

AUDLEM PUBLIC HALL

(Registered Charity 519458)

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

Approved by the Management Committee on 15th February 2017
This policy is to be reviewed at the first Management Meeting after every AGM
or earlier if necessary

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Being able to handle a crisis is a normal part of running an establishment. However, some incidents are so critical and overwhelming that they are capable of causing acute and prolonged distress to visitors, young persons and parents.
- 1.2 This Guidance Note highlights the response Audlem Public Hall Management Committee may have to consider and follow.

2 DEFINITION OF A MAJOR EMERGENCY / INCIDENT

- 2.1 A major emergency / critical incident is defined as a serious disruption to life which causes or threatens one or more of the following:
 - Serious injury or death
 - Incidents charged with profound emotion
 - Incidents attracting unusual attention from the news media
 - Incidents involving serious threat
 - Suicides of young persons
 - Other incidents with very unusual circumstances which produce a high level of emotional reaction.
- 2.2 Note that such an emergency may be declared elsewhere in the nearby locality and that Audlem Public Hall is designated as the Emergency Evacuation Centre by Cheshire East Council and the civil authorities. It is also the point of refuge following the evacuation of any nearby care homes.

3 WHAT CAN AUDLEM PUBLIC HALL DO TO PREPARE?

- 3.1 It is evident that an establishment which has anticipated a major emergency, and laid plans for managing a response, is likely to handle the actual event more effectively and confidently.
- 3.2 We cannot plan for every eventuality, however, if it is known who will assume key roles, have checklists and procedures in place etc., then our response to a crisis will be more assured.

3.3 The following process has been agreed:

In the event of an emergency in Audlem Public Hall

- the Evacuation Procedure is activated. A copy of this Procedure is displayed on the main notice board in the entrance to the Hall and is referred to in the Booking Policy and Reservation Form.
- Once the emergency is identified and the building evacuated then as many officials of the Management Committee as possible are to be informed – the list of Management Committee Members and contact numbers is displayed on the main notice board in the entrance to the Hall. This list will also be available via the village website (www.audlem.org)

In the event of an external emergency where the Hall is to be used as an Emergency Evacuation Centre

- Contact numbers of Management Committee Members and key holders are to be advised to Cheshire East Council's "Gold Control", Cheshire Police and the two nursing care homes in the area (Corbrook Park and Audlem Country Nursing Home). This list is to be kept up to date. A copy of Cheshire East Council's Rest Centre Plan is attached to this document.
- Committee Members are required, where possible, to attend at the Hall and liaise with the appropriate emergency services and civil authorities
- They are to ensure that the Hall is accessible, well lit and heating provided if required. The kitchen should be also made available to provide hot and cold water and cooking facilities if required.
- Ensure basic information, contact lists, communication, procedures etc. are in place, known to all Committee Members and kept up to date.

4 ACTION REQUIRED

- 4.1 The type and scale of response will be determined by the kind of emergency or incident that has occurred.
- 4.2 Various guidance notes can be found in the Health and Safety policies that highlight the responses and actions required for the different types of emergency i.e. 'Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH)', 'Bomb Threats and Dealing with Suspect Packages' and 'Fire Safety'.
- 4.3 An action plan would need to be developed in conjunction with the emergency services and civil authorities to be followed in the event of an emergency / incident.
- 4.4 The actual procedures necessary will depend on the incident, in terms of scale and impact. This may include procedures to:
 - Obtain and collate information about what has happened.
 - Gather and brief the emergency services and civil authorities
 - Allocate responsibility for liaising with the relevant emergency services.
 - Contact legal services if there is an issue of liability or negligence.
 - Contact Cheshire East Council Health and Safety team if the incident involves serious injury or death.
 - Make arrangements for informing parents. Ensure letters or statements are checked prior to issue.
 - Inform young persons, with particular care being taken to protect and support them.
 - Encourage people involved to talk before they go home and leave contact details
 - Be ready to deal with the media immediately and in the longer term.

