

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR SKILLS AND SUPPORT IN EMERGENCIES

A guide to aid government departments and agencies to better understand, engage with, and integrate the potential of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in planning for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies.

A guide for
central
government
departments

Purpose and contents

This guide is intended as a reference tool for Central Government Departments and Agencies to better understand, engage and integrate the capabilities of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in the response phase of large incidents and whole system civil emergencies. VCS organisations referenced in the document are either formal partners of, or in some way connected to, the VCS Emergencies Partnership (EP).

Although focused more on the response phase of incidents, the guide will add value to all other phases of the emergency management cycle and the effectiveness of VCS response capabilities would be enhanced if the guide is used throughout the cycle.

The guide provides an overview of:

1. The VCS in Emergency Response – context and the problem this guide aims to solve
2. [Five key considerations for engaging the VCS](#) that can help to maximise the value added from the VCS' involvement in almost any type of emergency.
3. [VCS Capabilities Summary table](#): Listing VCS organisations/types and broad capabilities in a format based on VCS 'Capability Matrices' from several Local Resilience Forums (LRFs)¹
4. Annexes A-E provide further information on the VCS organisations and networks mentioned throughout this document. including how to mobilise them in an emergency.
 - A. [The VCS Emergencies Partnership EP](#)
 - B. [VCS Infrastructure Organisations](#)
 - C. [VCS Community Specialist Organisations](#)
 - D. [VCS Emergency Response Organisations](#)
 - E. [VCS Surge Capability Organisations](#)

This guide is just that, a guide, and **so Central Government departments and agencies must undertake their own due diligence, suitability and capacity checks of organisations as part of engagement**. VCS organisations, those listed and otherwise, hold numerous and varied contractual arrangements, memorandums of understanding and service level agreements which will impact an organisations' capacity to meet needs in an emergency.

We would like to express our thanks to the many VCS partners who have worked in partnership with the EP team to develop this guide. Also, colleagues from the Cabinet Office and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (owners of civil society policy in government and leading on government engagement with civil society more widely) who have provided support in framing how to communicate this guide to government departments.

Lastly, we must also emphasise that despite the EP consulting with government on how to best frame and describe the VCS in the sections that follow this is not a government document and should not be considered government guidance.

¹ London Resilience Forum, Devon Cornwall & Isle of Scilly, Bedfordshire, Gloucestershire, Northumbria

Version Control

Document to be checked and updated by the EP in collaboration with named partners, with new versions being considered annually with input from Cabinet Office, DCMS and MHCLG. Updates outside of this can be triggered by the EP as and when required.

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Description of changes made</u>
1.0	26/08/2025	Jon Vangorph	First version published September 2025

Section 1: The VCS in Emergency Response

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in England includes approximately 132,000 charities, social enterprises, faith-based organisations and community groups, employing just under 1 million people and supported by over 14 million people volunteering every year.²

- Around 80% of VCS organisations in England are micro/small organisations with an income of less than £100k per annum and work mostly in their local area.
- The remaining 20% are medium to large charities that operate with incomes of up to £100m per annum and work across local, regional, national and international regions.

Directly and indirectly the activities of all VCS organisations (through both paid staff and unpaid volunteers) contribute to improved community resilience and so are engaged in the emergency preparedness, response and recovery of people and communities to different risks and incidents.

This document covers the capabilities of those VCS organisations with paid staff and formal volunteers but across communities, informal volunteers directly support other people who are not family members in preparedness, response and recovery from incidents. Some VCS organisations in this document (e.g. the British Red Cross' Community Reserve Volunteers) run programmes that aim to coordinate and harness some of the informal and spontaneous volunteering we often see in relation to emergencies (mostly in the response phase). At times of crisis the VCS will work with statutory partners or will self-mobilise to:

- directly respond to the needs of their community with their own capabilities
- amplify needs that have not been adequately addressed by responding agencies (particularly of those communities who are seldom heard and suffer from discrimination and inequalities), un-used community capabilities and assets to responding agencies and coordinating forums
- connect-up different communities to parts of the system so that deployed capabilities of responding agencies have most impact in meeting need

The VCS respond and contribute both from within and outside of the multi-agency forums that Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and Central government lead. The VCS' level of involvement in emergencies varies greatly from place to place, as well as the type and scale of emergency, and the different agencies leading the response and recovery.

Nationally and locally, Government can better partner, engage and harness the VCS at a time of crisis to meet the challenges society faces. This guide, developed by the **Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (EP)** with our EP partners, will aid government decision makers to quickly understand the potential capacity and capability of the VCS and advise on how to best draw on these capabilities and offer community insight.

