

FLOODING CONTINGENCY POLICY
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The south coast (from the Hampshire border to the Kent border) is under threat from flooding caused by a combination of low atmospheric pressure over the English Channel, high tide levels (spring tides) and gales driving a storm surge down the English Channel. The outcome would be a very large sea surge in the channel, with tides, gale force winds and potentially heavy rainfall. Many coastal regions and tidal reaches of rivers could be affected all along the South of England. Excessive tidal levels would cause many coastal and estuary defences to be overtopped or breached, and drains would back up. Flooding from these breaches would be rapid and dynamic, with minimal warning and for some people, no time to evacuate.

Much has been done to protect the Sussex coastline, particularly in the construction of flood defences. However, sea levels are rising, and because of the national and local impacts of a serious flood event, the risk is something which must be taken seriously. The risk of coastal flooding is managed through flood defences schemes across the county. However, the consequence of flooding, if defences are breached, is high.

None of the properties that are currently occupied by the Trust are liable to flooding from rivers or the sea. However, in severe flooding it is likely that urban areas not normally impacted by flooding may be affected if drainage systems are unable to cope. It is important to have plans in place to help to prevent flooding in Trust properties, as well as to address the challenges of continuing service delivery during a flood should circumstances change. In addition, while the flood risk to our sites and properties is low main access routes to some critical sites are prone to flooding and this can have an impact.

It is possible that regions served by the Trust will become subject to flooding periodically, and there is some evidence to suggest that the frequency and severity of floods may well increase in the future. Flooding can occur at any time of the year, just as easily in the summer as in the winter.

1.1 Purpose of Policy

The flooding contingency plan is intended to inform and guide those managing the response to a flood emergency. The plan will be reviewed annually taking into account new flood risk information and outcomes from incidents and exercises.

This plan should be used in conjunction with the Trust's Incident Response Plan and Business Continuity Management Policy.

1.2 Scope of Policy

The aim of this plan is to establish a coordinated management response to the threat of flooding across the Trust. It also aims to provide a structured response to emergencies caused by severe flooding.

The three main objectives are :

- To take action to prevent flooding of Trust facilities where possible
- To protect life, and to defend key facilities

- To plan and manage business continuity during a flood

2.0 DUTIES

2.1 Statutory Duties and Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Trust are required by the Department of Health to undertake preparedness work to prevent loss of life or property in a flood. As part of that compliance, and as part of the Trust's commitment to provide safe and sustainable high quality services for mental health service users, it is important that robust flood plans are in place.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

2.2.1 Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has general supervisory duty over all flood defence matters. They also provide advice regarding flooding and a flood warning schemes. It is worth noting that some floods, particularly urban drainage floods, may occur very quickly and there may therefore be little time to warn of an impending flood.

2.2.2 DEFRA

Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk in England. Defra funds most of the Environment Agency's flood management activities in England and provides grant aid on a project by project basis to the other flood and coastal defence operating authorities (local authorities and internal drainage boards) to support their investment in improvement projects to manage flood and coastal erosion risk. DEFRA are also responsible for the National Flood Contingency Response assets.

2.2.3 Local Authorities

Local authorities (including highway authorities) have responsibility for surface drainage from roads and public spaces. They also have development planning control.

If the flooding arises from a drain or gully in the road, and there is no foul debris in the water, then it is the responsibility of the Highways Authority (usually accessed through the Local Authority) to arrange remedial work.

2.2.4 Water Companies

Water companies (as the sewerage providers) have a statutory duty to deal with foul water and storm water received from water customers.

2.2.5 Emergency Services

The Emergency Services will continue to respond to flooding in the same way as any other circumstance, and will implement their own business continuity management in order to do so. The Emergency Services attend the Local Resilience Forum at which the Trust is also represented, and this allows them to communicate with all partner organisations in order to ensure that information regarding service provision is disseminated appropriately.

2.2.6 Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

One of the main causes of the increase in flooding risk is the poor maintenance or disappearance of watercourses. The Trust has the responsibility to keep watercourses on Trust land clear and well-maintained, even if the watercourse is simply a dry ditch. The Trust also has responsibility for defending its own properties, and for managing business continuity to ensure that the adverse effects of a flood on service provision are minimised.

As a strategic measure to minimise the risk of flooding, the Trust assesses the risk of affecting flooding before undertaking development that may have an impact on drainage. In addition, the Trust endeavours to ensure that watercourses and drainage from wet lands within its responsibility are effectively maintained.

3.0 THE FLOODING CONTEXT IN SUSSEX

The Sussex Resilience Forum has assessed the risk of flooding across Sussex:

RISK IMPACTS

The predicted impacts could include:

- Risk to life (people and animals)
- Damage to property, businesses, agricultural land, roads, structures and infrastructure
- Pollution and contamination of local environments
- Long-term damage to tourism, businesses and agriculture.

