

Statement from

The National Coordination Group on Recent Severe Weather

12th December 2015.

A further meeting of the National Coordination Group to discuss the on-going severe weather was held in the (NECC) National Emergency Coordination Centre today (12th December 2015) to review the response to date, to assess the impact of the storms on infrastructure and communities and to ensure that the response of relevant local authorities, Government Departments and Agencies continues to be coordinated.

The NCG is comprised of representatives from all the main government departments and all the key state agencies this includes, inter alia, OPW, ESB, HSE, Civil Defence, Coast Guard, Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána & Met Eireann

Local authorities remain on standby and continue to monitor the situation and in the areas where further flooding may occur they are making the necessary preparations. These preparations are supplemented by the Defence Forces and other service providers when and where required..

Met Eireann

Met Eireann advises heavy rain has fallen overnight and continues to fall but this should clear later in the afternoon. Sleet or snow continuing for a time over northern parts. Drier conditions in the west and northwest will extend gradually southeastwards this afternoon, with rain possibly turning to sleet or snow on high ground for a time before it clears. The rain will not clear southern coastal areas for the rest of today. Become cold almost everywhere this afternoon with temperatures of 3 to 5 degrees by mid-afternoon. Windy along south coasts at first, with strong southwest winds.

The weather tomorrow will improve somewhat but more rain is forecast for early next week.

ESB

ESB advises that the Shannon continues to rise and that the flow of water through Parteen Weir will increase to 405 cubic metres per second today Saturday 12 December.

The levels in Lough Derg are monitored and regular assessments made of flows. The flow will increase to 405 cubic metres per second today and is likely to increase further later today or tomorrow Sunday. With further rain expected, the level of water flowing down the Shannon may increase further in the following days.

This level of water flow is likely to lead to increased flooding of roads, land and property in the vicinity of the Shannon downstream of Parteen Weir including the areas of Springfield, Montpellier, Castleconnell, Mountshannon (Annacotty) and the University of Limerick.

ESB is continuing to monitor the situation and is liaising with the relevant County Councils.

View infographic on the River Shannon system.

For Media Queries, please contact the ESB Press Office: 01 702 6009 / 087 2557186

OPW

Max rise in mid Shannon catchment - Athlone area is 3 inches approx..

Lower Shannon catchment - is approx 1 inch rise.

Many of the other catchment being monitored had fallen overnight - the Brosna, Suck, Moy, Erne and Clare;

Lower Shannon estimates time to peak remains Sunday and Monday;

Huge intensity in rainfall today will cause surface water and pluvial flooding in affected areas.

Media queries in relation to Flood Relief Measures or Flood Mapping to the OPW may be directed to: OPW Press Officer at 087 9475552.

There is still flooding on minor roads and more will occur over the weekend with the possibility of flash floods in some places. Motorists are advised to heed the Garda Síochána and local authority warnings in this regard.. As the temperatures fall this will cause freezing on some roads so the public are advised to extra vigilant. The advice in affected areas is to slow down and take care.

The public is reminded to avoid walking along riverbanks, which may be unsafe due to swollen rivers until it is safe to do so. They are also requested to heed any public warnings from the local authorities and local media outlets. People are further advised to follow local flood warnings issued through local authorities for more detailed information.

The Coast Guard advice to people remains the same - anybody who might visit coastal areas to take care. Their general safety message is Stay Back, Stay High & Stay Dry

The group noted the responses of emergency services, defence forces, local authority workers, state agencies, businesses and the public for their hard work and patience during the recent event. The NCG will meet again tomorrow to review matters and Local Authorities will continue to monitor river levels and are preparing where necessary in areas impacted.

Government support for small businesses

Government decided yesterday to establish a fund of €5m to aid small businesses which have suffered damage to their property in the current flooding. The fund will be administered on behalf of the Government by the Red Cross.

The fund is intended for businesses in towns recognised to be at flood risk by the OPW and which have been unable to get flood risk insurance.

Applications forms will be available on the Red Cross website shortly.

Department of Social Protection -Humanitarian Assistance Scheme.

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) has activated its Humanitarian Assistance Scheme, administered by the local Community Welfare Service (CWS), to assist householders affected by the current bad weather conditions. The situation in all affected areas is being monitored and CWS staff are engaging with the local authorities and other agencies to ensure supports are being provided to those affected as swiftly as possible.

Staff are assessing and meeting the demand for assistance by the public as the needs arise and when necessary are visiting the homes of persons affected.

People seeking assistance under the Humanitarian Assistance Scheme should contact their local DSP Intreo Centre or CWS office who will be able to offer assistance. The Humanitarian Assistance Scheme is not just available to people in receipt of social welfare payment, it's open to any member of the public who has an urgent need.

There are three stages to Humanitarian Assistance Scheme:

1 - Emergency Income Support - payment that the Department can offer is an immediate humanitarian aid payment, which is intended to cover immediate needs such as food, clothing, etc.

2 - Replacement of Goods & household items - will follow when the flooding has receded and the items that need to be replaced can be assessed

3 - Long term financial aid and works - will follow when the flooding has receded and the full extent of the damage to a property is known

The Department opened emergency Humanitarian Assistance clinics in Ballinasloe, Crossmolina and Athlone, further clinics may be opened in Limerick, Clare as circumstances require.

Further information and applications forms in relation to the Humanitarian Assistance Scheme are available Department of Social Protection offices in the affected areas and from the Department's website:

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Humanitarian-Assistance-Scheme.aspx>

Media queries to the Department of Social Protection may be directed to:

press.office@welfare.ie or Tel: 01 704 3860