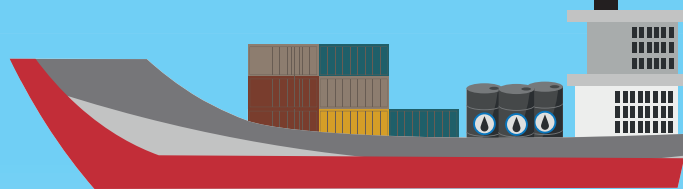


NORTHERN IRELAND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS GROUP

RESILIENCE STRATEGY 2025-2030



CIVIL CONTINGENCIES

RESILIENCE

Be Ready for Emergencies

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1.0 FOREWORD

The period 2020-2025 was particularly busy, with the commencement of the inaugural strategy coinciding with the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, which sadly impacted so many lives in Northern Ireland and around the world.

The agility embedded in the first strategy assisted partners at the local level to pivot their services in a co-ordinated manner as the pandemic progressed. Also, the response to multiple emergencies, including gorse fires, transport accidents, cyber incidents, severe weather and flooding events, support to asylum seekers and refugees, industrial action and animal health have all informed the review of our strategic priorities going forward into 2025-2030.

There has been significant progress in collaborative working arrangements at the local level in Northern Ireland since 2020. We are grateful to all partners involved for their commitment, dedication and energy. In 2022, the Resilience Team conducted a mid-point review to assess progress against the strategic priorities to ensure focus continued on the objectives as agreed within the first strategy.

Therefore, we welcome the development of the second Strategy at a local multi-agency level across the Northern Ireland civil contingencies arrangements. Our overarching objective remains to keep people safe! However, as always, we must all strive for continuous improvement, learning the lessons identified from previous incidents in Northern Ireland and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Donaldson'.

Chief Superintendent Sam Donaldson
Police Service of Northern Ireland
Joint Chair of the Northern Ireland
Emergency Preparedness Group

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison McCullagh'.

Alison McCullagh | Chief Executive
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Joint Chair of the Northern Ireland
Emergency Preparedness Group



2.0 INTRODUCTION

As emergencies increase in both frequency and diversity, the need for co-ordinated responses to emergency management is more important than ever. Growing risk requires an agile response, with emergency services and other responder organisations co-operating and adapting to deliver on the overarching aim of civil contingencies and risk management: to protect and serve all members of our communities, especially those who are most vulnerable.

As our communities become increasingly diverse, these risks grow in complexity and the need for effective co-ordination of resources is more important than ever. This will mean building on existing relationships, forging new connections and working across sectors as efforts are invested in adopting a whole of society approach to civil contingencies.

The Northern Ireland Emergency Preparedness Group's Resilience Strategy 2025 - 2030 will be delivered by the Local Resilience Team, building on the work and collaboration achieved under its previous strategy and drawing on the experience and collaboration of emergency preparedness partners at both local and regional level. It also recognises the requirement to reflect evolving needs and challenges and their impact on an increasingly diverse community by supporting a people centred approach to emergency planning and response.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The strategy recognises the importance of co-ordinating a multi-agency response to emergencies in addition to complying with legislative requirements. It sets out the direction for local resilience across Northern Ireland, aligning with the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework “*Building Resilience Together*” (revised 2023) which outlines and informs the structures and processes for managing civil emergencies and crises in Northern Ireland, setting out arrangements for effective emergency response. While not a legislative document, it provides regional cohesion and an overall framework for civil contingencies. This together with the development of the *Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Risk Register* and the *Civil Contingencies Learning and Development Strategy* since 2022 has underpinned the ongoing work at a local level across Northern Ireland.

The adoption of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) by all Northern Ireland partners has also contributed to our revised vision for local level arrangements. All multi-agency planning arrangements have embedded these principles which form the basis of joint working.

The strategy can also make a direct contribution to the 2024 – 2027 Programme for Government, Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most, which identifies Safer Communities as an immediate priority. Reflective of an ever changing environment, and associated risks, the strategic priorities it has set out acknowledge the need for agility, the role local communities can play in emergency preparedness and the value in working with and learning from other regions.

The Local Resilience Team is responsible for the co-ordination of multi-agency planning and response on a local level to promote and support resilience in Northern Ireland through the 2025 – 2030 NIEPG Resilience Strategy which will drive its work over the next five years. The Local Resilience Team has responsibility for management of the multi-agency Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs) in Northern Ireland and their associated sub regional working groups.

