

UK flash floods: Houses evacuated as Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Lincolnshire

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Kashmira Gander

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The rain continues to fall on a flooded street in Worcester on February 14, 2014 in Worcester, United Kingdom. Flood water has remained high in some areas and high winds are causing disruption to other parts of the UK with the Met Office issuing a red weather warning. Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

Hundreds of homes in Cambridgeshire were left without power on Friday after a riverbank collapsed under the weight of torrential rain.

50mm (2inches) of rain fell in the county in an hour in the county, which saw drivers trapped in their cars, and two supermarkets close. One Tesco shopper said water was "pouring through the ceiling near the fresh fish counter," BBC News reported.

The UK Power Network said it had been working to restore power to homes and about 400 homes were still without power at about 9pm on Friday.

Meanwhile in Norfolk and Lincolnshire, people were evacuated from their homes, and an air display in Lancaster was cancelled.

In Cambridgeshire, fire service group commander Ryan Stacey told the broadcaster that seven crews are currently stationed in March, Doddington and Wisbech St Mary, where they are helping to evacuate residents and pumping water from homes.

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"The exact number of properties affected cannot be confirmed, but we understand that we are assisting currently at least 60 properties," he said.

He warned residents not to drive through standing water to avoid damaging their vehicles and encountering underwater hazards.

The force also tweeted urging people not to drive in flood water.

A rest centre for those affected has opened in St John the Evangelist Parish Hall in Queens Street, March.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary Chief Inspector Nick Night said: "We would urge people not to go out in a vehicle unless absolutely necessary and also not to call 999 unless it is a real emergency where life is at risk.

"We do not have a stock of sandbags so please do not call 999 requesting any," he added.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service said officers have been dealing with about 40 flood-related calls with ongoing incidents in Swaffham, Necton, Outwell and Downham Market.

Twitter users took to the website to post photos of sodden roads.

A spokeswoman from the Met Office told *The Independent* that the torrential rain was caused by a lack of wind moving clouds across the sky, and was not linked to ex-[Hurricane Bertha](#). The UK is expected to be hit by the remnants of the storm on Sunday.



Environment

Storm fears mean sandbags again on the Somerset Levels

Residents have not been in their flooded homes for months – now more bad weather is forecast

Jamie Merrill | [@Jamie_Merrill](#) | Friday 8 August 2014 | 



Flood water was pumped from fields into the river Parrett in January *Carl Court/AFP/Getty Images*

You could forgive Bryony Sadler for keeping a closer than usual eye on the weather this weekend. Her

once-picturesque home on the Somerset Levels spent three weeks under water during the winter storms. It became a breakwater against a surge of flood water and her family hasn't spent a night at home since February.

Summer high tides and the potential arrival of the remnants of tropical storm Bertha this weekend won't produce anything like that volume of water, but the Environment Agency in Somerset is taking no chances this weekend, with teams laying sandbags and making inspections.

Six months ago Mrs Sadler was one of the 80 homeowners evacuated by emergency services as the River Parrett burst its banks in the early hours of February 7, overwhelming temporary flood defences and leaving 80 homes underwater.

"It's been a living hell. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy. We've only just started work on our house after battles with the insurance company," said Mrs Sadler, who worked as a mobile hairdresser before she and most of her clients decamped to temporary housing elsewhere in the county. "There is no community here now. Of course it will return, but so few people are back in their homes, the village feels empty other than builders' vans".

Local Conservative MP Ian Liddell-Grainger agrees. "Life is very far from perfect in the village, with work still going on and the vast majority of people still staying in temporary accommodation," he said. "What's amazing, though, is that the surrounding countryside has returned to its beauty as a little backwater of England, it's just that you see people in caravans at night instead of their homes, so that's a little spooky."

Working with the local authorities, the Environment Agency has drawn up a 20-year flood action plan for the Levels, while short-term measures include the dredging of the rivers Parrett and Tone by October, increasing capacity so that water is more easily moved off the land.

In pictures: The floods recede



show all

Campaigners at the Flooding on the Levels Action Group want the Government to go further and invest in a barrage or sluice to prevent a deluge of water from the Bristol Channel at high tide. The Government says a report on the sluice is due to be completed in September.

