

CASE STUDY: KENDAL, CUMBRIA (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

OVERVIEW

Newground worked with the residents in the Castle Street area of Kendal to increase the uptake of the Flood Resilience Grant and increase community resilience as a whole.

Many areas in Kendal were flooded after Storm Desmond wreaked havoc in parts of the UK on the 5th and 6th of December 2015. Newground, on behalf of the Environment Agency and South Lakeland District Council has been working with the residents in the Castle Street area of Kendal to increase the uptake of the Flood Resilience Grant and increase community resilience. Engagement work was targeted in the worst affected area of Kendal with the lowest uptake of the Flood Resilience Grant, engaging with residents and businesses across 5 streets with over 200 properties.



Images: The Flood Hub

CHALLENGES

The engagement work brought about a number of challenges that all needed to be addressed in order to increase uptake of the grant. Some of the challenges included:

- A large number of properties still being empty at the start of engagement in October 2016, as well as there being a high percentage of rented properties in the area making it difficult to contact property owners.
- Many residents did not feel ready to apply for the grant, as they were still dealing with insurance claims, not yet back in their homes or simply still trying to recover from the flood event.
- Obtaining quotations and submitting applications was challenging for a number of residents causing a barrier to obtaining the grant for many.

NEWGROUND APPROACH

Starting engagement work in October 2016, initial door knocking was carried out and letters posted to make residents aware of the support available to them. Newground offered assistance in making applications, promoted the Environment Agency's Flood Warnings Service and engaged with residents around community flood resilience. Where needed, further support was provided in obtaining quotes, organising surveys and submitting applications. In total 4 rounds of door knocking engagement were carried out as well as holding an evening drop in event at Castle Street Community Centre and providing support at the South Lakeland District Council drop in sessions.

HOW WE MADE A DIFFERENCE

In total we were able to engage with 81% of the community in the Castle Street area which resulted in 56% of eligible residents submitting an application for the Flood Resilience Grant. The team assisted residents applying for the flood resilience grant through helping to fill out forms, liaising with the council and contractors and assisting residents in obtaining quotes. As a direct result of Newground's engagement and assistance, Castle Street Community Centre was able to access funding from both the Flood Resilience Grant and additional funding from Cumbria Community Foundation for 6 demountable aluminium flood barriers and 21 self closing air bricks.

"Newground helped and advised me when it came to flood defences! They advised me of the grant funding which was available and gave me a list of suppliers for the flood defences we needed. An excellent service provided by Newground, made the Grant / Installation works which I had to do a very pleasant experience. Fantastic knowledge from all the team!!"

- Centre Manger Castle Street Community Centre

Newground has supported the community to develop a Flood Action Group. The Castle Street Community Flood Action Group has been involved in community cleans ups, awareness raising events, engaging risk management authorities to better understand the flooding issues in the area, supporting the development of the Kendal flood risk management scheme and have developed a community flood plan.

"Newground has been incredibly supportive whilst we have been putting the Castle Street Community Flood Action Group together. Their approach is very calm and they have an excellent way with people which has been very useful in our group meetings. Newground are very knowledgeable about the flooding issues in our area, how they link to neighbouring areas and also bring knowledge and experience from other Flood Action Groups from other towns to ours."

- Castle Street Community Flood Action Group



Images: The Flood Hub