The team also project manage various regional workstreams. This strategy has been informed by consultation with partner agencies through the mechanism of the three sub regional EPGs and the Northern Ireland EPG. These structures have become integral to the local level preparedness, response and recovery during the course of the previous strategy.

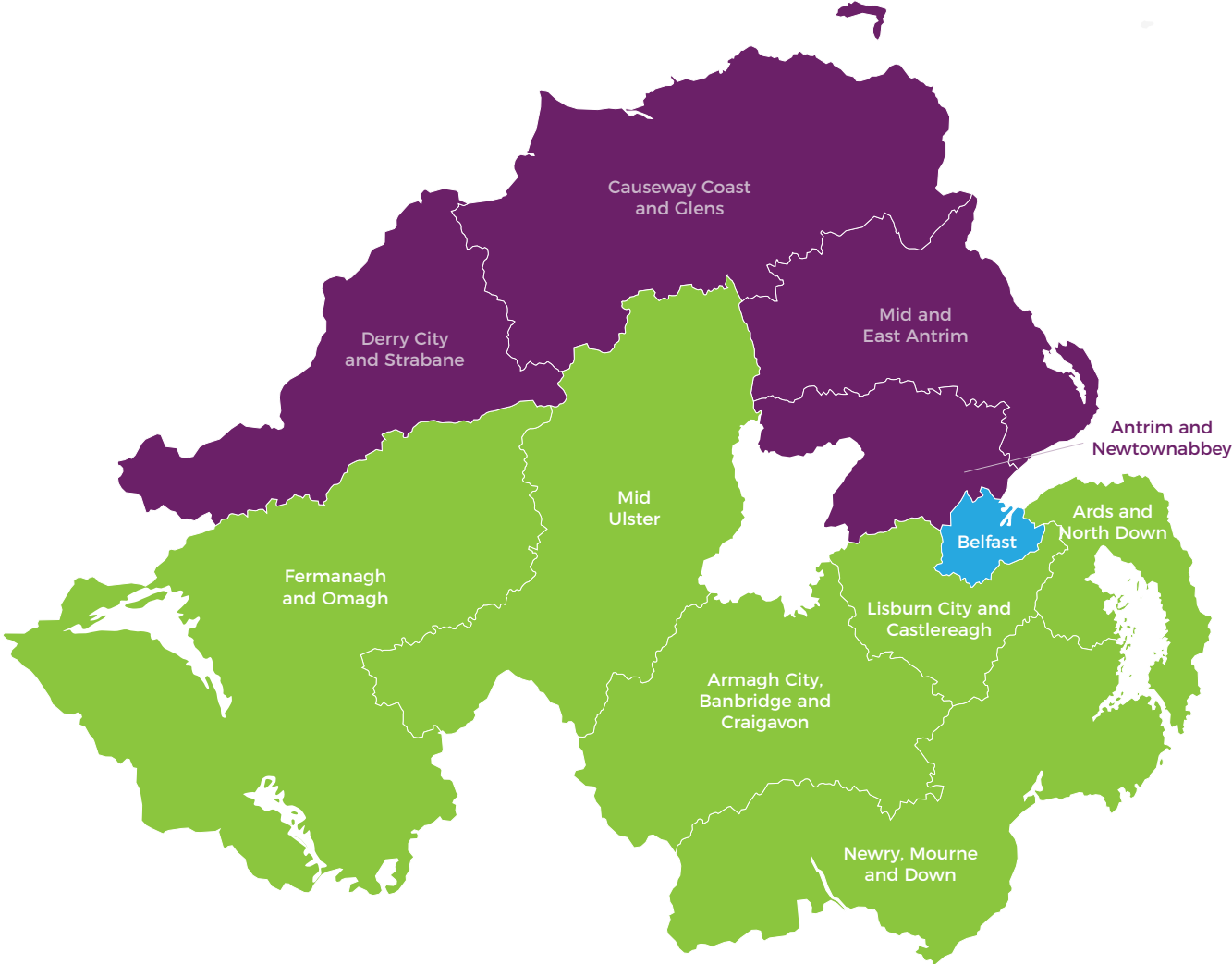
4.0 LOCAL LEVEL MULTI-AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS - EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GROUPS

There are three Emergency Preparedness Group areas (Belfast, Northern and Southern) in Northern Ireland. The geographical areas of these groupings are illustrated in Figure 1. Each Emergency Preparedness Group is jointly chaired by a Senior Police Commander and Local Government Chief Executive/Senior Officer. The purpose of each Emergency Preparedness Group is to ensure an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi-agency response to emergencies, which may have a significant impact on the local community.