Despite action being taken, life is still tough for many locals, with the knock-on effects to tourism being particularly tough; some firms report summer trade down by as much as 25 per cent.

For farmer Geoff Miller the consequences of the winter floods will be felt for years to come on his 250-acre cattle farm: “I’m still putting the pieces back together after having my animals off the farm and my fields under water for three months.”

He was forced to sell 20 cattle out of his 88-head herd, and faces “up to five years” of financial troubles as he struggles with reduced returns at market and less-productive grazing land. He expects the total cost to be “close to £30,000” this year alone.

He added: “If it hadn’t been for the support from local volunteers, farmers and also farmers across the country donating animal feed, I’d have packed it in long ago.”

Environment Secretary, Elizabeth Truss, said: “Ensuring the area is well protected is a very high priority. I saw for myself that the dredging of the Parrett and Tone is on track, and we are looking at further measures to better protect against any future flooding.” ●

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Hurricane Julio to hit Hawaii after Iselle passes without major damage

A magnitude-4.5 earthquake also hit Hawaii's Big Island on Thursday

[Lizzie Dearden](#), [Kashmira Gander](#) | [@lizziedearden](#) | Thursday 7 August 2014 | 



Two tropical Pacific Ocean hurricanes - Iselle at center and Julio at right - bearing down on Hawaii, top left. Hurricane Iselle is expected to reach Hawaii Thursday night, Aug. 7, 2014. *AP Photo/NASA*

Hurricane Iselle has slammed into Hawaii, toppling trees and cutting power to thousands of homes.

No serious injuries or major damage had been reported by Friday morning as the category one storm passed over the island.

It hit the Puna district at around 9.15pm local time on Thursday, with sustained winds of about up to 70 miles an hour, according to authorities.

Iselle was downgraded to a tropical storm by about 11pm and is expected to weaken as it moves on but left around 18,000 homes without power and trees blocking roads.

More than 1,000 people, including many tourists, had been evacuated to Red Cross shelters on high ground while the island's residents fortified their houses and stocked up on supplies.

But there will be little respite for Hawaii, which is braced for a second hurricane, Julio, tracking closely behind.

Meteorologists originally believed that Iselle would weaken and fade into the Pacific Ocean but later warned islanders to prepare for their first hurricane in 22 years.



Staff members of the Royal Kona Resort in Kailua, Hawaii take down umbrellas as the resort prepares for Hurricane Iselle

To make matters worse, as residents rushed to gather supplies to deal with possible flooding and outages, a magnitude-4.5 earthquake hit Hawaii's Big Island northern tip about 7 miles (11 km) from Waimea, at about 6.30 am local time, the US Geological Survey reported.

Hawaiian state officials have stressed that the islands are ready for the the second hurricane to strike, and that while residents should prepare, they need not panic.

On Thursday, travellers were alerted to flight disruptions, when commuter airline Island Air said it was cancelling some afternoon flights between the islands and shutting down all operations Friday.

The storms are rare but not unexpected in years with a developing **El Nino**: a change in ocean temperature that affects weather around the world.

READ MORE

- Is Hurricane Bertha going to hit the UK?

The US National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service (NESDIS) tweeted a photo of Iselle raging across the ocean on Thursday evening.

#Hurricane #Iselle bearing down on Hawaii. GOES visible imagery from 1:00 pm EDT.

<http://t.co/A8zmWWM1XC> pic.twitter.com/o1bXf0aw9J

— NOAA Satellites (@NOAASatellites) **August 7, 2014**

Hurricane Julio swirled closely behind with maximum winds whipping at 100 mph.

The National Hurricane Center said it expected the storm to strengthen even more on Thursday before starting to weaken.

Hawaii has been directly hit by hurricanes only three times since 1950, though the region has had 147 tropical cyclones over that time.

The last time Hawaii was hit with a tropical storm or hurricane was in 1992, when Hurricane Iniki killed six people and destroyed more than 1,400 homes in Kauai, said meteorologist Eric Lau. ●

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