The EP recognises a great number of effective networks, connections and relationships between government (locally and nationally) and the VCS already exist. These are regularly drawn upon before, during and after emergencies and this document should be used with all of those in mind. The guide aims to strengthen any of those networks and relationships that already exist and create new opportunities for collaboration.

² NCVO Almanac 2024 - <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2024/>

Section 2 – Five key considerations for engaging the VCS

In most emergency incidents (anything from local authority-led responses to whole system civil emergencies) the **five key considerations** below will aid government in quickly drawing on a more complete set of VCS capabilities across national, regional and local levels.

- 1. Actively convene and influence organisations to collaborate.** In an emergency, Central Government should consider the EP (Annex A) and the four types of VCS partner (as listed in Annexes B-E) and how they should facilitate and promote spaces **to work and share openly in partnership and alongside statutory partners**.
- 2. Speak with and commission VCS infrastructure nationally as well as enabling and advocating for similar with infrastructure locally.**

Central Government should draw on the capabilities of infrastructure organisations that have significant capability in:

- Communicating at pace across vast networks and forums
- Sharing and drawing out insight and information to best direct responses
- Influencing and mobilising the work of vast networks of VCS organisations locally

The knowledge and relationships of national, regional and local VCS infrastructure can help to better identify, mobilise and direct local capabilities at scale. Trusted national infrastructure organisations can also support their associated local networks to develop ongoing support for communities and can also provide government with national mechanisms that can channel funding more directly to local organisations.

For example, in response to the racist and Islamophobic riots of August 2024 – NAVCA and Locality worked with their networks and others across government including No 10, the Charity Commission and LRFs. Through coordination meetings, best practice guidance and opening comms channels they gathered and shared insight across thousands of VCS organisations embedded in communities. This informed policy and helped to advise and direct local action to better support and empower communities to meet the challenges they faced.

A first step is to engage with **national networks and membership bodies like NAVCA, ACRE, Locality and UK Community Foundations (Annex B)**.

- 3. Engage VCS organisations who specialise in specific communities.** Central Government should directly engage with **VCS organisations who specialise in specific communities of interest, identity, culture and belief (further info in Annex C)**. These organisations and networks can provide:
 - Specialist insight into how best to engage and work with different communities
 - Specialist services that are designed for and with specific communities

They can help responding agencies and coordinating groups to better understand and deliver support that is tailored to the needs and strengths of communities and can significantly increase the credibility and trust in government-led initiatives.

4. Continue to utilise VCS organisations with specialist skills relating to emergencies.

As they have in the past, Central Government agencies and departments should continue to draw on **VCS organisations that hone specialist capabilities, experience and relationships that centre on emergencies (Annex D)**. Many of these organisations hold long-standing strategic relationships with government departments and agencies that place them at the forefront of the VCS capabilities in emergency response. They are often well-integrated into response plans locally, regionally and nationally, some through contracts and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), others (like the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance) are auxiliaries to government under Royal Charter.

These organisations' capabilities are vast, professional and often regulated and accredited to the same standards as Category 1 and 2 partners. Their capabilities are further enhanced by:

- Skills and experience in command-and-control structures and processes, and JESIP principles, that work in harmony with other VCS orgs like them and with Category 1 and 2 partners
- Long-standing and trusted relationships with statutory agencies and other VCS organisations through joint work in preparedness and planning that better primes their capability/capacity to mobilising quickly and potentially surging
- partnership arrangements and networks that can often draw on the mutual aid and capabilities from other local, regional, national and international partners
- Brands that are often respected and well-known by the general public
- Scope to flexibly deploy their capabilities in other 'non-standard' (in comparison to their business as usual activities) scenarios and to scale operational capacity across a wider population of their organisations

In addition, to the 'typical' emergency specialist VCS organisations listed under Annex D, many VCS organisations hold specialist capabilities that can be (and have been) re-purposed and re-directed to provide **emergency surge support**. **Some examples of national organisations are listed in Annex E** and include capabilities covering:

- General welfare, hardship, housing and legal advice
- Healthcare, both physical and mental
- Food and water distribution including logistics and infrastructure
- Surge volunteer projects to meet targeted and specific needs

5. Remunerate VCS organisations.

Central Government Departments and agencies should ensure adherence to Charity Commission guidance on full-cost recovery and be open to **remunerating VCS organisations whose capabilities are requested in meeting the needs of impacted communities..**

Even VCS organisations that specialise in emergencies under their ‘business as usual’, like those in Annex D, are unlikely to be able to fully cover costs through existing operating models. Particularly when emergencies are highly demanding, protracted, concurrent and impacting across whole-systems. Financial support that enables the VCS to meet needs will represent significant cost savings compared to commercial alternatives or taking options like Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA).

