

URGENT



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for HCLG

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for EFRA

By Email

5th February 2021

Dear Robert and George

MAJOR INCIDENT – STORM CHRISTOPH

We are writing to you on behalf of the communities across Cheshire most affected by the devastating impact of Storm Christoph.

We have seen first-hand how residents and businesses across Warrington and Cheshire West & Chester boroughs have been severely impacted. The damage has been felt across Warrington, Northwich, Acton Bridge, Chester, Ellesmere Port, Farndon, Tattenhall, Winsford, and beyond.

Preliminary figures on the impact have been provided to MHCLG by the two councils in cooperation with the Environment Agency. These numbers are still being finalised, and have increased over the course of the last week as council teams have been able to access all areas and properties.

A summary of the impacts as they currently stand is below.

Cheshire West and Chester:

- 128 residents evacuated to emergency accommodation supported by the Council;
- 152 properties flooded across the Borough;
- damage to over 330 businesses and residential properties;
- around 50 per cent of reported incidents not covered by insurance;
- damage to infrastructure including bridges and roads.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
FOR THE BOROUGHES OF
CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER AND WARRINGTON

Warrington:

- 152 properties confirmed to have flooded, and out of those properties 140 residents evacuated into hotels;
- an initial figure of 600–700 properties affected across the geography of the Borough;
- increasing numbers of residents indicating they do not have insurance, or where they do, that insurers will not cover floods.

This will give you a sense of the scale of damage and longer-term impacts that will persist for some weeks and months for our residents and businesses, and of course follows the pressures in our communities from Covid-19—particularly the ongoing restrictions to businesses to help reduce the spread of infection.

Strategic co-ordination recovery groups are in place for both boroughs, involving multi-agency joint efforts, and including support for residents in need of temporary accommodation; welfare advice and help; ongoing highway management and clean-up operations; and clean-up and removal of damaged goods from premises.

Both councils alerted MHCLG to the major incident last week and called for support for both costs incurred and ongoing costs, together with grant framework support for residents and businesses. Costs may run into many hundreds of thousands, and both councils will struggle to meet these without additional external support, or by cutting other valuable public services.

We understand that the Bellwin funding may prove difficult to access, and it may require you as Secretaries of State to intervene in this case to designate Storm Christoph as an event requiring additional support.

We are therefore requesting your intervention to assist the communities and businesses in our constituencies, and both of the councils dealing with this emergency in the context of Covid-19.

Those residents now facing financial hardship and months of temporary accommodation, together with many businesses dealing with significant stock loss and property damage, need our collective support.

We hope you will respond swiftly, and provide the reassurance of Government commitment that our communities are seeking.

Yours sincerely



Edward Timpson CBE MP (Eddisbury)

for and on behalf of

The Rt Hon Esther McVey MP (Tatton)
Andy Carter MP (Warrington South)
Mike Amesbury (Weaver Vale)
Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port & Neston)
Chris Matheson (City of Chester)
Charlotte Nichols (Warrington North)