

Section 7

Recovery

The section deals with the impacts of flooding on health and wellbeing and the process of recovery, including funding. It contains chapters examining:

- health and wellbeing;
- roles, responsibilities and recovery operations;
- recording and reporting;
- funding for recovery; and
- normalisation and regeneration.

Health and wellbeing

This chapter explores the impact the floods have had on individuals' health and wellbeing. It contains sections on:

- provision of health advice;
- health and psychosocial impacts;
- wider community impacts;
- social research studies; and
- monitoring and mitigating actions.

Introduction

25.1 The summer 2007 floods had a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing. Many people suffered from illnesses including stomach upsets, anxiety and depression and this affected family life and relationships. Some individuals have likened their flooding experience to bereavement, going through similar emotions such as shock and disbelief, anger, blame and finally acceptance.

25.2 Definitive statistics on the health impacts of the floods are scarce for a number of possible reasons as discussed later in this chapter. However, one, perhaps indicative, study¹ by the Farm Crisis Network, an organisation which provides pastoral and practical support to farming people during periods of anxiety and stress, showed a significant increase in the number of calls to its helpline, which received up to five times more calls than in the same period the previous year, most probably due to the combination of

the floods and restrictions imposed as a result of last summer's animal disease outbreaks. Impacts reported included physical and psychological health conditions, potentially over extended periods.

Definitions used in this chapter:

Good health:

A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity

Psychosocial:

The mind's ability to, consciously or unconsciously, adjust and relate to the social environment

Psychological:

Pertaining to the mind, its mental processes, and its emotional makeup

¹ http://www.farmcrisisnetwork.co.uk/file_download/28

25.3 A number of organisations are responsible for providing general and specific health advice, including the Health Protection Agency (HPA), the Department of Health (DH) and Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs). As described in Chapter 12, there is also a large role for the voluntary and community sectors in all aspects of recovery and they can be particularly effective in supporting local communities in addressing the psychosocial impacts of flooding.

25.4 However, during the response and early recovery phases of the summer flooding, the Review found that there were many instances of individuals, businesses and the voluntary and community sector receiving inconsistent health information. In some cases, health advisors said it was safe to stay in flooded properties, yet in others families were told to leave their homes immediately due to health risks from fungal spores. Television images of children playing in floodwater suggest that the dangers of contaminated water had not been widely understood by the public.

25.5 In the recovery phase, builders were unable to find advice as to whether renovating damp properties posed health risks. As noted in Chapter 9, confusion was caused by conflicting advice from public authorities and the insurance industry on the removal and disposal of water-damaged items from houses and businesses. There was also uncertainty about any continuing health risks from interior brickwork and building fabric that had absorbed flood water and furniture that was water-damaged. Schools and householders were not confident about using playing fields and gardens once the floodwater had receded.

25.6 Difficulties in finding consistent health information for the provision of emergency water supply from bowzers are highlighted in Chapter 11, which describes how water bowzers deployed during the emergency response should have had permanent notices advising consumers to boil water before use. The Review received a number of comments that notices on bowzers were either missing or unclear.

25.7 Evidence submitted to the Review shows that information was particularly lacking or inconsistent on the sources of support available and possible longer-term health impacts. Furthermore, there was only limited guidance for relevant public authorities on actions they could take to improve health and wellbeing in the community.

25.8 The HPA now provides advice through a number of factsheets focusing specifically on health in flooding emergencies, including 'Health advice following flooding', 'Cleaning up after a flood – health advice' and 'Advice on flooded sports playing fields'.² The Review is pleased to learn that the HPA has set up a working group to examine all flood advice made available to the public by public authorities to ensure consistency.

25.9 Clear and consistent health advice needs to be widely available to all people affected, both during the response and throughout recovery. The advice should cover hazards to both physical and mental health. To ensure accessibility, it should be widely available across a range of media, such as the internet and in leaflets available at health centres. Consideration should also be given to raising health awareness in advance of an emergency. This is discussed further in Chapter 20.

RECOMMENDATION 71: The Department of Health and relevant bodies should develop a single set of flood-related health advice for householders and businesses which should be used by all organisations nationally and locally and made available through a wide range of sources.

² <http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1158934608011?p=1158934608011>

Organisational responsibilities in the healthcare sector

The Department of Health (DH) is responsible for the overall performance of the NHS in England. Its work includes setting national standards and shaping the direction of the NHS and social care services, and promoting healthier living. In the event of an emergency, the Department provides strategic co-ordination of the NHS response in England. DH has produced emergency planning guidance which explains the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act for NHS organisations. It includes guidance on the Scientific and Technical Advice Cell which recognises two distinct 'health' roles at Gold command level: the coordination of health service resources and the provision of health advice to the public.

The Health Protection Agency is responsible for providing advice and information on health protection issues to the public, communities, professionals and to government.

Strategic Health Authorities are responsible for managing and setting the strategic direction of the NHS locally. They support Primary Care Trusts and other NHS organisations that deliver primary health services at the local population and ensure that they are performing well.

Regional Directors of Public Health are responsible for ensuring that NHS arrangements in their region are appropriate and safe. They also have responsibility for emergency planning and work closely with the Health Protection Agency, the NHS and Regional Resilience Teams in Government Offices.

Local Authority Chief Executives are responsible for recovery co-ordination groups in their areas.

Organisational responsibilities in the healthcare sector (*continued*)

Social Services are responsible for providing support, care and protection to vulnerable groups, and providing services for children and their families, older people, and those with a physical, mental or learning disability.

The health and psychosocial impacts

25.10 Submissions to the Review and anecdotal evidence gathered during our visits around the country highlight various health impacts believed to result from the flooding. Physical health problems attributed to the floods ranged from coughs and colds to bronchitis and heart attacks. Psychological and psychosocial impacts included increased levels of anxiety during periods of rainfall, distress as a result of temporary living arrangements and stress from dealing with insurers and builders or caused by people experiencing financial difficulties.

25.11 The emerging findings from a real-time study of local recovery in Hull (see case study) suggest that participants are:

- experiencing increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression and a loss of interest in everyday activities;
- experiencing strain on family relationships, especially increased arguments;
- having more difficulty in managing long-term health problems such as angina and arthritis;
- drinking more alcohol as a coping strategy; and
- finding it harder to adhere to usual practices of healthy eating and exercise.

Flood vulnerability and urban resilience: a real-time study of local recovery following the floods of June 2007 in Hull³

This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the Environment Agency. An aim of the project is to identify all aspects of the long-term experience of flood impact and flood recovery. To date, 48 interviews of people affected have been completed, including owner-occupiers, and private, council and housing association tenants. The emphasis of the study is on understanding flood recovery from the perspective of those involved in the process. Extracts from interviews and diaries of householders include the following:

“Some days I just felt like jumping off Humber Bridge. It’s been that low, it’s been that bad, except I’m not brave enough to do it. But the state of mind I’ve been in – some days I’ve just sat in here and just sobbed and sobbed and sobbed.”

“When I go home, the first thing I do if it’s been raining or is raining, is stop and check the level of the drain. The last thing I do before I leave is check the level of the drain just to make sure that I’m aware of its current state... There is a lot of anxiety if the weather is going to be bad. As we move more into winter... the anxiety, I think, will rise and it’s affecting people. I think the main problem is sleep patterns because a lot of us have said we are not sleeping through it and a lot of us are waking up and we’ve dreamt it’s been raining through the night because that’s on our mind all the time.”

“You get very fraught marriage-wise. We’ve had lots of arguments and lots of discussions and lots of “I’m leaving you when this is all done!” and “That’s it, the house is going up for sale!”. Because there’s nobody to help you – if my husband is working away during the week and he comes home on a weekend and we are in here, and it’s like all the stress I’ve had in the week goes straight on him, and all the stress he’s had in the week goes onto me...”

“When we told our son it would be six more weeks and then we could move back home he started to pack his toys away! I don’t think anybody realised how much the floods and the move affected him. He still gets upset and very protective of me every time it rains. He has just started cubs so it means he can see his friends more, like he used to. Because before we lived so close to all his friends he is now isolated in the rented house and spends a lot of time on his computers or watching the TV.”

25.12 DH has reported no significant increase in the number of people reporting to healthcare professionals with physical health problems caused by flooding. Anecdotal evidence from discussions the Review has had with local healthcare professionals suggests however, that the DH’s reporting mechanisms are not necessarily a good indicator of all the health impacts of flooding as they monitor only specific health conditions (such as diabetes and chronic heart disease) and they also rely on individuals presenting to healthcare professionals. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many victims of flooding will not go to their GPs and therefore

health affects may go unreported. This seems to be for a variety of reasons, including concern by affected people that they will not be treated sympathetically and the perception of a stigma attached to admitting such problems.

25.13 DH has also reported no significant increase in the number of people requesting psychosocial help and mental healthcare support. The DH has, however, indicated that there could still be an upsurge in those experiencing psychological problems, given the long period over which symptoms may appear.

³ http://www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/cswm/Hull%20Floods%20Project/HFP_home.php

Insurance and Health Impacts Survey

A survey of 647 households affected by the floods across England, carried out by GfK NOP UK for the Review, showed the health and relationship effects to include:

- 39 per cent of respondents stated that the flooding had had an effect on their (or their partner's) physical health. Those who were forced to move out of their property were twice as likely to have physical health problems as those who did not (50 per cent versus 24 per cent).
- 15 per cent of respondents reported that the flooding had had an effect on their children's physical health; this figure did not differ between those who moved or did not move out of their home.
- 67 per cent of respondents stated that the flooding had had an effect on their (or their partner's) emotional health. Those who were forced to move out of their property were more likely to have emotional health problems (78 per cent versus 50 per cent).
- 35 per cent of respondents stated that the flooding had had an effect on their children's emotional health. Those who were forced to move out of their property were twice as likely to have emotional health problems as those that did not (42 per cent versus 20 per cent).
- 31 per cent of people with health problems took time off work, and over half of these were off work for more than 10 days.
- 39 per cent of those who reported health problems had been to see a doctor.
- Of those married or living with a partner, 22 per cent reported that the flooding had an effect on their relationship. Those who were forced to move out were twice as likely to have had relationship problems as those who did not (28 per cent versus 14 per cent).
- Of the whole sample, 15 per cent said the flooding had affected their relationship with family members. Those who moved out were nearly twice as likely to have problems as opposed to those who did not (18 per cent versus 10 per cent).

25.14 Health and wellbeing problems related to stress and anxiety may also arise due to flood-related debt. In this respect, evidence submitted to the Review by Hull Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) shows increases in the numbers of priority debt enquiries for January and February 2008 compared with the same period in 2007, as follows:

- Mortgage and secured loan arrears up from 58 to 136 (+134%)
- Fuel arrears from 74 to 138 (+86%)
- Water arrears from 41 to 87 (+112%)
- Council tax arrears from 82 to 176 (+115%)
- Rent arrears from 44 to 91 (+107%)

25.15 Whilst these increases in priority debt enquiries cannot be attributed directly or wholly to the flooding, especially in light of the current market situation, the CAB suggests that there is likely to be a correlation.