Representation on these Groups broadly includes senior officers from all the emergency services, health trusts, councils, government departments, Education Authority, NI Housing Executive, NI Environment Agency, Met Office, Utilities Organisations, Voluntary Sector, Ministry of Defence, Airports, Ports, Translink and other relevant organisations essential to ensure an integrated approach to emergency management. This composition ensures a robust and co-ordinated response to emergency management, combining a wealth of knowledge, skills and resources.

The planning which is facilitated by the Emergency Preparedness Groups enables partners to put arrangements in place to respond to the wide range of emergencies with potential to impact their communities.

Figure 1: Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) areas in Northern Ireland



Southern Emergency Preparedness Group

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Mid Ulster District Council
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council

Northern Emergency Preparedness Group

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Derry City and Strabane District Council

Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group

- Belfast City Council

5.0 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CIVIL CONTINGENCIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Civil Contingencies Group (NI) is the principal strategic preparedness body for the public sector in Northern Ireland. The group is chaired by the Deputy Secretary responsible for Civil Contingencies within The Executive Office and comprises senior level membership for key civil contingencies stakeholders across all departments, emergency response organisations and local government.

The Executive Office's Civil Contingencies Division (CCD) provide the secretariat function for the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) and also facilitates the effective delivery of the NI Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA), which includes supporting CCG (Officials/Ministers) in its Executive level emergency decision making role when responding to emergencies.

The Northern Ireland Emergency Preparedness Group, a subgroup of CCG (NI) oversees the work of the EPGs and acts as a conduit to escalate issues to the strategic level. There are several other regional groupings that report to NIEPG which include:

- Cross Border Emergency Management Group
- Regional Community Resilience Group
- Northern Ireland Utilities and Telecoms Group
- Regional Multi-agency Business Continuity Management Group
- Public information and Media Group

The funding for the management and resourcing of this function is delivered via the Department for Communities, Local Government and Housing Regulation Division.

From a local government perspective, an Executive Steering Group, consisting of representation from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the local government EPG Chairs and the Department for Communities is in place to provide strategic oversight for this function.

The 2020 - 2025 Local Resilience Strategy embedded the work of the NIEPG into civil contingencies structures in Northern Ireland, acting as a co-ordination point for the sharing of information and learning across regional partners through EPGs. The strategy also acted as a platform to promote resilience in the wider community, creating the conditions for a whole of society approach which the 2025 - 2030 strategy will embrace. Among its key achievements were:

- Enabling a multi-agency approach across preparedness, response and recovery activities
- Establishing, developing and building the Be Ready NI Campaign for Preparedness Month #BeReadyNI
- Building resilience capacity through production of training, interactive learning resources and exercising on an ongoing basis
- Developing the Cross Border Emergency Management Operational Plan 2022-2025
- Development of regional multi-agency response arrangements
- Beginning to strengthen links with the voluntary and community sector

