



Community Resilience Hubs Pilot Project



British Red Cross, Groundwork London, Communities Prepared
(Groundwork South)

LONDON RESILIENCE

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Executive summary

We are living in a time of increasing emergencies. We know that community venues have often responded when their community needed them to, in an additional role to formal emergency responses from statutory services such as the police, ambulance services and the local authority.

British Red Cross, Groundwork London and Communities Prepared (Groundwork South) ran a pilot commissioned by London Resilience engaging three London community venues to learn from their experience:

- Redmond Community Centre in Hackney,
- Chestnuts Community Centre in Haringey,
- Greenwich Millennium Centre in Greenwich.

This pilot project sought to understand how these community venues have mobilised in an emergency in the past and what needs to be in place to support them to mobilise in the future in a sustainable and structured way. The key aim of this pilot was to identify the core elements of a Community Resilience Hub for London, centred on the possible roles and responsibilities for Community Resilience Hubs in preparedness, response and recovery. In this report we share lessons from the three Community Resilience Hubs that can help other community venues in London to step in when emergencies require it and act as community-run hubs supporting local people to prepare, respond and recover.

The key findings and recommendations of the project are:

- 1) Community Resilience Hubs should focus on supporting their immediate local communities, leveraging their trusted relationships and deep understanding of local needs. Mobilisation efforts must be tailored to each venue's capacity, comfort, and existing roles to be effective and sustainable. To have successful community-centred mobilisation of a community venue, a values and strengths-based approach is essential. The venue should be the key decision maker with vital support and guidance from wider stakeholders. Raising awareness of this approach and shared planning across both statutory organisations (e.g. local authorities) and Community Resilience Hubs are needed to maximise the benefits of a community centre interacting with and supporting the formal response (such as a formally stood up rest centre). **Our recommendation: Take a bespoke approach and aim for a hyperlocal mobilisation to gain buy-in from local stakeholders and meet the community's unique needs.**
- 2) Following a collaborative process, as outlined in this report, can help facilitate the development of prospective community resilience hubs. The outlined mobilisation activities across prepare, respond and recover enable the venue

to expand their knowledge and mobilisation approach based on their capacities and resources, supported by strong partnerships with local authorities, statutory responders and other local infrastructure organisations. Focusing on preparedness ensures that venues have the necessary resources, capabilities and connections needed. Provisional roles and responsibilities were identified to facilitate and manage these activities, across venue management, preparedness and response, research and information, communication and community volunteering. These roles and associated responsibilities can be treated as functions to be carried out by existing roles in a venue. This can help ensure that mobilisation activities can be delivered by existing structures and that there are clear processes and points of contact in place. **Our Recommendation: test proposed roles and responsibilities and associated activities further to be able to roll out the processes and requirements.**

- 3) Developing a strong internal business continuity plan is essential before engaging in community-wide mobilisation. Community Resilience Hubs should lead the process of defining their mobilisation roles, timelines, and scopes ensuring flexibility and maintaining independence while collaborating with statutory partners. This needs to be managed with the day-to-day responsibilities of the venue, recognising that existing internal policies, procedures and operations may need to be updated or changed to enable mobilisation to be possible, particularly in relation to being agile and flexible. A Community Emergency Plan can then be developed, based on the Community Resilience Hubs approach to mobilisation. **Our recommendation: Prioritise business continuity to ensure that the venue-led mobilisation can be sustainable, then create a Community Emergency Plan to expand resilience and preparedness into the community.**
- 4) Successful emergency mobilisation requires dedicated funding, time, and capacity. Strengthening partnerships with local authorities, volunteer centres, and emergency services is vital to create such capacity and coordinate efforts, especially in identifying and supporting vulnerable populations, which remains an ongoing challenge and focus for stakeholders outside of this pilot. Mutual awareness and trust are key, with strong collaboration enabling a combined or hybrid response. There is still a need for Community Resilience Hubs to maintain their independence and feel comfortable to share and amplify community needs, challenges and criticisms. **Our recommendation: To empower Community Resilience Hubs to respond they need to be resourced to expend the time, energy and money necessary.**



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Project overview

The brief and objectives

London Resilience commissioned this pilot to design and trial Community Resilience Hubs in London. The project focussed on engaging community venues as well as local authority emergency planning teams and local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) to test how Community Resilience Hubs could be mobilised and what roles they could play to prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies, therefore, strengthening, complementing and supporting existing response mechanisms.