25.16 Data gathered through a questionnaire distributed to households by Hull City Council, however, provides stark evidence of the wide-scale nature of the health impacts of the summer 2007 floods (see case study). Of the 890 individuals who responded to the health questionnaire, 64 per cent said their health had been adversely affected. Stress, anxiety and depression were the most commonly reported conditions, but a range of symptoms was

also reported including dermatitis, worsening asthma, arthritis and chest infections, which individuals have attributed to being flooded.

25.17 Negative health impacts amongst children appear to stem from a variety of causes including the use of temporary facilities, extended travel times to school and the need to re-do destroyed school work, in addition to heightened anxiety levels during rainfall. It is notable from GfK NOP's Insurance & Health Impacts Survey that children were twice as likely to suffer emotional health problems if they had to move out of their homes.

25.18 Evidence to the Review suggests that health impacts are also being felt by people at work. Individuals and trade associations have described to the Review the difficulties people faced trying to keep working whilst dealing with their recovery and that of their family, and the distress that this caused them. Some companies reported increased sickness absences as a result. Health impacts extend beyond people directly affected by the floods and evidence to the Review shows that organisations responsible for response and recovery have also reported increased levels of stress amongst staff. Many attribute this to prolonged additional duties in response to the floods.

Hull recovery questionnaire

The recovery questionnaire was distributed via Hull City Council to 1500 households in Hull during March 2008. Householders were asked to provide feedback on a number of recovery-related issues including health impacts and the service received from different organisations. 890 survey responses were collated and assessed.

Of the 890 respondents, 869 had been flooded. Of these 869 people, 862 indicated whether they had to move out of their home or not. The figures show that 66 per cent (568) had to move out of their homes and of those 70 per cent (396) reported health problems.

Comments included:

"I have lost a stone in weight due to the stress of sorting our home out and coping with a 3 year old and an 8 month old baby whilst in very small temporary accommodation. It has also put a strain on our marriage." (Householder now back in her home)

"My 2 year old daughter's facial eczema has got worse and flares up a lot, my two sons (aged 6 & 10) have had colds constantly, we have all had bad chests, sickness and diarrhoea lots of times, coughs, sleepless nights. I have mild IBS but it has been worse recently. I have also come out in a rash all over my hands. We are at the doctor's a lot more than normal and my daughter has also had to visit the hospital due to a very bad bout of sickness & diarrhoea. It is all extremely worrying." (Householder not back in her home and currently in alternative accommodation)

"I have had to take sick leave due to stress and insurance problems. The children's behaviour has deteriorated as their friends have left the area and there has been a lack of space for a long period of time – we have not returned to normal as yet." (Householder temporarily in a caravan on her driveway, now back in her home)

"I am having panic attacks due to living conditions. Having a disabled child in a caravan isn't easy, I only hope these attacks improve once back in my home. I also have mood swings and depression" (Householder in a caravan on her drive – not yet back in her home)

Wider community impacts

25.19 Anecdotal evidence to the Review suggests that the effects of the summer 2007 floods are likely to extend beyond the individual households which were flooded. The Review has heard accounts of the negative impact on extended families both as a result of accommodating displaced family members and concern for their progress in recovery. Community impacts range from damage and disruption to community facilities to changes in traditional support networks because of displaced families or because of the unavailability of community facilities.

25.20 So far we have discussed the negative impacts of flooding. Positive effects may be few, but one which has been widely recognised is a heightened sense of community. Householders often had to rely on neighbours for help and support both during the flood and during the clean-up phase. This support took many forms, from the provision of refreshments to the loan of equipment, as well as emotional support. The Review has heard accounts from people praising much greater community awareness and the emergence of new friends and support networks. **The Review considers that often such community networks are effective tools in reducing the psychosocial impact and they should be supported and capitalised on by local Recovery Coordinating Groups.**

Research studies

25.21 Social science studies consulted by the Review reinforce the significance of the psychosocial and health impacts of the summer 2007 floods and the need to consider these issues when planning for and recovering from serious emergencies.

25.22 One such study was carried out by the Health Protection Agency into the health impacts of the flooding in Lewes in 2002.⁵ This found that having been flooded was associated with a significant increase in gastroenteritis and a four-times higher risk of psychological distress in adults. The study concluded that

policies for the recovery period must include both practical support for flood victims and the provision of appropriate psychological support. The incidence of physical illness pointed to the need for advice and assistance about hygiene and access to medical services.

25.23 Likewise, research^{6, 7} funded by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs described the impacts of flooding on the mental health of flood victims in both the short and long term and stressed the need to improve the services available to flood victims at the time of the flood and during the recovery period.

25.24 In summary, evidence to the Review and existing studies show that the impact of flooding on psychosocial health is significant. The Review therefore believes that those charged with leading recovery locally should consider actions they can take to minimise the distress people feel during the recovery from emergencies.

RECOMMENDATION 72: Local response and recovery coordinating groups should ensure that health and wellbeing support is readily available to those affected by flooding based on the advice developed by the Department of Health.

Health impacts of damp properties

25.25 A number of people the Review consulted around the country wanted advice on the health impacts of living in damp, flood-affected properties. This was true both of people living upstairs in houses where the lower floors were still flooded and residents who had moved back into their damp homes once the floods had receded. However, the advice given to householders was often inconsistent and people were frequently confused.

“I’ve been told by [company A] that it’s alright to live in a damp house with children with asthma, and I’ve been told by [company B] that it’s dangerous, so who do you trust?”
(Business owner, Hull)

⁵ [http://www.hpa.org.uk/cdph/issues/CDPHvol7/No1/7\(1\)p56-63.pdf](http://www.hpa.org.uk/cdph/issues/CDPHvol7/No1/7(1)p56-63.pdf)

⁶ The Appraisal of Human related Intangible Impacts of Flooding: www.defra.gov.uk/science/project_data/DocumentLibrary/FD2005/FD2005_1855_TRP.pdf

⁷ Flood Risks to People Phase 1: www.rpaltd.co.uk/documents/J429-RiskstoPeoplePh1-Report.pdf

25.26 The Review is aware of some advice on this matter (albeit limited), for example that of CIRIA⁸, which states:

“Do not occupy a house that still contains standing water. Do not move into the building until it is structurally safe, sufficiently clean and, preferably, reasonably dry. Damp surfaces are good breeding grounds for mould and other fungi, so it is best to minimise the potential for fungal growth by drying them as quickly as possible. If you do re-occupy the building prior to this, ensure that the building is well ventilated and that an effective heating system is running at all times, preferably with a de-humidifier.”
And from the HPA:⁹

“It is recommended that you only fully reoccupy your home once it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and allowed to dry out.”

25.27 Clearly, people wish to move back into their homes as soon as possible, but this is not just a matter of comfort; evidence shows that there is continuing and significant detrimental effect on families’ mental and physical health when they have to stay out of their homes for months at a time. The Review’s Health & Insurance Impacts Study saw a marked link between those households who had to move out of their home and both physical and mental problems. Those who moved out were twice as likely to have physical health problems as those who did not (50 per cent to 24 per cent). Therefore, the results of the study suggest that action to improve the speed at which individuals can return to their homes and ‘normality’, for example carrying out property assessments and repairs quickly, will pay significant dividends.

25.28 However, the Review is not aware of appropriate advice on the potential health impacts of living in a damp property, which will affect the speed with which residents move back into their homes (although it is noted that, in many cases in summer 2007, it was impractical to wait until properties were fully dry before re-occupation). Although the local council’s environmental health department may

be able to assess whether the building is dry enough for re-occupation, it is the opinion of the Review that publicly available advice on factors to consider when deciding whether to re-occupy a damp property, is neither extensive nor definitive and it is found in a confusing variety of locations. The Review judges the wider HPA advice to be particularly good at highlighting the risks of germs and chemical hazards when cleaning a flooded property, however, it appears to be silent on the potential hazards arising from fungal spores and the longer-term health impacts of damp properties, both in terms of carrying out structural repairs and living in the property. Again, the Review found that the public, in the absence of advice, was often confused:

“We don’t know what the spores are... what is in a spore? What are they? In ten years time we could all pay the price for not wearing masks.” (Business owner, Hull)

25.29 The Review would welcome the HPA providing guidance on the impacts on health of damp flood-affected properties; this should be aimed at people repairing the properties and householders and should also comprise advice on mitigating measures. The material prepared should then feature in the single set of flood-related health advice for householders and businesses recommended earlier in this chapter.

Drying out damp properties

25.30 We have been made aware of significant dissatisfaction about the time it took to dry out and stabilise some properties after the summer 2007 floods and the Review believes that cases of undue delay may be due to the absence of definitive guidance about drying methods.

25.31 With respect to existing guidance, following the summer 2007 floods, Hull City Council prepared a range of material for its contractors to advise on the drying process. The Review is also aware of guidance on a variety of different methods and technologies for drying properties, for example that of CIRIA¹⁰, which advises pumping out the flood

⁸ http://www.ciria.org.uk/flooding/drying_out.htm

⁹ http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947420817

¹⁰ <http://www.ciria.org.uk/flooding/>

water at a defined rate to avoid structural damage, followed by the use of central heating or industrial heaters, fans, wet/dry vacuum cleaners and dehumidifiers. As well as these conventional drying methods, the Review is also aware of a variety of more innovative approaches, including the use of bags of absorbent gel and trailer-mounted dry-air systems. However, the Review is not aware of any definitive guidance as to best practice in this area.

25.32 In light of the evidence about the impact on displaced communities, insurance costs, alternative accommodation costs and long-term health and wellbeing problems, the Review recommends that Government, the ABI and other relevant organisations work together to explore any technological or process improvements that can be made to speed up the drying out and stabilising process of building recovery.

RECOMMENDATION 73: The Government, the Association of British Insurers and other relevant organisations should work together to explore any technological or process improvements that can be made to speed up the drying out and stabilising process of building recovery after a flood.

Monitoring and Mitigating Actions

25.33 Although DH has reported no increase in people presenting to healthcare professionals, this is likely to be a consequence of the method of monitoring used, as discussed above. To promote continued vigilance by healthcare professionals in spotting flood-related symptoms, and to ensure the provision of effective health services, national guidance on recovery from emergencies recommends that local services undertake a range of actions, including:

- continuing to monitor closely the numbers of people who are coming forward for psychosocial help and mental healthcare;
- facilitating access to primary and secondary mental health services;
- making the necessary capacity available to meet any upsurge in demand; and

- expecting to see an increase in anxiety, particularly in children, during heavy rain.

