



Flood Investigation Guidance

Guidance on flood investigations in Lancashire

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1. Introduction

What is the purpose of this guidance document?

The purpose of this guidance document is to explain how the policies contained within the county council's flood investigation document will be applied, and to serve as a practical implementation guide for those who wish to report flooding to the Lead Local Flood Authority.

This guidance is intended to be read alongside the flood investigation document which sets out the county council's policies for how it will apply legislation and undertake its responsibilities in investigating flood incidents that have the Lead Local Flood Authority has been made aware of.

This is a living document and subject to officer review triggered by either a regular review cycle and/or review when there is a change triggered at a national level that does not require a policy change.

How do I use this document?

This guidance document has been structured so that the numbered headings correspond with the numbered headings in the Flood Investigation document.

The document has been written in a 'frequently asked questions' style to guide the reader to the post appropriate section and answers.

1.1. An introduction to Flood Investigations

The Lead Local Flood Authority, upon becoming aware of a flood, has a duty under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to investigate a flood in its area to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate.

The purpose of an investigation under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) is to establish:

- which risk management authority(s) has relevant flood risk management functions, and;
- whether each risk management authority(s) has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.

The information above outlines the Lead Local Flood Authorities responsibility in response to being notified of a flood incident, the following information outlines what to do during a flood incident.



What should I do during a Flood?

If there is an immediate risk to your life or you are trapped by floodwater **call 999** and follow their advice.

Please note, Lancashire County Council is not an emergency service and any report will be investigated in line with our flood investigation Policies.

It is important that members of the public are aware of the support that they can access when they are affected by a flood incident. Useful information and advice can be found on [The Flood Hub](#).

For further information regarding flooding, please follow this link:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/flooding/>

What is the role of emergency services in a flood incident?

The first to arrive at the scene of an incident with specialised training to provide assistance or resolution in an emergency. These typically include law enforcement, fire and rescue services or medical practitioners.

1.2. Why it is important to report a flood

The following section outlines how to report flooding **after** an incident has occurred, as well as further guidance on other organisations that may be involved in a flood incident **post event**.

The term 'flood' is defined in Section 1 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 as:

"includes any case where land not normally covered by water becomes covered by water."

It does not include flooding from a burst water main or any part of the sewage network (unless caused by the volume of rainwater entering the system).

Lancashire County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, strongly encourages all flood incidents to be reported to us so that we can investigate these in accordance with the county council's duty and policies outlined in this document.

If you have flooded but don't report the flood incident to us, we are unlikely to be able to validate and investigate. You can read more about the importance of reporting flooding on [The Flood Hub](#).



How do I report a flood incident to the Lead Local Flood Authority?

Where a flood incident relates to an ordinary watercourse, surface water or groundwater the public can report the incident to Lancashire County Council by using any of the following methods:

Online: www.lovecleanstreets.info (an app is available to download from the Love Clean Streets website)

Telephone: 0300 123 6780

More information can be found on: www.lancashire.gov.uk/flooding

If reporting flooding on behalf of someone else, you will need to ensure that you provide their contact details so that we can contact them in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

If you live in [Blackpool Council](#) or [Blackburn with Darwen Council](#) area, please report flood incidents to them directly.

What is the Love Clean Streets website or app?

When reporting an incident to Lancashire County Council using the 'Love Clean Streets' website or app, you will be prompted to provide detailed and relevant information regarding the flood incident. There is an option to include photos of flooding in support of your submission.

Should you wish to submit videos as part of your information, please add this into the description box, in order for the Lead Local Flood Authority at the County Council to contact you with details of a secure file transfer option.

All information provided in response to a flood incident will be governed by General Data Protection Regulations.

What is the role of the Lead Local Flood Authority in relation to flood incidents?

The Lead Local Flood Authority is **not** an emergency responder during a flood incident. This is because the Lead Local Flood Authority does not own any assets which require a response to during a flood incident.

Specifically in relation to flood incidents, on becoming aware of a flood, the Lead Local Flood Authority has a duty to investigate significant flood events to the extent it considers necessary or appropriate and publish the results of its investigation.

The Flood Investigation document sets out how we will undertake this duty following a flood event.



Who else may I need to report a flood incident to?

You may wish to report a flood incident to your insurance company in the time after a flood incident, after taking the necessary time to recover from the flood incident.

In addition to this you may need to [contact other organisations](#) if the flood relates to any of their assets or duties. In addition to those organisations listed on the [Gov.uk website](#), other organisations in Lancashire include:

- [National Highways](#) for the strategic road network, such as motorways and some A-roads, which are not managed by Lancashire County Council as the local Highway Authority.
- [Canal and Rivers Trust](#) in relation to a flood issue or incident relating to a canal.
- [Earby and Salterforth Internal Drainage Board](#) in relation to ordinary watercourses in this drainage board area.
- Environment Agency – main river link
- Coastal
- Other RMAs like District councils

How does the Lead Local Flood Authority interact with other organisations and individuals post-incident?

We may contact other organisations and individuals including, but not limited to, those listed below in relation to a flood incident.