It should be noted that in the event of a national emergency, the National Emergencies Trust may activate a nationwide fundraising appeal that could then distribute grants to local and national VCS organisations supporting people's immediate and longer-term needs.

Section 3 - VCS Capabilities Summary table

Maintaining a complete and detailed list of all available capabilities spanning all VCS organisations is an impossible task and the resulting product would be impractical for Government colleagues to use. The table below provides what the EP believe to be 'good enough' in providing government colleagues with high-level information on capabilities at pace.

The table lists only those VCS organisations who specialise in emergencies but we must re-iterate points made in Section 2 regarding other types of VCS organisation and how their capabilities support in emergencies, namely:

- **VCS Infrastructure organisations** can use their local, regional and national networks to mobilise a wide variety of capabilities and insight that bolsters and informs all capabilities and can include the distribution of funds to the local level and wider reaching communications.
- **VCS Community Specialist Organisations** provide connection to and insight on vulnerable / disproportionately impacted groups that all deployed capabilities should consider and use
- **VCS Surge Capability Organisations** are embedded within communities and deliver highly valuable capabilities which in an emergency should be considered and drawn on

How to use the VCS Capabilities Summary Table

1. Consider the capabilities you need and refer to the seven bullets listed ahead of the table and which outline the variety of activities, assets and experience into the seven different types or groupings of capability
2. Use the Green/Amber/Blank colour coding below to determine which organisations are most likely to deliver the required capabilities.
3. Refer to relevant contact details for these partners under [Appendix D](#), also hyperlinked in dividually within the table



Organisations can **meet the majority of activities** in this capability type

Organisations can **meet some of the activities** in this capability type

Organisations can **meet very little or no activities** in this capability type

What we include in the seven types or groupings of capability.

1. **Generalist and Welfare Support** - Supporting emergency centres (rest centres, humanitarian assistance centres, survivor reception centres) including admin, practical assistance, information logging, food/refreshments, clothing, cash-based assistance, convergent volunteer management
2. **Mental Health Support** - Delivery of (or connecting to) specialist and longer-term welfare, psychosocial and mental health support, group therapy, counselling.
3. **Physical Health Support** - Support to ambulance services, First Aid and medical posts, hospitals/treatment centres and assistance with vaccination
4. **Search & Rescue** - Urban, rural, coastal, remote and water-specific search and rescue
5. **Logistics** - Transport/escort of people impacted and management of resources (acquisition, storage, transportation, clothing donations, surge food distribution)
6. **Communications** - General comms but also in widespread disruption, telephone and radio operators, interpreters and translators, tracing and message services, info cascade
7. **Fundraising and distribution** - Disaster fundraising and distribution, grant giving to individuals and organisations

VCS Emergency Specialist Organisations	Types of Capability						
	General Welfare Support	Mental Health Support	Physical Health Support	Search & Rescue	Logistics	Comms	Fundraising and distribution
4 x 4 Response (UK-wide)							
British Red Cross (UK-wide)							
Cruse Bereavement (England, Wales, NI)							
Islamic Relief (UK-wide)							
National Emergencies Trust (UK-wide)							
Rapid Relief Team (UK-wide)							
Raynet (UK-wide)							
REACT (UK-wide)							
Search & Rescue (UK-wide)							
St John Ambulance (UK-wide)							
The Salvation Army (UK-wide)							
Victim Support (England and Wales)							

Section 4 – Further information on VCS organisations

Organisations across the following five appendices are listed in the same order as they appear in the five considerations of section 2.

Information here is subject to change and will be updated regularly and as stated under the Version Control. Wherever possible organisations have provided information which attempts to mitigate information becoming outdated with people, teams or organisations changing and restructuring.

Annex A – The VCS Emergencies Partnership



The voluntary and community sectors' (VCS) involvement in emergencies is always incredibly varied with organisations from national emergency response specialists to local infrastructure, all playing a vital role throughout preparedness, response and recovery.

In the response phase of an incident, the VCS Emergencies Partnership (EP) can help national, regional and local systems to better harness the VCS by helping coordinate and convene partners with capabilities and to gather and share insight that can best direct capabilities based on the risks and opportunities in communities.