25.34 The Review endorses these recommendations. Whilst the benefits to individuals and communities cannot necessarily be measured on a quantitative basis, anecdotal evidence suggests they are likely to reduce the burden on medical services, reduce the need for people to take sickness absence from work and positively aid recovery.

Observed examples of mitigating actions to aid recovery from flooding

- Partnership working to provide advice to appropriate organisations such as the insurance industry and the voluntary and charitable sectors.
- The distribution of leaflets giving specific advice such as coping with stress, keeping physically and mentally well, dealing with property repair (builders and insurers) and health and safety advice to those living in temporary accommodation.
- Primary Care Trusts working collaboratively with the local authority to provide health and wellbeing events at which individuals are able to access advice and support.
- The provision of on-site counselling services in schools.
- The provision of funding to community resilience and support networks which enable flood victims to share their experiences and seek support from others with similar experiences.
- On-site and mobile advice centres provided by local authorities to enable individuals to access a range of services and support available to them.
- Flood fairs organised by local flood forums and residents groups.
- Organised social activities, such as day trips and coffee mornings, to maintain community camaraderie and support networks built up during the flooding.

RECOMMENDATION 74: The monitoring of the impact of flooding on the health and wellbeing of people, and actions to mitigate and manage the effects, should form a systematic part of the work of Recovery Coordinating Groups.





Roles and responsibilities for recovery operations

This chapter examines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the recovery operation. It contains sections on:

- central government's recovery machinery;
- local and regional recovery operations;
- aims and objectives of recovery coordination groups; and
- current guidance.

Introduction

26.1 As with the response phase, clarity over roles and responsibilities is crucial to the effective management of the recovery phase. Evidence to the Review shows that recovery arrangements following the floods in summer 2007 generally worked well, with strong collaborative working between key government departments and agencies, and between regional and local bodies. Successful outcomes were seen especially where there was clear leadership and where roles and responsibilities were well understood. However, there were inconsistencies in the approaches taken, and in some cases this reduced the effectiveness of the recovery phase. The public also perceived differences in treatment within communities which led in some cases to annoyance and frustration.

Central government's recovery machinery

26.2 All emergencies are local, especially to those who suffer. So work at the local level is the building block of preparedness planning. Local planning and decision-making allows local knowledge to be factored into preparedness plans, leading to a more effective outcome. This reasoning lies behind government's approach to planning for the response and recovery phases, which prescribes that operations should be managed and decisions should be made at the lowest appropriate level. Accordingly, response and recovery operations are usually managed by local agencies with limited input from regional or national levels. However in some instances, such as wide-area flooding, the scale or complexity of the emergency is such that some degree of central government support or coordination becomes necessary.

The Lead Government Department

26.3 The 2007 summer floods were one such case where the breadth of the impact meant that central government support and coordination was indeed required. During the emergency response phase, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (the Lead Government Department for flooding) led the coordination of the Government's response, and the crisis management facilities at the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) were activated. The response aspects of both the June and the July emergencies are dealt with in greater detail in Chapters 11-13.

26.4 When the situation transferred formally from the emergency response phase to the recovery phase, the lead department role was transferred to Communities and Local Government (CLG) on an ad-hoc basis. CLG thus became responsible for cross-government delivery of the flood recovery programme.

26.5 CLG's role was to ensure that government departments and other national and regional bodies had a shared understanding of policies and priorities, and that they contributed fully and effectively to the recovery effort. The rapid establishment of a central Flood Recovery team within CLG was key to the provision of this coordinated response, providing a national, centralised focus for flood recovery issues, driving progress and enabling responses to requests for information from multiple sources.

26.6 Guidance on identifying the responsible lead department in the case of an emergency can be found in *'The Lead Government Department and its role – Guidance and Best Practice'* along with the *'Lead Government Department List'*, maintained by the Cabinet Office. These documents enable lead departments to carry out effectively the responsibilities and functions associated with their role. However, at the time of the summer 2007 floods, the formal lead department for

recovery from flooding had not been allocated. In light of this, in the interim report the Review recommended that CLG should have formal responsibility within government for coordinating recovery from all future flooding emergencies.

26.7 The Review has now received, and welcomes, formal confirmation from the Government that CLG will be lead department for flood recovery, as well as for other recovery situations either where they involve local communities, such as some categories of severe weather events or where the primary impact is on the built environment such as dam failures, earthquakes and some categories of structural failures. **The Review now encourages CLG to set out clearly the duties and responsibilities of its lead department role in the recovery phase, and to explain how it will work in partnership with other government departments and regional and local bodies.**

The Inter-Ministerial Group for Flood Recovery

26.8 Following the summer 2007 floods, the CLG Minister of State put in place and then chaired a Cabinet Committee - the Inter-Ministerial Group for Flood Recovery (IMG) - which brought together ministers from relevant departments across Government. The IMG acted as the key mechanism for decision-making and currently remains responsible for driving the progress of the Flood Recovery Programme. The terms of reference for the IMG captured the key aspirations of the Flood Recovery Programme, which were:

- to engender public confidence in the recovery process at all levels;
- to ensure effective, coordinated support by central government departments and other national and regional bodies to the work of local agencies in helping communities affected by the June and July floods to return to normality as soon as possible; and

¹ <http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/response/ukgovernment/~media/assets/www.ukresilience.info/lgds%20pdf.ashx>

² <http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/sitecore/content/Sites/www.ukresilience.info/response/ukgovernment/responsibilities.aspx>

- to ensure that local authorities and other recovery agencies fulfil their role and that, where necessary, local issues are considered and resolved at the national level.

26.9 The IMG was supported by a Flood Recovery Officials Group (FROG), chaired by CLG, whose members included officials from all relevant departments and a representative from the Local Government Association (LGA).

Local and regional recovery operations

26.10 Multi-agency Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and Regional Resilience Forums (RRFs) lead local and regional planning activities for the response phase of emergencies, and recovery is planned for in subgroups of these bodies.

Local Resilience Forums

26.11 Evidence to the Review shows that LRF recovery subgroups worked well in relation to the floods. However, some responders have pointed out that, since LRFs are based on police areas rather than local authority areas, and therefore because the footprint of an LRF can cover more than one local authority, plans need to be consistent between adjacent areas as far as possible. To aid consistency between areas, LRFs should develop recovery plans that are generic, wherever possible.

Government Offices

26.12 Government Offices (GOs) represent central government in the nine English regions. During the 2007 floods, they were the principal means for gathering information from affected local authorities and relaying this to central government. Likewise, local responders used the GOs as the first port of call for requests for advice or assistance from central government.

26.13 Each of the GOs has a Regional Resilience Team (RRT) to coordinate the response during emergencies in their regions. During the response to the floods, the GOs provided an information conduit between the central government response structures in COBR and local responders. This role

continued into the recovery phase, however, there were not previously-established structures in place to undertake this work, which caused difficulties in some GOs.

RECOMMENDATION 75: For emergencies spanning more than a single local authority area, Government Offices should ensure coherence and coordination, if necessary, between recovery operations.

Regional Development Agencies

26.14 There are nine Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in England. They provide a crucial link between the needs of business and the policies of Government. RDAs can also put businesses in touch with business support and advice. As covered Chapter 28, following the summer 2007 floods the RDAs provided support and reassurance to businesses affected in their regions, making over £11 million available to support business recovery in the affected areas.

Local Government Association and Local Authorities

26.15 For the affected regions last summer, as the flood waters receded recovery operations became just as pressing as the initial emergency response. Local authorities are ideally placed to understand the varied flood recovery needs of different neighbourhoods within their areas and in summer 2007 local authorities naturally understood that they would be looked upon to play a key leadership role in recovery efforts. Indeed, the Local Government Act 2007 provides local authorities with the 'leadership of place' role and, as such, local authority leadership of the recovery phase is well placed.

26.16 Just as central government recovery coordinating groups were quickly established nationally, local Recovery Coordinating Groups were, on the whole, established rapidly. Recovery activities were frequently carried out with partner groups and organisations, with the local authority having ultimate responsibility for ensuring progress. The Review has seen

considerable evidence of good work by many local agencies, starting with their determination to begin the process of recovery, underpinned by dedication and hard work at all levels within local government and a willingness to go above and beyond established roles to help those most severely affected. Such efforts have, disappointingly, been little recognised so far.

26.17 The Review did however receive evidence which indicated that not all local authorities had well-rehearsed plans for recovery. The Review is of the strong opinion that the need to exercise recovery plans is as important as the need to rehearse plans for the response phase and this is discussed further in Chapter 13.

The voluntary and community sector

26.18 Evidence to the Review demonstrated the integral role of the voluntary sector and wider communities in the recovery phase. Local knowledge held by volunteers has been shown to be invaluable when considering how to engage effectively with the community during the recovery phase.

26.19 We have been encouraged to hear many excellent examples of good practice on community engagement during both the response and recovery phases following the summer's flooding, including in Hull where a 'flood bus' took council staff into communities to give one-to-one advice, in West Berkshire where mobile multi-agency advice centres were set up, and in Gloucester where the PCT ran a health and wellbeing event in Tewkesbury. In Toll Bar, Doncaster Council located 14 staff in temporary prefabricated accommodation in the village, initially on a 24 hours per day basis, to listen, solve problems and provide reassurance. In Catcliffe, Rotherham Council set up a Flood Assistance Centre in the Memorial Hall to provide residents with a one-stop-shop for raising their concerns, also providing transport for those who could not get there by their own means.

26.20 From talking to members of the public affected by the 2007 floods, it is clear that people who had access to the types of projects highlighted above found them to be extremely helpful. Community-based activities allowed people to access important information and guidance on dealing with the aftermath of the floods and also provided them with the opportunity to meet other people who had been affected in the same way. Having someone to talk to, has for many people, been key to enabling them to accept what has happened to them and their home, and to begin to move on with their lives.

RECOMMENDATION 76: Local authorities should coordinate a systematic programme of community engagement in their area during the recovery phase.

Recovery Coordinating Groups

26.21 Recovery Coordinating Groups (RCG) provide multi-agency strategic decision-making structure for the recovery phase. Their composition is typically decided by the lead local authority depending on the nature of the emergency. Activation of the RCG is carried out by the local authority, usually following the request of or by agreement with Gold Command. Subgroups support the RCG allowing a focus on a range of operational issues.

26.22 RCGs decide the overall recovery strategy, including communications, clean-up, health, welfare, and economic and business recovery plans. Furthermore, and most crucially, RCGs also ensure that relevant stakeholders, especially the communities affected, are involved in the development and implementation of the strategy.