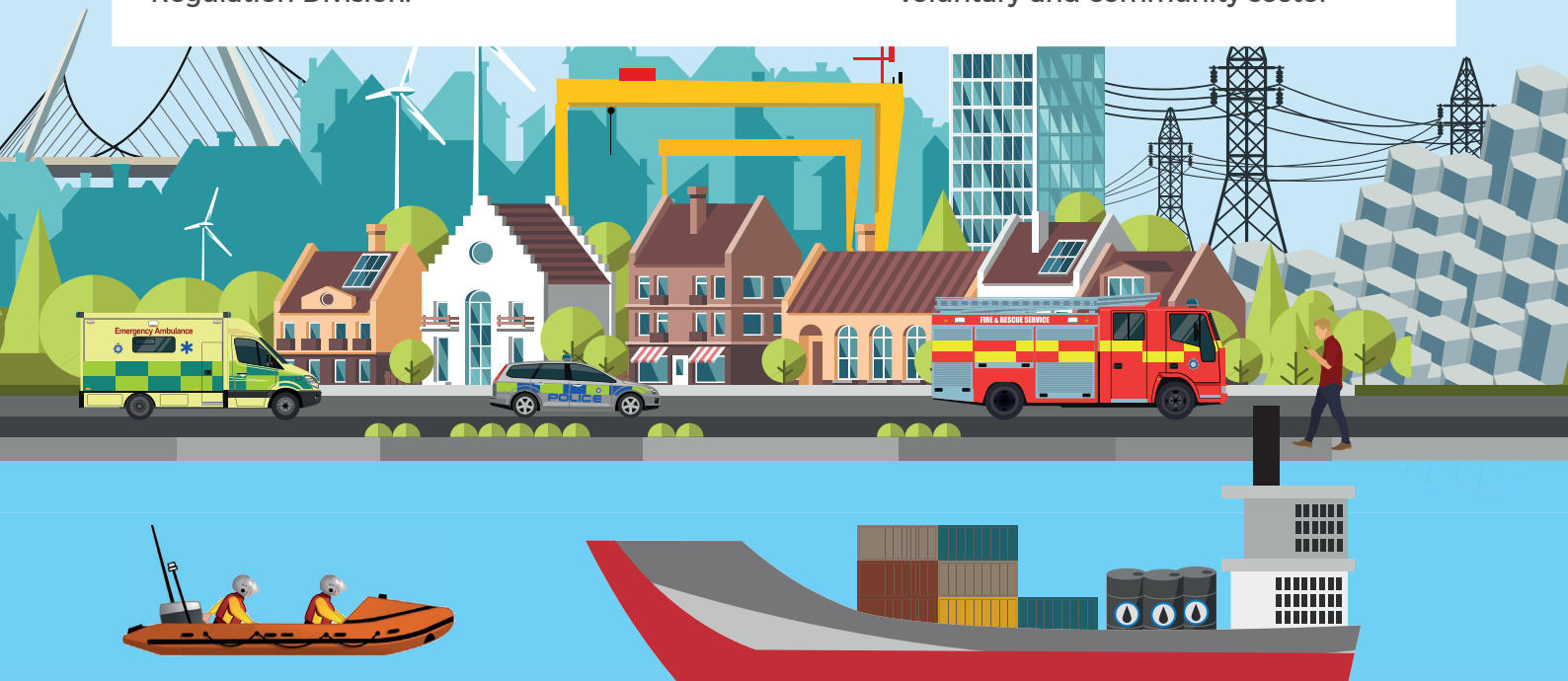
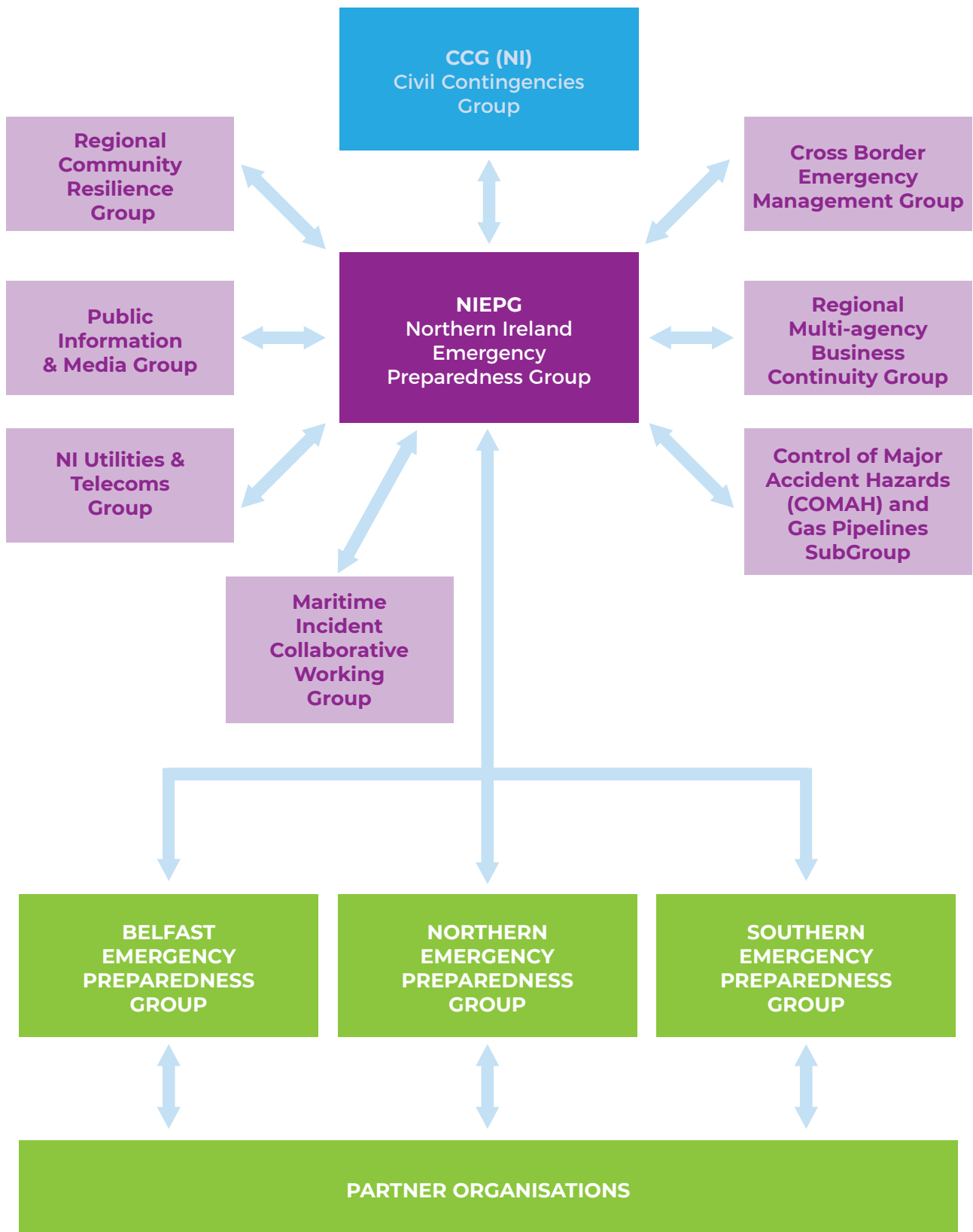


