directory. Time and dates and numbers are randomly chosen from sections within Emergency Contact Directories.

Development activities in planning

- Rest Centre Plan- a multi-agency plan to meet the needs of the 6 North Wales Local Authorities is currently being finalised
- Leading on compiling a North Wales Excess Deaths Response Plan on the North Wales Excess Deaths Group
- Finalising the Local Authority corporate emergency response guidelines/plans/ policy

Forward Look

Mutual Aid between LA's bordering with North Wales local authorities.
COMAH exercise for Great Bear Distribution Ltd
Publishing ELearning Modules.
Business/Service Continuity review.
Major Emergency Plan review.
Learning from COVID-19.
Learning and Development Programme