CONSEQUENCES

The consequences could include:

- Disruption to utilities, electricity and water supplies
- Evacuation of residents
- Short, medium and long-term accommodation of those whose homes are flooded
- Long-term psychological and health impacts
- Long-term restoration and recovery issues for homes and businesses.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

- Find out if your property is within a flood risk area by logging on to the Environment Agency website or calling Floodline on 0845 988 1188..
- Plan where you will go if you have to evacuate and how you will get there.
- Know what to do to protect your property during a flood and have adequate insurance.
- Identify neighbours who may need assistance or who may be able to provide assistance to you, in case of evacuation.
- Have supplies in your home that will enable you to cope for up to 3 days should you be unable to evacuate.
- Ensure that you have signed up to Flood Warning Direct if you are in a flood risk area.
- Where possible, move valuable/ irreplaceable items to upper floors during times of flood risk.

WHAT ARE WE DOING IN SUSSEX?

- Identification of where the flood water could go and who and what is at risk.
- Production of multi-agency plans to assist with the evacuation of those communities who are at risk.
- Strategic area planning to protect the areas at risk.
- Provision of guidance for the public about protecting property from flooding.
- Development of ways and means of alerting the public as early as possible when there is a significant flood risk.
- Continuing to invest in maintaining and improving river defences in our high-risk areas.
- Developing flood rescue and assistance for those who become isolated by flooding

4.0 FLOOD WARNINGS

The Trust receives flood warnings from the Environment Agency. Trust staff are also able to find out about flood warnings currently in force by:

- contacting Floodline 0345 988 1188 and listening to recorded flood warning messages or speaking to Environment Agency staff
- [check your flood risk](#)
- keep up to date with the [latest situation](#) - call Floodline on [0345 988 1188](tel:0345 988 1188) or follow @EnvAgency and #floodaware on Twitter for the latest flood updates
- [sign up for flood warnings](#)
- viewing the flood warnings (updated every 15 minutes) on the Environment Agency website <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings>.

4.1 Response to Flood Warnings

There are four degrees of flooding information that will be disseminated by the Environment Agency. They are defined as follows:

DEGREE	DEFINITION	ACTION POINTS
<p>Flood Watch</p> 	<p>Flooding of low lying land and roads is expected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor local news and weather forecasts. • Be aware of local water levels. • Follow the Flooding Contingency Plan. • Check on the safety of potentially affected service users and staff. • Charge your mobile phone.
<p>Flood Warning</p> 	<p>Flooding of homes and businesses is expected. Act now!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move important documents and mobile electrical goods e.g. portable fans to safety. • Get flood bags in place. • Follow the Flooding Contingency Plan.

<p>Severe Flood Warning</p> 	<p>Act now! Severe flooding is expected with extreme danger to life and property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid electricity sources. • Avoid walking or driving through flood water. • In danger call 999 immediately and follow instruction • Follow the Flooding Contingency Plan. • Follow the Incident Response Plan if activated.
<p>All Clear</p> 	<p>No further flooding is expected. Water levels will start to go down.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep listening to weather reports. • Only return to evacuated buildings if you are told it is safe. • Beware sharp objects and pollution in flood water. • Continue to follow the Incident Response Plan if activated.

On receipt of a flood watch, flood warning, or severe flood warning, the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and response (EPRR) Lead will inform the Director on Call, who should log all related actions in the Directors on Call Log.

4.1.1 Office Hours

- The EPRR Lead will inform Service Directors of the Flood Watch.
- Service Directors should ensure that teams are aware of the Flood Watch and follow the Flood Watch advice.
- Service Directors should nominate a local representative from each site to check whether the Flood Watch will affect them. This can be done by calling the Environment Agency Flood line on **0345 988 1188**.
- Liaise with Service managers and advise them to take actions as below

4.1.2 Out of Hours

Managers on Call should check for updates from sites potentially threatened by a flood and advise Service managers to take actions as follows.

4.2 Flood Watch Actions

On receipt of a flood watch, service managers should:

- Ensure mobile phones are charged
- Ensure staff members know where the Flooding Contingency Plan, the Incident Response Plan and the Evacuation Plan for the site are.

4.3 Flood Warning Actions

On receipt of a Flood Warning, service managers should:

- Assess the vulnerability of any service users likely to be affected.
- Ensure that no documents are stored on the floor.
- Put plugs in sink holes and baths.
- Ensure that electrical items such as portable fans, toasters etc. are kept off the floor.

4.4 Severe Flood Warning Actions

On receipt of a Severe Flood Warning, service managers should:

- Decide what support will be needed by service users in the community based upon the assessment of vulnerability
- Assess whether such support is available, and if not, communicate this to Tactical (Silver) Command (If stood up) if not stood up to Director on call.
- If flooding is approaching the buildings or other risks are imminent, activate the Incident Response Plan.

5.0 SERIOUS OR WIDESPREAD FLOODING AFFECTING THE TRUST

In a serious or widespread flood, the Incident Response Plan should be activated. Command and Control should be instigated as per the incident response plan and this may mean a physical incident control centre or a virtual one this will be decided by Trusts' Gold Commander for the incident considering the site(s) affected and the practicalities of getting key attendees to a single venue and the risks or traveling during a major weather event/potential infrastructure failures (e.g. localised power or internet outages).

