

Editor's Note: As the end of summer creeps closer and we continue to await the much anticipated National Flood Resilience Review, it's hard not to wonder if we may have missed some opportunities *to fix the roof whilst the sun shines*. That's not to diminish the flooding many have endured this summer – we've barely had a flood-free month - but as we head into autumn/winter, the likelihood of further flooding seems inevitable and it begs the questions: What have we learned from the past and how well prepared are we for the future? In contrast the Calderdale Flood Review has published its findings and we ask the author what he learned from his role chairing the review.

We also continue to shine a spotlight on standards in the flood products sector and include a response from BSI about their Kitemark™ for Installation of Flood Protection Products.

We're pleased to showcase some of our partnership working with flood groups and other charities. We're also delighted to be named as one of the beneficiaries of Flood Re's charity bike ride from Lands End to John O'Groats. The team will be stopping at flood-hit locations along the way to spread the word about Flood Re and answer any questions. Good luck!

As ever, your views, comments and feedback are always welcome at bulletin@floodforum.org.uk

Spotlight On: Calderdale

Calderdale Flood Review: An Independent View

Following the severe flooding that hit the Calder Valley on Boxing Day 2015, Calderdale Council were quick to commission a review to consider the causes, impact of and response to the floods.

The review, independently chaired by the National Flood Forum's Paul Cobbing, reported its findings last month. It made recommendations to Government, Calderdale Council, the Environment Agency, the community, and other public and private bodies about the lessons to be learnt and future actions required to reduce the risks of similar flooding and to reduce the impact of any flooding that occurs.

The [interim and final reports](#) are publicly available and were widely reported in the local press. For the purposes of this article we wanted to take a different view and asked Paul Cobbing about what he learned from his experience of chairing the review.

1. In writing this report was there anything that surprised you or that you hadn't considered before?

People who have been flooded several times are often best placed to recognise the need for very significant change. The ideas that people proposed were sometimes quite radical, such as using the Neighbourhood Planning process to reconfigure a settlement, removing development from high risk areas and giving communities a new focus for the future.

There was a real enthusiasm and effort from everyone, individuals, communities the many organisations involved, as well as my fellow commissioners, to bring about change, including right across the political spectrum. The resulting report reflects all this hard work and has been accepted in full by Calderdale MBC.

The logo for the Halifax Courier, featuring the word "HALIFAX" in small capital letters above the word "Courier" in a large, bold, serif font.

Calderdale Flood Commission reveals its findings from Boxing Day floods



2. When it comes to people and communities, what were the main frustrations you heard?

Communities showed enormous energy, commitment, skills and knowledge. In some places they led the response during the Boxing Day floods. From the evidence provided it was clear that people also feel that they are frequently not listened to and ignored. Many are demanding change, rapid progress and involvement in future flood risk management. At the other end of the spectrum are communities that are not well developed, are not particularly resilient and have suffered in the recent flooding.

Communities must feel that they have a thriving future, that they can shape it with support from agencies and organisations and that they are valued. Where communities are willing to lead, in partnership with others, they should be supported to do so.

3. What do you see as the main barriers to managing flood risk both in the Calder Valley and nationally?

The single biggest barrier is the lack of understanding of the scale of ambition needed to tackle the flood risk challenges. Whether it is in government or in the rest of society, there remains the idea that flood risk can be addressed by building more flood defences. Whilst flood defences are important, particularly if they are well maintained, we must look at flood risk in a holistic way, managing water from the point at which it falls on the ground all the way to the sea on a catchment wide basis. We need to use every means at our disposal to achieve this, whether it is through warning systems, land management, storing water, river channel management, directing the flow of water through rural and urban areas, flood defence schemes, reshaping settlements to reduce their risk, individual property resilience or street scale programmes, community based approaches or incident management. We need to be managing water for both flooding and drought, for water supply and the environment, for tourism and recreation, as well as agriculture, in a well-coordinated and planned way.

