



GLOSSARY

Catchment – An area of land which leads each drop of rain that falls within it towards the same river.

Climate – The usual weather conditions in an area, such as temperature, wind and rainfall.

Climate change – Changes in weather patterns over time which can be known as 'global warming' when the climate heats up from lots of greenhouse gases.

Coastal erosion – When materials at the coast such as rock, soil and sand are worn down and washed away by waves.

Coastal flooding – When normally dry, low-lying flat land at the coast is flooded by the sea.

Coastline – A point where the land meets the sea or a place near to it.

Compaction – When soil is squashed together by animals or machines so there is no air gaps left within it.

Condensation – The process by which water vapour in the air (gas) turns back into liquid.

Confluence – The point where two rivers come together to form one larger river.

Dam – A structure built across the channel of a river to hold back some of the water.

Deforestation – The cutting down of a large number of trees from a forest.

Delta – Landform that forms where the river meets the sea and drops all the sediment it was carrying.

Deposition – When eroded materials are left behind as a river slows down and loses energy.

Ecosystem – A community of living organisms such as plants and animals that live together along with non-living aspects of their environment.

River ecosystem – The environment in which plants and animals all live together in a river and rely on each other in order to survive.

Emergency – An unexpected or dangerous situation which happens suddenly and requires quick action to deal with it.

Erosion – When materials such as rock, soil and sand are broken down and gradually worn away by the action of rain, rivers, wind or waves and transported away.



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Estuary – The point where a river meets the sea.

Evaporation – The process by which water turns to gas.

Evapotranspiration – The loss of water through evaporation at the surface, e.g. in soil and through transpiration from plants.

Fatberg – A large, hard mass that blocks sewers, made up of wet wipes and other objects.

Flash flooding – Usually happens very quickly when heavy rain falls on dry land or hard surfaces and can occur with little or no warning.

Flood – The temporary overflowing of water on to an area of land which is usually dry.

Flood defence – A structure or system of structures built to reduce the risk of flooding from rivers or the sea.

Flood risk – How often or likely a flood event will happen in a certain area and what the consequences would be if one did happen.

Flood scheme – A plan put in place to reduce the risk of flooding in an area using different flood defences.

Floodplain – The area of land directly next to a river that water flows onto when a river overtops during a flood.

Fluvial flooding – Also known as ‘river flooding’, when a river overtops its banks and spills over, covering an area of land next to the river that is usually dry.

Habitat – The natural home of an animal, plant or organism.

Hard engineering – Managing rivers and coastlines through man-made structures.

Industrial Revolution – The period of time in history when work changed from agricultural work to mainly work with machines in factories.

Levee – A raised bank that forms naturally on a floodplain alongside the river channel and can protect against flooding.

Main river – Usually larger rivers and streams that are designated as a ‘main river’ on the Environment Agency’s Main River Map.



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Meander – A bend in the river channel created by the speed of the water, erosion and deposition.

Mouth – The point where a river enters a lake, larger river, or the ocean.

Natural – Existing in and created in nature, and not man-made.

Natural Flood Management – When natural processes are used or mimicked to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

Ordinary watercourse – These include watercourses such as rivers, brooks, becks, ditches, streams and culverts.

Oxbow lake – A curved lake created when the gap between a meander gets smaller and the river takes the straighter, quicker route through the land.

Pluvial flooding – Also known as ‘surface water flooding’, when there is heavy rainfall and drainage systems are full to capacity.

Precipitation – Water vapour or moisture that falls from the clouds in the form of rain, sleet, snow or hail.

Prevailing winds – The main wind direction in an area.

Property Flood Resilience (PFR) – Changes you can make to a property so it can cope better when it floods, less damage is caused and you can recover from it faster.

- **Resilience** – Allows floodwater to enter your property, but reduces damage caused and makes recovery faster, e.g. tiled floors instead of having carpets.
- **Resistance** – Stops floodwater coming into your property, e.g. a flood door or flood barrier.

Reservoir flooding – When a dam wall is overtopped or breaks down and releases the water.

Resources – Things and/or materials that can be useful or are valuable.

River – A natural channel that water flows along.

River bed – The ground within the river channel that water flows over.

Runoff – Excess water the land cannot absorb that flows over hard surfaces or into rivers and streams.

Sewer flooding – When sewers become blocked or reach full capacity during heavy rainfall and the sewer water overflows out of them.



GLOSSARY

Silt – Small bits of sand and dirt that is carried in a river.

Soft engineering – Using the natural environment to manage and protect against flooding and coastal erosion.

Source – The place where a river begins which is usually in the hills.

Storm – Very bad and destructive weather which is usually caused by very strong winds and heavy rain. They can be called typhoons, hurricanes and cyclones in other parts of the world.

Surface water flooding – When water cannot soak into the land or flow into drains so flows over the surface instead.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) – Ways to capture and manage rainfall like nature does, to stop it from adding to surface water, entering drains and adding to the risk of flooding.

Tides – The rise and fall of sea level caused by gravity.

Tributary – A stream or river that flows into a larger river.

Urban – Usually a town or city where many people live and work, with lots of buildings and hard surfaces. This is the opposite to rural which is the countryside.

Valley – The lower part of land between two higher such as mountains or hillsides.

V-Shaped valley – These landforms are created when a river erodes the valley sides vertically and horizontally, creating a V-Shape.

Watercourse – Any river, stream, ditch, drain, culvert, dike, etc. water flows through.

Water cycle – The journey water takes from land to the sky and back again.

Waterfall – A steep drop in the course of a river that forms when water flows over hard rock that overlies softer rock.

Water table – The level below the surface of the ground at which water can be found.

Weathering – The breaking down or wearing away of rocks where they are by the weather, and not because they move or collide with each other.