It is worth noting that even if a flood does not directly affect a Trust property, a major incident may still arise. This could be due to many circumstances, for example :-

- Loss of critical infrastructure e.g. water or power supply
- Transport difficulties leading to staff absence
- Closure of schools leading to staff absence
- Partner organisations requiring support from the Trust

6.0 RECORD-KEEPING

Each individual involved in the response to an emergency should record all communications and activities in a log which will then:

- serve as a true record of events.
- act as a personal aide-memoir.
- assist operational decision making.

- facilitate handovers of responsibility.
- aid the compilation of post operational reports.
- be available for debriefing and any subsequent enquiries.

A log of actions in a serious flood should be recorded on the Log of Activities, in accordance with good practice. This can be found in the major incident supplies box, or in Appendix D of the incident response plan.

7.0 COMMUNICATIONS DURING A FLOOD

In a serious flood, the Incident Response Plan will be activated.

The Trust may use the following modes of communication as special measures during the floods:

- Dedicated public helpline
- Dedicated media line
- Web links to up to date information
- Mobile phones
- Team briefings
- Emails
- Group SMS messages
- VOIP communications such as SKYPE

The best strategy for communication will be decided upon during the establishment of the incident control centre, based on the best information available at the time.

8.0 DEBRIEF AND EVALUATION OF RESPONSE

- After the all clear has been given, the Gold Command will decide a timetable for the debrief and evaluation of the response.
- The Disaster Recovery Group will implement their recovery plan, and this will be communicated at the time of the debrief.
- All of the documents and records relating to the flood will be gathered, collated and reviewed and learning drawn together into a report which will be disseminated appropriately by the Disaster Recovery Group.
- The Incident Response Plan and the Flooding Contingency Plan will be reviewed and amended where appropriate to take learning from the incident into account.

9.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A GOLD COMMANDER CHECKLIST

GOLD COMMANDER This checklist is intended as a guide to INITIAL ACTION		
Flooding Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that your key actions and decisions are recorded. • Overall co-ordination of the Trust's response • Support of the Emergency Services response • To take a lead role during the recovery phase and debriefing 	
Actions		
		Time completed
1	ASSESS: The scale of the emergency The likely duration (weather forecasts) The threat to life The threat to property The scale of evacuations necessary The need for mutual assistance	
2	EARLY CONSIDERATIONS: Safety of Trust staff deployed in response to emergency Set up of Major Incident Command and Control structures Support for Emergency Services Media Response Public Help-line Emergency Rest Centres	
3	LATER CONSIDERATION: Advice and assistance to the public Environmental impact. Financial implications Plan for recovery Phase De-brief Report	
4	LONGER TERM ISSUES: Ensure that all notes, logs and documentation are retained for de-brief reports and any future inquiry	

APPENDIX B SILVER COMMAND CHECKLIST

SILVER COMMANDER This checklist is intended as a guide to INITIAL ACTION		
Flooding Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take a lead role in co-ordination of the Trust's tactical response in support of the Emergency services. • To provide support to the Gold Commander in the event of a full strategic response being required. 	
Actions		
		Time completed
1	INITIAL ACTION: Liaison with Local Resilience Forum Activate the Incident Control Centre	
2	ASSESS: The scale of the emergency The likely duration (weather forecast/EA advice) The threat to property The likelihood of the need to evacuate The need for additional resources The need to escalate the response	
3	SECONDARY ACTIONS: Brief Chief Executive Brief Communications Officer Brief Directors as required Brief Incident Control Team members	
4	LONGER TERM ISSUES: Arrange de-brief Action learning points Amend plans Ensure that logs, notes and other documentation are retained	

APPENDIX C ESTATES AND FACILITIES LEAD CHECKLIST

ESTATES AND FACILITIES LEAD This checklist is intended as a guide to INITIAL ACTION		
Flooding Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specialist and logistical support to the Trust • Maintain services • Assist in the deployment of flood defence, including the use of flood bags • Response to and assistance on the scene of affected sites 	
Actions		
		Time completed
1	PROACTIVE MEASURES: To develop and maintain a programme of maintenance of drains and watercourses To maintain strategically located supplies of flood bags	
2	INITIAL (TACTICAL) RESPONSE: Telephone contact with the Incident Control Centre Provision of specialist advice and assistance Provision of signage for flooded premises Provision of signage etc. for traffic diversion routes Removal of debris from roads, drains and culverts Provision of emergency lighting	
3	KEY ACTION Ensure that your key actions and decisions are recorded. Disconnection of electrical or gas equipment if necessary	
4	RECOVERY RESPONSE: Provision of specialist advice and assistance Making safe of damaged property Collaboration in recovery planning	

APPENDIX D – ACTIONS FLOW CHART

If a flood of water has occurred, you must do the following:

