

Cumbria Flood Bulletin

Information for residents and businesses - Issue 1 - Monday 23rd November
Brought to you by all public sector organisations in Cumbria

Information for residents and businesses

Cumbria has now started its recovery and restoration plan, and this Flood Bulletin will be issued regularly to keep you up to date with what's happening.

News update

A clean up operation is now in hand and plans are in place to reopen the county's road network by repair work and clearing debris where possible.

Road bosses will concentrate on priority routes between the main centres of population before moving onto smaller routes.

Priority is being given to checking the safety of Cumbria's 1800 bridges across the county. People are advised to avoid using bridges as vantage points to view the floodwaters.

Flood Support Centres

Flood Support Centres have now been set up at the following locations:

Cockermouth

Christ Church, South Road, opening 10am – 5pm

Workington

Town Hall, Oxford Road, opening 9am – 5pm

Keswick

Keswick Library, opening 9am – 5pm

Mobile centres

There will also be two mobile Flood Support Centres visiting other affected areas from Monday 23 November. A programme will be published on-line.

The aim is to develop these centres so that they provide emotional and voluntary sector help.

Currently available at the support centres:

- A wide range of advice and information.
- Free to charge your mobile phone.
- Yellow pages and other local information.
- Register for free Bulky Waste Collection.
- Housing advice, social work support, Citizens Advice Bureau staff.

Help on hand

Public sector staff and voluntary organisations from all over Cumbria are hard at work to minimise the impact on people affected. Advice and support can be accessed through Flood Support Centres.

Helpful contact telephone numbers

Casualties Bureau number
0800 0560944

Highways 0845 6096609

Police 0845 3300247

Cumbria County Council
01228 606060

South Lakeland District Council
0845 0504434

Allerdale Borough Council
01900 702911

Consumer direct including any calls from bogus tradesman
08454 040506

Floodline 0845 988 1188

Prescription help and advice
NHS Direct 0845 4647

Red Cross 0191 273 7560

Age Concern

Northwest 01946 66669

South Lakeland 01539 728118

Benefit Enquiry Line

0800 88 22 00

Citizens Advice Bureau

Allerdale 01900 604735

Keswick 017687 73472

Whitehaven 01946 693321

Wigton 016973 44026

Workington 01900 604735

Community Law Centre

01228 515129

Cumbria Chamber of Commerce (business advice)
01228 534120

Cumbria Community Foundation 01900 820822

Environment Agency

Advice, floodline 0845 9881188

NHS Direct – 0845 4647

Police – 01768 891999

Samaritans

UK Wide 08457 90 90 90

Social Services

01539 713377

Traveline – 0870 608 2 608

United Utilities

(electricity) – 0800 195 4141

WRVS – 01228 524508

Advice to home owners

Following the recent floods and storm damage in Cumbria, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service offer the following advice to homeowners prior to re-occupation of their premises:-

- take care as there may be hidden dangers in the flood water like sharp objects, raised manhole covers and pollution;
- if the premises have been flooded, the electrical/gas installation should be checked by a competent person prior to reconnection;
- any domestic appliances or equipment ie. cookers, televisions, VCRs, washing machines etc which have been affected by water should not be used;
- heating systems ie. gas boilers, oil boilers, storage heaters etc which have been affected by water should not be used unless checked by a competent person;
- to avoid the threat of arson, you should be vigilant where damaged household contents are left outside the property, including damaged vehicles which should be moved away where possible to a safe distance;
- if your premises are unoccupied, make sure that they are secure;
- if you are re-occupying the premises, make sure that your smoke alarms are working to ensure your safety;

- if you are using portable heaters take appropriate precautions in the use and siting of these appliances to ensure the safety of your family. Portable heaters using gas, oil or paraffin etc should have adequate ventilation;
- if your premises has structural damage which may be a result of flooding or storm damage, you should contact the local authority prior to occupation.

If you have been made homeless by flooding

If you are in this situation contact 01900 702 911.

Skips

Skips are being provided at strategic locations. Please contact your local district council.

South Lakeland District Council
0845 050 4434.

Copeland Borough Council
0845 054 8600.

Allerdale District Council
01900 702911.

Allerdale Borough Council would like to assure people that it is making every effort to empty the bins of homes and businesses that may have been missed as soon as weather conditions allow.

Electricity supply

If you have any concerns or are experiencing any other problems with your electricity supply, please contact United Utilities on 0800 195 1414.

United Utilities will check properties affected by floodwater. You should have your electrical system checked by a professional electrician before switching on electrical equipment.

Gas supply

If you smell gas or experience difficulties with your gas supply, for instance if your meter is malfunctioning or has been switched off for safety reasons, please contact the National Gas Emergency Service 0800 111 999.

Water supply

We are advised by United Utilities that mains water supply is safe to drink and use. There have been isolated reports of discoloured water from taps - if you experience this contact United Utilities 0800 195 4141.

We have had 24 reported instances of diluted wastewater from the sewer network entering properties. Most of these homes have now been visited by our clean-up teams. We expect these problems to continue as the flood waters drain away and the sewers continue to fill up. Customers affected by internal flooding can call our 24-hour call centre, 0845 746 22 00, and a clean-up team will attend. A major operation to inspect wastewater treatment works and pumping stations across the flood hit areas is now underway.

Customers suffering from water loss can call our 24-hour call centre on 0845 746 22 00.

Public health information

Wherever possible, try to avoid coming into direct contact with water you think may be contaminated.

Parents should not let their children play in floodwater and also ensure that any items suspected of being in contact with contaminated water are thoroughly cleaned before further use.

Suitable waterproof gloves (such as household cleaning gloves) and wellingtons should be worn if it is necessary to come into contact with floodwater.

