

Devolved nations

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 23 October 2013 Updated 3 April 2024

The devolved nations inform central government in the same way as local resilience forums (LRFs) to ensure coordination and to maintain an accurate national common recognised information picture (CRIP).

This section describes emergency preparedness and planning arrangements in the devolved nations, where they differ from UK government and local arrangements in England.

It also outlines how [Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 \(CCA\)](#) and its associated regulations apply in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

More detail on the specific duties under the Act and how they apply in the devolved administrations can be found in [Emergency preparedness](#).

Emergency preparedness in Wales

North Wales Police act as the single point of contact (SPOC). For details about the role of the SPOC, see [Pan-Wales Response Plan](#) (central notification). The [Pan-Wales Response Plan](#) sets out the arrangements for the response to an emergency in, or affecting, Wales. Response arrangements at the local level in Wales are the same as those in England but take into account devolved functions. The [CCA](#) pays due cognisance to those organisations whose roles are devolved including fire and rescue, and health.

Response arrangements at the local level in Wales are the same as those in England but take into account devolved functions. The [CCA](#) pays due cognisance to those organisations whose roles are devolved, including fire and rescue, and health.

The Emergency Coordination Centre (Wales), or ECC(W), is a facility established by the Welsh Government to gather and disseminate information in Wales on developing emergencies. It supports the [Wales Civil Contingencies Committee \(WCCC\)](#) and Welsh ministers in providing briefing and advice on emergencies. This facility also provides accommodation and equipment for

all other services to work together and links into all three SCGs.

If the emergency is of a magnitude that requires national levels of coordination, it has been agreed that the ECC(W) will act as a conduit for communication. This includes all organisations whether devolved or not. Non-devolved organisations would also communicate through normal channels – for example, police to the NPCC or NPoCC. If emergency regulations are made covering Wales, the UK government must appoint a Wales Emergency Coordinator.

For further information see [Welsh civil emergencies website](#) and the [UK/Wales Concordat](#).

Emergency preparedness in Scotland

Scottish emergency response arrangements are based on the same principles as those that apply elsewhere in the UK. These arrangements are outlined in [Preparing Scotland](#). This guidance provides for suitable arrangements to be put in place to establish effective communication and engagement with the UK government depending upon whether the emergency relates to a devolved or a reserved matter. Resilience partnerships in Scotland are similar to LRFs. They operate regionally as regional resilience partnerships focusing on planning and locally as local resilience partnerships predominantly in response to the emergency. Strategic oversight and direction for civil contingencies and resilience is provided through government-led multi-agency governance arrangements. Scottish Ministers have devolved responsibilities related to managing the consequences of emergencies in Scotland.

Although the regional resilience partnerships are active during planning stages, in practical terms during response, multi-agency coordination is routinely configured around local resilience partnerships. These may be established to determine the appropriate management structures and strategy for the local inter-agency response.

Scottish ministers may open the Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR), which gathers and disseminates information, coordinates activity, provides appropriate guidance and supports the Scottish response to emergencies. It provides a national picture of the impact of the emergency, which, in turn, can be used to advise and inform decisions on the strategic management of the situation for the Scottish and UK governments.

For further information see [Scottish government civil emergencies website](#).

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Office has responsibility for national security matters. It maintains crisis management arrangements to govern the strategic response to such emergencies. Civil protection in Northern Ireland is largely a devolved matter, with functions being exercised by the Northern Ireland departments.

Some functions are not devolved and are delivered in Northern Ireland by bodies that fall within the remit of the UK government. The Civil Contingencies Policy Branch in the Executive Office promotes civil contingencies preparedness in Northern Ireland. It maintains arrangements for strategic crisis management in serious and catastrophic emergencies. [The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework](#) has been published by the Executive Office (2023).

Sub-regional and local coordination is achieved by a variety of arrangements, including those involving the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the district councils. The PSNI is a Category 1 responder. Some Category 1 and 2 responders in Northern Ireland are subject to Part 1 of the CCA and its regulations, and guidance issued by UK ministers including the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and telecommunications providers.

Arrangements are in place to ensure information exchange and coordination in the event of emergencies that cross the border with the Republic of Ireland.

Tags

Civil emergencies