Figure 2: Governance Arrangements for Civil Contingencies in Northern Ireland



6.0 VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The 2025 – 2030 NIEPG Resilience Strategy is underpinned by a series of strategic priorities informed by consultation with stakeholder organisations involved in emergency management preparedness, response and recovery.

These priorities will direct the focus, energy and effort of the Northern Ireland Emergency Preparedness Group (NIEPG) over the next five years in pursuit of its vision and core mission, namely:

OUR VISION:

“The NIEPG Resilience Strategy 2025 – 2030 will provide the delivery mechanism for local resilience in NI, building on existing relationships to further co-operation and ensure the region is best prepared to deal with potential risks and respond to emergency situations”

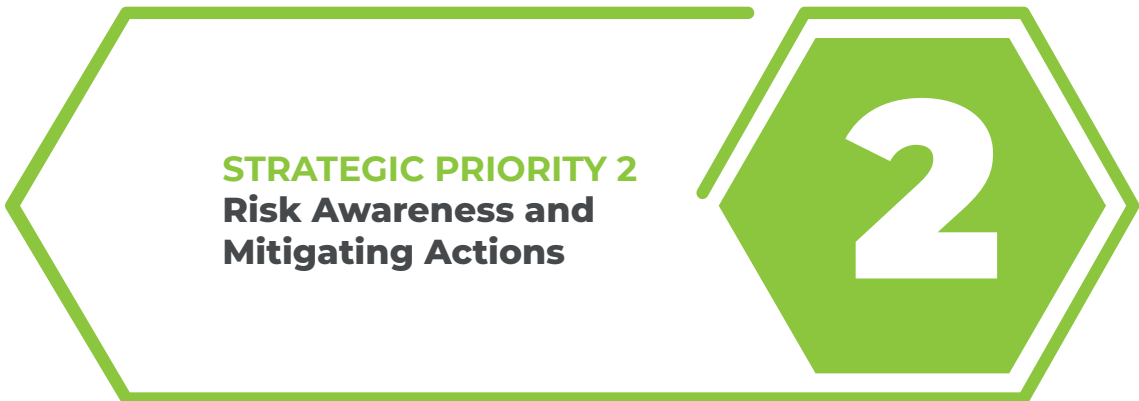
OUR MISSION:

