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The National Briefing on Societal Resilience [UK+]



What is 'The National Briefing on Societal Resilience [UK+]'

The National Briefing on Societal Resilience [UK+] is produced by Alliance Manchester Business School on behalf of [The National Consortium for Societal Resilience \[UK+\]](#). The briefing speaks to practitioners who work to enhance the resilience of society, including government, emergency planners, resilience officers, the voluntary sector, business, and communities. The briefing shares knowledge and good

practice on operationalising societal resilience, lessons from ongoing design and implementation work on the NCSR+ strategy to create Local Resilience Capability, and promotes events relevant to societal resilience. NCSR+ also run a [series of webinars](#) that explore how societal resilience is developed and delivered, register for upcoming and watch previous:

Register: [25/05/2023](#)

Strengthening local resilience; This webinar will share insights from the journey through the COVID-19 pandemic years and ask what did we learn about the future of resilience.

<https://tinyurl.com/3zfjrasr>

Watch: [14/03/2023](#)

Sellafield Community Support Cell; Discusses the societal resilience work carried out by the Sellafield Community Support Cell established during COVID-19.

<https://tinyurl.com/mrxkzb83>

Watch: [16/02/2023](#)

North Yorkshire; Shares insights and lessons on societal resilience work, particularly in relation to the 'Ready for Anything' volunteer community resilience project.

<https://tinyurl.com/25vwrz4p>

Watch: [12/01/2022](#)


Fermanagh; Presents the societal resilience building activities being undertaken in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

<https://tinyurl.com/jj2dx9mz>

Visit our webpage [National Consortium for Societal Resilience \[UK+\]](#)

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 **Previous briefings.** If this is the first briefing you have received and you'd like to access more, they can be found [here](#).

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The National Conference on Societal Resilience: NCSR+ strategy to create a Local Resilience Capability

The [National Consortium for Societal Resilience \[UK+\]](#) (NCSR+) ran its first national conference at Alliance Manchester Business School (University of Manchester, UK), focussed on enhancing societal resilience as a strategic endeavour. The conference welcomed over 140 delegates from local resilience partnerships joined by senior government representatives and partners from policy and practice from across the UK. Across two inspiring days of networking, we heard perspectives from a range of people on the challenges and approaches to enhancing the resilience of society to disruption. Discussions explored the foundations of societal resilience, how the national ambition can be translated locally, the importance of strategic actors working in partnership, and opportunities to galvanise further collaboration and action. The conference demonstrated growing consensus and enthusiasm among local government partners for collaborative working to enhance societal resilience.

This briefing sets out the NCSR+ strategy to create Local Resilience Capability – the system that local resilience partnerships can create to operationalise societal resilience. The briefing concludes with seven steps to create Local Resilience Capability that can support local resilience partnerships as they work to translate this national ambition into local action. The NCSR+ is well placed to support local resilience partnerships as they pursue strategic societal resilience.

Some highlights from the conference include:

- **Opening up resilience** by expanding the focus of local resilience partnerships and how we approach resilience with a welcome shift from response to broader and more strategic thinking. For example, integrating the whole system, building the foundations of resilience from inside communities, involving partners strategically and from an earlier stage, and sustaining those relationships
- **Central to enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable in society will be bringing everyone up to the same level in this endeavour** and helping resilience partnerships to integrate local resilience capabilities so that individuals, community groups, organisations, and networks can all play a meaningful part in building the resilience of society
- **Elevating the conversation to the strategic level**, recognising the important first step of aligning people and politics behind a local and strategic endeavour, and enhancing coherence between national and sub-national levels to ensure that direction taken beyond the scale of local resilience partnerships can be translated locally
- **Prioritising 'intelligent resilience'** by increasing local capability and capacity and targeting effort to not only vulnerable people and at-risk places but also to vulnerable parts of the system or capabilities that surround the target group/place. For example, the continuity of services and businesses that humanitarian capabilities rely on
- **Moving from rhetoric to reality** through building the ecosystem required to deliver. The NCSR+ is strengthening to influence practice, galvanise resilience partnerships, and provide thought leadership. Now it's about narrowing this big

ambition down to a very strategic piece of work that turns this groundswell of goodwill and motivation into action that is meaningful on the ground and can deliver value to society

- **Making communities a welcome and useful resource** by strengthening communities and their agency, challenging assumptions, and enhancing how we listen to and work with communities

The conference provided a significant opportunity for NCSR+ to listen and reflect on the priorities, ambitions, and challenges ahead as local resilience partnerships work to translate this national ambition into effective local practice. The learnings from the conference have been incorporated into the NCSR+ strategy to create a Local Resilience Capability which is discussed in the following section.