5 SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO ESTABLISHMENTS

- 5.1 Emergencies test the spirit, organisation and leadership of establishments and their communities in extreme ways.
- 5.2 Experience indicates that a establishment at the centre of a critical incident will usually need external support from the Local Authority and/or other agencies to provide establishments with practical support and to provide people with expertise to offer emotional support, debriefing and, exceptionally, counselling.
- 5.3 It is best if the establishment itself seeks and manages any external help, but this may not always be possible. The priority objective, shared between the establishment and Local Authority, must be to serve the best interests of the community in coping with the incident individually and collectively.
- 5.4 The Local Authority can make available some specific types of support to establishments in the first hours, days and weeks following an emergency/critical incident.
 - Additional or alternative accommodation.
 - Telephone contacts for support and advice.
 - Debriefing and support for teachers and other staff.
 - Debriefing sessions for young persons.
 - Longer term support.
 - Leaflet to parents.
 - Support for Headteacher/Managers and Deputies.

6 SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

- 6.1 The following documents will assist establishments in developing their own arrangements for dealing with emergencies/critical incidents.
 - 'Managing the response to critical incidents in establishments' booklet
 - Accidents – Reporting and Investigation Guidance Note
 - Bomb Threats and dealing with Suspect Packages Guidance Note
 - Fire Safety Guidance Note
 - Premises Security Issues Guidance Note

7 EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This document shall be monitored, and reviewed annually (or more frequently as necessary) to evaluate its effectiveness. The review will ensure that the documents comply with statutory requirements and the charity's policy. After this review, the document's issue and next review dates will be amended.

Rest Centre Plan

Introduction

Major emergencies both natural and man-made can strike anywhere at any time. When this happens Cheshire's emergency services will attend to the immediate effects. They will need the help of the local authorities and voluntary organisations to look after members of the public displaced by the emergency.

When an evacuation occurs, the emergency services will shelter the public using any suitable building as a Reception Centre. They will expect the local authorities to move these evacuees to a designated Rest Centre and once there, to take the lead in caring for them.

Co-ordination

In a major incident many resources are needed, staff being the most important. Emergency services personnel, local authority and voluntary agency staff may be needed at the incident scene and at emergency centres elsewhere. Liaison is needed to ensure that their activities achieve the common good.

Evacuation

For their own safety, people may need to be moved out of an affected area (a release of gas may threaten the residents of a housing estate; a transport accident will result in passengers to look after).

Survivor Reception Centres

In these cases any suitable building nearby may be used as a shelter for these people (The Survivor Reception Centre). Police will co-ordinate any evacuation, if necessary assisted by the Fire Service. They will also choose a location near the incident as a rendezvous point. Here they will jointly decide how best to deal with the immediate effects of the incident.

Having placed those affected in the reception centre (more than one of these may be required), the emergency services will now need help from other agencies.

East Cheshire Council will take the lead role in providing care for those who have had to be evacuated. This plan, "The Cheshire Local Authorities Rest Centre Plan",

describes how this is to be achieved. We do not intend to provide extensive services to the public at the Reception Centres; rather we will move people to a designated Rest Centre which has better facilities.

Rest Centres

Reception Centres are unlikely to have facilities suitable for the needs of large numbers of people or for an extended (24hr) stay. In East Cheshire we have designated certain buildings as Rest Centres. These range in size from small village halls to large leisure centres and secondary schools. They may be owned by East Cheshire Council or by private organisations.

Civil Contingencies Act

The introduction of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 placed certain additional responsibilities on Local Authorities to prepare and respond to emergencies and work closely with the emergency services and voluntary organisations in doing so.

The Act deals with Emergency Preparedness and establishes a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level.

The Act divides local responders into two categories, imposing a different set of duties on each.

Category 1 Responders are those organisations at the core of the response to most emergencies (e.g. emergency services, local authorities, NHS bodies). Category 1 responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties.

They will be required to:

- Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
- Put in place emergency plans;
- Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements;
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and

- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (Local Authorities only).

Category 2 Responders are the Health and Safety Executive, transport, utility companies and the voluntary sector organisations. These "co-operating bodies" are less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work but will be heavily involved in incidents that affect their sector.

Category 2 responders have a lesser set of duties - co-operating and sharing relevant information with other Category 1 and 2 responders.

Category 1 and 2 organisations will come together to form 'Local Resilience Forums' (based on police areas) which will help co-ordination and co-operation between responders at the local level.

Local Resilience Forums (LRF) have already been set up and are working effectively to address all issues outlined above.