



Formalising a County Wide Community Support Centre Network

From community-led emergency response to a
structured and coordinated county wide model

Theresa Donohue
Administrative Officer
Community Department



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



Storm Éowyn: A Catalyst for Change



54 community hubs mobilised at the height of the disruption.

Communities provided warmth, refreshments, charging, connectivity and practical support when power and communications services were unavailable.

The lesson: **community goodwill was strong, but it needed a structure.**

What Storm Éowyn Revealed

What worked

- Local knowledge
- Community goodwill
- Rapid mobilisation



What needed to change

- Reactive activation
- Uneven coverage
- Unclear roles
- Variable arrangements

**The challenge was not to replace the community response,
but to strengthen and support it.**



Crisis Response to Formal Network

Dec 2025 Expression of Interest

Mar 2026 Stakeholder
Information Sessions

Mar-Apr 2026 GIS Mapping &
Real-Time Activation Platform

Jan-Feb 2026 Standardised
Operating Procedures

Mar 2026 CSC Information
Published

May-Aug 2026 Storm
Preparedness Guide Developed



Current Position



A designated county-wide network supported by rolling applications and targeted outreach



What the EOI Told Us

- **87 expressions of interest**
- **Broad geographic reach**
- **Strong baseline readiness**
- **Backup power was the main recurring gap**

87 premises submitted an Expression of Interest, demonstrating strong demand and broad geographic reach. Existing community infrastructure, particularly community centres and sports facilities, forms the backbone of the emerging network.

The most frequently identified operational gap was access to backup power.



Responding to Gaps

- **Funding Alignment**
CSC requirements reflected in relevant grant programmes.
- **Power Resilience**
Support for installation of generator changeover switches.
- **Targeted Outreach**
Suitable facilities approached in areas with limited coverage.
- **Pathway to Designation**
Practical support to help facilities meet CSC requirements.



Customer Service Impact & Learning

For Communities



- Clearer information on where support may be available
- More consistent facilities and service expectations
- Accessible, multilingual preparedness information
- Greater transparency through published centre details

For Community Partners



- Clear designation and activation procedures
- Defined Council contacts and support routes
- Better connection to emergency management structures
- Practical pathways to address infrastructure gaps

For the Council



- Known locations and contacts before an emergency
- Improved geographic and facility information
- More consistent activation and communication
- A scalable and replicable operating model



Next Steps

- **National integration**
Connect with the National GIS CSC Management Portal.
- **Operational readiness**
Reconvene the Humanitarian Subgroup ahead of storm season.
- **Public preparedness**
Launch the multilingual Storm Ready guide.
- **Internal coordination**
Finalise a departmental SOP for resourcing, coordination and escalation.



Thank you

The value of the network is not simply that centres can open during an emergency; it is that communities, volunteers and public services now know how they will work together before the emergency occurs.



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council