4. There is an emphasis on us all taking responsibility to reduce our flood risk by reducing our carbon footprint. What do you say to those who remain to be convinced about the climate change argument?

The evidence for climate change is overwhelming on many fronts, including sea level rise, rising global temperatures, documented changes to flowering and fruiting dates, changes to the distribution of many species of birds, animals and plants, as well as direct measurements of CO₂ and methane levels. We are also seeing changes in our rainfall patterns, leading to significant flooding events every year since 2000, except for 2011, something we did not see in previous decades. It is this last point that is most significant. Whether you believe in climate change or not, the resultant flooding affects many thousands of people's lives each year, something we need to reduce, particularly as the number of people at high risk is projected to increase.

5. The Calderdale Floods Commission is the first to report its findings. With many more regional reviews underway and the publication of the National Resilience Review expected soon. How prepared do you think the country is for the potential for more flooding this winter?

Let's be realistic; it will take decades to do all of the things that need to be done to contain and reduce flood risk. On the plus side, many more people now recognise that something more radical needs to be done; whilst there's still a need for financial investment there is a significant funding programme in place for capital works and maintenance and work is underway to better prepare for future floods this winter. On the downside, the scale of action and the breadth of what is required in many different organisations is still largely unrecognised, and the role of people, businesses and communities as active partners is often missed. We need to raise both our level of ambition and our collective effort.

6. What does 'perfect' look like in terms of flood risk management for you?

Flood risk will remain. No matter how much effort we put in people will get flooded, with all the trauma that brings. But, we can do much better at ensuring that we don't create more risk as well as reducing the risks that we have at present.

Flooding is something that affects society, not just a few individuals and organisations. We need to develop a societal response, where people in all organisations recognise that they may have a role to play. There are important roles for public health services, social care, planning, education, critical infrastructure and transport, as well as traditional flood risk organisations. We all need to "own" our flooding and we need to look at how we can work in partnership to tackle it.

There is also a need for much more innovative thinking about how to approach solving flooding problems, from reshaping communities to reduce the number of properties at risk, to better use of data and local knowledge together, from finding new ways to give people a much greater sense of control over their lives to clear programmes for managing water across whole catchments.

Spotlight On: Living with flood risk in the Upper Calder Valley

We asked local Calder Valley resident, Mike Watts from Todmorden, what it's like to live with flooding.

First things first. I am a volunteer Flood Warden in association with the Environment Agency and past Chairman and Secretary to my local Flood Action Group. My experience of blackwater flooding started in June 2000. My cellar was inundated, water also came in from street level and flooded the entire ground floor, as happened to hundreds of other homes and businesses. All that remained in our home for almost a year was a cold water tap and a gas meter.

We have since been under threat many times and suffered flooding to varying degrees on four other occasions with increasing frequency. The most recent event on Boxing Day 2015 which caused the most widespread devastation experienced throughout the Upper Calder Valley on record.

While each event is different, the physical and perhaps more importantly [once the adrenaline 'rush' has subsided] the psychological stresses are devastating. Even after the event itself, the stress continues throughout the recovery process and beyond for months and in some cases years. Each threat, whether or not an event occurs, increases tension and anxiety levels and to an extent, I re-live past experiences.

Over time, beneficial hard and soft engineering improvements have been made to help handle some flooding issues involving river capacity and surface water run-off. Significant improvements in highways drainage work and maintenance regimes have helped to improve matters.

However, much more needs to be done. Notably, a dedicated storm drainage system needs to be installed along the valley floor that keeps surface and foul water separated. Also, far better co-ordination needs to take place at the onset of an event. In 2015 for example, the early emergency response seemed stilted, although the response from the people, the Fire Service and Council of Todmorden was exemplary and sustained.

Also welcome is the £5000 resilience grant that is helping people make their homes more flood resistant. I have used this scheme to backfill my cellar, provide flood gates and other measures. I believe it is as far as I can go to help protect my property. However, only about half of the expected 1800 householders who might apply have done so. The scheme is not easy to use and much has to be co-ordinated by home owners. I believe that this is a key reason for this shortfall. More needs to be done to encourage participation before this government scheme, administered by Calderdale Council, is withdrawn.

The recent Calderdale Independent Review commissioned into the Boxing Day floods touched on these [and many other] issues and those findings need to be developed and actioned at national and local level. I would like to see the approach used by the Calderdale Commissioning Team expanded to embrace all communities at risk of flooding so that a national picture emerges which in turn can be used to establish a cohesive flood investment plan that benefits our entire nation. The piecemeal, 'fire-fighting' approach needs to stop.



Learning from past flood events: Storm Desmond

Just three short weeks before the Calder Valley was hit, Storm Desmond wreaked havoc across Northern England and parts of Scotland.

Defra estimates 19,000 homes were flooded, forcing thousands to evacuate and leaving 3,000 families in need of emergency accommodation. The storm is also thought to have caused power cuts in up to 100,000 households, while 131 bridges in Cumbria required urgent inspections and repairs.

A review of flooding after Storm Desmond has been published by Zurich in collaboration with the JBA Trust. It includes contributions from the National Flood Forum who presented case studies and feedback from those people who lived through floods, many of whom are still unable to return home and are rebuilding their lives and livelihoods nine months on.

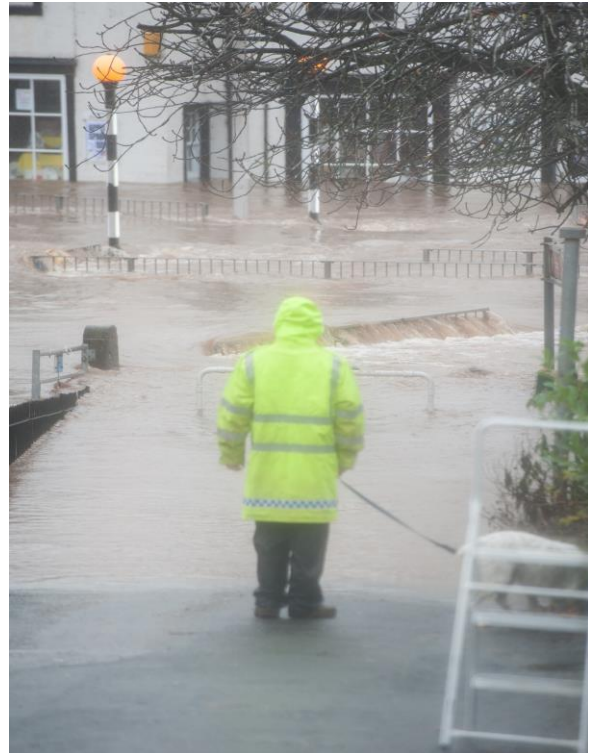
The report says it sets out to 'review the complete risk management cycle surrounding Storm Desmond and highlight what lessons can be learned'. It separates its recommendations out into three key categories that cover:

- 1) **Risk awareness and communication** - the need for improved communication of flood risks, their likelihood and what actions individuals and communities can take.
- 2) **Residual risk** - how to avoid further losses when physical defences fail or become overwhelmed, particularly with many communities often relying on a single line of defence.
- 3) **Property level resilience** - the need to learn about and to utilise the range of alternative products that are available, many of which are often easier to deploy, more cost effective and more reliable than sandbags.

The report believes that ultimately all parties need to contribute, and understand, the principle of 'integrated flood risk management strategies.' Everyone has a role to play and there isn't a single solution, rather it should be a holistic approach that makes use of all the tools available that needs to be applied and then flexed according to local requirements.

It suggests: "The real difficulty seems to be for the various agencies, organisations and individuals to 'buy into' and adopt in practice this integrated approach to managing flood risk and building resilience. One of the central purposes of this report is to advance the concept of integrated risk management as a key factor of reducing flood losses in communities such as those affected by Storm Desmond."

[You can read the full report here](#)



Sesame website

A new e-learning tool to help small businesses become more flood resilient has been made available through the [SESAME website](#).

