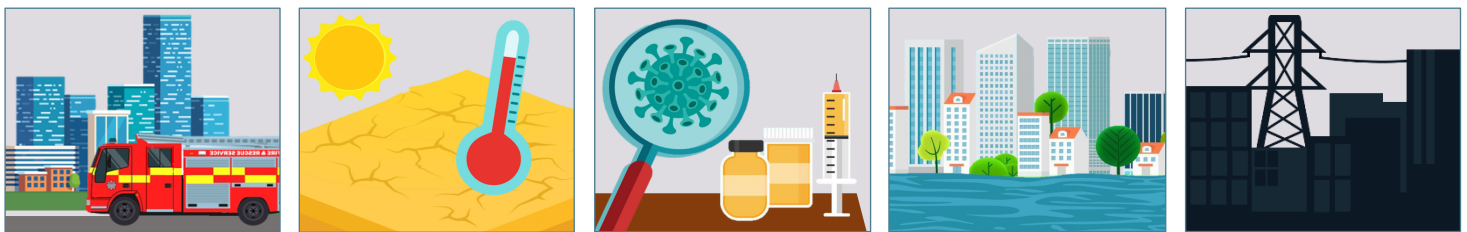


Response to an Emergency in Tower Hamlets

The **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** provides the legal framework for emergency preparedness and response in the UK. It defines an emergency as: “An event or situation that threatens serious damage to human welfare, the environment, or the security of the UK”

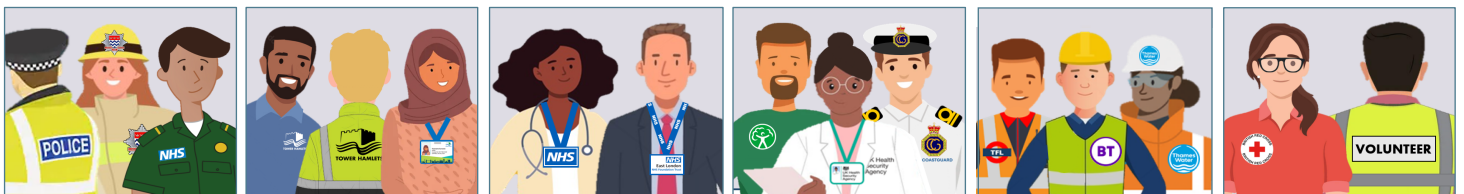
Examples of emergencies include **flooding, fires, mass evacuation, a pandemic, terrorist attack, building collapse, severe weather, or a major utilities failure.**



Under this Act, ‘**Category One**’ responders are the core organisations responsible for managing emergencies. These include the Emergency Services, Local Authorities, NHS bodies, the Environment Agency and the UK Health Security Agency.

‘**Category Two**’ responders are supporting agencies such as Utility Companies, Transport Operators, and Telecommunications Providers who must cooperate and share relevant information to support the response.

The **VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise) Sector** is not categorised under the act but plays an important role in emergency response. Organisations like the British Red Cross, St John Ambulance, and crucially, local community groups, have provided support across many previous incidents. They often fill gaps in formal services, offering flexible and rapid support tailored to local needs.



A shared understanding of all organisations’ capabilities is essential for an effective emergency response. When agencies are aware of each other’s strengths, resources, and limitations, they can **coordinate more efficiently, avoid duplication, train and ensure that residents receive timely and appropriate support** during and after an emergency.

Preparing for Emergencies in Tower Hamlets

Category One and Category Two organisations are required to share information and cooperate with each other when planning for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

Many of these organisations provide services at a regional level (e.g. London Fire Brigade or the London Ambulance Service). The following partnership and organisations exist to coordinate efforts at the **regional** level:

Regional Partnerships & Organisations	
London Resilience Partnership	Pan London collaboration of over 180 responding organisations who have specific responsibilities for preparing for and responding to emergencies. Each sector of the partnership is represented at the 'London Resilience Forum' which takes place periodically.
London Resilience Unit	The London Resilience Unit is part of the Greater London Authority. they deliver and coordinate resilience services on behalf of the London Resilience Partnership and London Local Authorities.
London Communities Emergencies Partnership	Part of the London Resilience Partnership. Run jointly by London Plus and the VCS Emergencies Partnership. Aims to keep organisations connected, share knowledge and strengthen emergency preparedness.

In Tower Hamlets, relationships between **local** organisations are maintained via the:

Local Partnerships & Organisations	
Borough Resilience Forum (BRF)	Partnership of responding organisations across Tower Hamlets that meets quarterly to coordinate emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts locally. Attended by Category One and Two organisations and representatives from the VCFSE sector, Housing Providers and Businesses.
Civil Protection Unit	Team who maintains the Council's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity measures. The Civil Protection Unit also chairs the Borough Resilience Forum in Tower Hamlets.

Through the Borough Resilience Forum, responding organisations in Tower Hamlets assess local risks, prepare and train collaboratively, and strive to achieve regional guidance. For BRF queries please contact emergency.planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Responding to Emergencies in Tower Hamlets



The Emergency Services take the lead in the initial response to an emergency. As the situation evolves, additional agencies are engaged to provide specialised support. This support could include utility companies isolating gas and electricity supplies, or the Local Authority putting in place road closures, deploying structural engineers, and assisting displaced residents.

When displaced residents require temporary shelter and welfare support, the Local Authority will open an **Emergency Centre**, in a Council or Community Building. This will be staffed by trained council volunteers. Additional support is provided by voluntary organisations such as the British Red Cross.



Where appropriate, the Local Authority work with the landlord of impacted properties to support displaced residents at, and onwards from, the Emergency Centre.



Responding organisations work collaboratively to deliver the necessary support to those impacted, known as **Humanitarian Assistance**. Examples of this include the identification of vulnerable people, providing information, or mental health support.

Local Authorities are the Lead Agency for the coordination of Humanitarian Assistance. In Tower Hamlets the Civil Protection Unit operate a 24/7 rota to coordinate this locally.

The support of VCFSE organisations is invaluable in supporting those impacted, due to their local insight, trusted community ties, and specialised expertise.

The Civil Protection Unit are the point of contact for coordinating offers of support in Tower Hamlets, with the intention of achieving a shared understanding of the situation, avoiding duplication, and maximising the impact of the Humanitarian Assistance provided.



Search 'Contact Us' on the Tower Hamlets Council website to find the contact details for the service that you require during an emergency.

For queries outside of an emergency situation, please contact emergency.planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk