



How resilient is your community?

Emergencies can happen - sometimes with little advance warning.

Do you know what to do in an emergency? Where would you get help if your house began to flood? Where are the sandbags? Or if you were snowed in? Is your community prepared for severe weather? Do you have a plan for your own house?

Across Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, local people who have experienced emergency situations, such as flooding or snow, are coming together with a range of agencies to make sure their communities are prepared for emergencies in the future. Local volunteers in Ahoghill, Broughshane, Martinstown and the Toome Road in Ballymena have signed up for tasks such as the distribution of sandbags, taking on the role of River Watcher or receiving weather alerts from the Met Office.

Recent funding has secured severe weather resources which are available in the community. More information on this work can be found on the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council website.

[Emergency planning advice here.](#)

Information is key to being prepared. The nirect website will connect you to a range of advice on how to stay safe. Downloadable booklets have been produced by the Regional Community Resilience Group, providing guidance on how to plan for your own household.

[Downloadable booklets here.](#)

September is Be Ready and Be Prepared month. A range of agencies will be posting advice and guidance each day on social media. Remember to follow the hashtag #BeReadyNI. Retweet and share – let your friends and communities know.



Some of the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council residents and staff who volunteered to help out in the event of a weather emergency

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£1million flood alleviation scheme in Lisburn completed

DfI has recently completed work on a significant flood alleviation scheme in the Hull's Lane area of Lisburn.

The scheme was developed and designed in-house to reduce the risk of flooding to three commercial properties, as well as reducing the risk of damage to



the critical infrastructure of the main Belfast to Dublin railway line at times of flooding.

The scheme, which took approximately eight months to complete, involved the construction of a new 150m long precast concrete box culvert and a new 290m long in-situ concrete flood retaining wall, with an average height above ground of 1.8m.

The works were successfully undertaken by FP McCann.



Work of RCRG highlighted at Climate Change Conference

Derry City & Strabane District Council has hosted Northern Ireland's first Green Infrastructure and Climate Change Conference.

The event, held in The Guildhall, was sold out and attracted a range of global climate change and green space experts who shared their knowledge of climate action.

The event highlighted the Council's pioneering climate adaptation and green infrastructure plans - also a first across Northern Ireland. It also explored the issue of climate action at a local authority level.

The Council's Climate Programme Manager, Cathy Burns, explained the development of the adaptation planning toolkit, which will be available to all local authorities in Northern

Ireland to support the development of future adaptation plans.

The ongoing resilience work already underway in the North West was showcased as an example of best practice. This included the work of the Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) and the Emergency Planning Officer for Derry City and Strabane District Council, Martin Daly. It highlighted projects such as increasing preparedness of future health care professionals with the Ulster University.

The Council adaptation plan is due for completion at the end of 2019.



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Fermanagh and Omagh District Council hosts Community Convention

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, in partnership with the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, has held its third annual Community Convention. Representatives from more than 60 community and voluntary groups from across the district attended the event in the Bawnacre Centre in Irvinestown.



John Wylie addresses the Convention

Delegates heard Met Office Advisor (Civil Contingencies) NI, John Wylie, speak about the role of the Met Office in advising the public and emergency responders of adverse weather conditions. John also outlined the differences between the weather warning systems in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland which can occasionally result in different colour coded warnings being issued for the same weather event. John explained that the Met Office warnings outline the likely impact of weather, whereas Met Éireann issues warnings when forecasted weather meets certain thresholds.

Delegates were also updated on the progress of the Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan 2030, and the recently launched Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy 2030.



Speaking about the Community Convention, Council Chairperson, Councillor Howard Thornton, said: “Fermanagh and Omagh District Council recognises the value which community groups offer the district. Through their hard work, they offer so much to the communities which they serve and the Council is delighted to offer its support and expertise to help groups develop their skills and facilities.

“The Community Convention is an excellent opportunity for community groups from across the district to get together and compare experiences,

to network with similar organisations and to find out about the services provided by other members of the Community and Voluntary Sector.”