26.23 During last summer's flooding, RCGs were not routinely activated at an early stage across the country. Evidence to the Review shows that, where they were set up from the outset of the emergency, plans were more coherent. And formal handover from Gold Command to the RCG (locally, to the Chief

Executive of the affected local authority and nationally to the minister of the lead government department for recovery) clarified the lead at each stage of the emergency and made negotiations simpler and smoother. Evidence to the Review shows that delays in setting up RCGs usually arose from the absence of national guidance. **The Review welcomes the fact that this has now been published³.** Shortly after the floods hit, Gloucestershire County Council, for example, were able to make use of the then draft National Recovery Guidance to help set up their RCG and subgroups quickly and effectively. They have subsequently noted that they found the guidance useful, although they remarked that its direction may be more suited to unitary authorities than upper tier local authorities.

RECOMMENDATION 77: National and local Recovery Coordinating Groups should be established from the outset of major emergencies and in due course there should be formal handover from the crisis machinery.

Aims and objectives of recovery coordination groups

26.24 Evidence to the Review from local authorities suggests that, when RCGs are established, aims and objectives for the recovery phase should be agreed and a programme of actions captured in a Recovery Plan. Furthermore, that Plan should set out timescales for action and provide for regular review of progress to check that proposed actions are still needed. RCGs should coordinate, drive and facilitate recovery until there is no longer the need for regular multi-agency coordination and the remaining issues can be dealt with by individual organisations as a part of their mainstream programmes and business. The need for care in doing so is, however, provided by substantial evidence to the Review of staff within local organisations struggling to cope with additional burdens placed upon them by having to handle new tasks associated with recovery from flooding whilst at the same time discharging their previous responsibilities.

26.25 National Recovery Guidance describes the functions of RCGs against which it is suggested that recovery aims, objectives and plans are based. The Review welcomes this. Thus, the Guidance suggests that the local RCG:

- is the strategic decision-making body for the recovery phase, able to provide a broad overview and represent each agency's interests and statutory responsibilities;
- provides visible and strong leadership during the recovery phase;
- takes advice from subgroups, decides the strategy and ensures implementation of the strategy and the rebuilding of public confidence; and
- ensures the coordination and delivery of consistent messages to the public and media.

These functions allow flexibility to meet differing local circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 78: Aims and objectives for the recovery phase should be agreed at the outset by Recovery Coordinating Groups to provide focus and enable orderly transition into mainstream programmes when multi-agency coordination of recovery is no longer required.

Mutual aid and coordination

26.26 Experience last summer highlighted the benefits to be gained from local areas working together and sharing best practice on the management of recovery work. The Review has received reports of the significant benefits to RCGs of advice from authorities who had dealt with recovery from previous similar flood emergencies. The Review therefore welcomes the development of mutual aid plans, including those addressing the recovery phase, and guidance on mutual aid is discussed further in Chapter 11.

³ http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/response/recovery_guidance.aspx

26.27 The Review considers that responders' experience is valuable and should be captured and shared with others in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. The National Recovery Guidance is a key source of information; however, it could be enhanced by GOs also taking on a role, in cooperation with organisations such as the LGA, to facilitate the provision of expert advice in the aftermath of a severe flooding emergency

RECOMMENDATION 79: Government Offices, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, should develop arrangements to provide advice and support from experienced organisations to areas dealing with recovery from severe flooding emergencies.

Current guidance

26.28 Accurate, up-to-date guidance is vital to the efficient management of emergencies. Central government has produced considerable guidance material on the management of the response phase. However, recovery is often addressed separately and in much less detail. While there are some advantages to having separate 'stand-alone' and focused guidance for responders, in the Review's opinion, and that of stakeholders we have spoken to, it is important that the recovery phase is both seen as integral to the overall management of the emergency and that its importance is viewed as equal to that of the response phase.

26.29 The Review therefore concludes that central government guidance should be reviewed and the roles and objectives of those responsible for the recovery phase should be developed and formalised on the basis of the model employed during the recovery from last summer's floods and as set out in the National Recovery Guidance. As such, the recovery phase needs to be included within a number of guidance documents and papers, especially:

- **Central Government Arrangements for Responding to an Emergency: Concept of Operations (CONOPS)**⁴, central government's generic emergency plan which sets out arrangements for the response to an emergency, irrespective of the originating cause. At present the management of the recovery phase is not spelt out;
- **Emergency Response and Recovery**⁵, which provides the generic framework for multi-agency emergency response and recovery in the UK, including crisis management structures at central government, devolved administration, regional and local level. At present the document does not have the latest material on the management of the recovery phase.
- **The Lead Government Department and its role – Guidance and Best Practice**⁶ along with the **Lead Government Department List**⁷, which provide guidance on designated lead departments for the various types of emergency that might arise and which set out the responsibilities and functions associated with being designated lead department. These documents describe the key processes and disciplines necessary in planning for and responding to emergencies, and describe how these processes will be monitored and audited in order to achieve a uniformly high standard of planning and preparation. They do not yet, however, make reference to the recovery phase or to how the formal transfer of leadership from the response to the recovery phase should be executed.

RECOMMENDATION 80: All central government guidance should be updated to reflect the new arrangements for recovery and Local Resilience Forums should plan, train and exercise on this basis.

⁴ <http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/response/~media/assets/www.ukresilience.info/conops%20pdf.ashx>

⁵ <http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/preparedness/ccact/~media/assets/www.ukresilience.info/emergresponse%20pdf.ashx>

⁶ <http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/response/ukgovernment/~media/assets/www.ukresilience.info/lgds%20pdf.ashx>

⁷ <http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/sitecore/content/Sites/www.ukresilience.info/response/ukgovernment/responsibilities.aspx>





Recording and reporting

This chapter examines information needs and the recording and reporting of data during the recovery phase. It contains sections on:

- gathering and collating information;
- the accuracy of data collected;
- protocols and mechanisms for reporting; and
- the publication of information.

Introduction

27.1 As in any wide-area emergency with central government involvement, the floods of summer 2007 led to the need for effective information flows during the response and recovery phases. Those seeking information included members of the public, the media, those charged with leading response and recovery actions at the local, regional and national levels, and businesses and industry associations.

27.2 Local authority leadership of the recovery phase meant that they were tasked with providing information to central government via the Government Offices (GOs). Central government, in turn, provided information on the position on recovery overall.

27.3 Chapter 13 sets out the difficulties experienced in obtaining accurate and up-to-date information the response to the flooding. Whilst the situation improved significantly during the transition to and through the recovery phase, there are lessons to be

learned in terms of pre-planning to ensure that there is clarity at the beginning of the process about:

- who is responsible for collecting data;
- the information that is needed;
- when it is needed;
- the purposes is needed for; and
- where it will be published.

Gathering and collating information

27.4 The Review has received evidence from the Government which explains the protocols and mechanisms in place for information-gathering and reporting during the response and recovery phases. It would appear that local authorities used a variety of approaches to gather and collate information (for example on which properties had flooded, what repairs might be necessary and any special needs of the occupants). Some authorities used a home visits process, whilst others chose to record

only those who came forward for support. The former may have fuelled the perception which we have heard from some members of the public that some authorities prioritised the needs of their own tenants – by visiting those in social housing – above the needs of other flood victims in private accommodation.

27.5 Although home visits by local authorities and the voluntary and community sector were resource-intensive, the evidence shows they were beneficial and worth the investment. They enabled authorities to identify quickly those who were vulnerable and in need of particular support. Although there are data protection issues to be considered, those authorities who did undertake home visits found they were then able to use data gathered in this way to feed into the information needs of central government and other agencies, ensuring that the vulnerable received the support they needed.

The accuracy of the data

27.6 Evidence to the Review has been critical of the accuracy of the data produced. This has been particularly noticeable in relation to estimates of the number of households affected by the floods. The numbers used differed between agencies and government departments. Indeed, different organisations used different definitions of the term ‘households affected’. For example:

- the Environment Agency initially reported that there were 20,238 houses affected, although it later became clear that this estimate included only properties affected by fluvial (main river) flooding;
- the Cabinet Office initially reported that 55,357 houses had been affected but it would seem that this estimate included properties which did not have flood water entering living quarters; and
- many central government departments reported a figure of 48,000 households affected, an estimate which covered households where flood water had entered living premises but which did not cover properties which had outbuildings and gardens flooded.

27.7 In addition, there have been many references to over 7,000 businesses having been ‘affected’ (a figure that we have used in this report). However the Review has found it difficult to clarify how this figure was derived – for example, whether it is based on flood water having entered business premises or whether it includes businesses that experienced secondary effects, such as loss due to the non-delivery of goods and services or the absence of staff.

Protocols and mechanisms for reporting

27.8 Submissions to the Review have indicated the frustration with the information gathering process.

“There are multiple requests for information which seem fragmented and replicated. Information is being requested that is not possible to give. A clearer outline and understanding of what is required would be useful.”

– LGA Survey

27.9 The agreed protocols and mechanisms for reporting included a template which was completed at the regional level by GOs, in an attempt not to overburden and divert those dealing with recovery at the local level. The intention was to have an agreed set of reporting information which produced accurate data and reduced the need for ad hoc requests. Submissions to the Review show this approach was welcomed by the GOs.

27.10 However, the Review has also heard from local authorities that, while the handling of requests for information and the deadlines set did improve throughout the recovery phase, there are instances even today where information is being requested:

- with unreasonably tight deadlines;
- directly from local authorities by government departments and other agencies without going through the mechanisms established by CLG and the relevant GO; and
- which is novel or not readily available.

27.11 While the actions taken by the Government described above did ease the bureaucratic burden associated with information reporting, the Review believes that more attention and forethought should be given to agreeing the criteria, definitions and mechanisms for reporting in advance. Thought should be given to who needs information, what information they need and the format they need it in. In this respect, the Review is pleased to learn that the Cabinet Office is currently working with the GOs and other Departments to agree an improved, standard GO situation report template.

27.12 In taking forward this work, the Cabinet Office should consider not only the immediate needs of the various organisations involved but also the need for key indicators to allow the measurement of wider impacts or trends, for example on business recovery. Thus, for example, the Department for Children Schools and Families will want indicators on the impact on local schools or the disruption caused to school education, while Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) will want indicators of the impact on businesses, perhaps by sector, and the wider impact on the local economy. Key indicators should be agreed with the main stakeholders, including:

- lead departments;
- the GOs;
- the RDAs;
- upper tier local authorities; and
- public and private sector associations (such as the ABI and LGA).

RECOMMENDATION 81: There should be an agreed framework, including definitions and timescales, for local-central recovery reporting.

Publication of information

27.13 One of the main indicators used during both the response and recovery phases to measure the scale of damage and speed of recovery was that of ‘households affected’ – replaced later by the indicator on ‘households who are still displaced’. Data in this area was also used to support the targeting of resources and the direction of actions to maximise their impact. The figure for households still displaced was used most recently in January 2008 by the Government to make further payments of the Flood Recovery Grant, discussed in Chapter 28.