The project aimed to strengthen community resilience by fostering collaboration among stakeholders and building trust and a shared understanding of emergency preparedness and a prospective Community Resilience Hubs' role in it. Through localised, inclusive engagements and events, it sought to empower venues, build social cohesion, and catalyse sustainable, community-led support networks. Strong stakeholder collaboration and trust were crucial for developing a consistent approach to venue engagement and ensuring robust data could be collected to inform recommendations and a provisional mobilisation model.

Background

The Community Resilience Hubs Mobilisation Pilot Project was developed in response to the increasing need for neighbourhood-level infrastructure that supports preparedness, response, and recovery during crises. The COVID-19 pandemic, cost-of-living pressures, and climate-related events have highlighted the pivotal role that local community venues and networks play in reaching vulnerable people and maintaining social cohesion during emergencies. This project builds on that learning to test how trusted community venues can be activated and supported as Community Resilience Hubs.

Community Resilience Hubs are community-embedded spaces such as libraries, community centres, and faith venues that already serve as trusted points of support and connection for local residents. In times of disruption, these spaces can be mobilised to extend their support functions, providing accessible, inclusive, and tailored services that reflect the needs and strengths of the communities they serve. Unlike formally identified emergency centres such as rest centres, resilience hubs operate in a more relational, community-led model that leverages pre-existing trust and networks, with both the community and the wider resilience stakeholders. Strong partnership and collaboration can also enable community resilience hubs to be integrated with and supported by statutory responders, as seen in the Merton case study from the Imperial College Research Report 'Mobilisation of community venues for resilient response and recovery' (Friman & Swinscow-Hall, 2024).

To inform the pilot's design, a review of existing models and guidance was conducted, including:

- The National Consortium for Societal Resilience (NCSR+), which advocates for place-based resilience approaches and partnership working between communities, voluntary organisations, and statutory services. Its emphasis on shared ownership and hyper-local mobilisation helped shape the pilot's collaborative framework.
- The Wiltshire Council model, which integrates resilience through community area boards and local leadership structures. This model reinforced the importance of decentralised coordination, asset mapping, and local autonomy.
- Additional learnings were drawn from responses in Northern Ireland, where Community Resilience Hubs played a central role in pandemic response through collaboration with public health and voluntary sectors.
- Insights were also gathered from several London borough-led initiatives that piloted community emergency response roles and emphasised the role of convening power, trust, and flexible funding mechanisms. These include the Building Resilience Together Project, during which the London Borough of Havering was engaged and the case studies from the Imperial College Research Report 'Mobilisation of community venues for resilient response and recovery' (Friman & Swinscow-Hall, 2024) which explored existing mobilisation examples in Merton, Lewisham and Islington.

This review affirmed that successful community mobilisation depends on enabling Community Resilience Hubs to lead with their own values, strengths, and capacities supported but not led by formal systems. The project was an opportunity to test this approach by working with three diverse venues to co-develop and document mobilisation pathways, build relationships with statutory and voluntary sector actors, and surface learning that can shape future models across London.

Methodology and activities

Recruiting Community Resilience Hubs

We issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) to select venues for the pilot based on a set of evidence-based criteria, with the aim to identify organisations who were in a strong position to benefit from the project and from which lessons could be learned. The criteria focussed on the following areas:

- Accessibility – including whether they were easily accessed by all of the community, including those who are disabled.

- Trust – including whether they are trusted by the local authority, the wider voluntary and community sector, the wider community, whether the venue has responded before to emergencies, whether they are working towards becoming a more sustainable organisation.
- Preparedness - for this project we wanted organisations who were engaged in the idea of resilience to some degree and were in a strong position to mobilise.
- Resources – including their space, facilities and staff capacity, as well as confidence that the venue will be running in five years.