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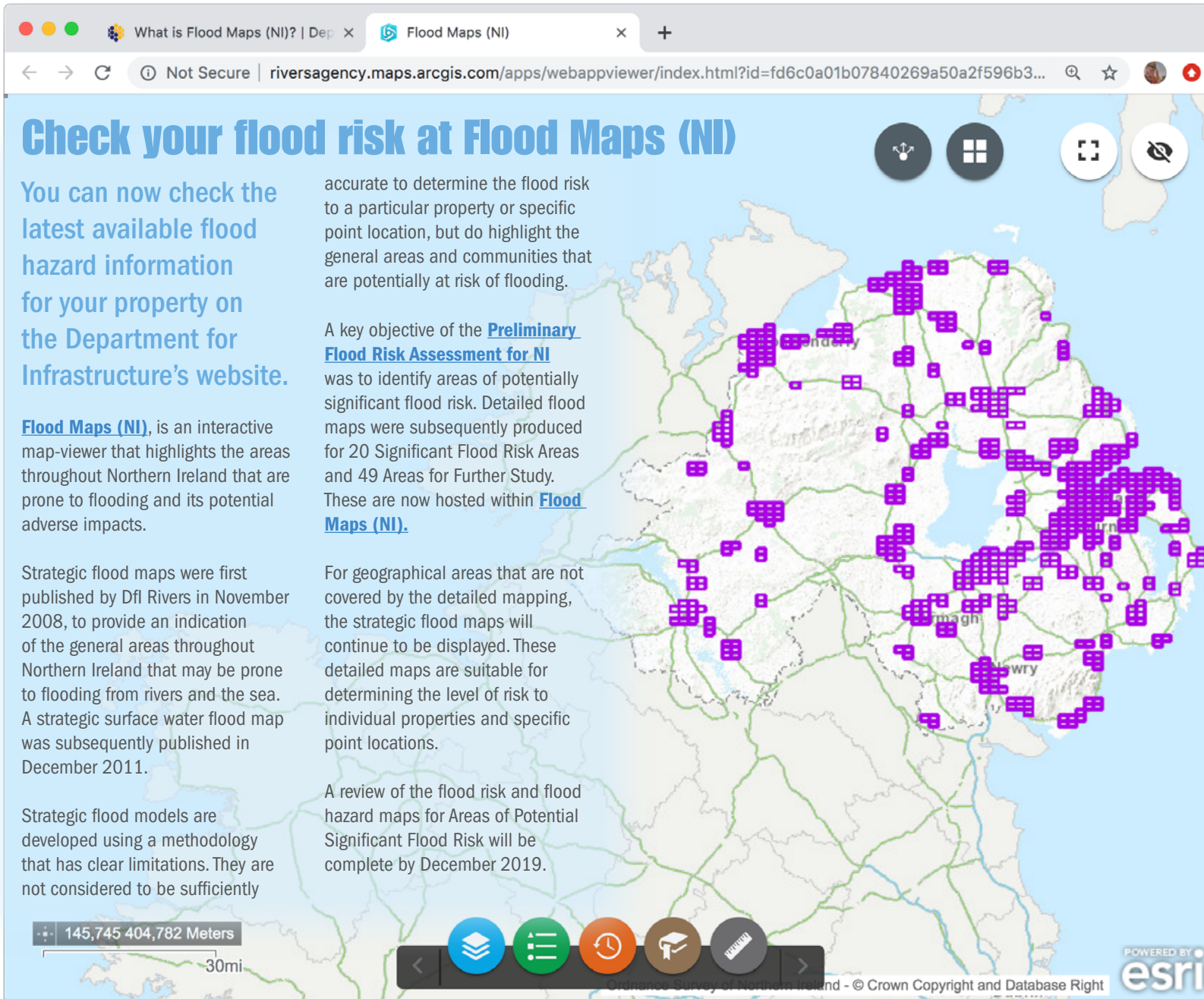
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Check your flood risk at Flood Maps (NI)

You can now check the latest available flood hazard information for your property on the Department for Infrastructure's website.

Flood Maps (NI), is an interactive map-viewer that highlights the areas throughout Northern Ireland that are prone to flooding and its potential adverse impacts.