Next steps for NCSR+ in supporting the development of local resilience

The success of the National Conference on Societal Resilience showed the enthusiasm among partners for collaborative working to enhance societal resilience and the consortium wants to work together to support each other in this endeavour.

The NCSR+ is well placed to help drive these efforts by providing strategic support to operationalise societal resilience as a local resilience capability. The NCSR+ is formed of a diverse team who have the knowledge to work with local resilience partnerships to translate that into effective practice to further enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable in society. Over the last 12 months we have worked with a range of UK local resilience partnerships to support their design and implementation of strategy to operationalise societal resilience as a local resilience capability.

Over the coming months NCSR+ will continue to strengthen its experience of designing and implementing strategy for societal resilience through:

- Ongoing implementation work with several local resilience partnerships to create a Local Resilience Capability in their areas
- Refining and disseminating the NCSR+ strategy for societal resilience and the accompanying manual to operationalise societal resilience as a Local Resilience Capability
- Developing a toolkit to operationalise societal resilience, including a focus on how to evaluate and baseline performance before, during and after Local Resilience Capability implementation
- Sharing knowledge and good practice on societal resilience through interactive online and in-person events including workshops and training sessions for local resilience partnerships
- Facilitating strategic conversations and translating these into action that generates change and creates value for society
- Supporting the further strengthening of the national ecosystem of local resilience partnerships

Watch the video from the conference:

<https://www.alliancemb.manchester.ac.uk/news/ambbs-resilience-conference-attracts-delegates-from-across-the-uk/>

Discussions at the conference tested various principles and concepts for societal resilience with the conference participants. Those conference discussions reinforced our growing confidence in the NCSR+ strategy to create a Local Resilience Capability. Below, we share that strategy given our growing confidence in it being one way to support local resilience partnerships in further enhancing societal resilience.

NCSR+ strategy to create a Local Resilience Capability

i) Introduction

This section introduces the strategy for operationalising societal resilience as a Local Resilience Capability. The conference reiterated that resilience as a societal endeavour is taking hold as a national ambition. [The UK Government Resilience Framework \(2022\)](#) and the [Integrated Review of Security and Defence \(2021\)](#) – including the [Integrated Review Refresh 2023](#) – commit to a whole-of-society approach to resilience. The conference heard how local resilience partnerships are already working on aspects of societal resilience through a number of supporting agendas (e.g. providing public health services, supporting people in need, enhancing social cohesion) but there is more to do to make everyone more resilient.

Most in society are already quite resilient and can prepare for a disruption, or self-help if it happens. But, our society is diverse and some parts are less resilient to disruption, suffer more from its impacts, and have diverse needs for support that they cannot resolve themselves. These are ‘target groups’ for additional support and include those individuals, community groups, businesses, and organisations in society that are most at-risk, vulnerable, not prepared, unaware, or unable to leverage their agency to self-determine their own resilience to disruption. But, some parts may be hardly reached by usual mechanisms, or may be suspicious of state intervention.

Target groups are prioritised using the community risk register. They may have support networks that can help but, in a disruption, may also require extra help from local services such as partners in local resilience partnerships. By working even more closely with target groups and wider society, local resilience partnerships can enhance societal resilience in general that will encourage self-help and helping others in a disruption, and better understand the changing needs in target groups so that services can be better pinpointed.

Societal resilience is the capability created by local systems to help people and places to adapt and advance in a changing environment. Local resilience partnerships are a critical component of that system and will continue to respond to local needs from a disruption, target effort to those most in need, and maintain local essential services and their infrastructure. But some disruptions are so big that the volume of needs they create outstrip what local resilience partners can, alone, realistically support. Here, society (with an enthusiasm to help others) has a crucial role to play in bolstering the official response so that emergency responders can focus on those most in need.

Local resilience partnerships can help society to channel these efforts strategically to get ready before a disruption to react to what may happen during and after it. To accomplish this, local

resilience partnerships can develop a system that operationalises societal resilience as a capability that can be activated when additional support is required.