Alongside the application process, we consulted relevant data sources, including:

- British Red Cross vulnerability data
- GLA Climate Risk Maps
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation map

The project EOI process ensured that we reached a wide range of venues and could fairly assess each venue based on the above criteria. From initial project engagement we recognised we needed to ensure accessibility, based on feedback. This included simplifying communication materials, offering flexible engagement formats (such as virtual and in-person options), and providing clear guidance tailored to each venue's capacity and needs.

Project Timeline

- Sept 2024: We launched the project with an information pack and information session. We received low levels of response due to lack of funding for community venues, to support their engagement with the project.
- Oct 2024: Additional funding was made available by London Resilience and the EOI process was relaunched, with significant uplift in response. We then ranked the applications according to a criteria matrix.
- Nov 2024: Three community venues were onboarded to the project and kick off meetings held.

Working with venues

The three community venues that were chosen to be part of the project were:

- Redmond Community Centre (Hackney),
- Chestnuts Community Centre (Haringey),
- Greenwich Millennium Centre (Greenwich).

As well as engaging with the community venue leads, wider stakeholders were engaged to ensure the project, and its deliverables, were well integrated and based on collaboration. For each community venue, the Local Authority emergency planning or resilience team, a representative from the borough local infrastructure

organisation (such as a volunteer centre), and the British Red Cross Emergency Response Coordinators were involved at all stages of the project.

Each community venue followed the same project activities, with adaptations and additional areas of focus added, such as an intro to emergency management session, based on their existing level of understanding and involvement.

We conducted some activities collectively to facilitate shared learning across venues, while others were venue specific. When working with multiple venues, it's beneficial to decide where joint efforts will enhance learning and where a venue-specific approach is more effective. For venue-specific tasks, we held weekly one-hour progress calls with each community venue to provide support, share insights, and adapt future sessions.

Outline of the activities:

- **Kick-off session:** a collective session with all community venue and local authority stakeholders to align on project goals and process, and to build relationships.
- **Community venue onboarding session:** individual venue sessions to aid understanding of the programme of activities of each venue, its key partners and current situation. We also shared a more detailed project plan with each venue.
- **Stakeholder and capability mapping:** individual community venue session exploring what relationships already exist in the wider community (for example, with current users, local government, other users of the space, funders), looking at informing and influencing levels. Understanding what the venues' current offer is and how it could fit into venue mobilisation.
- **Introduction to emergency response:** an individual session introducing emergency response, giving wider context and understanding to venues newer to the topic.
- **Mobilisation workshop:** session to collectively unpack possible venue mobilisation activities. The workshop was divided into three parts:
 - **Part 1:** (collective, all venues) Brainstorm all activities to be potentially carried out by venue across the prepare / respond / recover phases of an incident.
 - **Part 2:** (venue specific) Review, categorising and prioritising the activities from the venue's perspective.
 - **Part 3:** (venue specific) Consolidation of the identified activities, focusing on what support/actions/knowledge are needed to make them happen in a response.
- **Scenario exercises:** Tabletop heatwave themed exercise guided by technical partners (British Red Cross, Local Authority Emergency Planning teams) in

two of the venues to simulate an activation at the local scale and its coordination with the wider response in the borough. The exercises covered strategies and actions across the phases of Prepare, Response, and Recover and focussed on the specific strengths of the venues in each. (Included in appendix 1).

- **Building of a mobilisation matrix:** Engagement sessions with the venues to consolidate the learnings from the mobilisation workshops and heatwave scenario exercises into a matrix outlining actions and activities to prepare, respond, recover against the scenario-specific situation.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** A facilitated session to distil provisional roles and responsibilities based on the mobilisation matrix. The identification of these roles and responsibilities considered what roles already exist that can be leveraged in each venue and was guided by similar work conducted across the country and summarised in the NCSR+ Hub Manual.
- **Action plan:** Facilitated by the project team, each community venue developed an action plan prioritising activities to support their progression towards mobilisation. Specific activities for prepare, respond and recover, were distilled based on what feels feasible now and then next, based on the comfort level, capacity and capabilities of each venue, to support a staggered and manageable approach.
- **Next steps:** Each venue received a pack of documents created as part of the project and received a bespoke action plan for next steps, as well as signposting to additional training to support them as they move forward with their mobilisation activities.

Project Findings

Based on the project activities outlined above we have identified key components that can help community venues step up and play the role of Community Resilience Hubs in London, to better prepare, respond and recover from emergencies.