SESAME is an online space where small businesses can share their experiences and suggestions about flooding and flood risk. It includes real-life stories about how Britain's small businesses protect themselves from the impacts of floods and achieve greater business continuity.



BSI Kitemark™ for Installation of Flood Protection Products

In our last edition we highlighted concerns raised about a new British Standards Institution (BSI) Kite Mark Installation Scheme of Flood Protection Products. In particular we, along with the Property Care Association (PCA), raised concerns that the scheme could be misleading for consumers due to the implied suggestion a house could be fully protected from flooding. We said we believed the wording of the scheme was inappropriate, that the scheme should be developed with the whole industry, rather than just one manufacturer, and a change of approach was needed. In the article the BSI was called upon to clarify the situation.

This is their response:

Following a series of meetings with Government departments, flood industry representatives and Trade bodies, BSI (British Standards Institution) have made a number of changes to clarify elements of their *BSI Kitemark™ for Installation of Flood Protection Products*. The scheme, which aims to improve the installation of Kitemark™ flood protection products, includes a robust definition of the installer's survey that focuses on the suitability of the Kitemark™ product.

It also requires the Kitemark™ installer to ensure they and the home owner are fully aware of the flood history, future flood risks and all points where flood water may enter.

The installation scheme currently includes products certified to *PAS 1188* which is the publicly available specification on which the Flood Protection Products Kitemark scheme is based.

What is the Kitemark™ for Installation of Flood Protection Products?

The *BSI Kitemark™ for Installation of Flood Protection Products* has been developed to give home owners the assurance that any Kitemark Flood Protection Products have been installed correctly by Kitemark certified installers and will provide the level of protection the product is designed and tested to achieve.

The BSI Kitemark is a symbol that around 70% of consumers recognise¹ and represents quality, safety and trust. Any product or service must be rigorously assessed in order to achieve and maintain the Kitemark. It provides an independent third party endorsement that a service consistently meets the requirements of the appropriate standards or scheme.

Whilst the scheme cannot guarantee to prevent all flooding, it is an important element in the defence against flooding. It will help determine that the product is fit for purpose, fitted correctly and will protect to the specified flood level. If water exceeds this level however, flooding might occur, for example in the case of overtopping.

What does the scheme include?

The Kitemark scheme for the *Installation of Kitemark Flood Protection Products* has four main elements:-

- There is a process in place to assess and validate the competency of the installers
- A survey is undertaken of the aperture where the Kitemark product is to be fitted to check for vulnerabilities and ensure its suitable and fit for purpose
- The product will be checked to ensure it is installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- A practical site test is carried out to demonstrate the effectiveness of the installation

In addition, installers are required to ensure the home owner has a wider understanding of the flood risk to their property and make them aware of other potential vulnerabilities.

Who is the scheme aimed at?

The scheme is available to all installation companies that can demonstrate an appropriate level of competence, normally via training and practical assessment. It has been designed specifically so that both individual organisations and those that operate in conjunction with a trade body or group of companies can benefit from it and the widely recognised Kitemark.

BSI will continue to work with flood industry representatives to develop and evolve certification and standard-based solutions to support broader flood defence issues and reduce the impact of flooding on householders.

¹GfK NOP Business Survey, Dec 2010

The Growth Project, Rochdale

We were delighted to join The Growth Project in Rochdale when they re-opened their flood damaged gardens following the winter storms. The project aims to help people with mental health issues on their road to recovery by using green spaces, gardening, plants and horticulture to help individuals develop both mentally and physically.

We have been working with the project and helping to raise awareness of flooding and resilience for more than a year. This was never more important, than on Boxing Day 2015 when the project's allotments were flooded causing extensive damage.



A spokesperson said: "All the fences around the site had been washed away and everything that wasn't tied down was destroyed by the water. Even the metal container, that was the size of a double garage, had floated hundreds of yards from its original position.

"All the vegetables that had been grown for over winter had to be composted because of the contamination from the flood-water."