27.14 Perhaps most importantly for those affected, such information is a very clear signal of progress and of the effectiveness of the efforts being made by all those engaged in the recovery phase. When published, it has attracted wide interest and allowed both government and the insurance industry to be called to account. This is extremely beneficial – as we say elsewhere in this Report, the number of people out of their homes has remained unacceptably high and every pressure which focuses effort on bringing down numbers more quickly is to be strongly welcomed.

27.15 However, the Review has not found any evidence of a specific pre-agreed timeframe or method for publishing such information. Rather, we have identified a variety of publication channels used such as:

- the House of Commons, either during debate, via written updates or as a response to questions posed by elected members;
- in the media, through government press releases and as a result of investigations by media organisations, at national and local levels; and
- via a host of other channels such as local publications and debates.

27.16 The Review believes that the methods and timescales of publication of data should be pre-planned, perhaps in parallel with producing wider information templates. The Review believes that this would enable those seeking information to be clear in advance about what will be reported and when, which may help reduce the number of ad hoc and time-pressured requests.

RECOMMENDATION 82: Following major flooding events, the Government should publish monthly summaries of the progress of the recovery phase, including the numbers of households still displaced from all or part of their homes.



Bank of England

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9

Funding for recovery

This chapter examines the costs of recovery and funding support. It contains sections on:

- individuals and communities;
- businesses;
- local authorities; and
- new funding arrangements.

Introduction

28.1 The total costs of the summer 2007 floods to public and private sectors and to businesses and individuals are estimated to run into billions of pounds. They ranked as the most costly floods in the world last year.

28.2 Damage caused by the floods affected individuals, homeowners, farmers and businesses as well as public buildings and infrastructure such as schools and roads. Funds to cover the repair and replacement of goods and property, and to compensate for loss of business, came from a number of sources and via an assortment of funding mechanisms. In some cases people were happy with the speed of payment and the amounts given. However, in many cases there were concerns that advice on funding was inconsistent and the procedures for obtaining funds were complex and inflexible.

28.3 Evidence to the Review shows that different people and organisations have different opinions about who should fund the costs of recovery from flooding and the sums required. Many look to the various layers of government for support and have expectations that do not necessarily match the finite funds available, leading to disappointment and criticism.

28.4 The Review has also received a range of evidence which indicates that, although the schemes and payments were broadly welcomed, there remains room for improvement in respect of:

- the length of time it took to receive funds;
- clarity over processes;
- certainty about the sums that could be expected; and
- the allocation of funds to provide the greatest benefit.

Individuals and communities

Costs

28.5 The largest expenses for individuals were the costs of replacing vehicles and the moveable contents in their homes, for example furniture, televisions and washing machines, and the costs of repair to buildings, fixtures and fittings. People also had to fund additional equipment to dry their homes, to buy cleaning products, as well as unexpected costs such as take-away food or increased mobile phone usage where land-lines were disrupted.

Support

28.6 Building and contents insurance funded the vast majority of costs to individuals and homeowners. In information submitted to the Review, the Association of British Insurers (ABI) has estimated the average domestic claim for the June and July 2007 floods at between £30,000 and £40,000. Costs for those without insurance were covered through public funds such as grants from local authorities and the Department for Work and Pensions, as well as support from the voluntary and community sector, as discussed below.

Flood Recovery Grant

28.7 The Flood Recovery Grant (FRG) was a new grant scheme established in June 2007 and administered by Communities and Local Government (CLG) for local authorities. FRG was intended to support local flood recovery work, particularly for people in greatest and most immediate need. The grant was paid to lower-tier local authorities on the basis of the number of households affected by flooding (those where water entered the property, not just the grounds). As of June 2008, the total amount of money paid out to local authorities under FRG had reached £18.39 million: £10 million in June 2007, £7.39 million in July 2007, and a further £1 million in January 2008 to the nine local authorities who had the greatest number of households still displaced on 17 January 2008.

28.8 FRG was a non-ring fenced grant for local authorities, who could decide locally how to use it. In practice, this included:

- support payments to flood-affected households based on a range of criteria;
- provision to flood-affected households of new household items (for example fridges, cookers, washing machines);
- provision of temporary caravans to allow people to remain within their communities while their houses were repaired; and
- other priorities set through consultation with flood-affected householders and communities, including resilience projects.

28.9 A number of submissions to the Review praised the flexible nature of FRG payments, which ensured that money was provided to local authorities quickly. Central government was also able to meet continuing needs, which led to the welcome payment in January to those areas still with the greatest need in respect of displaced households.

28.10 There has been some criticism that the amounts allocated in FRGs did not necessarily give compensation commensurate with losses incurred within a local authority's area. The Review notes this concern, although, it also appreciates that the intended purpose of the FRG was to support local flood recovery work, not to compensate for all losses. However, many local authorities reported that because the FRG funding was new and unexpected (though much appreciated) without well established triggering criteria, it is not possible for them to factor this assistance into their contingency plans for future emergencies. In response to this, the Government has argued that such funds should not be seen as setting a precedent and each and every emergency should be seen as different and requiring a tailored solution.

28.11 Some people felt that the distribution of FRG payments to individual households was a 'postcode lottery' and that the allocation rewarded the uninsured. While the Review acknowledges this strength of feeling, it is our opinion that the uninsured remain those who have ultimately suffered most from the 2007 floods. For example, many uninsured owner occupiers had little option but to remain living

inside homes that were barely habitable and were unable to replace items essential to everyday life. In many cases they were forced to rely upon support from charitable donations or on the generosity of friends and family.

28.12 There were also problems with the mechanisms used to pay the FRG. In some cases, the FRG was paid to lower-tier local authorities, although upper-tier local authorities had the lead on social responsibilities. Evidence has been submitted that certain county councils (upper-tier) wished to carry out work in response to their social duties but lacked funding, the funds having been provided direct to the district council (lower-tier). The Review is of the opinion that, whilst in the majority of occasions the lower-tier is the correct level for funding, the principle behind the FRG is that funding should be provided to aid those most in need. In addition, because the mechanisms of allocating FRG did not allow the Government to spend the money directly there was no guarantee that funds went to those with the greatest need. In this respect, the Review is of the opinion that greater consideration needs to be given to the possible role of the voluntary and community sector in using its local knowledge to help to indicate areas of greatest need to aid allocation. Finally, there is a question over the funds allocated to the FRG which have remained unspent. As has been mentioned previously, money available from the FRG remains limited and is intended to help those most in need. **It is the strong belief of the Review, particularly in light of the number of people still living in temporary or flood-damaged accommodation, that money provided for recovery purposes should be used without further delay.**

Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants

28.13 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) gave funds using two existing payment mechanisms from the Social Fund: Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants. Crisis Loans are intended for people on benefits or a low income, and Community Care Grants are for people on income-related benefits with little or no access to capital or other resources to meet need. Crisis Loans are repayable with amounts taken weekly from existing benefits, whereas Community Care Grants are non-repayable.

28.14 A contingency reserve of £1 million was available to meet the extra call on grants as a result of the flooding, to help with the replacement of essential household items. As at the end of February 2008, a total of 1,791 Social Fund Payments had been made with respect to flooding (see table 9).

28.15 Evidence provided to the Review suggests that the availability of the two schemes was not widely publicised. It is noteworthy that over 96 per cent of Community Care Grants were paid within the Yorkshire and the Humber region, while the Government's latest figures (May 2008) on those claiming income support (and therefore eligible to receive a Community Care Grant), are broadly similar between the affected regions: Yorkshire and the Humber constituted 9.59 per cent of the national total while the South-East and South-West regions constituted 9.52 per cent and 6.97 per cent of the national total of income support claimants respectively.

Table 9 – Payment mechanisms from the Social Fund

Crisis Loans		Total
Living expenses	347 awards	£20,000
Items	158 awards	£58,000
Community Care Grants	1,286 awards	£732,900

28.16 The Review is aware of factors within the Yorkshire and the Humber region (such as the low take-up of insurance and the large proportion of cities affected, with associated socio-economic factors, compared with other affected areas) that may explain the apparent discrepancy. Nevertheless, the Review believes that questions around these figures, and the effectiveness of methods of publicising the schemes which could underlie them, may be mirrored in other areas. **We would welcome further studies to explore how effective publicity of the schemes was elsewhere. Lessons from such studies should ensure that appropriate uptake of the schemes is optimised in future.**

28.17 In supporting local flood recovery work, particularly for people in greatest and most immediate need, the FRG and DWP's Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants can be seen to have overlapping targets. **To avoid confusion and to remove the inconsistencies observed within these funding schemes, the Review would welcome a more joined up approach from CLG and DWP.**

Voluntary and community sector

28.18 The Review would like to draw attention to the excellent work of the voluntary and community sector during the recovery phase. In all of the affected regions, local voluntary organisations played a crucial role along with national voluntary organisations such as the Salvation Army, OXFAM, RSCPA, St John Ambulance, the WRVS and the Women's Institute. The money provided by local funds, such as the Gloucestershire Relief Fund (which raised over £1.8 million), helped meet uninsured financial losses, as well as costs relating to damaged possessions, equipment and, for businesses, machinery.

28.19 The British Red Cross is worthy of separate mention. Its National Floods Appeal was launched on 24 July 2007 to support those affected by the floods. As of June 2008, the appeal had raised more than £3.8 million. The British Red Cross invited organisations in affected areas to apply for grants to help those most in need, such as the elderly, disabled

or those on low incomes. It began making grants on 5 October 2007 to local authorities and charities to support people affected by the floods. Funds were allocated on the basis of the scale and severity of the flooding suffered in a particular area, and based on the number of homes that were affected.

Businesses

Costs

28.20 The costs of the floods to businesses resulted from stock and equipment loss, damage to premises and business interruption. In some cases, stock was still usable but was marked down in quality, while in others the stock write-off was serious enough to halt operations for a considerable time. The loss of business often resulted in cash-flow problems and many businesses had to reduce staffing levels.

