

## ***COMMUNICATING AND ENGAGING WITH MINORITY GROUPS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS***

**(Postgraduate Certificate in Integrated Emergency Management  
University of Leeds)**

My name is Paula McDonald and I am an Emergency Planning Officer with Derbyshire County Council. The Emergency Planning Division at Derbyshire County Council performs the Emergency Planning function for Derby City and the District/Borough Councils within the County under Service Level Agreements. One of my roles in the Division is the lead on Humanitarian Assistance.

In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, local authorities have to provide emergency accommodation for anyone who is displaced due to a major incident. As such I have written a Humanitarian Assistance Plan which gives guidance on setting up Rest Centres (evacuation centres), the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved etc. I would like to develop this Plan by including guidance for the management team on the requirements of minority groups whilst they are in a Rest Centre.

I am undertaking a Postgraduate Certificate in Integrated Emergency Management and the work based project I have chosen to develop is "Communicating and engaging with minority groups in emergency situations". The areas I am initially looking at are ethnicity, disability and faith/belief. The project is based around a Rest Centre scenario and I am looking at the needs of displaced minority groups following an evacuation from their home or workplace.

Rather than just trawl the internet and read books on this topic I would also like to approach appropriate community groups/associations etc to ask them directly what requirements they would have in such unusual and stressful circumstances. Therefore, if your community group/association etc are interested in taking part in this important project, I would be very pleased if you could contact me to discuss the best way forward. Some of my initial thoughts in relation to disability are:

- Hearing impairment
- Sight impairment
- Mobility issues
- Learning disability
- Access
- Carer issues
- Medication
- Communication

I hope that you will feel, as I do, that this is a very worthwhile and important piece of work and that your organisation will want to form a partnership with the Emergency Planning Division in order that all members of the community can be catered for during very stressful and sometimes traumatic situations.

I would be grateful if you could contact me via the details at the foot of the page.