The opening line from the book A Tale of Two Cities that starts with ‘It was the best of times; it was the worst of times’. This line has been going round in my head for the last few weeks. And isn’t it spot on?

We have been hit by three major emergencies over the last month or so and all of us have felt immense shock and sadness at the devastation wrought by the recent floods. We have a lot of staff affected by this and we can only begin to imagine the trauma and stress of what they are going through along with so many people in our local communities. But, there is a saying that in prosperity our friends know us, and in adversity we know our friends. And it seems Cumbria is full of friends! I was speaking this week to someone who had been affected and she told me that one of the first people she had seen after the floods was a lady in her eighties on her mobility scooter with a kettle and an offer of a cup of tea!

This is just one of many stories I have heard about the kindness and compassion of people to help others in distress. A lot of these stories have been by our own staff and I have been overwhelmed with examples of our staff going above and beyond to support one another and our patients and communities. Whether this was managing our response to the major incident; going to extraordinary lengths to get to work (canoeing in one example!); covering for colleagues unable to get into work; volunteering and donating items and money; and even going so far as to bake a cake for every member of staff affected (a floury pat on the back to the Infection Prevention Team).

The spirit and kindness shown by our staff has been inspirational. Every one of you really are amazing and your response over the last few weeks makes me so proud to live in Cumbria and work in this organisation. We will do everything we can to provide ongoing support to the hundred or so members of staff affected and to our local communities as they try to recover.

Helpful advice

For staff affected by flooding

The communications team has developed handy tips for staff affected by the floods with information regarding everything from legal advice to cleaning tips and how to access the Cumbria flood volunteer service. See more at: www.cumbriapartnership.nhs.uk
Storm Desmond well and truly threw down the gauntlet to CPFT last month. All of a sudden, on a Saturday afternoon three weeks before Christmas, Desmond’s unwelcome presence brought a huge range of challenges to our health services. Storm Desmond flooded over 6000 properties in all corners of the county including around 100 of our own staff, and left in its wake huge disruption to our transport network with many roads closed due to flooding and structural damage, and leaving over 1000 bridges requiring inspection or work to repair them.

The challenges were particularly heightened for us, as a Trust covering the county of Cumbria with 4000 staff delivering 60 services from around 200 bases across the county. Immediate challenges for our staff included battling to reach patients needing urgent care while feeling uncertain about how family, friends, colleagues and in some cases their own homes were affected.

My day - Saturday 5th December 2015!

I walked over three fields in my wellies and over two gates to reach my car as my drive was flooded. I was almost the last person to drive over Appleby bridge! I drove the wrong way down a one way street with hazard warnings on to reach the health centre. After I became stuck in Orton (as all exit roads were flooded) I spent the rest of day with my colleague in her 4x4 as she aquaplaned us round Upper Eden. Top gear has nothing on Mandy Iveson’s driving! I got a lift from Shap back to Penrith to get a pool car. Shap was heavily flooded but the chip shop was still open! I drove home to a car park near my home, climbed over the neighbours wall into my sitting room window as water was reaching doors of the house. I sat on a high seat watching Strictly Come Dancing, drinking a glass of red wine as the water spread below me (a Titanic moment)!

Cathy Jones | Bank District Nurse Eden District Nurses.

Staff working on inpatient units struggled to get to work not knowing if they will be able to use the same route back, and for days and weeks afterwards experiencing difficulties in carrying out our core business as the transport network was severely affected. But thanks to the extraordinary efforts of all of our staff, we were able to keep our units open and check on all of our patients who needed our attention most urgently. We suspended routine work at the start of the following week because of the huge strain on the system in getting around the county but resumed ‘business as usual’ as far as possible later in the week. We continue to deal with the effects of Storm Desmond, especially for our community staff travelling the county and not least our staff who were personally affected.
In line with other agencies, CPFT declared a major incident in response to the floods on Saturday night through our on call system. Daniel Scheffer, Associate Director for Corporate Governance, who was Gold On Call that night explains, “Usually in a major incident, we would set up an incident command centre and draw in key staff to help us manage the incident in line with our emergency planning arrangements. However, in this case, all of those key staff were based at various places within the county, and indeed outside of the County, so it wasn’t possible to bring us all together because of the ongoing and worsening impact upon the transport network. I organised alternative arrangements so that we used remote working to manage the incident, which meant we relied on teleconferencing. This proved to be challenging in itself due to disruption in power and data networks. We continued these arrangements throughout Sunday and on Monday the strategic command centre was set up in our organisational headquarters in Penrith and a tactical control room in Carleton Clinic.”

Joanna Forster Adams, Director of Operations said,
“A comprehensive incident command structure was put into place across care groups and support services appropriate to the scale of the incident so that we could understand how our staff and services were being affected and also share information we were obtaining from system wide calls. One of the issues with this incident was the speed in which it happened. Although we were already on an amber alert of rain from the Friday, the scale of the rainfall and flooding was far greater than anticipated and only became apparent on the Saturday. We alerted our staff as soon as possible through the on call system and got out basic information we received via e-mail, web and staffweb that evening but some staff had already been affected and weren’t in a position to receive that information when battling through to reach patients.”

