

Wainfleet residents return home after flooding

Residents in Wainfleet have been advised that it is now safe to return home after extreme rainfall flooded 137 properties in the town last week and more than 500 homes were evacuated.

More than two months' worth of rain fell in three days last week, causing a breach of the flood bank on the River Steeping. Over 500 staff from the emergency services, Environment Agency, local council and partners have been involved in the incident response.

The Environment Agency has carried out temporary repairs to the flood bank on the River Steeping and has strengthened it with additional ballast. Engineers are now out on site using drones to survey the river bank and design a permanent repair to the breach. The next stages of repair include:

- Building and stabilising an access road to bring machinery on site
- Using a 35 tonne machine to insert steel reinforcements into the bank
- Carrying out permanent repairs using a combination of clay, stone and steel

The permanent repair work will begin when the ground surrounding the breach has dried out, as currently the embankments are saturated with water making it dangerous to bring heavy machinery on site. In the meantime, residents have been advised that they are safe to return home.

Ben Thornely, Flood Risk Manager for the Environment Agency said:

We know how hard this last week has been for the people of Wainfleet and the surrounding areas whose home and businesses were flooded. Keeping people safe and helping them get back home is our top priority and we are pleased that over 500 people can return to their properties today.

We will continue to support local residents over the coming days and our incident room is open and operational. There is some further rainfall forecast over the weekend and into next week – we are keeping a very close eye on the situation and are ready to act as needed.

Assistant Chief Constable Shaun West, chairman of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum, said:

The emergency services, our partners and volunteers have been working around the clock to get people back in their homes and I'm happy to announce it is now safe to return.

We appreciate that this has been emotional and distressing time for local residents and our organisations will be providing ongoing support as things gets back to normal.

Summary of the flood response

Over 160 Environment Agency staff have worked around the clock alongside the emergency services to ensure that it is safe for flooded residents in Wainfleet to move back into their homes as quickly as possible.

On Thursday last week, due to the extreme rainfall, military assistance was requested to seal a breach in the embankment of the River Steeping. Within hours of the breach, Environment Agency engineers worked with the RAF to drop 342 tonnes of sand into the breach to stem the flow of water.

The Environment Agency and the Fire & Rescue Service have used some of Europe's biggest mobile pumps to bring down river levels to reduce flood risk to properties in and around Wainfleet. So far, the fleet of pumps have moved nearly a million tonnes of water away from the town, enabling work to start on repairs more quickly.

The EA has also worked with telecommunications companies and mobile providers to extend their free Flood Warning Service to cover the wider area at risk around Croft and St Peter.

Community Information officers continue to be on the ground in Wainfleet, knocking on doors to ensure that everyone has the latest information and that they are signed up to flood warnings.

Weather outlook

There is the potential for heavy rain and thunderstorms to return affecting parts of England later on Sunday and into next week.

The Environment Agency is encouraging residents of Wainfleet, and elsewhere in the county to [check your flood risk](#), get the latest alerts and warnings, and [get advice on what to do if you've been flooded](#).

Advice for residents

- Residents of Wainfleet can receive hourly updates from the emergency services on the [@LincolnshireEP](#) Twitter account.
- Avoid direct/ indirect contact with floodwater, if you feel unwell call NHS 111.
- Feeling tired, anxious and having difficulty sleeping is normal after you have been flooded. Contact friends and family for support as it can take a long time for life to return to normal.
- Do not use petrol or diesel generators indoors. The exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide, which can kill.

Michelle Howard, East Lindsey District Council's Assistant Director (People) said:

Returning to normal life following an event like this can be easier said than done and we want to assure residents that we will continue to be there throughout the recovery efforts to help them access the support they need.

As well as continuing to share information through our communications channels, we will continue to have a daily presence at Coronation Hall for the foreseeable future where you can drop in for advice and support from a number of services. The support we are offering will also include a flood recovery link worker, this role will provide direct support to affected residents and operate as a communication channel and direct link between residents and support services.

A spokesperson from Anglian Water said:

We'd like to thank local residents for their help and cooperation over the last week in limiting the use of their facilities. We're pleased to say water levels in the network are now returning to normal, so people can use their toilets, showers and washing machines as they would usually.

If people are experiencing problems with their facilities, they should report this directly to Anglian on 03457 145 145 or via Twitter or Facebook.

Dr Jharna Kumbang, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control at Public Health England (PHE) East Midlands, said:

As some residents return to their homes, our advice is not to use petrol or diesel generators indoors. The exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide, which can kill.

Residents should avoid contact with floodwater and take care if they must go into flood water by following our [advice about how to clean up your home safely](#).

If residents develop symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting or respiratory illness, they should call 111 in the first instance.

Feeling tired, anxious and having difficulty sleeping is normal after you have been flooded. We would urge those affected to contact friends and family for support as it can take a long time for life to return to normal.