Strategic flood maps were first published by DfI Rivers in November 2008, to provide an indication of the general areas throughout Northern Ireland that may be prone to flooding from rivers and the sea. A strategic surface water flood map was subsequently published in December 2011.

Strategic flood models are developed using a methodology that has clear limitations. They are not considered to be sufficiently


accurate to determine the flood risk to a particular property or specific point location, but do highlight the general areas and communities that are potentially at risk of flooding.

A key objective of the [Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for NI](#) was to identify areas of potentially significant flood risk. Detailed flood maps were subsequently produced for 20 Significant Flood Risk Areas and 49 Areas for Further Study. These are now hosted within [Flood Maps \(NI\)](#).

For geographical areas that are not covered by the detailed mapping, the strategic flood maps will continue to be displayed. These detailed maps are suitable for determining the level of risk to individual properties and specific point locations.

A review of the flood risk and flood hazard maps for Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk will be complete by December 2019.

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Did you know that you can now report road related faults online?

The Department for Infrastructure is responsible for maintaining all publicly-adopted roads and footways in Northern Ireland, and carries out routine inspections to identify defects for repair.

However, faults may arise due to severe weather, traffic accidents, vandalism, damage following road openings by utility companies, and through natural wear and tear.

How to report a fault online

If you discover a fault on a road, you can report it on the NI Direct website. Categories of fault include:

- **Street lighting** e.g. light out or damaged apparatus
- **Potholes** including other surface defects such as dislodged kerbs
- **Obstruction** e.g. fallen tree or rock fall
- **Spillages** such as oil or mud
- **Ice and Snow** e.g. gritting or salt bin requests
- **Drainage** e.g. blocked gully or minor ponding
- **Ironwork** such as manhole cover or gully lid fault
- **Road Works** e.g. signing for ongoing works
- **Vegetation** like overgrown grass, hedges or trees
- **Signs and road markings** such as faded or missing signs or road markings

- **Graffiti and fly-posters** including illegal advertising
- **Pedestrian Guardrail and Crash Barriers** e.g. damaged infrastructure
- **Traffic Lights** e.g. faulty or damaged signal apparatus

Please note due to the current budgetary shortfall for routine maintenance work, we must prioritise repair work to initially target those areas posing the greatest risk to the public. We would therefore ask everyone for their patience while we continue to make progress with the various outstanding repairs.

Tracking the progress of a fault

Enter the fault reference number into the 'Track-a-Fault' service to check the progress or outcome of a reported fault, using the following links:

- **Street Lighting Faults**
- **Other Roads Faults**

Other ways to report a fault

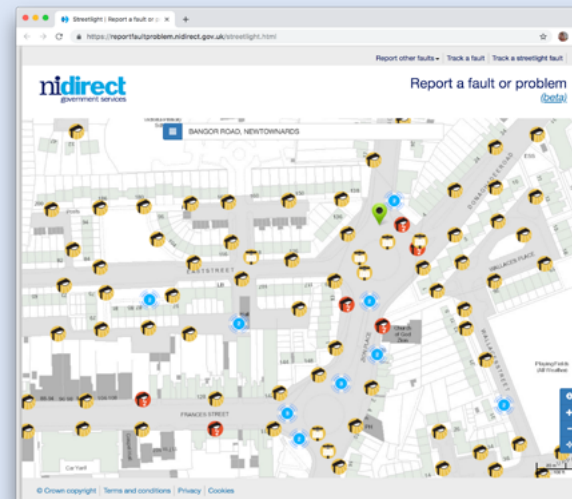
You can also report a road fault by calling 0300 200 7899 and a call-handler will submit this on your behalf.

How to report a fault online

After choosing the appropriate link, click on the green button. Once the map has opened:

1. Plot the fault location on the map by navigating to or by using the street name or post code search function.
2. Select the appropriate sub-category and type additional comments (e.g. position and severity of the issue).
3. Add a photograph, if required, and enter contact details.
4. Take a note of the fault reference number.

If the fault has already been reported, you can still add your name to this by clicking 'Add'.



