

Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum (DCIOS LRF)

Voluntary and Community Sector Group (VCS Group)

Welcome!

The Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum *Voluntary and Community Sector Group (VCS Group)* is a relatively new entity; while some VCS work had been conducted by the LRF pre-Covid the group was not formally established until we were some way into the pandemic.

The group is currently chaired by Becky Maynard of the *Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP)*, and co-chaired by the British Red Cross. The group is assisted by a Support Officer from the LRF Secretariat.

The VCS Group meet quarterly with a standing agenda and all VCS agencies, as well as wider LRF partners, are invited to attend. The purpose of the group is to raise and discuss issues impacting the regions VCS and provide and route to escalate concerns to the wider LRF collective of Category 1 and Category 2 Responders (including blue light services, local authorities, health partners, transport organisations, and utilities amongst others). An action log is maintained and the Chair / Co-Chair sit on the LRF's Monthly on Thursday (MOT) calls to represent the VCS cell and to feedback items of relevance to group members.

We push to ensure that there is VCS involvement in LRF training and exercising as well as any post-response debriefs. Representatives of the VCS Group attend several LRF group meetings, including the *Humanitarian Aspects Evacuation & Shelter* Capability and the *Whole Society Resilience and Volunteer Management (WSR & VM)* Capability. VCS Group representatives also attend the newly formed *Southwest Voluntary Agencies Group Chairs Meeting* to share best practice from LRF VCS cells across the region.

In the event of a large incident requiring an LRF-led response, we aim to have at least one VCS representatives attending all Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) meetings as well as any relevant activated cells, and we hold a VCS Capability Matrix to enable us to quickly call on the right people at the right time. During Summer 2024 we reviewed and revised our call-out process and the capability matrix, following work undertaken with Wiltshire & Swindon LRF, to improve our preparedness and response capacities. This review gives us an opportunity to reach out to a wider VCS audience for involvement in preparedness and resilience.

For VCS organisations, benefits to being part of the DCIOS LRF VCS group include:

- **Improved Coordination and Collaboration opportunities**, both across the VCS community but also via access to multi-Agency networks and information.
- **Enhanced Preparedness**, with collective planning, training and exercising opportunities, as well as enhanced insights into local and regional risks and mitigations.
- **Representation**, including having a voice and influence within the development of the region's multi-Agency policies and response plans.
- **Operational support during incidents**, and early access to information during a response.

- **Recognition and Credibility:** being part of the VCS Group and wider LRF provides opportunities to showcase an organisation, its skills, commitment, and achievements.

We hope this gives you an insight into the group and the benefits it can bring We look forward to welcoming you at future meetings!

With warm regards,

Becky Maynard, Chair