These findings bring together the insights from working with the three community venues, previous project work such as the Building Resilience Project and wider sector knowledge and insights, such as the NCSR+ Hub Manual.

However, it is important to note that this is a pilot. For Community Resilience Hubs in London to function reliably and be recognised as an asset in a response the concept should be tested and be operational over a longer period, with more venues contributing their learning from real life emergencies and events.



Venue Mobilisation

The following prospective mobilisation activities, roles and responsibilities look at the ideal set up and scope of mobilisation but recognise and allow for the need for flexibility so that the Community Resilience Hubs can continue to develop in a way that works for them.

These activities were determined by working with the three venues involved in the pilot project as the basis for wider mobilisation planning but are not designed as a predetermined list of requirements of what Community Resilience Hubs must do. Mobilisation should ultimately be based on the capacity, values and requirements of the venues and their community. Community Resilience Hubs wanting to develop their own approach to mobilisation can build on the above activities and processes, using them as a template.

To effectively begin planning for a mobilisation, Community Resilience Hubs must prioritise preparedness activities like gathering information, raising awareness, and emergency planning. These foundational steps provide a basis for expansion, enabling venues to leverage their awareness, connections with stakeholders, and knowledge of their locale to help their wider community prepare.

Once Community Resilience Hubs feel prepared, based on their knowledge, connections and resources, they are then able to consider how they would respond during an emergency. This would need to be incident or emergency specific and critical decisions will need to be made by key people as to whether this is something within the community venue’s capabilities.

Community Resilience Hubs can support with recovery even if they have not been fully active during response, as they are able to provide ongoing support, guidance and connection to the community.

The tables below outline the mobilisations activities identified in the pilot across the phase of prepare, respond and recover.

Prepare Activities:

Activity	Outcome
Community mapping: Integration and collaboration with local stakeholders and networks.	A connected mobilisation, built on trust and knowledge.
Communications tree: Developing key contacts needed.	Establishes a reliable contact network to ensure timely communication, coordination, and support between community hubs and key local stakeholders.
Physical assets: Understanding what the venue can provide or	Awareness of the extent of mobilisation possible, as well as any limitations.

may need such as food, water and other items.	
Identifying risks: Understanding of local hazards, risks and actions the venue can take.	A community that is building its resilience and preparedness.
Identifying and developing skills: Looking at first aid, mental health support, community languages and beyond.	Venue has the skills needed and considers how to be inclusive and community centric in its mobilisation process.
Develop a Community Emergency Plan: Consolidating the above elements to form the basis for your plan. Use the London Community Resilience Toolkit to help guide and support the process.	A pre agreed process and approach to responding emergencies, which enables clear communication, collaboration and integration.
Volunteer management and training on responding to emergencies.	Volunteer mobilisation process that is set up for success where volunteers feel able to respond appropriately.

Following these activities, Community Resilience Hubs will be better able to perform:

Response Activities:

Activity	Outcome
Mobilising partners: Contacting relevant stakeholders including the local authority, determine and be ready to contact a list of relevant contacts (i.e. communications tree, developed as part of a Community Emergency Plan).	Clarity and awareness and two-way communication
Using your assets: Provide culturally relevant support and needs (food, drink, space).	A respectful and dignified response.
Communicating with the community using the communication tree: Sharing relevant, correct, up to date information with community.	Clear, calm management of relevant information, built on trust.
Open doors: Management of arrival and flow of people at venue.	Coordinated and safe entry to the venue.
Further support: Sign posting, service support, community reassurance.	Clear, calm management of relevant information, built on trust.
Business continuity: Postponing or cancellation of 'business as normal' activities if needed.	Prioritisation and effective management of an incident.



While undertaking the response activities, reflect on, manage and mitigate impacts to venue itself For example, making a list of cancelled activities and reflecting on how to reschedule.	A venue led process, that is able to adapt and prioritise as needed, and better able to return to business as usual
Establish cool/warm space.	Mobilisation that connects with other community needs.

As the response phase ends, Community Resilience Hubs have a key role to play in recovery.