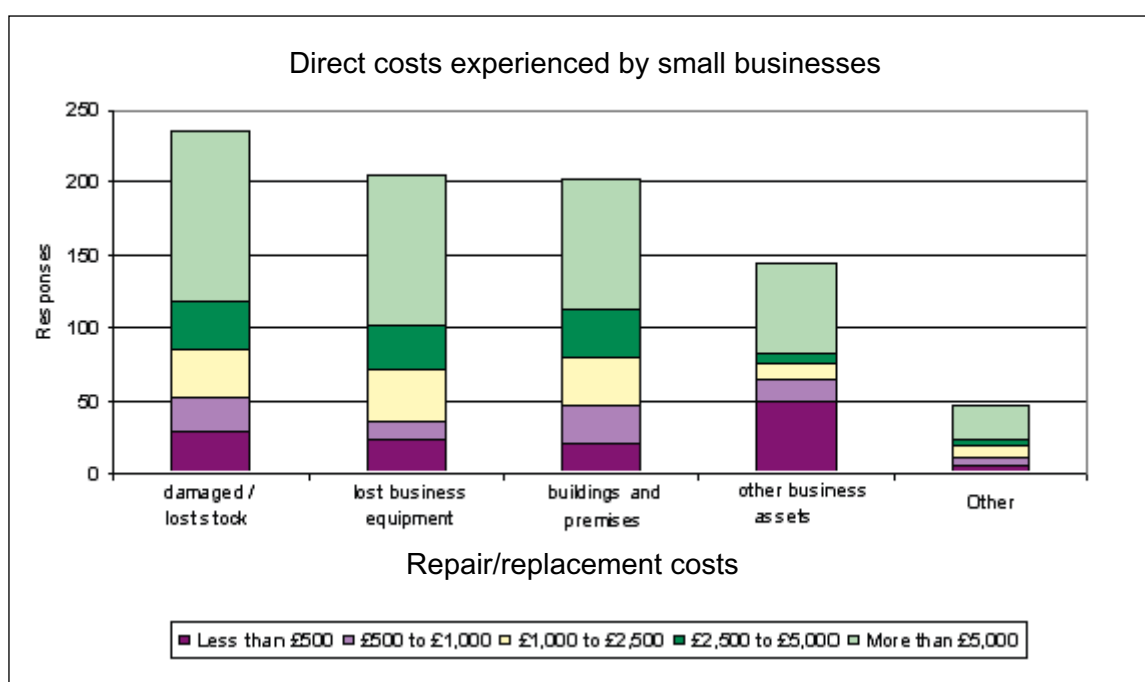
28.21 A survey of 81 local authorities affected by the flooding, carried out for the Review by the Local Government Association (LGA), showed that, as of February 2008, 20 of these local authorities were still experiencing adverse impacts to their local economy, with the same number citing adverse impacts to their leisure and tourism industries. And impacts are substantial; one local authority said hotel bookings were down 40 per cent and another said the losses to tourism amounted to £150m.

Costs to businesses in Yorkshire

A study was undertaken by EKOS Consulting Ltd to assess the impact of Yorkshire Forward's response to the 2007 floods and the interim report has been shared with the Review. For the study, 303 small businesses and 23 larger companies who received RDA grants were surveyed.

Replacing and repairing damaged/lost items (stock, machinery and assets) was one of the biggest immediate costs affecting both large and small businesses. Many large businesses experienced direct losses of over £25,000 (the chart illustrates that the comparative figure for small business was over £5,000). Of those small business which experienced lost sales, approximately 40 per cent incurred an indirect cost of over £10,000 and a further 25 per cent judged this to be over £25,000. Many large businesses experienced indirect losses of over £100,000.

The consultants believe the cost estimates are conservative and are undertaking further work to obtain more detailed figures for those large businesses with direct losses of over £25,000.



Agricultural businesses

28.22 Agricultural businesses suffered all of the above expenses as homeowners and businesses, as well as incurring secondary impacts - for example, poorer yields and lost crops caused by the floods resulted in a significant loss of income for arable farmers. Farmers were also facing animal disease restrictions associated with successive outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, Blue Tongue and avian influenza. These restrictions

meant that animals could not be sold at the most lucrative time and farmers incurred additional costs when purchasing higher priced replacement forage. Some arable farmers had forward supply contracts in place, notably for potatoes and milk, and were required to source the products from other places, typically at a loss, to avoid breaching the terms of the contract.

28.23 Case studies have shown that irrespective of the type of farm, farmers faced considerable losses resulting from the flooding, ranging from around £18,000 to approximately £150,000. With the exception of damage to equipment and to dwellings, insurance is not available to cover losses for farmers and they therefore had to meet the costs from their own funds.

28.24 The submission to the Review from the National Farmers' Union (NFU) highlighted the costs incurred by farmers in clearing up waste and debris brought down by the floods and deposited on their land from properties and towns upstream. During a visit by the Review to a farm in Upton-upon-Severn, the farmer told us how this waste comprised tonnes of household rubbish, as well as larger items such as gas canisters and telegraph poles, sufficient to fill tens of skips. Disposal costs included the time and manpower needed to collect the rubbish as well as landfill fees. The NFU stated to the Review that farmers would like some immediate support to undertake this work in the aftermath of a major flood, as well as waiving of the landfill fees associated with disposing of this waste, or some arrangement for the waste to be collected free of charge, since they are not the originator of the waste but are left to deal with it. **The Review would welcome the Environment Agency examining this matter further in discussion with the NFU.**

Support

28.25 As with individuals, insurance was the main source of reimbursement for businesses, particularly business continuity insurance. In information submitted to the Review, the ABI has estimated the average commercial claim for the June and July floods at £90,000. However, a number of businesses also had existing contingency plans as well as reserve funds that they were able to use following the summer floods.

Regional Development Agencies

28.26 As well as drawing upon their own reserves and seeking reimbursement through insurance, many businesses also received support from the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for their area. RDAs are

government bodies that support economic development in the regions and are financed through the Single Budget, a fund which pools money from all the contributing government departments (BERR, CLG, DIUS, Defra, DCMS and UKTI). The RDAs made over £11 million available to support business recovery in the affected areas. However, their packages of support to businesses affected by the flooding differed significantly from region to region.

28.27 RDA grants were paid under *de minimis* State Aid rules, which are the means by which the European Union ensures that individual member states do not distort the principle of 'fair and open competition' through the use of financial assistance. While the overwhelming majority of evidence to the Review from businesses was positive with regard to RDA funding, particularly with regard to the speed at which the funds were established and the percentage of businesses that benefited from the relief funds, there were questions raised over the use of *de minimis* State Aid rules, provision of information as to what could be claimed, the value for money of the funds and differences in awards and advice between regions. In this respect, comments from businesses' submissions to the Review included:

"If a friend hadn't told us we wouldn't have known about it"

"There needs to be improved clarity about what can be claimed for, particularly relating to uninsured losses."

"Grants are not always the answer – some form of low interest loan or something like the Small Business Loan Guarantee Fund might be better."

"The grants on offer to farmers are too small to make any impact."

28.28 The NFU queried the use of *de minimis* State Aid rules. They make the case that farmers are in the unique position of having substantial uninsurable losses (largely in crops) and that the payment under the rules is far from sufficient. The NFU argue that the RDAs did not consider a further option which is to apply

to the European Commission for permission to use one of the other methods of calculating financial assistance, such as Agricultural Exemption Regulations (which pay 80 to 90 per cent compensation) or the Fully Notified Scheme Under Agricultural State Aid Guidelines (which pays 100 per cent compensation).

28.29 There remains disagreement over the advice that Defra provided the RDAs in relation to the options available to them, with the RDAs maintaining that they were unaware of options beyond the *de minimis* State Aid rules, whereas Defra is of the opinion that the RDAs merely clarified whether *de minimis* rules could be applied and that the RDAs already had complete knowledge of the alternative arrangements. It is the opinion of the Review that this is an example of how the lack of pre-planned arrangements has resulted in a less than fully considered approach.

28.30 In addition, there have been some criticisms about whether the variety of schemes between regions offered the best value for money. This disparity was brought to the attention of the Review on a number of occasions. For example, interest-free loans were commonly requested by both businesses and farmers, and the West Midlands provided such loans, while the other RDAs did not. In the regions where loans were not available, the provision of grants to cover the costs of business planning advisers only served more to anger than to aid. Those affected argued powerfully that they needed money, not advice.

28.31 There have been a number of suggestions that a national long-term low-cost loan system be established, similar to the Small Firms Loans Guarantee scheme currently offered by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), to assist businesses and farmers after an exceptional emergency. The Review believes that such a scheme could potentially be of great benefit, however, we are also of the opinion that there is considerable work yet to be carried out before it is known whether this is a viable option. **The Review would welcome Defra and BERR considering such a scheme.**

Local authorities

Costs

28.32 The LGA survey of 81 local authorities affected by the summer 2007 floods showed that, as of February 2008, 57 local authorities (70 per cent) were struggling to find the resources to carry out recovery work. Comments from the survey included:

“Some areas have produced a large piece of work that has had an impact on workload and budgets.”

“[We] spent one year’s worth of budget on the floods so none of the programme of maintenance can be actioned in this year’s budget.”

“Ideally, one officer would work with town and parish councils to prepare for an emergency, run training days and act as a go between. There isn’t the money to do this.”

Table 10 – Total flooding costs to local authorities

Local Authority Service costs*	£ million	£ million	£ million
	Revenue	Capital	Total
Emergency action	31.288	0	31.288
Highways	0	81.755	80.755
Schools	26.305	11.371	37.676
Housing	31.809	0	31.809
Social Services	0.734	0	0.734
Other	26.621	24.134	50.754
		Total	233.016

*Data taken from Audit Commission publication – 'Staying Afloat – financing emergencies', December 2007, which sets out the service costs of flooding to 18 severely affected local authorities that took part in the study

Support

28.33 The Prime Minister, in his announcement of 14 July 2007, acknowledged that the summer 2007 floods constituted an exceptional emergency and therefore committed the Government to make available additional resources to support communities affected.

28.34 However, the evidence shows that before this announcement there was considerable uncertainty among both local authorities and central government during the flooding over the definition of 'an exceptional emergency'.

Funding schemes

28.35 Many submissions to the Review from local authorities stated that funding the costs of the recovery phase, including humanitarian assistance, was as vital as funding the costs of the emergency response. However, many people perceived that recovery did not receive the same priority.

28.36 The majority of payments made to support the communities affected by the flooding were made via central government departments, using a combination of existing mechanisms and new schemes. By June 2008,

the Government had made available a package of up to £118 million. The range of mechanisms available to fund recovery from the floods is outlined below in detail.

Insurance and reserves

28.37 Under the current funding models, costs to local authorities for non-exceptional emergencies and insurable costs must be met by the local authorities themselves. Councils have a long-accepted responsibility to prepare themselves for unforeseen events using insurance, self-insurance and reserve funds, as appropriate locally. Guidance¹ issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy on local authority reserves and balances lists "*the adequacy of the authority's insurance arrangements to cover major unforeseen risks*" as one of the factors authorities should consider in deciding the level of their general reserves.

28.38 The Review has considered evidence from local authorities about their insurance decisions. We do not take a view on whether decisions were appropriate or not as we consider that insurance, self-insurance and the use of reserves remain a question for the relevant local authorities. The Review maintains that local authorities must take responsibility

¹ <http://www.cipfa.org.uk/pt/laap.cfm>

for the consequences of their decisions – central government will not fund costs for non-exceptional emergencies or insurable costs.

