

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE CASE STUDY: WHALLEY, LANCASHIRE

BACKGROUND

In December 2015 Storms Desmond and Eva resulted in extreme rainfall across the North of England, Whalley was badly affected as a result of Storm Eva causing widespread flooding throughout the village.

The record rainfall levels resulted in the River Calder overtopping its banks and also a local culvert, resulting in floodwater entering the village from both ends of King Street, the main street through the village, and spreading throughout the neighbouring streets.

CHALLENGES

There were numerous challenges to overcome in helping the residents of Whalley become more flood resilient, these included:

- Low uptake of flood resilience grants initially.
- Many residents not being back in their homes several months after Storm Eva.
- A lack of interest in and understanding of property level protection.



Image: From video by J Whipps / Whalley flooding, Lancashire

NEWGROUND'S APPROACH

Newground began to undertake community engagement work within the area in September 2016, working closely with Ribble Valley Council to target the worst affected areas and those with low levels of grant uptake, such as Queen Street and Waters Edge.

By directly engaging with residents we were able to fully appreciate and understand the barriers that people faced in accessing the grant funding. Many residents had issues getting companies to visit their property to obtain quotations for property level protection, due to the huge increase in demand following the floods.

As well as offering impartial advice and support around the flood resilience grant, the flood engagement team encouraged residents to sign up to the Environment Agency's Flood Warning service to help people be more prepared.

HOW WE MADE A DIFFERENCE

Between September and December 2016 Newground were able to directly engage with 86% of the community we were asked to target resulting in a 66% up take of the flood resilience grant. Newground helped people access grant funding and offered support to residents where needed, below is an example of the assistance we provided to a resident in Whalley.

Queen Street

A landlord was concerned that if a flood occurred on a similar scale again, they would not be in a position to protect the property. Newground supported their property owner through the application process following a site visit and as a result they were able to access grant funding and property level protection was installed in December 2016.

"Firstly thank you so much for the meeting; I have started the process which I would not have done without your support... I can't thank you enough and I am very glad I sang your praises in my application."

Prior to Newground's engagement a resident had looked into making an application for the flood resilience grant but was put off as he found the application form complicated and thought there would be a hidden cost. A member of the flood engagement team went through the application form and assisted in arranging for companies to visit and provide quotations, as they had struggled to do so themselves. As a result the resident was able to submit their application before the deadline and now has property level protection fitted.

"It was very fortunate that you called at my address when you did It makes a big difference when someone takes the time to explain the ins and outs of claiming grants etc, with your help we have now had the approval passed for the flood resilience works, thanks for all your help."



Images: From video by J Whipps / Whalley flooding, Lancashire