Recover Activities:

Activity	Outcome
Communicating with the community: Ongoing communication and managing expectations.	Recognition that the incident doesn't end at the same time for everyone.
Bringing people together: Community 'hot wash' (i.e. soon after the emergency hold an event to collective debrief from the event).	Prioritising community-led learning and experiences.
Continued help and advice: Support mental health and wellbeing both internally and within community, ongoing signposting.	Recognition of ongoing impacts and proactively trying to minimise long term impacts.
Learning from the incident: Applying learning to preparedness activities.	Lessons are learnt and put into practice to be better prepared and improve response in the future.

Roles and Responsibilities

A key focus was to define community-led roles and responsibilities that each participating venue could undertake in the event of a local emergency. Building on the core activities identified by stakeholders during the project, we conducted a detailed mapping of existing capacities within each hub and explored how these could be expanded or adapted in a response scenario.

This process was guided by the National Consortium for Societal Resilience (NCSR+) Hub Toolkit, which outlines scalable and community-driven roles across preparedness, response, and recovery. Using this toolkit as a reference, we worked collaboratively with venues to co-develop roles that aligned with their values,

capabilities, and levels of comfort ensuring that responsibilities remained manageable and locally relevant.

The resulting roles and responsibilities reflect a strengths-based, flexible approach that empowers Community Resilience Hubs to act within their means while linking effectively with statutory and wider voluntary sector partners.

While these roles and responsibilities have been detailed separately for ease of understanding, they can also be treated as functions that exist within existing roles and can also be held by the same person, where appropriate. The priority is to ensure that there is clarity and understanding of who does what when, with clear lines of communication and points of escalation both internally and externally.

Venue Manager

<u>Areas of responsibility</u>	Oversee and be aware of all activities, support with strategic relationships, providing support and advice.
<u>Role Description:</u>	Be in charge of key relationships – such as with resident’s associations. Be aware of safeguarding and health and safety challenges. Ensure that messages are aligned.
<u>Role Responsibilities:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In prepare phase, ensure smooth running of business as usual, whilst integrating relevant prepare activities. • Hold team meetings and ensure coordinators work as a team. • Support Prepare and Response Coordinators, with the ability to take on role as needed. • In response phase, work with media if needed. • Decide/agree to close the facility during an emergency if needed. • Ensure that team are resourced to provide volunteers with appropriate welfare, drinks, rest, kit, etc. • In recovery phase, ensure lessons are captured and learnt, team well-being is managed, and community support continues.

Prepare Coordinator

<u>Areas of responsibility</u>	<i>This role could be held by the same person who is also the Response Coordinator.</i>
<u>Role Description:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead on the prepare phase: planning and coordination before emergencies.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the Response Hub Coordinator, informing and consulting throughout (if roles held by separate people). • Play a supportive role during the <i>response</i> phase. • Lead during the <i>recovery</i> phase: supporting the community and coordinating return to normal operations.
<u>Role Responsibilities:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and engage volunteers. • Collaborate (if 2 people) and ensure prepare, response and recovery activities are in place. • Ensure all roles and responsibilities are integrated and understood with processes in place to facilitate connection and collaboration.

Response Coordinator

<u>Areas of responsibility</u>	<i>This role could be held by the same person who is also the Response Coordinator.</i>
<u>Role Description:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Prepare Coordinator during the <i>prepare</i> phase. • Lead operationally during the <i>response</i> phase: responsible for opening/closing the venue and managing logistics. • Support in the <i>recovery</i> phase.
<u>Role Responsibilities:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage volunteers. • Ensure practical delivery of emergency activities during activation. • Collaborate (if 2 people) and ensure prepare, response and recovery activities are in place. • Ensure all roles and responsibilities are integrated and understood with processes in place to facilitate connection and collaboration.

Research and Information Lead

<u>Areas of responsibility</u>	<i>This role could be held by the same person who is also the Communications Lead.</i>
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<u>Role Description:</u>	Research and collect information that is relevant from trusted sources throughout the phases of the emergency cycle and handle it safely.
<u>Role Responsibilities:</u>	<p>Prepare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather relevant information from trusted sources and keep up to date, e.g. with the latest weather report and actions needed. <p>Respond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up noticeboards to keep the community up to date with new information on what’s happening. • Safely collect relevant information from people as they arrive at the facility (considering data rules and regulations as part of the Community Emergency Plan) • Organise collection of missing information by groups going into the community. <p>Recover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information about support available in the recovery phase.