Through a series of events, working groups, resources/tools and engagement with partners, the EP adds value and builds resilience through three pillars of work:

- growing trusted relationships and connections – making friends before you need them but also how to make friends fast
- gathering and sharing actionable insight – using lessons, experience and data from the past to look ahead and plan for what we must do better now and in future
- and building capabilities across our partners – building a collective understanding of where across our networks and systems capabilities lie, how they can be enhanced and better utilised to meet needs

Website: <https://www.vcsep.org.uk/>

Contact details: info@vcsep.org.uk

Annex B – VCS Infrastructure Organisations

VCS Infrastructure Organisations support the VCS and communities to take social action, thrive and be resilient by:

- developing local leadership and advocating for change
- enabling better partnership and collaborative working
- building local capacity and volunteering opportunities.

They include hundreds of local and regional VCS infrastructure organisations such as Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS), Volunteer Centres (VC), Rural Community Councils (RCC) and Community Foundations (CF). Most of these local organisations are supported by one (sometimes more) of the four national infrastructure networks/associations listed below.

These national organisations, their key contacts and their constituent members do not operate 24/7 but can still provide Central Government with important emergency capabilities around engagement, communication, insight, surge volunteers and mechanisms to commission locally.

Engaging these organisations early on in responses and establishing lines of communication from across their networks up and into Government coordinating groups, will establish a means to gather rich insights and quickly support grassroots initiatives.

	National Association of Voluntary and Community Action
Who we are A national network of over 180 local and regional VCS infrastructure organisations covering the vast majority of local authorities in England.	
Website https://www.navca.org.uk/	
Member Details Local NAVCA members are given in the map here³.	

	Action with Communities in Rural England
Who we are A National network of 38 county-based organisations supporting rural communities to flourish.	
Website https://acre.org.uk/	
Member Details 38-county based Rural Community Councils are listed here⁴.	

³ <https://www.navca.org.uk/find-a-navca-member>

⁴ <https://acre.org.uk/the-acre-network/>

	Locality
Who we are A national membership network of 2,000 local community organisations predominantly located in disadvantaged areas, these trusted local charities and community groups are independent, locally focused, and locally led. Locality members often run local buildings and spaces, and deliver services covering employment, health and wellbeing, climate, arts and housing to support their communities. They know their place and their local people, and they can respond quickly to local needs.	
Website https://locality.org.uk/	
Member Details Local community organisations are included in the network map here⁵.	

	UK Community Foundations
Who we are a network of 47 local Community Foundations that support local fundraising efforts and connect national, regional and local funding and grants to local groups, initiatives and projects.	
Website https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/	
Member Details The 47 Local Community Foundations are listed here⁶	

⁵ <https://locality.org.uk/membership/our-members>

⁶ <https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>

Annex C – VCS Community Specialist Organisations

VCS Community Specialist organisations in England are numerous and cover a huge variety of different characteristics, cultures, circumstances, causes and areas of interest across communities and listing all of them here would be impossible and unhelpful.

To help guide government in their engagement we instead give a sample of organisations the EP currently engage with or are aware of. We are always welcome to working with more organisations and would look to include them in future versions of this document if they would like to be listed.

In an emergency, these organisations add value by delivering some capabilities themselves that are tailored to their communities, some act as gateways into other communities or use their experience and knowledge to inform how responses might be adjusted and delivered to deliver better outcomes.

They have a vital role in emergencies as incidents will often disproportionately impact certain communities given underlying inequalities, and so their involvement can help to reduce impact through more person-centred interventions.

We also suggest that engagement with these organisations and communities could be usefully started through national teams and networked partners like the **VCS Emergencies Partnership, Equally Ours, The Equality Trust** and through **local, regional and national VCS infrastructure organisations** (Annex B).

Specialisms	Organisations	Organisation summary
Hunger, hardship and economic deprivation	Citizens' Advice	Citizens' Advice network of independent charities offers confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free.
	FareShare	FareShare is the UK's leading food redistribution charity, harnessing the power of food to change lives.
	Turn2Us	Turn2us is a charity offering information and support to people facing financial insecurity. We help people gain access to benefits and charitable grants.
	Sustain	Sustain campaigns for and delivers innovative food and farming projects in the UK, particularly those that aim to change the mainstream narrative.
Global majority, British minority ethnicity networks	East European Resource Centre	East European Resource Centre is an independent charity that provides information, advice and support services for disadvantaged, isolated and socially excluded Eastern European migrants in the UK
	Ubele	The Ubele Initiative, an African diaspora led, infrastructure plus organisation, empowering Black and Minoritised communities in the UK, to act as catalysts for social and economic change.
	Race Equality Foundation	A national charity tackling racism in UK society and positively transforming the lives of Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities.
	Friends, Families and Travellers	Working to end racism and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.
	Europia	A charity and community development organisation committed to supporting and empowering European nationals and Roma communities.

Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers	Refugee Action	Give expert advice and guidance to those struggling to navigate the asylum system. Help those with refugee status to settle into new homes and communities.
	Reset	Reset empowers volunteers to welcome refugees into communities across the UK.
	British Red Cross	British Red Cross help anyone, anywhere in the UK and around the world, get the support they need if crisis strikes. One pillar of their UK work centres on emergency support for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking.
	Migrant Help	Migrant Help provide independent advice and guidance to assist people seeking asylum in the UK
	Strategic Migration Partnerships	Collaborative bodies led by local or devolved governments that coordinate and provide leadership on migration policy at a regional level.
Homelessness and people experiencing rough sleeping	Homeless Link	A national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England
	Shelter	National housing and homelessness charity that campaigns for a safe, secure, and affordable home for everyone and provide free, confidential housing and homelessness advice and support.
	Crisis	UK-based national charity that helps people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to find homes, develop skills, and rebuild their lives, while also campaigning for systemic change to solve homelessness altogether.
	St Mungo's	UK homelessness charity that provides accommodation, outreach services, and support to people experiencing homelessness.
	The Salvation Army	The Salvation Army provides extensive support for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness through a network of Lifehouses (supported accommodation), outreach services, Day Centres and Housing First schemes across the UK
LGBTQ+	Consortium	Consortium is the largest network of LGBTQ+ groups and organisations in the UK
	LGBT Foundation	A national charity with LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing at the heart of everything they do in empowering LGBTQ+ individuals and their diverse communities to realise their full potential.
	MindOut	MindOut is a mental health service run by and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer people.
Women and Girls	Respect	Respect is the UK charity stopping perpetrators of domestic abuse
	Hibiscus Initiative	Hibiscus enables Black and minoritised migrant women interacting with the immigration and criminal justice systems to rebuild their lives.
	Women's Institute	The National Federation of Women's Institutes (the WI) is the largest women's organisation in the UK. WI aims to give women a voice, act as a force for good in their communities, provide opportunities to share experiences, learn new skills, and make a difference through campaigns.
Children and young people	UK Youth	UK Youth is the UK's leading youth work charity. With an open network of 9,000 youth organisations and partners, UK Youth reach more than four million young people a year through a variety of programmes covering aspects like literacy, social action, mental health and employability.

	National Youth Agency	The National Youth Agency is the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body for youth work in England. Enabling high quality youth work across a range of settings to benefit the health and outcomes of young people and strengthen local communities.
	Barnardo's	National children's charity in the UK that provides a wide range of services to help children, young people, and families, including support for mental health, online safety, parenting, and fostering.
	Action for Children	National charity that protects and supports vulnerable children, young people, and families in the UK through practical and emotional care, early intervention, fostering, residential care, and campaigning for policy changes to improve children's lives.
	YMCA	Supports community health, education, and wellbeing through diverse programs, including fitness, youth work, supported housing for the homeless, and vocational training and employment opportunities.
	Scouts	Develop "skills for life" in children and young people by empowering and enabling participation in diverse, team-based activities that range from outdoor adventures like camping and hiking to creative pursuits like coding and performance art.
	Baby Bank Alliance	Unites and supports over 400 baby banks across the UK, providing essential items like clothing, nappies, and equipment to families experiencing poverty.
Older people	Age UK	A national charity that offers a wide range of support for older people, their families, and carers, including providing free information and advice on benefits, health, housing, and more.
	Centre for Better Ageing	Works to improve the lives of older people by focusing on age-friendly homes, employment, and communities, and by tackling ageism.
Faith and Belief	Faith Action	A UK-based charity and a national network for faith-based and community organizations, working to support and grow their capacity for social action in communities
	Community Security Trust	Protects British Jews from antisemitism and related threats by providing physical security, training, and advice for Jewish buildings and events, assisting victims of hate crimes, and recording antisemitic incidents to produce UK-wide statistics and analysis
	The Salvation Army	Provides practical support and charity services in local communities, such as support for homelessness, modern slavery, and food insecurity, all rooted in their Christian mission to demonstrate faith in action.
	Muslim Charities Forum	Supporting, connecting, and representing British Muslim-led charities by providing resources, training, networking, and advocacy to enhance their effectiveness, transparency, and impact.
	Near Neighbours	A program run by Church Urban Fund that works to build positive relationships in multi-faith communities, especially in areas that have experienced social tension.
	Caritas	A global network of charities rooted in Catholic Social Teaching that provides humanitarian aid, promotes long-term development, and advocates for justice for vulnerable and marginalized people worldwide.
Disability, neurodiversity and long-term	Voluntary Organisations Disability Group	A national body that represents not-for-profit organisations working with disabled people in the UK.