Local Resilience Capability is the system that local resilience partnerships can create to operationalise societal resilience to deliver a range of functions to society and target groups, including:

- preparing for a disruption – by encouraging self-help and helping others and by integrating that capability into local resilience partnerships as the coordinating body
- responding to a disruption – by coordinating requests for help and offers of support from individuals, community groups, businesses, and organisations, and by monitoring changing local needs
- recovering from a disruption – by supporting society as it deals with the aftermath

The following section describes the vision, aims and objectives for Local Resilience Capability – all of which were raised and tested at the conference. It describes why these are important, the principles, risks and opportunities, and the seven steps through which local resilience partnerships can create the Local Resilience Capability. The strategy can be delivered by the local resilience partnership’s Societal Resilience Working Group which is a collaboration of key partners on this ambitious endeavour.

ii) Vision for societal resilience

The conference gave us confidence that NCSR+’s vision for societal resilience was still appropriate:

To create a Local Resilience Capability for a local resilience partnership that will enhance the approach to societal resilience, so that individuals, community groups, businesses, organisations, and voluntary sector can all play a meaningful part in building the resilience of society.

iii) Aims and objectives to deliver this vision

To deliver this vision, the **aims** focus on enabling society to support those target groups that are most in need. Each of these aims map onto six consistent **objectives**:

Aims – and rationale:	Objectives:
1. To help society to self-determine their own resilience – because self-determination is at the core of co-production	For each aim: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine current performance 2. Determine gaps and where more work is required to enhance performance 3. Form meaningful collaborations to enhance performance 4. Design intervention to enhance performance 5. Implement intervention to enhance performance 6. Determine how local intelligence is acquired and used to enhance performance
2. To enhance local preparedness for disruption to target groups – because better preparedness will lower demand, reduce diversity of need, and pre-position support for target groups	
3. To reduce local risk and vulnerability of target groups – because reducing risk and vulnerability will allow Local Resilience Capability to focus on the target groups most in need	

iv) Principles underpinning the aims and objectives

The conference strengthened our belief that the top three principles when delivering the aims and objectives are:

1. Work with society to co-produce a Local Resilience Capability – that aligns to risk, is activated by existing structures, is valued by society, and is sustained by available resources
2. Focus on target groups that are most in need and those that support them – and work with partners to understand changing needs and gain access to target groups
3. Start simple and grow – for example, prioritise one target group at a time, build momentum, learn from experience, and create spill-over opportunities to grow the coverage

v) Why achieving these aims is important

Delivering these aims and objectives will:

1. Target support to those in society who are most in need from disruptions and those who maintain local business services and their infrastructure

To achieve this, Local Resilience Capability will enable local resilience partnerships to:

2. Support society to self-determine their future resilience to disruption
3. Activate those in society who can help themselves or help others to increase overall societal resilience
4. Reduce demand so local resilience partnerships can target resources onto those most in need during disruption
5. Reduce risk and vulnerability to disruption

vi) Opportunities and risks

As discussed in the conference, the top three opportunities from delivering Local Resilience Capability are:

- Identify and access hard-to-reach parts of society (of place and of type) that are most in need during disruption
- Activate through the local resilience partnership the provision of support from the voluntary sector and spontaneous individuals, organisations, and businesses
- Support the majority in society as they self-help in a disruption, but focus mainly on those who cannot self-help

The top three risks to be managed are:

- Individuals, community groups, businesses, and organisations that may have needs during disruptions remain unaware and uninterested in building resilience
- Those involved in Local Resilience Capability lose interest because of insufficient activations
- Local Resilience Capability does not have the desired impact on addressing need

vii) Pace and resource to implement Local Resilience Capability

The conference heard how creating a Local Resilience Capability takes ongoing commitment, starts modestly, and expands as funding allows. The pace of development will depend on resources available.

viii) Seven steps to create Local Resilience Capability

We presented to the conference how Local Resilience Capability is delivered through seven steps:

Pre-design the Local Resilience Capability	
1. ALIGN	Align the people and the politics behind LRC
Design the Local Resilience Capability	
2. WHO	Build the team, identify existing partnerships, take stock of existing LRC
3. WHY	Agree the business case to enhance LRC
4. WHAT	Co-produce the strategy to enhance LRC
Implement the Local Resilience Capability	
5. WHO	Develop instrumental collaborations to enhance LRC
6. WHY	Manage LRC
7. WHAT	Deliver value to society through LRC

Step 1 is critical to agree the direction and local ambition. Steps 2 and 3 can be completed relatively quickly by partners engaged in societal resilience. Step 3 requires involvement of wider partners such as the voluntary sector and businesses. Steps 5, 6, and 7 are implementation and continuous improvement where interventions start small, prove value, and roll-out wider.

We look forward to working with more local resilience partnerships in implementing their strategy to enhance local resilience.

If you are interested in this work or would like to contribute, please get in touch with our team at ncsr@manchester.ac.uk