

# Staffordshire Prepared

The Newsletter of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum  
Issue 9 - April 2009

Staffordshire  
Civil Contingencies Unit



Supporting Resilience in Staffordshire  
[www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk)

## Setting the Gold Standard



**Steve Hill**

Corporate Directors and Senior officers from Category One responders attended the Staffordshire Resilience Forum's first Gold training exercise.

The strategic exercise attracted delegates from a wide range of organisations including Staffordshire Police, the county's fire and rescue service & Staffordshire County Council.

They were joined by officers from the Environment Agency, MoD 143 Brigade, the Government Decontamination Service and Government Office West Midlands.

The training day held in association with Leicestershire Police was the first of five Gold exercises planned for 2009.

Staffs CCU Training & Exercise Coordinator, Steve Hill said "The Leicestershire Force has developed a strategic command and control training system called Vector. Delegates undertook a multi-agency response exercise under realistic conditions."

The first SRF Silver control exercise will be held on 6 May. Officers should contact Steve Hill for further details. E-mail [sl.hill@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:sl.hill@staffordshirefire.gov.uk). Steve has devised a comprehensive 2009 programme involving 119 training sessions and 25 exercises.



**Delegates hard at work at Ashby**

## Harecastle Tunnel Exercise



Emergency procedures in a two mile long tunnel were put to the test.

Firefighters from Kidsgrove and Newcastle took part in the rescue.

Rescue work inside the tunnel is hindered by a lack of ability to communicate and the length of time it takes boats to travel through.

All radio and telephone communications cut off about 350 metres into the tunnel.

British Waterways give boaters one hour and 45 minutes to pass through the tunnel meaning that a boat could be in trouble for some time before the alarm is raised.

Civil Contingencies officer Bob Brown said, "The exercise simulated the rescue of persons trapped within the tunnel following a fire on a narrow boat.

Fire appliances from Kidsgrove and Newcastle, including a water rescue unit attended.

The exercise highlighted the numerous difficulties faced by the Emergency Services when faced with rescues in confined and hazardous surroundings.

Local plans will now be produced enabling a more comprehensive response to any future incidents."

## Early warning system launched



**Flooding in Stafford**

Homes and businesses in Staffordshire are set to benefit from a sophisticated new flood warning system.

The National Flood Forecasting Centre (FFC) has been set up to give early warnings of potential serious incidents – such as the floods which affected the Lichfield district and caused devastation across Yorkshire and the Midlands in summer 2007.

The FFC has been set up in a partnership between the Met Office and the Environment Agency and draws upon the experience of meteorologists and hydrologists.

The London based centre will provide up to the minute information to civil contingencies planners aimed at providing more advanced warnings of potential incidents than in previous years.

Planners will receive expert assessments of risk levels based on the level of rainfall and the capacity of river flood plains.

### **Staffordshire Flood Plan Launched**

The improvements to the national flood prediction system comes as the Staffordshire Resilience Forum is preparing to publish the Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan.

The new plan, to be launched in April, is among the first to be published nationally drawing on the lessons learned from the 2007 floods.

### **Exercise White Water**

White Water, a major exercise designed to test details of the new plan and how resilience forum members respond to it, will be held in November 2009.

## **Libraries Link for Flu Planning**

An agreement has been reached giving Staffordshire County Council libraries a key role in the event of an outbreak of pandemic flu.

The libraries will be the collection point for the collection of anti viral drugs by the public.

They have been chosen because of their position at the heart of many communities. Many libraries have plentiful parking, good disabled access, IT and communications equipment, space for queuing and are on bus routes.

Staffordshire County Council also has two mobile libraries which could be used to serve the rural areas.

Training will be arranged for library staff by NHS South Staffordshire and NHS North Staffordshire.

No decision has yet been used on whether to use the libraries, or not, in Stoke on Trent.

## **On Line for Success**

A new e-learning package will help medical staff plan for a potential flu pandemic.

The package was launched by the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in March and was funded by the SHA and all West Midlands' Primary Care Trusts.

It includes a DVD which will allow PCT's and the local authorities in their areas to carry out exercises and training.

A timetable will be agreed and published as part of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum's exercise programme.

## **Mobile Command Unit Refit**

The mobile command unit operated by Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit is being upgraded.

The specialist refit will mean that the vehicle is off the road for around four months.

Alternative mobile control arrangements have been made by the CCU.

A tented mobile control unit will be provided for transport to incidents by the unit's Land Rover and trailer.

## Training Spotlights Recording Role

Twenty delegates attended a training session highlighting the vital role of a loggist at any major incident.

Staff from the NHS, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Staffordshire local authorities were given training on the specialist role.

Civil Contingencies Unit training officer, Steve Hill, said: "Keeping a record of who does what and why they do it is extremely important at any major incident.