North West Flooding - Insurance Information Session

Difficulties in understanding the details around home and property insurance, and making an insurance claim, continue to be a challenge for many who have been impacted by severe weather and flooding.

Homeowners in the areas affected by the August 2017 flooding in the North West continue to face difficulties getting affordable insurance, inclusive of flooding cover. These problems are often only encountered some time after the event when repairs to their home are complete.

It was clear, through RCRG engagement in the North West, that insurance continues to be a problem and an information session was held on 14 January to help provide access to accurate, reliable information.

Representatives from the Association of British Insurers; British Insurance Brokers' Association; Chartered

Institute of Loss Adjusters and Flood RE were on hand to discuss homeowners concerns and to explain the different roles and responsibilities in the insurance industry. For example, the difference between loss adjusters and loss assessors; and the benefits and limitations of Flood RE.

Recurring themes at the event included:

- many homeowners were, 18 months on, encountering insurance difficulties when seeking renewal for the first time following settlement of their claims; and

- everyone should be more aware of the details of their insurance policy.

For further information, check out the following links:

- [nidirect](#)
- [Flood RE](#)
- [Association of British Insurers](#)
- [ABI advice on what to expect from your insurer in responding to major floods](#)
- [British Insurance Brokers Association](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Loss Adjusters](#)



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Free extra help available from Water and Energy Companies

The Consumer Council is encouraging people to make use of schemes, operated by Northern Ireland's water and energy companies, that offer free extra services for those who need help.

Known as Customer Care Registers, the schemes allow you to:

- receive priority information by phone during an interruption to your electricity or water supply

- have a nominated contact, for example a friend, relative or carer
- get extra time to answer the door
- get information in large print or braille
- set up a password to help you identify callers to your door
- move your meter to a better place to make it easier to read

Most importantly, the companies will be aware that you might need extra help if there is a problem.

Registering is easy: simply contact your water, gas or electricity company and ask to be put on

its Customer Care Register. The extra help offered will not cost you anything and your information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

You can contact NI Water on 03457 440088, NIE Networks on 03457 643643 or your electricity or gas company. You can also call the Consumer Council for free independent advice on 0800 121 6022.

The help available may be most useful to people who:

- are elderly

- have limited mobility or are unable to leave their property
- have a sight, speech, hearing or cognitive impairment such as dementia, or learning difficulties
- have a serious illness
- are dialysis patients or have medical or life supporting equipment at home
- have a mental health condition

If you have a friend, family member or neighbour who might benefit, why not tell them about the Registers? You could even help them make the phone call.

Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme

The Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme (Northern Ireland) is a government scheme to help homeowners make modifications to prevent flood water entering their homes.

It was launched in January 2016, as a 'pilot' project, and is aimed specifically at the owners of residential properties that have flooded internally in the past and continue to be exposed to flood risk.

Individual properties that meet the eligibility criteria will be retrofitted with an appropriate range of measures, designed to make the property more resistant to the entry of floodwater. Such measures include flood doors, flood barriers, automatic airbrick covers, drainage non-return valves, and waterproof wall treatments.



These measures can be effective, particularly for shallow depths less than 600mm. Protecting an individual property from flood water greater than 600mm is not recommended, as there is a risk of causing structural damage to the external walls due to excessive water pressure.

Eligibility for the Grant Scheme is determined using either of the following criteria.

- Where the owner of a property can provide verifiable evidence of having internally flooded once or more in the past 25 years and which are also located within the

estimated flood inundation areas illustrated on the 1 in 25 year Fluvial Flood Hazard Maps; or

- Properties for which the owner can provide verifiable evidence to substantiate internal flooding on two or more occasions in the past 25 years.

The scheme is bound by a financial limit. This limit is close to being met and the scheme is expected to close in the coming weeks. Full details of the scheme, including how to apply can be found at:

- [Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme](#)



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Emergency plan produced for Orchardville area

Partners from the Regional Community Resilience Group have met with local residents in the Orchardville area of south west Belfast to devise a community emergency plan.