health conditions	Disability Charities Consortium	Brings together leaders from the UK's major disability organizations to influence government policy and improve the lives of disabled people.
	Disability Rights UK	UK Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) that campaigns for a society where disabled people have equal rights and are fully included in all aspects of life. They provide free guidance and advice through helplines, factsheets, and a handbook on issues such as benefits, social care, and health
	RNIB	Provides comprehensive support to blind and partially sighted people, their families, and carers in the UK through its Sight Loss Advice Service, community programs, and technology training
	MENCAP	Supports people with a learning disability by providing personalized support services, developing skills, and offering information and advice to individuals, their families, and carers.
	Carers UK	Supports and advocates for unpaid carers in the UK by providing expert information and advice, connecting carers to a supportive community, and campaigning for policy changes that improve their lives.
	RNID	Supports people who are deaf, have hearing loss, or have tinnitus, working to end discrimination and enable full inclusion in society
	Visionary	National membership organisation for local charities that support people with sight loss. It connects 110 local partners and 28 national partners together so they can share information and best practices and develops their skills and networks.
	DeafPlus UK	Provides specialised services such as advocacy, personal development, and access to assistive technology for people with hearing loss.

Annex D – VCS Emergency Response Organisations

VCS Emergency response organisations dedicate the majority of their staff and volunteer resources towards developing and delivering emergency specific skills, assets and experience.

These organisations regularly appear in Local Resilience Forum capability matrices and many hold MOUs and contracts with Category 1 and 2 partners (and national government) to provide support in emergencies.

They tend to provide prompt emergency response support with many operating 24/7 mobilisation numbers/support lines. Organisations hold some capacity to continue supporting into the recovery phase, but their focus is mostly on the response and preparedness phases of the emergency management cycle.

	4 x 4 Response UK
Who we are 4x4 Response groups across the UK voluntarily provide valuable support to the emergency, statutory and voluntary services. In circumstances where remote locations or uneven terrain are involved, volunteers respond in all weathers, at all times of the day and night, 365 days a year. Volunteers use their own four-wheel drive vehicles or support those who do, by means of publicity, fundraising, administration and control operators.	
Website https://4x4response.uk/index.php/4x4-response-uk-coverage	
 BritishRedCross	British Red Cross
Who we are The British Red Cross mission is to mobilise the power of humanity so that people can prepare for, respond to, and recover from crisis. It has been supporting people in the UK for over 150 years and is part of the global movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The BRC maintains the 24/7 365 crisis response capability across the UK, convening and leading VCS responses. The BRC also delivers support to Refugees and displaced people, and health services across the NHS. The BRC is an auxiliary to the UK Government, authorised to act to support public authorities in the humanitarian field, with a special role in enhancing respect for humanitarian values and human dignity, providing assistance to victims of armed conflict, and to disseminate knowledge of the Fundamental Principles and of International Humanitarian Law through information and education.	
Website http://www.redcross.org.uk	

	Cruse Bereavement Support
Who we are Cruse promotes the well-being of bereaved people to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. The organisation provides emotional support, information, advice, education and training services. Through its network of local services and over 3,500 volunteers, Cruse provides a range of services for adults, children and young people who have been bereaved including telephone, email and face-to-face support.	
Website www.cruse.org.uk	

	Islamic Relief
Who we are Islamic Relief, a leading Muslim charity, is an independent Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) founded in the UK in 1984 working in over 40 countries. By responding to disasters, rebuilding lives and preparing people in case disaster strikes – we save lives before they are lost. In addition to providing disaster and emergency response, we also promote sustainable economic and social development by working with local communities – regardless of race, religion or gender.	
Website https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/	

	National Emergencies Trust
Who we are The National Emergencies Trust is an independent charity set up to raise funds from the general public in the event of UK disasters such as floods, acts of terror and major accidents. When a disaster occurs, the National Emergencies Trust acts fast to launch a nationwide appeal that can meet the immediate and longer-term needs of those impacted. It collaborates with charities and other bodies to raise funds and distribute them fast and fairly. Appeal funds are allocated as financial gifts for those affected and may also be distributed as grants to local and national charitable organisations that can offer support. During its £100million Coronavirus Appeal, the Trust allocated more than 15,000 grants to voluntary sector charities and groups across the UK.	
Website http://www.nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/	



Rapid Relief Team (RRT)

Who we are

Rapid Relief Team (RRT) is a charity with a clear vision to provide care and compassion during times of crisis.

