

Background and Context

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

The impacts of this included:

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

Reception Centres were opened around the flooded area - both official and unofficial - by communities helping self evacuees. Registration took place at the official centre, and a Casualty Enquiry Bureau was set up, which took around 3,000 calls. There was a requirement to capture details of the needs and welfare issues of evacuees in unofficial centres and the majority of displaced residents who had self evacuated to friends and relatives.

How the Topic was Handled

A needs assessment questionnaire was compiled by Carlisle City Council in consultation with partners at the multi-agency recovery control centre. This was then used to capture details of evacuees at formal and informal reception centres, emergency feeding centres, city council and partner agency service points, partner agency mobile help points, telephone help-lines and then in door to door interviews. It was also widely promoted through the media.

A database was established to record this information and to also capture registration information from reception centres and all comparable information acquired by partner agencies during the incident. A data sharing protocol was agreed. This database was then used to provide management information upon which informed decisions were made to address welfare needs.

Lessons Identified

- There is some resistance to the completion of questionnaires especially by those affected who feel they don't currently need any additional support.
- Data input and management of the database is resource intensive and this issue should be taken on board and addressed up front.
- Microsoft Access linked to Ordnance Survey Address Point Dataset proved suitable for this purpose and, as widely used, can be operated by a range of personnel.
- The database has the capacity to go on and become a case management database for a sustained welfare response.

- Staff and volunteers undertaking door to door exercises need to be adequately trained and supported.

Contacts for Further Information

John Mallinson, Head of Scrutiny and Emergency Planning Services,
Carlisle City Council

Tel: 01228 817010

E-mail: johnm@carlisle.gov.uk

Lindsay Cowen, Emergency Planning Officer, Cumbria County Council

Tel: 01228 815700

E-mail: lindsay.cowen@cumbriaepu.gov.uk

Additional Documents

- [Needs Assessment Questionnaire](#)