The financial and emotional costs were high but the project committed to returning their allotments to their former glory and the National Flood Forum's Sarah Parkington was delighted to join them for the grand opening this summer.

Sarah said: "The project has experienced flooding a few times in the past but Boxing Day was the most damaging of all. The fact they managed to re-open in readiness for Rochdale in Bloom and the National Garden Scheme this summer is fantastic and it's all down to their sheer hard work and resilience. A real achievement."



Above: The Growth Project's allotments during and after the flood.

Far left: Karen Hayday, manager at the Growth Project with Dave, a volunteer.

Left: The allotments back in full bloom this summer.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

We're also enjoying working alongside Shropshire Wildlife Trust on initiatives to slow the flow and reduce flood risk whilst also preserving and protecting wildlife in the local catchment.

Our local Flood Resilience Officer, Thomasin Sayers joined Helen Campbell from Shropshire Wildlife Trust to support Culmington Flood Action Group at the local summer fair.

Thomasin is pictured rooting through some little invertebrates from Culmington's stream bed to see what the water quality is like.

Wildlife and Flood Risk go hand-in-hand!



We're interested in your views...



**WE'RE INTERESTED
IN YOUR VIEWS**

National Flood Forum Survey 2016 - Have Your Say

The National Flood Forum is continually looking at how we can improve our services to ensure we're doing all we can to support communities and individuals at risk of flooding.

In order to assess how we're doing, we are running two surveys to gain a better understanding of how we're perceived, what people know about our work, what we do well, where there's room for improvement and how we can work together.

We have split the surveys into two audience groups: one for people at risk of flooding and the other for professionals. We would be grateful if you could complete the survey that applies to you.

- 1) Survey for people and communities at risk of flooding. If you are someone who has been flooded or are at risk of flooding, please click on this link to complete our survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9LH7R9C>
- 2) If you are a professional whose work is related to flooding, flood risk management, reducing flood risk or similar, please click this link to complete our survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/W5JX5C5>

You will need approximately 10 – 15 minutes to complete either survey and the findings will be used to help us shape our work to ensure we're working in the best interests of flood-affected communities

Thank you for taking the time to share your views.



Flood Re does Le Jog!

On 14 September a staff team from Flood Re will begin the Lands End to John O’Groats cycle ride to raise money for charities, including the National Flood Forum.

The aim of the UK tour is to allow the Flood Re team to visit flood affected communities each day along their journey, and speak with people up and down the country about their experiences. The team will be holding Q&A sessions with local residents, as well as updating local media outlets, councillors and MPs about Flood Re’s progress to date.

As well as visiting places which have been affected by flooding, Flood Re will be raising funds for the National Flood Forum, the British Red Cross and the Scottish Flood Forum to help those affected by flood events. You can check out Flood Re’s sponsorship page [here](#).

The team hopes to complete the 1,120 mile journey to John O’Groats by Saturday 24 September. To keep up to date with their progress check out the [blog](#).

Flood Re consumer survey donations

Thanks to all those people who took part in Flood Re’s recent consumer survey and opted to donate their £5 payment for participating to the NFF. In total they’ve helped to raise £6,315 to support our work in helping communities reduce their flood risk.

MORE INSURERS NOW ON BOARD

Flood Re is a joint industry and government scheme designed to help households who have been affected by or are at high risk of flooding. Since Flood Re launched in April, 36 providers have signed up to the scheme, meaning more choice for consumers in high flood risk areas.

Flood Re enables insurers to offer more competitive premiums and lower excesses to high flood risk homes across the UK. The support of the insurance industry is crucial to its long-term success and these 36 insurance providers now represent 85% of the overall market.

The National Flood Forum advice line – 01299 403055 - is there to help if you are having difficulties getting insurance and we are always interested to hear about your experiences.

Forthcoming events

The [Flood Expo](#) is the largest event of its kind in the world presenting solutions to widespread flooding problems from **200 of the world's leading flood prevention companies**, alongside **80 seminars** from leading experts.

