

Background and Context

June 2007 was the wettest month on record and the subsequent floods caused significant damage to property across the region.

290 schools were damaged by the floods across Hull, East Riding, Rotherham and Doncaster. 170,000 children and young people were affected, losing a total of almost 400,000 days of learning during the summer term. In addition, 2 special schools were severely affected.

62 mobile classrooms were deployed across three LA areas (Hull, East Riding and Doncaster), to accommodate displaced pupils, whilst remedial building work is completed. In most cases, children and young people will be able to return to their normal classroom setting early in 2008.

How the topic was handled

- Across the region, the damage to schools was handled as a partnership between the local authorities, the insurance companies (where relevant, some schools were self-insured by local authorities), the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, formally DfES) and the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.
- The first action was to quantify the extent of the damage suffered and the likely short, medium and long-term impact on children's education through loss of school days. One fortunate aspect of the incident was that events happened close to the end of term allowing some breathing space over the summer holidays to allow damage to be assessed and, where possible, repaired.

The aim was to:

- o assess fully the extent of damage to schools and early years and childcare provision – both buildings and equipment
 - o assess the impact of the floods on children and young people's ability to learn and make the progress expected
 - o take decisions on how best to get children back into proper permanent educational accommodation.
- Government Office Yorkshire and the Humber hosted a regional meeting with Directors of Children's Services from affected local authorities, both within Yorkshire and the Humber but also other affected regions, to discuss how best to allocate £10 million of additional funding identified by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and to highlight other key issues.
- While local authorities were responsible for the provision of education and hence the repairs to the school infrastructure, through liaison with DCSF via the Government Office, the need for additional assistance could be highlighted and provided, including providing access to temporary accommodation and classrooms, specialist project management advice and contractors.

- Through this partnership working and the huge efforts of local authorities and partners, all schools in the region were open for business at the start of September 2007 with only six schools in Hull (5 primary and 1 secondary) not able to open on the first day of term, though all these managed to do so by 10 September 2007.

Specific example: Ganton Special School

Ganton Special School is a school for young people (aged between 3 and 19) who have Severe Learning difficulties (SLD). It was one of the 92 (out of the 99) schools in Hull affected in some way by the flooding. The school, a single storey building, was flooded throughout to a depth of 750mm. The insurance company initiated the strip out works, which included hacking off the plaster to a height of 1.5m, removal of all joinery including skirtings, doors, frames, architraves and window cills.

Given this level of damage, building surveyors confirmed that it would not be possible to remediate this by September 2007. Initial estimates suggest that remediation works will continue until at least January 2008 and possibly into the spring term. The estimated cost of works is £730,000 (loss adjustor assessment). This school has independent 3rd party building insurance cover with a £250,000 excess.

The following arrangements were put in place by Hull CC for the start of the September 2007 term and remain until such time that pupils can return to Ganton:

- 85 pupils decanted to Midmere Primary School. This is a small school which is currently empty. The 7 classrooms do not provide sufficient space for all of the 130 pupils from Ganton, but with the introduction of some temporary accommodation (two short-term DDA compliant temporary classrooms), most of the children could be housed.
- 26 pupils based at the Bellfield Day Centre. Until recently, this was a multi-use site which accommodated a children's residential unit and a day care unit for elderly people with Alzheimer's and Dementia and, as such, has the capacity to handle non-ambulant pupils with severe learning difficulties.
- The remaining 10 pupils will be housed at Frederick Holmes Special School which caters for children and young people, aged two to 19, from Hull, the East Riding and Lincolnshire, with serious physical disabilities like cerebral palsy.

Lessons identified

- The need for accurate and timely information to allow the scale of the damage to be assessed and reported to both local partners and central Government - the details of information provided is shown in Annex A.

- There was difference across the region in how schools were or were not insured and what the insurance covered. Local authorities and other partners may need to reassess their business continuity plans and emergency plans for schools in the light of new and developing risks especially around flood risk management and climate change.
- Strong partnerships were already in place between Central Government and local partners through the Government Offices, and these existing networks worked well and were key to highlighting issues and targeting assistance.
- The wider impact of the floods on the community, and hence schools, needs to be taken into account over the medium and longer term. For example, many families will remain in temporary accommodation for a significant period of time while homes are repaired, and children may therefore be in less than ideal living arrangements, potentially impacting on their educational achievements.
- The recovery effort demanded huge effort and commitment from the school and local authority staff though the longer term impact on staff should not be underestimated.
- Sir Michael Pitts during a tour of the badly-damaged Sydney Smith School said: "The scale of it has been enormous," he said. "I'm impressed by the speed of recovery, the way communities have worked together, and the way organisations have really pressed hard to get construction work under way. These are the people we need to pay tribute to."

Contacts for Further Information

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Annex A

Information gathered to determine impact on schools during June 2007 floods

School Details

- Local Authority
- Name of school with buildings and/ or contents damaged by floods
- School Type (ie. community/voluntary controlled, etc)
- School Contact
- Number of pupils

Pupil Information

- A. % pupils receiving schooling
- B. % pupils schooled in temporary accommodation
- C. Target date for schooling 100% pupils in permanent accommodation

Money for Repairs

- D. Total expected cost of revenue-funded repairs or target date to provide this info
- E. Total expected cost of capital repairs or target date to provide this info
- F. Proportion of [D] that LA/School will meet from current revenue allocation &/ or insurance claims or target date to provide this info
- G. proportion of [E] that LA/School will meet from current capital allocation &/ or insurance claims or target date to provide this info