“To build a resilient Northern Ireland through co-ordinated emergency planning and management which puts people and communities at the centre of a civil contingencies response”

To achieve our mission, we have identified the following strategic priorities:



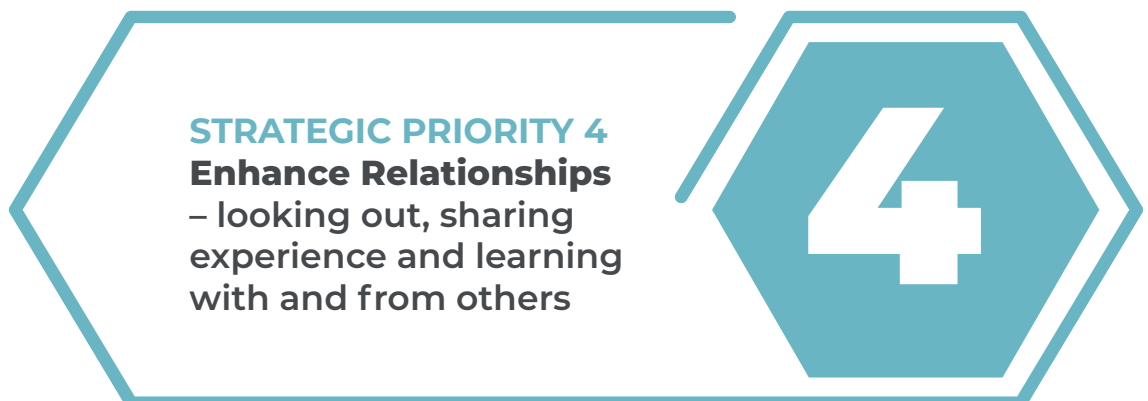
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1
Be Ready - promoting a 'whole of society' resilience approach



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2
Risk Awareness and Mitigating Actions



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3
Governance – strengthening our organisational capacity and securing our structures

