

## Background and Context

On the night of Friday 7 / Saturday 8 January 2005, severe storms and unprecedented rainfall on already saturated ground fell across Cumbria. Over the Friday night and into Saturday, this caused extensive flooding and storm damage particularly in the Carlisle area.

The impacts of this included:

- 3 deaths
- 1,925 homes and business flooded - to 2 metres
- 3,000+ people homeless for up to 12 months+
- 40,000 addresses without power
- 3,000 jobs put at risk.

Those made homeless were often out of their homes for an extended time-scale:

- 50% back after 9 months
- 70% after 12 months
- 90% after 18 months
- 20-30 properties > 24months.

## How the Topic was Handled

Key points were:

- The advice was that homelessness would be major issue.
- Exhaustive scenario planning carried out on options for provision of large scale temporary accommodation.
- Questionnaires, leaflets, door knocking, adverts and media coverage seeking to establish needs.
- High percentage of owner occupiers meant that insurance companies supported their temporary accommodation needs.
- Growing student population, national trend to buy-to-let investment, post foot and mouth investment in this sector by retiring farmers, and availability of tourist accommodation, all supported capacity to help meet temporary accommodation requirements.
- Private sector rent levels doubled during recovery period.
- Of 3,000+ people made homeless, only 50 actually re-housed as homeless via scheme to fast-track void Registered Social Landlord stock. Funded as part of £1.5 million in Government aid.
- Insurance company terms and conditions in relation to length of time and/or cash limit on temporary accommodation cover caused a second wave of accommodation needs/problems.
- Some conflict between tourist demands and displaced residents when tourist season started.

Once displaced, other issues caused by dislocation manifested themselves, including:

- Support / caring mechanisms for the elderly by neighbours, etc.
- Normal childcare arrangements.
- Additional travel to work, school, doctors, and other normal service outlets.
- Lost friendship groups for young people and access to recreational activities.
- Community activity and social networks.
- Re-direction of mail and telephone contacts, especially benefits, pensions, banking, etc.

Actions to help address these included:

- Information via media, newsletters, leaflets, community support centres.
- Advice via above and Communities Reunited and helplines.
- Provided access to telephones, computers, help with correspondence.
- Neighbourhood meetings and workshops.
- Drop in sessions in displaced neighbourhoods.
- Social events to bring displaced communities together.
- Supporting young people document (see Additional Documents below).
- School based projects.
- Community self help groups established, financed and supported by City and County Councils, Environment Agency and Cumbria Community Foundation.

## Lessons Identified

Pre-planning of the above types of support to enable rapid deployment.

## Contacts for Further Information

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## Additional Documents

[Supporting young people document](#)