Whether a natural disaster, a crisis, or any situation that places civilians or emergency services in need – their 4,000+ volunteers are on hand to serve high-quality food, coffee, refreshments, and practical support to those affected. RRT's purpose is to bring comfort, support, and a sense of community when it matters most. They recognise that a meal is more than just sustenance; it's an expression of empathy, a comforting RRT smile, and the reassurance that people are not facing their challenges alone.

Website

<https://rrtglobal.org/gb/>



RAYNET

Who we are

Providers of radio telecommunications systems and operators in emergencies, including widespread power and telecoms outages.

Licensed by Ofcom and permitted to provide radio-based emergency communications and interoperability with Category 1 and 2 responders and certain voluntary organisations such as St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross and others using the Business Radio (UK Simple) Licence

Emphasis on local and regional communications but RAYNET have some capability to engineer national and international links on a case-by-case basis.

1,600 members nationwide, organised into approximately 100 local groups, most self-equipped and resourced with local groups holding lightweight masts, antennas and small petrol/electric generators.

Website

www.raynet-uk.net



REACT Disaster Response

Who we are

REACT is a disaster response charity whose chiefly ex-military and ex-emergency services volunteers are very reliable and adaptable, and experienced in operating in complex and difficult circumstances.

Every volunteer (Responder), whether a veteran or civilian, brings resilience, determination and hard-won experience to our humanitarian mission. Responding primarily in the aftermath of natural disasters, REACT will also deploy if our capabilities can safely add value in wider disaster/emergency contexts.

Website

<https://www.re-act.org.uk/>



Search & Rescue (Mountain)

Who we are

Mountain Rescue (MR) teams (all charities) provide a wide range of services available as part of a 24/7 immediate response to an emergency incident. These include search for missing persons and effective search planning of rough or high terrain for other purposes, rope and high access rescue, remote area medical response teams, specialist support vehicles including 4x4 off road, and mobile communications networks.

Organised into regional groups and with Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) as their representative body, MR teams are connected into LRFs where these exist, and several have specialist training and equipment for flood and swift water rescue.

Website

<https://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/>



Search & Rescue (Lowland)

Who we are

Lowland Search & Rescue charities assist emergency services in the search for vulnerable missing people. Across England there are 36 Lowland Rescue teams made up of teams of highly trained staff and volunteers with specialist skills and equipment that make themselves available 24/7, 365 Days a Year.

Website

<https://www.lowlandrescue.org/>



St John Ambulance

Who we are

St John Ambulance provides a wide range of services available on a contracted basis or as part of a 24/7 immediate response to an emergency incident. With a focus on human health, this includes skilled clinical personnel, ambulances, specialist support vehicles, mobile treatment centres and specialist teams such as cycle responders and medical response teams trained to operate in dense crowds.

Website
www.sja.org.uk


The Salvation Army

Who we are

The Salvation Army is a denomination of the Christian Church and has resources of property, trained personnel and purpose-built mobile units which are equipped to be self-sufficient at emergency incident sites. Response to emergencies includes the following:

- Providing on site refreshments and emotional support to responders at incident sites
- Providing support to individuals, survivors and family members at various types of emergency centre (e.g. rest centre, humanitarian assistance centres, Mortuary Viewing Areas)
- 600 well equipped Salvation Army community buildings available across the UK that can act as small to large scale emergency centres
- Acting as a conduit for relevant faith support.

Website
<http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk>


Victim Support

Who we are

Victim Support work towards a world where people affected by crime or traumatic events get the support they need and the respect they deserve. They ensure people feel safer and find the strength to cope and recover from terrorist attacks or large-scale criminal incidents with free, confidential and tailored immediate and long term support to individual needs.