- Flood Risk Management
- Environment Agency
- Water and Sewerage Companies
- District Councils
- Highway Authorities, including Lancashire County Council Highway Authority and National Highways
- Earby and Salterforth Internal Drainage Board
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Emergency services, including police, fire, ambulance and search and rescue services.
- Canal and Rivers Trust

We may use our powers of Section 14 of Flood and Water Management Act (2010) to request information about a flood incident.



Any information gathered may be shared between flood risk management authorities (Lead Local Flood Authority, Environment Agency, District Councils, Water and Sewage Companies and Internal Drainage Boards) and emergency services to assist in the planning and emergency response to flooding incidents. The information may be used to plan future flood defence schemes and to inform the public about whether there is a risk of flooding in a particular area.

I own a watercourse. Do I have any responsibilities in relation to a flood incident?

Landowners who have a watercourse on or under their land or on the boundary of their land, up to its centre are '[riparian owners](#)'.

Riparian owners have responsibilities for the stretch of watercourse they own, this includes the management and maintenance of these watercourses.

For further guidance on riparian ownership please see [Gov.uk](#) and the County Council's Ordinary Watercourse Regulation webpages.

For any further guidance on risk management authorities in Lancashire please see [The Flood Hub](#) or the [Lancashire Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027](#).

Where can I find out more in general about the role and responsibilities of those in flood risk management?

You can read more about the general role and responsibilities of those in flood risk management on the [Gov.uk](#) website and also in our [Lancashire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#).

1.3. Investigation Approach

All flood incidents that are reported via Love Clean Streets, the telephone number or the flood incident report form will receive confirmation of a unique customer reference.

The information provided will be added to the Lancashire County Council secure asset management system, any information provided will be reviewed to determine whether an investigation as outlined in the policies is appropriate.

If an investigation is not appropriate on this occasion, the information will be stored in line with Lancashire County Councils Data Strategy and used to help understand future flooding incidents and capture an overview of flooding incidents across Lancashire.

Although not all flood incidents reported will result in a tier being activated as outlined in Policy INV2, all flood incidents reported will be thoroughly explored. Those incidents which do not result in a tier being activated will still receive appropriate guidance and response from the Lead Local Flood Authority.



The Flood and Water Management Act (2010) is clear that the Lead Local Flood Authority's responsibility for investigation only extends as far as establishing which of the risk management authorities has a flood risk management function and whether they have, or will be, exercising that function.



2. Flood Investigation Policies

2.1. Flood Awareness

How will the Lead Local Flood Authority collect the information required under Policy INV1?

The Lead Local Flood Authority has a number of ways this information can be collated, these include:

- Love Clean Streets App
- Telephone
- Email
- Flood Information Sheet

Once the flood investigation has concluded and the output published, the investigation is unlikely to be re-opened to accommodate additional reports of flood incidents that are received after the reasonable timeframe outlined above.

2.2. Flood Investigation

All information will be stored in line with Lancashire County Council's Data Strategy and used to help understand future flooding incidents and capture an overview of flooding incidents across Lancashire.

Included on the next page is a Figure 1 which is a flow chart outlining Policy INV2 and the different investigation Tiers. This is a simplified representation of the application of Policy INV2.

Although not all flood incidents reported to the Lead Local Flood Authority will trigger a particular Tier, we will undertake a review into the flood incident reported and a response will be provided with any further information gathered during the review as well as guidance or recommendations that may be relevant to the flood incident.





Figure 1: Application of Policy INV2



What response can I expect to receive from a flood investigation?

The response you will receive is dependent on which 'Tier' of investigation the flood incident triggers in Policy INV2 of the Flood Investigation document.

Tier 1a

If the flood incident triggers the Tier 1a criteria, the affected resident(s) can expect to receive a response from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

A **Tier 1a** investigation will include:

- A desktop review
- A site inspection, where required
- Appropriate action to:
 - Notify riparian owners of their responsibilities
 - Notify any relevant risk management authorities and/or asset owner(s) and confirm if they have or are proposing to exercise their function.
- A response to the affected resident(s) containing:
 - Findings of the review and, if applicable, the inspection
 - Advice and recommendations
 - A link to the published Flood Incident Register

Tier 1b

If the flood incident triggers the Tier 1b criteria, the affected resident(s) can expect to receive a response from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

A **Tier 1b** investigation will include:

- A desktop review
- A site inspection, where required
- Appropriate action to:
 - Notify riparian owners of their responsibilities, where required
 - Notify any relevant risk management authorities and/or asset owner(s) and confirm if they have or are proposing to exercise their function.
- A response to the affected resident(s) containing:
 - Findings of the review and, if applicable, the inspection
 - Advice and recommendations
 - A link to the published Flood Incident Register



Tier 2

If the flood incident triggers the Tier 2 criteria, the affected resident(s) can expect to receive a response from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

A **Tier 2** incident will include:

- A desktop review
- A site inspection, where required
- Appropriate action to:
 - Notify riparian owners of their responsibilities, where required
 - Notify any relevant risk management authorities and/or asset owner(s) and confirm if they have or are proposing to exercise their function.
- A response to the affected resident(s) containing:
 - Findings of the review
 - Advice and recommendations
 - A link to the published Flood Incident Register