Communication Lead

<u>Areas of responsibility</u>	<i>This role could be held by the same person who is also the Research and Information Lead.</i>
<u>Role Description:</u>	Communicate research and information gathered to the community, and sharing communications from the community.
<u>Role Responsibilities:</u>	<p>Prepare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consolidate information into an easy-to-understand, usable format. • Develop and manage communication channels with partners. • Raise awareness of where to gather reliable information. <p>Respond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the communications area such as notice boards, areas where announcements or up to date information will be shared (this can be both online and offline). • Send status report to statutory partners (e.g. facility is open, unmet needs)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive information from statutory partners, trusted communications channels, broadcast radio and communities. • Pass relevant information to statutory partners. • Maintain contact with any volunteers gathering information. • Communicate back to the community on what happened, how to help themselves, safety. <p>Recover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate information about support available. • Where appropriate, gather insights and stories of emergency response to inform future preparedness and to celebrate success.
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Community Volunteers

Role and level of involvement in mobilisation:

Volunteers are key players in the mobilisation/response phase and can take on many important tasks such as welcoming people to the venue supporting the wellbeing of those affected. Volunteers may already be known to the community, acting as a ‘familiar face’ and increasing trust.

However, operational planning should avoid relying entirely on volunteers, as they may not always be able to be deployed. For example, it may be that having a large number of volunteers will not be helpful or they cannot safely travel to the venue.

If volunteers are deployed, it’s best to ensure they have a way of being identified by a photo ID, photos displayed on walls or other means. In case of deployment, volunteers’ wellbeing and health and safety must be considered as a priority and need to be continuously monitored by the relevant leads.

Because of the venue-specific circumstances that can affect volunteer deployment and the need for relevant procedures and policies, the project did not identify a set of predetermined responsibilities for community volunteers. Their involvement can be tailored on the specific needs of a response and on the skills of the volunteers themselves and could include:

- Offering refreshments.
- Signposting people to information boards.
- Set up a reception area at the entrance.
- Ensuring general tidiness.
- Greet people who come into the facility and direct them to the part of the facility that can help them.
- Leading activities, e.g., arts and crafts.

- Compassionate listening to those in distress.

Roles and Responsibilities Considerations

When an organisation running a venue considers mobilising for a response by deploying roles like those outlined above, a starting point is to assess existing staff and any volunteer roles' capabilities. By leveraging current ways of working, the organisation can identify roles that naturally lend themselves to emergency response functions.

For any roles established, it's important that these are introduced and discussed and regularly refreshed in parallel to any foreseen venue's mobilisation approach. The latter can be established in parallel to such roles for example by using the London Resilience Community Emergency Toolkit as a guide.

It's important to remember that the proposed roles don't always require different people for each position. For instance, the Research and Information Lead and the Communications Lead could be the same person. Regardless of who holds the roles, there must be clarity on how roles and responsibilities are carried out in a specific event, along with the ability to delegate as a situation evolves.

To ensure resilience, wherever possible, people should train and refresh what is expected of different roles. This can help make the people covering them interchangeable and multi-skilled, which can prove vital if certain individuals are unavailable during a crisis. While this project did not investigate specific training for venue staff and volunteers, this is something that could be further explored and tested.

For roles that might require out-of-hours availability, such as key holders, it's often best to assign these to venue staff and volunteers who are local to the venue. Furthermore, every role needs clear escalation points within its responsibilities, both within the venue and with wider stakeholders and partners.

A clear understanding of the venue's role within the broader emergency response framework is also essential. This means knowing how the community venue aligns with the responsibilities of other key partners, especially statutory responders. Strong collaboration and integration with these partners will be critical for effective mobilisation.

Conclusion

Some community venues will respond in a crisis where their community is affected, regardless of what statutory responders do and don't do. The spirit of such responses is commendable and ensuring they are supported to be effective can reinforce the role that the whole of society can play in creating resilient communities.