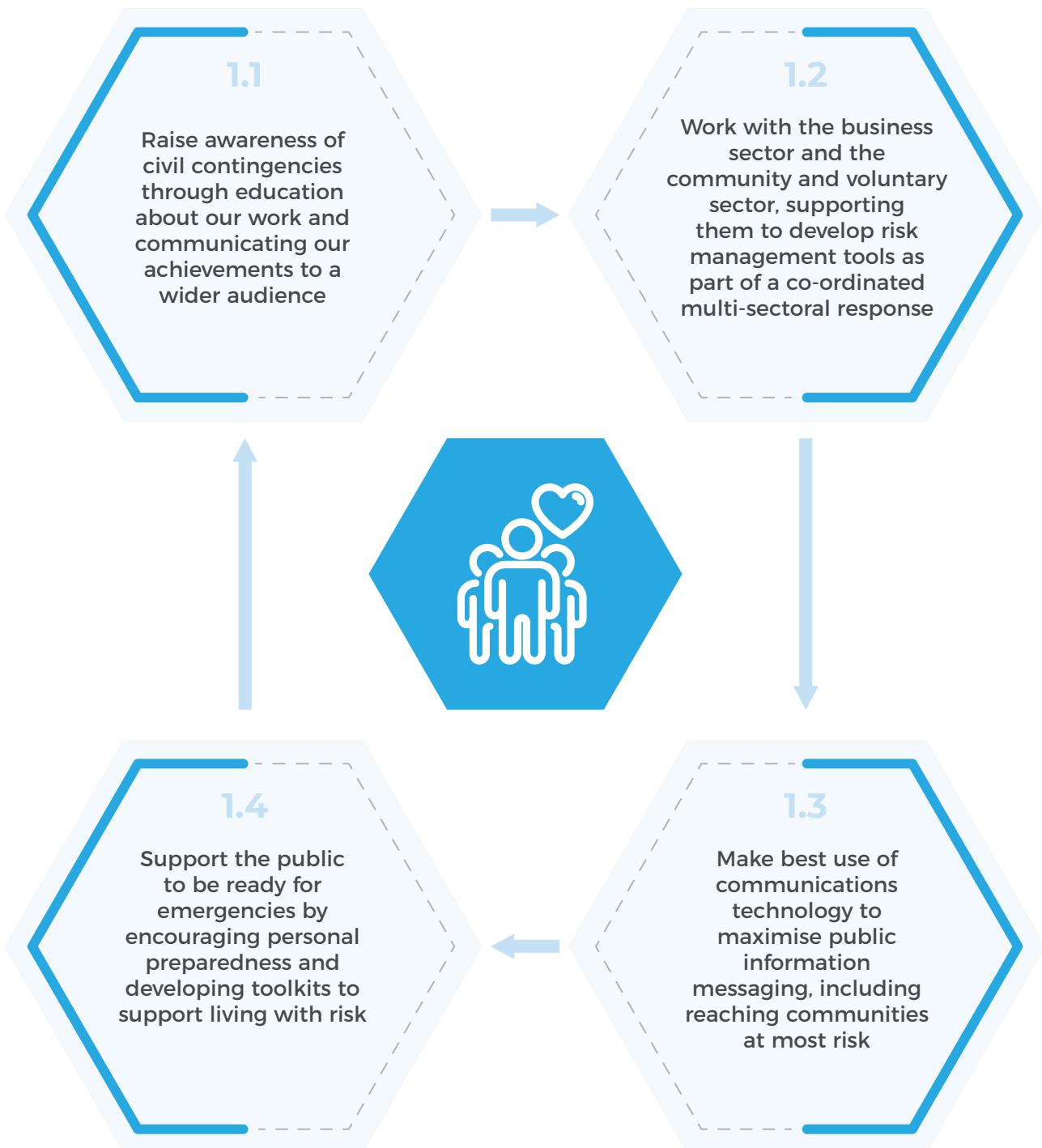


STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4
Enhance Relationships
– looking out, sharing experience and learning with and from others

1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Be Ready - promoting a 'whole of society' resilience approach



2

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 Risk Awareness and Mitigating Actions



3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Governance – strengthening our organisational capacity and securing our structures



4

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Enhance Relationships – looking out, sharing experience and learning with and from others



7.0 THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ENVIRONMENT

Implementation of the Resilience Strategy lies with the Northern Ireland Emergency Preparedness Group (NIEPG) which recognises the constraints and challenges which can impact on its delivery:

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES
Growing incidence of misinformation and disinformation, potentially leading to social unrest
Uncertainty over multi year funding arrangements impacts our ability to provide and sustain an effective service
The growing and evolving nature of risks, including threats to human and animal health, population displacement and cyber attacks
Climate change and an increase in severe weather events
Recognising our limitations and managing expectations within the resources available
Building societal resilience depends on clear, effective and timely communication and commitment from all sectors, while recognising the resource pressures faced by all

Strategic Enablers and Outcomes

The NIEPG Resilience Strategy will depend on key enablers being in place to enable NIEPG to realise its strategic vision and act on the priorities identified to ensure that Northern Ireland is best placed to prepare for and respond to both existing and emerging risks. The Enablers support the achievement of outcomes which capture the impact of the strategy over its five-year timeframe:

ENABLER	OUTCOME
Collective Action	A “whole of society” approach to resilience is embraced, working in collaboration with partners and putting people at the centre of civil contingencies.
Developing Relationships	By sharing experiences and learning with other regions, we can look outwards while retaining our people focus.
Legislative Authority	Civil contingencies in Northern Ireland benefits from a legislative framework which supports a whole of society approach.
Investing in Civil Contingencies	The Resilience Strategy is fully resourced in order to deliver on its vision and strategic priorities.
Building Capacity	NIEPG is supported to deliver on its priorities through a commitment to ongoing professional development and multi-agency training, enhancing capacity to strengthen response and preparedness.
Systems and Structures	Effective structures with clear communication and consistency in approach are in place to build a resilient Northern Ireland.
Evaluation and Review	NIEPG is proactive in evaluation of its work and impact, applying learning and experience to overcome the challenges presented by reactive environments.

8.0 GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Local Resilience Team is responsible for implementing the strategy, led by its Regional Officer. The Local Resilience Team works closely with NIEPG, the three sub regional EPGs and other multi-agency working groups to support collaboration, identify learning and share best practice. This ensures co-operation and clear lines of communication at regional level which can inform local delivery.

Membership of the Northern Ireland Emergency Preparedness Group





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