28.39 Nevertheless, the Review considers that further work by government is required around this model. The Government should support local authorities by commissioning work to review whether it constitutes value for money for local authorities to use commercial and self-insurance, and whether they have sufficient and appropriate information against which they can make risk-based decisions.

Recommendation 83: Local authorities should continue to make arrangements to bear the cost of recovery for all but the most exceptional emergencies, and should revisit their reserves and insurance arrangements in light of last summer's floods.

28.40 As well as funds from insurance, self-insurance and reserves, the exceptional nature of the emergency meant that, following the 2007 floods, many local authorities were also eligible for payments from funding schemes.

Response

28.41 The Bellwin scheme, administered by CLG, is a well-established method for compensating local authorities. The scheme is designed to fund the non-insurable, immediate response efforts and would, for example, cover: the costs of providing sandbags; evacuating people from dangerous structures and works to make them safe; temporary re-housing; and the costs of initial repairs to highways, pavements and footpaths and work to clear debris causing obstruction or damage to them. However, money from the Bellwin scheme cannot be used for post-emergency costs of recovery such as capital expenditure.

28.42 A Bellwin scheme is only set up at the discretion of Ministers, as was the case following the floods of 2007. Given that the events were of an unprecedented scale and severity, the following amendments to the scheme were announced for both the June and July floods:

- extension of the period for which local authorities are eligible to claim – from two to six months – meaning they could claim for more of the costs they incurred; and
- an increase in the proportion of costs that local authorities could claim to 100 per cent (instead of the current 85 per cent), once the costs rose past the given threshold (0.2 per cent of their revenue budget). The threshold has been a feature of the Bellwin scheme since its inception and represented the minimum amount which Ministers in successive administrations decided was reasonable for authorities to pay from their own resources.

28.43 Fifty local authorities registered for assistance from the June scheme and fifty-two registered for the July scheme. Twenty of these local authorities registered for both schemes. As of June 2008 around £18 million has been paid out through the Bellwin Scheme. The majority of responses to the interim report praised the scheme and it was felt, particularly amongst the emergency services, that it met the needs of the situation. People were also grateful for the increase in funding (up to 100 per cent from 85 per cent of eligible costs incurred).

28.44 However, the Review received suggestions that the scheme should be reviewed in light of the 2007 floods. Affected local authorities suggested that some of the Bellwin provisions were felt to be arbitrary or unclear, such the provision allowing for roads to be cleared but not public rights of way, such as rural footpaths and bridleways (for which we understand there have been no funds made available from the lead department, Defra). Furthermore, submissions to the Review suggested that consideration needed to be given to the funding of related costs incurred by organisations responsible for managing the recovery processes, such as increased staff costs.

28.45 There was particular concern around local authorities' expectation that government would fund 100 per cent of the costs of responding to and recovering from the 2007 floods. Local authorities have reported to

the Review that this was their understanding arising from promises made by the Prime Minister during visits to flood-affected areas and during debates in Parliament. Having explored this issue, the Review considers that this misunderstanding was generated by the explanation of the Bellwin limit being extended to 100 per cent. This meant eligible Bellwin costs, not all costs and not costs associated with the recovery phase.

Schools

28.46 There are no centrally held figures on the total costs to schools damaged by the June and July 2007 floods. However the Audit Commission report '*Staying Afloat – financing emergencies*', published in December 2007, noted that 858 schools had been reported as damaged, of which the 500 schools who took part in the Audit Commission study incurred damage costing almost £38 million.

28.47 The LGA survey showed that as of February 2008, 15 per cent of local authorities continued to see an impact on schools, mainly because of continuing repair works, with some pupils still being taught in temporary accommodation.

28.48 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) made a £14 million grant available for schools and children's services affected by the June and July 2007 floods.

28.49 Nearly all of the funding was allocated on the basis of a formula worked out in discussion with the affected areas. The same formula was used for the areas hit by the June floods and those affected by the July floods and allowed a set sum per school 'severely damaged', 'significantly damaged' and 'slightly damaged' respectively. A sum was also allowed per pupil in flood-hit schools and per home damaged, these sums acting as a proxy measure for disruption to services for children and families. As well as these formula-based allocations, DCSF gave an additional payment to Gloucestershire of £350,000 for the loss of water supplies, as this caused severe disruption to services for children, young people and families in addition to the flood damage.

28.50 The general DCSF grant could only be spent on the provision of education or education services, childcare or services related to childcare, and the promotion of welfare of children and their parents. In practice, this included:

- the provision of temporary accommodation for schools and 'early years' and childcare services, including Sure Start children's centres;
- the provision of additional summer activities for children and young people from communities affected by flooding; or
- family support workers to help parents, children and young people handle the pressures and demands resulting from the flooding, including counselling.

28.51 Because the DCSF scheme was based on the level of damage and number of pupils affected, it did not take account of whether the costs for repair (and other related areas) were already being met by insurance or other sources. In the opinion of the Review, this approach does not guarantee value-for-money.

Tourism

28.52 On 14 August 2007, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced a £1 million cash injection to promote tourism, rural destinations and visitor attractions. Of the £1 million, £750,000 came from DCMS, while £250,000 was provided by Visit Britain. A number of DCMS-sponsored museums were offered short-term curatorial and conservation support, for example where documents needed urgent treatment.

Roads

28.53 The Department for Transport (DfT) announced in July 2007, as part of the Government relief package, that funding would be made available to help local authorities repair flood-damaged roads through its emergency capital highway maintenance funding scheme, which helps local authorities address urgent capital resources and works needs arising from serious unforeseeable events.

28.54 The broad principle adopted by DfT over a range of differing emergencies in recent years has been that claims for emergency funding will be considered where the cost of works needed to restore infrastructure to the level of provision applying before the emergency exceeds 15 per cent of an authority's formulaic Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital allocation for highway maintenance for the relevant year. As of June 2008, first stage allocations of £23 million for repairs to the local highway had been confirmed in writing to local authorities and the majority of the funding had been paid. DfT issued guidance for emergency funding on 8 August 2007 and appointed a specialist to help local authorities obtain a clear assessment of the costs and to submit their claims.

28.55 A similar DfT scheme had been operational in earlier emergencies. However, like many of the other funding schemes described, this scheme, while welcome, was also an ad-hoc solution to the issue of funding. The guidance issued in August 2007 provided advice, which previously was not available, on the circumstances under which a claim for financial assistance could be made.

European Union Solidarity Fund

28.56 The European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) is intended to contribute towards the costs of damages incurred where no other funding is available, including emergency relief and reconstruction operations. As such, it can be used to support the costs of emergency services, cleaning up after an emergency and putting infrastructure back into working order. The Government submitted an application to the EUSF on 20 August 2007, requesting help in meeting the uninsurable costs of the floods.

28.57 The European Commission announced on 10 December 2007 that they proposed aid totalling €162.388 million (which equates to around £110 million) to help deal with the damage caused by floods in England, Northern Ireland and Wales in June and July 2007. This aid payment of £110 million was approved by the European Commission in April 2008 as a contribution to the costs of recovery. However, due to the UK abatement mechanism agreed between Government and the EU, in place

since 1984, the net value to the UK of this allocation is £31 million.

28.58 The Government has used the money offset by the EUSF funding to set up a Restoration Fund to provide additional funding to local authorities affected by the 2007 floods. The Government has reported that detailed decisions on how the money will be spent have yet to be made but it is anticipated that the grant will go towards reimbursing part of the cost of emergency measures such as rescue services, cleaning up after flood damage, and restoring basic infrastructure.

New funding arrangements

28.59 Problems with existing funding systems for local authorities were thus twofold: some organisations at the local level had not made proper arrangements to cope with significant financial shocks, and there was no coherent pre-agreed system for funding at the national level.

28.60 To improve future funding arrangements, a number of submissions made to the Review suggested that funding for recovery must be flexible in order to allow for local needs and that national funding must not distort local decision-making nor provide disincentives for local authorities to properly insure and maintain necessary reserve funds. The Review agrees with these principles. But we also believe that the benefits of regional and local decision-making and transparent processes being implemented nationally are not mutually exclusive.

28.61 While the Review accepts that there are valid reasons for funding schemes not being identical across the country, the reasoning for the disparity of funding across areas and regions following the summer 2007 floods was not always transparent and justifiable. There was certainly a need for greater consistency.

28.62 The Review believes that the problems observed are likely to be due to the speed with which schemes were put together and distributed. In contrast, pre-planned schemes, established in non-emergency situations, give the opportunity for the difficulties identified

to be considered. Calls by the Review for consistency do not imply advocacy of a generic approach to decision making. Pre-agreed parameters and principles may lead to different approaches or schemes at local and regional levels. But, they also ensure a coherent rationale and provide transparency around the differences.

28.63 Local organisations must also prepare themselves better. Most of the losses incurred during the summer were insurable, either through commercial insurance or through self-insurance and use of reserves. Local authorities in particular already have clear direction to build contingency into their financial arrangements, and this must continue. As with all other aspects of the response to emergencies, local organisations must expect to manage their own problems in the first instance and only seek support in the most difficult situations.

28.64 Nevertheless, the effects of the most significant emergencies can cause very serious financial problems. Individual authorities can face problems for which insurance is unavailable or its cost unreasonable. In the past, just as during the summer floods, central government has recognised this through generous ad-hoc funding schemes. But the temporary and uncertain nature of this approach undermines efficiency, and encourages local authorities to over or under-provide for disasters.

28.65 Having reviewed all of the existing means by which recovery work is funded, the Review therefore continues to believe that there are core principles upon which recovery funding should be based. These principles should be developed with advance planning and forethought. The opinion of the Review is that, although there is a clear need for local decision-making based upon specific local needs, the current variety of funding to local authorities, individuals and businesses is detrimental to the recovery process following from a national emergency. In addition, the Review considers that the ad-hoc nature of the schemes used to support recovery from the

2007 floods was not necessarily the best use of taxpayers' money and improved planning would enable significant targeting and therefore better use of limited funds. The Review believes that financial assistance can be revised to improve speed, simplicity and certainty.

28.66 The Review considers that that any future model for financial assistance should be designed to minimise unnecessary expenditure and maximise value for money for public finances collectively, rather than singularly for central or local government, and that arrangements for distributing any financial assistance during the recovery phase should be transparent and equitable.

28.67 The Review believes that there is a strong argument for a scheme to be created specifically to fund the capital costs of recovery from exceptional emergencies such as the floods of 2007. The new scheme would receive funding from relevant central government departments, be delivered through a single funding gateway and supported by the work of Government Offices. Such an arrangement would end the current piecemeal approach and allow for more accurate financial planning by local authorities. Effectively, it would be a kind of public sector self-insurance for the most serious events.