Tier 3

If the flood incident triggers the Tier 3 criteria, the affected residents can expect to receive a formal response from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

A **Tier 3** incident will include:

- A desktop review
- A site inspection, where required
- Appropriate action to:
 - Notify riparian owners of their responsibilities, where required
 - Notify any relevant risk management authorities and/or asset owner(s) and confirm if they have or are proposing to exercise their function.
- A response to the affected residents containing:
 - Findings of the inspection
 - Advice and recommendations
 - A link to the published Flood Incident Register



Tier 4

If the flood incident triggers the Tier 4 criteria, the affected residents or property owners can expect to receive a formal response from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

A **Tier 4** incident will include:

- A desktop review
- An area inspection, where required
- Appropriate action to:
 - Notify riparian owners of their responsibilities, where required
 - Notify any relevant risk management authorities and/or asset owner(s) and confirm if they have or are proposing to exercise their function.
- Community event, where required
- Multi-agency data collection
- A formal response to the affected residents or property owners containing:
 - Findings of the inspection
 - Advice and recommendations
 - A link to the published responsibilities register

Flood Investigation Report published covering the local area affected.

Tier 5

If the flood incident triggers the Tier 5 criteria, the affected residents or property owners can expect to receive a formal response from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

A **Tier 5** incident may include:

- A desktop review
- An area inspection, where required
- Appropriate action to:
 - Notify riparian owners of their responsibilities, where required
 - Notify any relevant risk management authorities and/or asset owner(s) and confirm if they have or are proposing to exercise their function.
- Community events, where required
- Multi-agency data collection
- A formal response to the affected residents or property owners containing:
 - Findings of the inspection
 - Advice and recommendations
 - A link to the published responsibilities register
- Flood Investigation Report published covering the multiple areas affected



Wide Scale Flood Incidents

On rare occasions Lancashire may be affected by wide scale flood incidents where an emergency response is required.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires responders within a local police area to form a Local Resilience Forum and in Lancashire this forum has a flooding sub group.

Lancashire County Council is a Category One emergency responder and as such has a number of important responsibilities to discharge during an emergency flood incident.

For more information on Lancashire County Council's [Emergency Planning](#) Service please visit www.lancashire.gov.uk.



2.3. Flood Incident Register

What is the Flood Incident Register?

The Flood Incident Register is a table that shows the following information for any investigation that relates to Tiers 1 to 5 and will be published on Lancashire County Council's website:

- **Flood location** - to the extent of a road name or locality;
- **Date of the incident** - to the extent of the month and year in which the incident occurred;
- **Number of residential dwellings and/or business / commercial buildings** – to state the number of dwellings or buildings internally flooded;
- **Flood Source** – where this is known, to identify the primary source(s) of flooding;
- **Responsible Risk Management Authority(s)** – which risk management authority(s) were identified as having a relevant flood risk management function(s), the date they were notified and whether they have exercised or are proposing to exercise their function.

Table 1: Example of the Flood Incident Register

Flood Location	Date of the Incident	Number of Dwellings / Businesses Affected	Flood Source	Identified RMA	Date Notified	RMA Function Status
Fleetwood	12 October 2023	5	Ordinary Watercourse	LCC Lead Local Flood Authority – Riparian Owner	20 November 2023	Exercised its function
Clitheroe	4 September 2023	7	Main River	Environment Agency	30 September 2023	Proposing to exercise its function
Galgate	17 August 2023	13	Surface water sewer	United Utilities	28 September 2023	Awaiting Response

PLEASE NOTE: All examples provided in Table 1 above are fictitious.



What is the Flood Investigation report?

The flood investigation report is one of the identified outputs from a Tier 4 or Tier 5 investigation and will be published online via [Lancashire County Council's website](#) within the flooding section.

What is included in a Flood Investigation report?

The Flood Investigation Report will include, but is not limited to, the following sections:

- Executive summary
- Introduction and purpose of the report
- Definitions and responsibilities
- Methodology
- The weather event
- Response to the flooding
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Appendices, as required



Appendix 1: Definitions

Word	Explanation
Functions	These are the combination of legal powers and duties which a Risk Management Authority has or may choose to exercise. For more information of Risk Management Authorities please see the section entitled Roles and Responsibilities.
Same source or same interacting sources	The source refers to how the flooding occurred, for example as a result of surface water flooding, blocked gully, river flooding or coastal flooding. A combination of any of these factors will be classed as interacting sources, for example where a high river level results in raised watercourse levels.
Reasonable Time	The Lead Local Flood Authority expects that in most circumstances, the information provided under INV1 shall be submitted to the Lead Local Flood Authority within 6 months of the date of the flood incident.
Scale	This refers to the number of dwellings/properties that have been affected by ¹ internal flooding and by the same flooding mechanism.
Output	This refers to the response provided by Lancashire County Council, further information can be found in the Tier breakdown.
Flood Incident Register	This refers to a record of tiered flood incidents that have been reported to Lancashire County Council under this new policy <i>(these records will not identify individual addresses)</i>
Published Report	This refers to whether a publicly available report will be published