"The loggist's role gives crucial support to decision makers and is particularly important when actions taken on sight are reviewed following an incident."

The training session was held at the Yarnfield Conference Centre.

Solicitor Advocate Mark Scoggins spoke of the important role of the loggist at the 2008 SRF conference, also held at Yarnfield.

Mr Scoggins, warned delegates that legal action could follow if there was a perception that any major incident had been badly handled.

He said that the key to defending any action was good record keeping, adding: "Logs must be taken recording what was considered, what was done and why."

## Multi Incident Scenario Tested Across West Midlands Region

Officers from across the West Midlands came together to discuss how best to work if emergencies hit several points of the region at the same time.

Scenarios examined at the workshop included a plane crash on Cannock Chase, a landslide in the Severn Gorge and severe flooding in Birmingham – with all incidents resulting in loss of life and serious injury.

Staffordshire County Council, Stoke on Trent City Council, Lichfield District Council and the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) represented Staffordshire at the workshop organised by the Government Office West Midlands, in Birmingham, on 26 March.

Bob Brown, of the CCU, said: "Delegates were tasked with looking at their current plans and how well they may perform when multiple demands are placed upon them. The results will be analysed to help central government identify any shortcomings and where assistance from the centre can be enhanced."

## Mock Town Centre Blaze Puts County BCM Plan to the Test

Staffordshire County Council's Business Continuity plans were put to the test in a realistic exercise run by the Civil Contingencies Unit.

Exercise players were given no prior warning of the realistic scenario which involved a major fire in the council's Children and Lifelong Learning building.

The mock fire was said to have caused severe disruption resulting in the evacuation of the building and the closure of town centre roads.

Exercise Gold Phoenix involved staff from the county council and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Andy Marshall, Director of Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, said "It is vital that responders exercise key plans and this is the best way to learn and improve. From the CCU's perspective this exercise is a fantastic example of how we can support Staffordshire's public services through the provision of realistic, credible and challenging scenarios."

## City Centre Evacuation Plan



Stoke on Trent City Council has run the second of its Stoke City Centre evacuation plan exercises.

The table top exercise was designed to test plans for the safe evacuation of Hanley shopping areas.

The three hour training session involved the emergency service, NHS Stoke on Trent, city centre management staff and the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit.

CCU Officer Bob Brown said "The testing scenario involving a car bomb attack caused simulated 'havoc' to the city centre and developed into a major incident. The exercise achieved the objectives in illustrating how disruptive and protracted serious incidents can be. The exercise helped the participants in identifying any shortfalls in their plans which will be addressed in the near future."

## William Read retires from CCU



Long serving Civil Contingencies Officer William Read has retired.

William joined the former County Emergency Planning Unit in 1987 having previously volunteered with the service as a Scientific Adviser.

A former high school teacher, William continues to work as a senior examiner and moderator with two examination boards.

He said "I have been Honorary Secretary of the Stafford Historical & Civic Society since 1988 and, in retirement, plan to spend more time in this role and in my role as Chairman of the West Midlands Branch of the Emergency Planning Society."

Meanwhile, Assistant Civil Contingencies Officers Sarah Moore and Ellie Gatrill-Smith have been made acting Civil Contingencies Officers and Megan Harris, who first joined the unit in an administration role two and a half years ago, is now acting Assistant Civil Contingencies Officer.

The CCU is offering an opportunity for a student to work with the unit at Beaconside, Stafford, for 11 months from September. Visit [www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk) for further details.



Sarah Moore



Ellie Gatrill -  
Smith



Megan Harris

## Partnership working in planning for pandemic flu

Stoke on Trent City Council and NHS Stoke on Trent staged a multi-agency table top exercise for Category One responders in North Staffordshire.

The two part exercise tested delegates' response to pandemic flu alert stages.

Exercise Director, Claire Machin, said feedback from the exercise had been very positive with staff learning useful lessons on how partner organisations plan to respond if a pandemic was declared.

She added "The hard work in organising the exercise was well worth the outcomes and a further exercise is being planned to see that lessons identified have been carried out. We would be happy to share the exercise with other groups."

Copies of the exercise pack are available from either: [peter.burgess@tw4stoke.gov.uk](mailto:peter.burgess@tw4stoke.gov.uk), [clairea.machin@stoke.nhs.uk](mailto:clairea.machin@stoke.nhs.uk) or [nicola.pilling@stoke.nhs.uk](mailto:nicola.pilling@stoke.nhs.uk).



Pandemic flu training at the Kings Hall, Stoke.



Westport Lake

## Search Team Rescue Man Following Night Time Lakeside Alert

Volunteers from the Staffordshire Search and Rescue Team (SSART) successfully located a missing man following a call for help from Staffordshire Police.

The man, aged 63, was found, very cold but safe and well, just over 30 minutes into the night time search of paths and woods at Westport Lake, near Tunstall, in early April.