RECOMMENDATION 84: Central government should have pre-planned rather than ad-hoc arrangements to contribute towards the financial burden of recovery from the most exceptional emergencies, on a formula basis.





Normalisation and regeneration

This chapter examines the transition from the recovery phase to normalisation or regeneration. It contains sections on:

- normalisation versus regeneration; and
- examples of regeneration programmes following emergencies.

Normalisation versus regeneration?

29.1 Recovering from a major event, such as the 2007 summer floods, is a long-term process taking many months if not years. Determining when an area has 'recovered' very much depends on the definition of the aims and objectives of the recovery phase made by those involved at its outset. In some cases, this will involve returning affected areas to their previous condition - 'normalisation'. In other cases, the recovery phase will be seen as the opportunity for long-term regeneration and economic development.

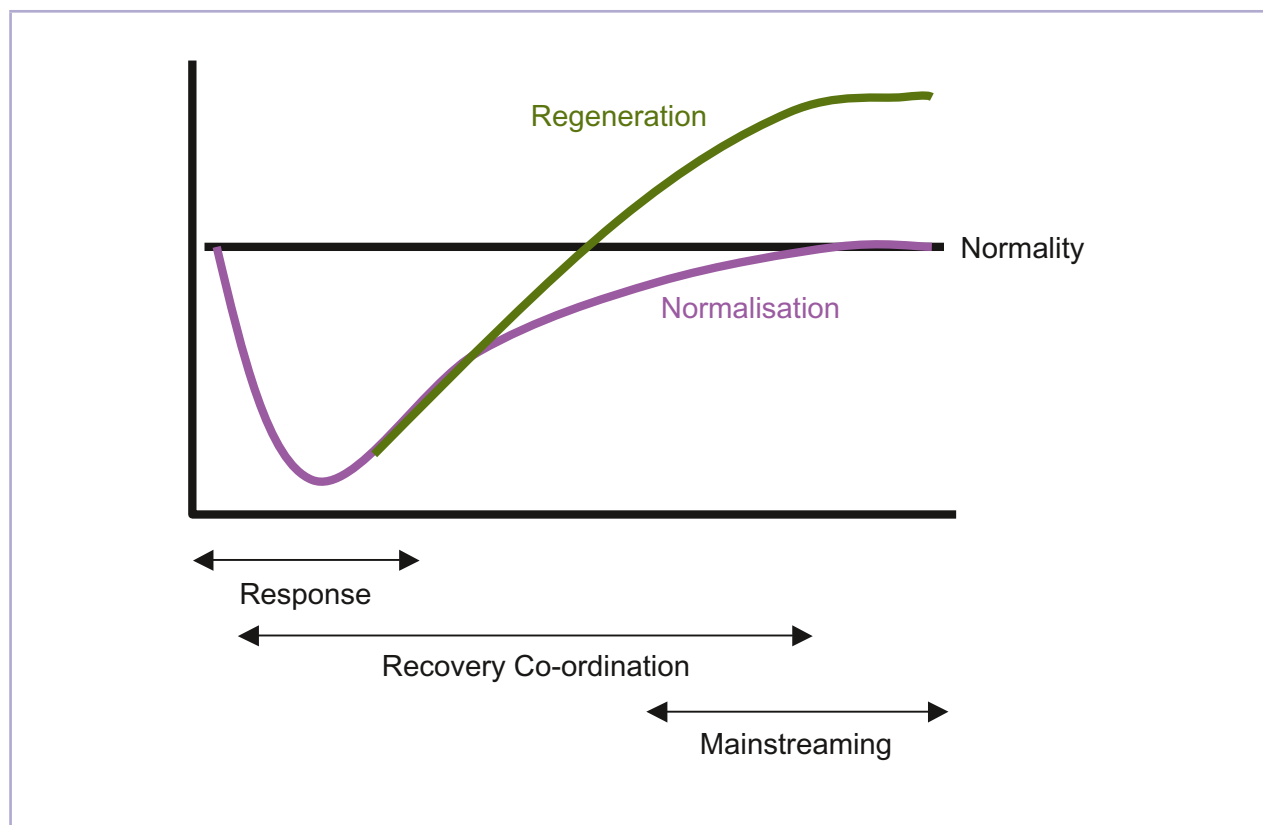
29.2 The Review believes that there is thus an important role for Recovery Co-ordination Groups (RCGs), in establishing the aims and objectives for the recovery phase, in considering the strategic choice between normalisation and regeneration of an affected area.

Recovery – the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency. This may be driven by RCGs until such time as recovery work can be delivered by an organisation's mainstream programmes.

Normalisation – local multi-agency RCGs can concentrate their efforts on action designed to restore the affected area to its previous condition.

Regeneration – local multi-agency RCGs can consider whether, in light of the damage caused and costs to recover, there is the opportunity to aspire to transformation and revitalisation. Transformation can be physical, social and economic. It can be achieved through building new homes or commercial buildings as well as through raising aspirations, improving skills and improving the environment whilst introducing new people and dynamism to an area.

Figure 16 – Recovering from an emergency



29.3 Evidence to the Review has shown that most local authorities agree that longer-term regeneration and economic development should be considered at an early stage of the recovery process, although many query where funding will come from. But evidence also shows that most authorities have opted for normalisation rather than regeneration. There are often very good reasons for this, not least a strong desire to return to a state of normality as soon as possible, including getting residents back into their homes quickly and restoring everyday services.

“The opportunity for ‘betterment’ is often overlooked in the rush to return the community to normality... the allocation of ‘betterment’ in financial terms will need to be worked through on a case by case basis”
– Havant Borough Council

“The long term recovery of the flooded areas is as integral as the physical recovery of the affected premises... Economic recovery and regeneration need to be considered and planned for on a priority basis as early in the recovery phase as possible”

– Dartford Borough Council

Examples of regeneration programmes following emergencies

29.4 The Review has found a number of regeneration programmes which followed emergencies in the UK and overseas, including the Carlisle floods of 2005, the hurricane and subsequent flooding in New Orleans and the explosion and fire at the Buncefield oil storage depot, Hemel Hempstead.

Carlisle

In January 2005, severe storms and associated heavy rain falling on already saturated ground led to the worst flooding in over 100 years in the Carlisle area, resulting in:

- 3 deaths;
- over 2,000 homes and business flooded up to 2 metres;
- more than 3,000 people homeless for up to 12 months or more;
- 40,000 addresses without power, and
- 3,000 jobs put at risk.



Left to Right: The Civic Centre flooded, and an artist's impression of what a redevelopment could look like. Reproduced with permission from Carlisle City Council

Carlisle City Council decided that the aftermath of the floods presented an opportunity to regenerate the city. A task group was formed, which included Cumbria County Council, English Partnerships and Cumbria Vision, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Carlisle and, importantly, any opportunities that the city might explore as part of the vision for the future of Carlisle. As part of the delivery of the regeneration programme, it was important for the Council to consult the general public as well as the private sector.

Under the banner 'Carlisle Renaissance', the vision was designed to lay the foundations for the city's future prosperity and growth within the following aims:

- to develop sites within the city centre, revitalise local communities and promote the city;
- to reduce worklessness, improve workforce skills and support businesses; and
- to build an accessible city, develop Carlisle's infrastructure and establish a sustainable community.

The authorities in Carlisle recognised the potential that the floods had afforded them:

"In the immediate aftermath of the floods in January 2005, Carlisle City Council... knew that it just wasn't enough to get the city back to normal, we had to do much better than that – so our mantra in the early days became 'Let's get Carlisle back to normal – but better.'

"Our key task was to oversee the flood recovery process, but we took the opportunity at that early stage to use our multi-agency group in developing a vision for the physical, social and economic regeneration in Carlisle and make the case for Carlisle Renaissance."

– Maggie Mooney, Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Carlisle City Council

Buncefield



On 11 December 2005, a number of explosions and a subsequent fire at the Buncefield oil storage depot, Hemel Hempstead resulted in:

- 40 people being injured;
- 2000 people being evacuated;
- between 300 and 325 properties being damaged;
- over 16,000 employees within the adjacent Maylands Industrial Area unable to access work;
- 92 businesses being temporarily relocated; and
- business recovery costs of £2.2 million with long-term costs in the region of £100 million over 10 years.

During the recovery phase, it became clear to the RCG that the impact on the local economy was important in terms of the longer term recovery of the community. Maylands Business Park, central to the area's economy, had over many years been losing ground to competing business parks around London. Office and employment growth had fallen significantly behind the regional norm. It was evident that Maylands had entered a slow spiral of decline prior to the explosion.

The RCG's business subgroup made the decision early during the recovery phase that its aspirations needed to be changed from recovery into one of regeneration. Work with local businesses prior to the explosion, captured in an existing 'Hemel 2020 Vision' regeneration package, part of which was a £400m 'Maylands Masterplan', could be used to support the economic and business recovery of the area.

Delivery of the Masterplan, which was adopted in September 2007, is the lynchpin of the Maylands regeneration strategy and focuses on actions to retain existing business and attract inward investment.

"Recovery is unambitious – use any disaster to think afresh, in a planned way, about the renewal aspirations" – Executive Director, Maylands Partnership

New Orleans

On 29 August 2005, the centre of Hurricane Katrina passed to the east of New Orleans causing catastrophic damage. The impact on New Orleans included:

- 1,836 deaths;
- 50 breaches in drainage canal levees and also in navigational canal levees;
- flooding to 80 per cent of the city, with some parts under 15 feet of water;
- evacuation of 90 per cent of the residents of southeast Louisiana;
- loss of electricity supply for 3 million people; and
- \$81 billion worth of damage.

In addition to their programmes for repair and rebuild, the City of New Orleans decided that the aftermath of the hurricane was an opportunity to regenerate the city. A significant proportion of the population has yet to return to the city, and the authorities recognise that they are unlikely to return until much of the infrastructure has been built, such as schools, hospitals and housing. The Unified New Orleans Plan (also known as the Citywide Strategic Recovery and Rebuilding Plan) enabled the City of New Orleans authorities to address some of the chronic problems that plagued the city before the hurricane and set a clear vision for the future of the city. The plan helps to prioritise those projects which should be undertaken first. It uses population spread as the basis for assessments of the need for a better distribution of services, such as schools and hospitals, across the city. There are also plans to replace damaged social housing with mixed community and tenure housing, in an attempt to regenerate deprived areas.

29.5 None of these examples of regeneration has been without its difficulties and critics. But the barriers and complexities are similar to those inherent in any change programme, and should not deter local RCGs from considering regeneration at an early stage.

RECOMMENDATION 85: Local Recovery Coordination Groups should make early recommendations to elected local authority members about longer-term regeneration and economic development opportunities.