# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Flooding following Storm Dennis** |
| **DATE**  | **17 February 2020** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Energy, Environment and Rural Affairs** |

# In the last two weeks many communities in Wales have suffered devastating and unprecedented effects from Storm Dennis and Storm Ciara. My thoughts, and those of my Ministerial colleagues, are with all of those affected. I would like to send our heartfelt thanks to everyone from across emergency and public services in Wales who worked tirelessly in atrocious conditions, day and night, to protect life and property.

# The community response in those areas hit by floods has been remarkable. The compassion and kindness shown by volunteers supporting neighbours, friends and strangers at their time of need is an inspiration.

# The emergency services, Local Authorities, Natural Resources Wales and other agencies worked closely together to mitigate the impacts as much as possible. The rainfall and flooding in many areas was of a scale and intensity not seen before, and these services rose to the challenge in extremely difficult circumstances. Their effort this weekend was all the more remarkable given the impact of dealing with Storm Ciara just days earlier.

# The impact of these storms has been felt across the whole of Wales. Areas particularly badly affected reach from Crickhowell and Usk in the south east, to Pontypridd, Nantgarw, Taff’s Well and other communities in the south Wales Valleys, as well as Llanrwst, Conwy, Powys and Denbighshire.

# The transport network has also been severely affected, and agencies are working hard to remove and make safe landslips on our roads and railways.

# The First Minister visited Pontypridd this morning to see the impact there at first hand, and I visited the Natural Resources Wales offices at Ty Cambria today to thank staff across the organisation for their round-the-clock efforts to predict and prevent flooding incidents across the country. The First Minister, myself and other Ministerial colleagues will be visiting flood-hit areas in the coming days, right across Wales, to hear directly from people who have been severely affected.

# There will be financial impacts on Local Authorities, businesses and individuals in recovering from the aftermath of this major incident. As a first step, the Welsh Government is convening a summit of Local Authority leaders from across Wales later this week, with representatives from the emergency services, voluntary sector and trades unions, to receive an initial assessment of the impact of these incidents. This will enable us to have the clearest possible Wales-wide picture of where help is most urgently required.

# It is also vital that once the immediate response is complete, lessons are learned in order that the best possible flood mitigation is put in place, even in the unprecedented circumstances we saw over the past two weekends.

# Many flood defences held and protected communities, even under record rainfall, which is a reflection of the £350 million investment in flood risk management we have put in place during this Assembly term.

# In Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis, we have faced two extremely severe weather events within just a week of each other. Climate change experts have consistently said that one of the key impacts of global warming is an increase in both the frequency and severity of weather events and this is a significant illustration of that prediction. The Welsh Government will continue its work to combat the climate emergency, support communities most in need to recover from these incidents, and invest to protect people from the impact of increasingly severe weather events.