Flood risks are getting higher every year and the show focuses on being prepared and how to handle any flood situation.

The National Flood Forum will be exhibiting and speaking at this year's event. If you're able to, please join us. Tickets are free.

You might be interested in:

Paul Cobbing – After the Floods: Where are Communities now? (13 Oct)

[Brendan McCafferty](#), CEO of Flood Re - How Flood Re works and what people need to know

Taking place on the **12th & 13th October at ExCeL London**, you'll find the latest research, products and solutions on the marketplace to help minimise –the risk of flooding. Register for a FREE ticket [here](#).

THE MUST ATTEND EVENT FOR
FLOOD PROFESSIONALS



FLOOD EXPO

**12 & 13
OCT 2016**

**EXCeL
LONDON**

FREE TICKETS



Emergency Services Show 2016

We will also be at this year's Emergency Services Show where we'll be in the exhibition hall, as well as hearing from Heather Shepherd our Community Engagement and Flood Recovery Specialist. Heather will be speaking about *Recovery Issues and Empowering Grassroots Communities*

The Emergency Services Show, is on 21 & 22 September. It is the leading UK annual event for all emergency services personnel and brings the sector together with the single aim of improving public safety. The Show reflects the importance the services are placing on finding new ways of working together for the mutual benefit of the individual organisations involved and for the benefit of the public they all serve.

Heather will also be speaking on the same theme at the [Emergency Planning Society conference in Cardiff on 20 September](#).

Flooding tips for students

It's probably fair to assume flooding won't be high on many students list of priorities as they get ready to busy themselves with lectures, timetables and campus life this September. But if a flood hits, the loss of coursework, research papers, books, computers and other possessions is hugely damaging, costly and emotional.

The National Union of Students (NUS) has worked with a number of UK-wide agencies* to publish some useful tips for students living in flood risk locations. [Visit the NUS website for more details.](#)

*Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure and the Environment Agency

Save the Children grants for flood affected families



Following the 'Desmond', 'Eva' and 'Frank' storms of late 2015 and early 2016 which caused widespread flooding, Save the Children UK has secured Eat, Sleep, Learn, Play! grants for flood affected families with young children.

The grants aim to help families recover, particularly if they were living in deprivation before the flooding struck. The grants can help to reduce the financial burden on families, alleviate family stress and help to provide a supportive home learning environment, which is key to ensuring a child learns and develops well.

They can provide brand new white goods, pushchairs, furniture, beds, cots, bedding, toys and Argos gift cards.

Children are particularly vulnerable in emergencies as they have distinct physical, developmental and emotional needs. Impacts such as missing school days, living in poor temporary accommodation and being separated from families and friends can have a significant and long term negative effect on children.

Save the Children are offering grants for families affected by flooding in Lancashire, Cumbria, Calderdale and Salford. They would like to hear from organisations and professionals working with families who were directly or indirectly affected by flooding in these areas.

We would strongly encourage any professionals working with families who may be eligible to contact Save the Children for more information:

Tanja Loncar, Senior Programmes Manager for NoE, Save the Children UK t.loncar@savethechildren.org.uk

0161 2495138 / 07920 545666

Woodland Trust Community Grants

The Woodland Trust is offering grants for its Community Woodland pilot scheme to give local communities the support they need to own, manage and care for their own local woods.

Their woodland support fund, in partnership with Nationwide, can offer up to £10,000 for projects where communities are looking to take on greater responsibility for their local woods.

Opportunities are currently limited to community woodland projects across the Northern Region.

For more information about the pilot and how to apply for the grants before the next deadline of Monday 3 October visit: www.communitywoodland.org

Ever heard of the **Winston Churchill Memorial Trust**? It funds British citizens to travel abroad to investigate ground breaking practice in other countries and to bring back innovative ideas. This year the categories include: Enterprise; Environment, Nature and Sustainable Living; Horticulture; etc. Check out the details if you have a great idea for work or beyond. www.wcmt.org.uk.