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## National Flood Forum A Manifesto for Flood Victims

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## **Why publish a Manifesto?**

The National Flood Forum is the only organization that speaks for and supports flood victims across the country. Over 200 local flood groups are now attached to the NFF. We therefore have a unique view of flooding and a singular authority to represent the effects of flooding on people and communities.

For us, flooding is not just about funding, structures and organizations. It is not just about return frequencies or rainfall intensities. It is about the very real tragedy of lives blighted by events over which the victims have no control.

No-one who has not themselves experienced flooding can really appreciate the impact it has on individuals and families. Every day at the NFF we hear stories of people flooded, whose lives will never be the same, whose health has been ruined by flooding, who are trapped by blighted property that has plummeted in value that they can't sell.

The Environment Agency estimates that 5.2 Million households are at risk of flooding in the UK. 2.8 million are at risk of flooding from surface water and 2.4 million from rivers. 1 million are at risk from both types of flooding.

As the Pitt Review noted, Climate Change is producing more extreme weather patterns and more intense storm events. It is likely that more houses will be hit by surface water (pluvial) flooding over the next 25 years than by "traditional" river (fluvial) flooding. Most of these will be affected for the first time.

This Manifesto states what we as the National Flood Forum believe – and flood victims and groups are telling us – should be the urgent priorities over the next four years for national and local government and the Environment Agency.

With a General Election on the horizon, flood victims are entitled to know what each of the political parties will do to tackle flooding if elected to office. The answers may well affect how they vote!

## **What we want to see from the next Government**

- Early implementation of the Floods and Water Management Bill
  - all sections commenced within 2010-11
- A comprehensive Flooding Bill within two years
  - taking forward the issues dropped from the draft Bill, particularly measures to address flooding resulting from neighbouring land
- Give the EA a Duty to address flooding, not simply a power
  - so that people don't come behind wildlife in importance
- Putting continuing care for Flood Victims at the centre of flood recovery
  - giving long-term support after the flood, for as long as it is needed

- A One-Stop Shop and community support centre in emergencies
  - with one body taking responsibility for information
- Clarify lines of responsibility
  - so flood victims know who will give them answers
- Commitment to real-terms increases in capital funding going forward
  - with additional funding for surface water flooding
- Continued grants for property based flood measures
  - where defences are not cost-effective or applicable
- A Public Commission to investigate the Flood Insurance industry
  - and make recommendations to end current anomalies and inconsistencies

### **What we want to see from the Environment Agency**

- Work with communities and put them at the heart of every flood scheme
  - adopting best practice in community engagement
- Put consideration of people before concern for wildlife
  - planning ahead so that wildlife surveys don't disrupt flood schemes
- Clear, accessible and accurate flood warnings
  - linked to communities and local property floor levels
- Develop a National Specification for Flood Wardens
  - and make it part of the National Strategy
- Consistent Mapping of Flood Risk across the country
  - with maps freely available via the internet
- Publication of all flood data and predictive maps
  - including areas at risk of surface water flooding
- Scrutiny of Local Flood Risk Management (FRM) arrangements
  - through the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCC)
- Flood victim representation on RFCCs and on the EA Board
  - so that members hear it as flooded communities see it

### **What we want to see from Local Authorities**

- No more permissions for building on flood plains
- A firm commitment to take on Local FRM responsibilities
  - and to allocate the resources needed
- Consistency of response across the Country
  - no "postcode lottery" for how flood victims are treated
- Transparent identification of funds for flooding
  - not diverting it to other uses
- Flood victim representation on Local Flood Committees
  - so councillors hear it as flooded communities see it
- Promoting and supporting local flood wardens
  - to gather information and support the community before and during a flood