Website
<http://www.victimsupport.org.uk>

Annex E – VCS Surge Capability Organisations

VCS Emergency Surge Capability Organisations are organisations and networks who in significant, protracted or whole system civil emergencies hold various capabilities that might be drawn upon in a response. These organisations do not respond as those in Annex D do, often with immediate 24/7 capabilities, so we are giving Strategic contacts that are likely to operate in standard business hours.

These organisations often hold significant capabilities around building social capital including welfare advice, housing, hardship, employment and community connection that are likely to be secondary issues following the major impact of a crisis but which often require significant effort to address through recovery and resilience (re)building.

	Business in the Community
Who we are Business in the Community is the UK's largest and most influential responsible business network dedicated to building a fairer and greener world together, supported by His Majesty the King for over 40 years. We inspire, engage and challenge purposeful leaders to take practical action to mobilise their collective strength as a force for good in society.	
Website https://www.bitc.org.uk/	
	Citizens Advice
Who we are The Citizens Advice service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice from nearly 3,400 locations, and by influencing policymakers. Citizens Advice is a network of local Citizens Advice charities that are independent and registered charities in their own right. Across the network they are reliant on over 21,000 volunteers and need to raise funds to provide their vital services. The majority of advisers are trained volunteers, helping people to resolve nearly 5.3 million problems every year. All Local Citizens Advice in England & Wales are members of Citizens Advice, the national charity which sets standards for advice and equal opportunities and supports with an information system, training and other services. Citizens Advice also co-ordinates social policy, media, publicity and parliamentary work and maintains an information and advice website.	
Website	

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/nearby/> for a link to the local Bureau.



FareShare

Who we are

FareShare is the UK's national network of charitable food redistributors, made up of 18 independent organisations. Together, we take good quality surplus food from right across the food industry and get it to nearly 8,000 frontline charities and community groups. The food we redistribute is nutritious and good to eat. It reaches charities across the UK, including school breakfast clubs, older people's lunch clubs, homeless shelters, and community cafes. Every week we provide enough food to create almost a million meals for vulnerable people. FareShare and its regional partners have 35 warehouses supporting 8,500 charities across the UK and can both store food and ambient goods and distribute to all post codes with logistics capability to any post code in the UK in an emergency.

Website

<https://www.fareshare.org.uk/>



In-Kind Direct

Who we are

We are a UK charity distributing the products every person, home and local organisation needs, including toiletries, period products, cleaning supplies, clothing, bedding, toys and games. Donated by quality brands and companies we reach over 500,000 people each week through a network of over 6,500 charitable organisations. As well as meeting immediate need in communities, we use our research and partnerships to tackle the root causes of too many people going without. Founded in 1996 by HM King Charles III, we are conscious of our environmental impact. With a trusted national logistics model, we find a home for donated products, preventing waste and enabling more communities to thrive.

Website

<https://www.inkinddirect.org/>



Mind

Who we are

Operate across England and Wales by making mental health something people talk about every day. They speak out against unfair treatment in healthcare, at work, and in the law - things that make life harder for people with mental health problems.

They provide support through our advice, information, and local services and bring people and communities together - people who care about mental health and want to make a difference.

Website

<https://www.mind.org.uk>

	Rotary (Great Britain & Ireland)
Who we are Rotary is one of the world's leading membership and humanitarian service organisations, with 1.2 million members globally which have championed good causes for over 100 years. Through Rotary membership individuals volunteer on community and humanitarian projects which make a difference locally, nationally and globally. Our members are determined to tackle the world's biggest issues, including promoting peace, fighting disease, supporting education and so much more. Rotary was formed as a networking organisation and continues to provide the opportunity to expand personal and professional circles, meet new people and make lasting friendships, all while having fun and making a difference.	
Website www.rotarygbi.org	

	Royal Voluntary Service
Who we are Royal Voluntary Service is one of Britain's largest volunteering organisations. The charity has a track record of mobilising at scale citizens to support the nation; with the most recent being the mobilisation of 1 million volunteers to support the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic. Today the charity has over 60,000+ volunteers that regularly support the NHS, social care, and wider community. The charity also has a 'reserve' of volunteers who can be deployed to support the nation at times of crisis.	
Website https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/	



Volunteering Matters

Who we are

By working with volunteers and partners in communities across the UK, our volunteering programmes turn local knowledge into action and progress. At Volunteering Matters we bring people together to overcome some of society's most complex issues through the power of volunteering. This builds stronger communities and enables everyone to thrive.

We work with local partners, turning local knowledge and energy into action and progress. And because we are a national charity, we do this at scale.

Website

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/>