Cuts and other open wounds should be covered with a waterproof plaster.

Hands should be thoroughly cleaned in hot water and soap after contact with water or other items suspected of being contaminated.

Food or drink suspected of being contaminated should be thrown away.

Don't eat contaminated garden or allotment produce.

Wash down any contaminated surfaces with hot water and detergent or disinfectant.

Thoroughly wash all crockery, pots and pans etc in hot soapy water.

Don't use electrical or gas appliances affected by flooding until they have been checked by a competent professional.

Don't use gas patio heaters etc to dry out interiors as there is a risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

Don't use gas barbecues indoors as there is a risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

Exercise particular caution if walking through murky water as this can often conceal hidden hazards.

Anyone who has been in contact with contaminated water or sewage who develops diarrhoea, fever or abdominal pain in the following 10 days should seek medical advice.

GP Services

Keswick

People in Keswick are advised that the town's two GP surgeries (Bank Street Surgery and Castlehead Medical Centre) are open for appointments as normal.

Cockermouth

In Cockermouth, South Street Surgery and Derwent House Surgery are closed.

Derwent House patients requiring an urgent GP appointment should contact Fitz Road Surgery on 01900 324124.

South Street Surgery patients requiring an urgent GP appointment should contact Cockermouth Hospital on 01900 822226.

Patients living north of the River Cocker can also contact Maryport Health Services (GP Practice) as an alternative on 01900 815544.

People with non-urgent medical queries can contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

For an urgent GP service outside normal surgery hours call Cumbria Health On Call on 01228 401999 (North Cumbria) 0845 052 4999 (South Cumbria).

Community hospitals

Patients are advised that outpatient clinics at the following community hospitals will not take place today (23 November):

Cockermouth
Workington
Wigton
Maryport
Penrith

Keswick

Clinics are being rescheduled to enable NHS Cumbria staff to assist in any recovery operations. Patients will be contacted to arrange new appointments in due course.

Visitors are asked not to attend Keswick and Cockermouth community hospitals unless absolutely necessary.

Acute hospitals

Some non-urgent outpatient clinics at Cumbria's four acute hospitals will not take place today where patients require transport services. Clinics are being rescheduled to free up ambulances and patient transfer vehicles to respond to flooding in the county.

Patients requiring further information on non-urgent outpatient clinics can contact:

Westmorland General Hospital on 01539 732288.

Furness General Hospital on 01229 870870.

Cumberland Infirmary on 01228 523444.

West Cumberland Hospital on 01946 693181.

Insurance tips

The Citizens Advice Bureau are available to talk you through insurance claims, and what to do if you have no insurance. Top tips from those who are making claims are:

- Photograph everything - take pictures of your rooms and damage to individual items
- Carpets - most insurers will accept a photograph of carpets, but keep a square to show the type of carpet you had in each room to show the assessor.
- In almost all cases the insurance company will send a loss adjuster to look at your property. They will confirm what repairs and replacements are needed and covered by your policy.
- If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company as soon as possible.

If you do not have insurance, your local council should be able to provide information on hardship grants or charities that may be able to help you.

Always make your own record of flood damage

- Use a permanent ink pen to mark on the wall the maximum height of the flood water. Do this in every room affected by flooding.
- Photograph or video record your damaged property. List the damage to your property and belongings.
- If your insurance policy covers you for loss of perishable goods, make a list of all the foods you throw away. Include any food touched by flood water and anything in your fridge or freezer ruined by loss of power.
- Depending on your policy, the insurance company may only offer to clean and repair something, not replace it. Confirm the insurance company will pay for any service or equipment you need.

- Make a note of all telephone calls. Record the date, name and what was agreed.
- Keep copies of all letters, emails and faxes you send and receive.
- Keep receipts.
- Don't throw anything away until told (except ruined food).

Support for businesses

Business link are already out and about visiting local businesses to offer their help and support and to identify business needs. They also have information and advisory packs available if you want copies of the pack or want to speak to someone call Business Link 0845 006688 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk

Business and commercial premises

- If the premises have been flooded or water damage the electrical/ gas installation should be checked by a competent person prior to reconnection;
- Any electrical plant machinery equipment which has been affected should not be used unless checked and verified safe by a competent person;
- If the heating system for the premises is affected it should be checked by a competent person before being brought back into use;
- if you have portable heaters, space heaters etc to dry out your premises, ensure that they are positioned in well ventilated areas away from combustible materials;
- if the premises is provided with a fire safety system such as fire alarms or emergency lighting systems, we recommend that they are checked and tested by a competent engineer prior to the

- occupation of the premises;
- if you have hazardous materials or substances on your premises which have been affected by water, you should seek specialist advice prior to disposal;
- to avoid the threat of arson, you should ensure that your premises are secure if unoccupied. We would also advise that where damaged goods, equipment etc are removed, that they are stored away from any building in a secure place or in a secured skip;
- prior to re-occupation of your premises we would advise that a risk assessment is reviewed or undertaken to ensure the safety of all employees in your workplace. You should also check your fire exits and escape routes to ensure that they can be used prior to occupation;
- if your premises has structural damage which may be a danger as a result of flooding or storm damage, you should contact your local authority prior to occupation.

If you have any fire safety concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your local Fire Safety Department.

Donations

Cumbria County Council has pledged £50,000 to the Cumbria Flood Recovery Fund to help communities recover from the severe floods that have hit the county. The figure is just the start of what will be a huge financial task to get the affected people back into their homes as soon as possible. The fund has been established by the Cumbria Community Foundation. Details of how to donate can be found at www.cumbriafoundation.org/

The funding matches the £50,000 that has been confirmed from the North West Development Agency.