For residents, this was an opportunity to discuss, with representatives from a number of statutory agencies, their concerns about flooding in the area during July and November 2018. Those attending included the NI Fire and Rescue Service, NI Water, PSNI, Department for Infrastructure, Belfast City Council and a number of local Councillors.

As a result, the 'Orchardville Community Emergency Plan' has been set up, with local residents volunteering to take on active roles and responsibilities in the event of future incidents. Some of their responsibilities include monitoring warnings from the Met Office to anticipate adverse weather and making preparations for the possibility of flooding.

Residents will be able to access and distribute sandbags from the local sandbag container, set out flood signs to prevent vehicles pushing flood water into their properties and check on any vulnerable or elderly residents.

Find out more about Community Emergency Plans at www.nidirect.gov.uk.



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Left to right: Andy McVeigh (NI Fire & Rescue Service), Claire Carleton (Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group), Seamus McBride (Belfast City Council Emergency Planning) and Cllr. Geraldine McAteer with residents Claire McErlean and Paddy Davidson

Keep up-to-date with local weather conditions

As we start to organise barbeques, daytrips and other summer activities, many of us will be paying more attention than usual to the weather forecasts on TV and radio.

However, the best way to keep up-to-date with forecasts is to download the Met Office App and have weather warnings sent directly to your smart phone. The App also lets you see the latest rainfall radar, showing where rain is heaviest in reality and how it will be moving in the next few hours, allowing you stay ahead with your preparations.

Following a mild and dry winter, when Northern Ireland had only 75% of the normal rainfall for the season, things changed dramatically in March. A record level of 159mm of rain fell, beating the previous record of 146mm set in 1992. Thankfully, with dry ground and generally low river levels, flooding impacts were limited and localised.

Now, as we head into the summer season, many of us will be hoping for plenty of warm, dry weather to enjoy the long hours of daylight that this time of year brings. Of course this is also the time of year when thunderstorms can cause flash flooding. These storms are often sudden and extremely localised,

making it difficult to predict where the worst flooding impacts will occur.

Met Office Chief Forecaster, Will Lang, has recorded a presentation, explaining the difficulties of forecasting summer storms. It is a little technical but, for those who stick with it, it gives a flavour of how challenging the forecasting of summer storms can be. Will's presentation starts about six minutes in to the video.

Hopefully, you will find the video interesting, and hopefully you'll have an enjoyable summer - whatever the weather brings!



Met Office Chief Forecaster Dr Will Lang



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Emergency Numbers

No matter how prepared we are for inclement weather, there's always the chance of an emergency at home. Here's a list of phone numbers you might find useful should the unforeseen happen:

Emergency Services:
999 or 112

Housing Executive:
03448 920 901

Northern Ireland
Electricity Networks:
03457 643643

NI Gas Emergency Service:
0800 002 001

NI Water
Waterline:
03457 440088

Flooding Incident Line:
0300 2000 100

For advice and information on dealing with emergencies visit:
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/
be-ready-for-emergencies](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/be-ready-for-emergencies)

Problems with Roads & Streets:
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/
information-and-services/
travel-transport-and-roads/
problems-roads-and-streets](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets)

GETTING WEATHER READY



The Regional Community Resilience Group Newsletter aims to keep its members up to date on getting weather ready



Regional Community Resilience Group

The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) was formed in 2013 to help local communities prepare for and respond to weather related emergencies.

The group brings together Multi-Agency Partner Organisations from government, utilities and the voluntary sector to work for and with Communities at Risk of Severe Weather.

The RCRG aims to provide a forum to facilitate co-ordination, communication, partnership working and capacity building on community resilience issues. The group is currently working with over 30 communities across Northern Ireland ready to inform and resource them and improve preparedness and community resilience measures.

Unfortunately, severe weather events will continue to occur but through good communication, accessible, reliable information and established practical measures, communities can and have applied self-help measures to reduce impacts and protect property.

This newsletter will be used to highlight important developments to enhance community resilience, provide an opportunity for communities to share experiences to the benefit of others and highlight key responder contacts to help readers to **Get Weather Ready!**

Partner Organisations:



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