Community Resilience Hubs offer an avenue to take a genuinely community-centred approach to responses and leverage the potential of community mobilisation during emergencies. Clearly defining the activities, roles, and responsibilities of these venues can improve understanding and coordination with statutory responders and help them embrace and value civil society's vital role in resilience. This approach will likely evolve with testing and incorporate lessons and experiences from real-life activations.

It is vital to build trust between prospective participants and local authorities, emergency services, London Resilience, and other official partners so that community-centred approaches are understood, valued and supported. To ensure the sustainability of their involvement, Community Resilience Hubs must lead the conversation and be empowered to decide the scope and nature of their involvement, and how and where support might be needed, guided by the needs of those they serve, their available space, and their capacity. Support and engagement from local authorities and statutory responders can support this, enabling a collaborative and partnership approach. This will lead to genuinely community owned mobilisation and effective community preparedness and mobilisation during crises.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the three venues who piloted becoming Community Resilience Hubs for their engagement, insights and openness, without which the project would not have been possible. We also thank their local authority resilience teams, local volunteer centres and other stakeholders who engaged in and supported the process.

Contact

To find out more about the project, please contact the London Resilience Unit via Londonresilience@groundwork.org.uk or the project team via Londonresilience@london.gov.uk



Appendix 1: Venue Specific Mobilisation Workshops and Scenario Exercise Insights

The mobilisation workshops and scenario exercises were key to uncover the community venues’ specific capabilities, and their strengths and gaps across the preparedness, response and recovery phases.

Preparedness focused on resource allocation, communication and identifying vulnerable residents. Response addressed challenges like power outages, marginalised group support and misinformation management. Recovery emphasized psychosocial support, service restoration and long-term resilience planning.

The exercise proved highly useful for mobilisation, highlighting strengths, gaps and areas for collaboration. It provided practical insights into how venues can efficiently prepare, respond and recover from heatwaves

Greenwich Millennium were not able to carry out a scenario exercise due to being in the earlier stages of mobilisation, so focus remained on preparedness activities and considerations.

The table below summarises the themes covered in the two community centres where scenario exercising was conducted.

Phase within Scenario Exercise	Chestnuts Community Centre	Redmond Community Centre
Preparedness	Safeguarding training, volunteer management, communication plans.	Awareness campaigns, identifying local languages, supporting vulnerable residents.
Response	Check-in on volunteers, signposting resources, tackling misinformation.	Providing food, emotional support, working with volunteers.
Recovery	Community "hotwash" debrief, reestablishing disrupted activities.	Long-term community support, hosting ceremony events.

Appendix 2: Glossary

Asset mapping: Identifying and recording the strengths, resources, and capacities that exist within a community, such as local skills, organisations and spaces.

Business continuity plan: A strategy that outlines how an organisation will continue to operate during and after a disruption or emergency.

Capability mapping: A process that identifies the skills, resources, and relationships a venue or organisation already has and how these can be used in emergencies.

Community Resilience Hub: A community venue that is prepared to support local people before, during and after emergencies. It may offer services such as information sharing, shelter, supplies, or emotional support.

Cool/warm space: A safe, welcoming venue that provides relief in extreme weather—such as somewhere cool during a heatwave or warm in winter.

Emergency planning teams: Groups within local authorities responsible for preparing for and coordinating responses to emergencies and major incidents.

Emergency preparedness: Actions taken before an emergency to ensure an effective and coordinated response—this may include planning, training, and public awareness.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD): A government measure that ranks areas in England based on factors such as income, employment, education, housing, crime, and health, to assess where disadvantage is most concentrated.

Local/Borough Resilience Forum (L/BRF): A multi-agency group that brings together emergency services, local authorities, health agencies and others to plan and coordinate responses to emergencies.

Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO): Organisations which support the voluntary and community sector, for example volunteer centres and council for voluntary services.

National Consortium for Societal Resilience (NCSR): A UK-wide partnership promoting approaches to enhance the UK whole-of-society approach to resilience, so that individuals, groups, organisations and networks can all play a meaningful part in building the resilience of our society.

Rest Centres: Designated emergency shelters established by local authorities where people can be welcomed temporarily and get support during emergencies.

Strengths-Based Approach: A way of working that focuses on existing skills, assets, and capacities within individuals or communities rather than solely on needs or deficits.