Dr Sara Munro, Director of Quality & Nursing said that a feature of storm desmond was its unprecedented scale. “The scale and extent of the flooding was something that we have never seen before. Cumbria has had its fair share of severe flooding, but this has often been confined to particular areas and not the whole county all at once. It affected almost every community, in which our staff live and work and every community in which our patients need care and treatment. 101 of our own staff were affected personally and needed our support. So not only did it negatively impact on the capacity of our staff, but on a grander scale it impacted on all of our services all at once.”

Lynn Marsland Director of Workforce & OD
“The thing that struck me about being in the control room was the professionalism, concern, commitment and unflattering dedication everyone on the calls gave to securing our services to patients and ensuring our staff were kept safe and supported. The days (and nights) were long shifts yet everyone was tireless in their efforts. I felt really proud to play even a minor part in it all.”
Trust Talk | FLOOD EDITION

Amazing team work from NHS Staff

A spirited team of health visitors and school nurses from CPFT have been helping to support flooded communities in Cumbria. Health visiting teams from across the County have been out visiting local families affected by flooding including Kendal, Carlisle, Cockermouth and Keswick. They have been giving expert public health advice relating to the impacts of the flooding and offering their support to the community. The team have been working with children’s centre providers to give children who lost their homes a safe, family friendly place to go during the day. They are also giving safety advice to families still living in flooded properties and other local B&Bs and hotels. The teams are now adapting their work pattern to meet the needs of the families as they come to terms with the effects of the floods as they will require careful advice and continuing emotional support for many months to come.

This fantastic team have gone over and beyond their daily roles and have been adapting their services to meet the needs of the public as well as publicising key health messages and liaising with other agencies such as County Council, Red Cross and voluntary groups. There are a number of helpful information documents to support families affected by the flooding available which the team have carefully sourced and devised.

These are found on the Trust website - See more at: www.cumbriapartnership.nhs.uk

Jane Dickinson, Quality and Safety Manager said “All teams have been fantastic, adaptable and continued giving excellent care despite the challenging circumstances”

The District Nursing Team from Kendal carried out their work as usual despite the area they cover being under water. Members of the team popped their wellies on and waded through the puddles to make sure they saw their patients. One nurse was chaperoned around by her boyfriend as her car wouldn’t have made it through the water. Other nurses who weren’t on duty went out and helped anyway. The team took many different routes but managed to visit every single patient.

Jane Dickinson, Quality and Safety Manger said “All teams have been fantastic, adaptable and continued giving excellent care despite the challenging circumstances”
“I live in Barrow and after working in Carlisle, I decided to stay over to finish off my Christmas shopping and have a few Christmas drinks with colleagues. I was rescued from the B&B I was staying in on Warwick Road via boat by the coastguards and mountain rescue team, and taken by the Army to safety in the local Richard Rose Academy. The Doctors and nurses were just outstanding and gave up their free time. They made sure I was checked over at the rescue centre and I was provided with warm drinks, food and support. I was also assured my regular medication would be available should I need it. My heart goes out to all my colleagues and the people who’ve been affected. I would like to thank all the services that helped me in my hour of need in Carlisle early hours of Sunday morning, as well as kindness and support from colleagues. It is really appreciated.”

Kathrine Preston
Applications Training Officer

“Our ‘Amazing People’ have proved that they really are amazing! I’m so proud of my team who went over and above to support patients and each other.”

Network manager, Carlisle Dental Team

“I am so proud of the dedication and professionalism of my community teams during some very stressful and emotional times. Staff have kept going and pulled together enabling us to deliver essential services to our communities. I am very blessed to be part of such a wonderful and passionate team.”

Community Psychiatric Nurse

“Staff in Copeland and Whitehaven have been working tirelessly, helping colleagues and clients to get over the devastation caused at by the floods. It’s lovely to see everyone pulling together and supporting each other.”

“Thanks to staff

“I would like to thank all the Cockermouth health care staff who continued to work throughout the flooding to benefit our community; many volunteered and all worked beyond their duties to serve their patients. Our new hospital and health centre proved its worth; power, communications, medicines and medical records were all secure and available throughout the weekend. Nursing staff who were able to travel in stayed throughout the period to care for inpatients. Castlegate Pharmacy was dispensing emergency supplies of medication until 10pm on Saturday. Under its skin your shiny new building has a soul - the healthcare team who have worked beyond their duties and will support our community in the difficult months ahead.”

Simon Desert, GP Cockermouth
Pictured: Penrith Mountain Rescue Team working with our District Nurses to ensure they get to their patients.

Our HR Advisors and Business Partners created a checklist of support available to the 101 staff members significantly affected personally by the floods. Liesje Turner, Senior HR Business Partner said, “When it was clear that a large number of our staff were affected, including our own team, we moved quickly to create a package of support. Every line manager was contacted by an HR advisor or business partner and encouraged to speak to their staff member and talk through the options available to them including assistance with salary advances, hire cars and details of special leave available to them. We also delivered a Christmas cake made by our infection prevention team to every member of staff affected.”

Working with army to get vital treatment to community patient

Two community nurses, Jacqui Bunting and Angie Reynolds, a tractor and the army came to the rescue of a patient who required urgent medical care after the flood waters entered the patient’s home. The army waded through the thigh deep waters to attempt to evacuate the patient which came with difficulty due to the patient being a lot of pain. This then resulted in two community nurses climbing aboard a tractor to reach the property where they were then carried inside to the stairs above the lapping water to assist with the patient. The nurses immediately dealt with the patient’s pain and the army returned alongside the search and rescue team with a tractor towing a flatbed trailer which was used to evacuate the patient. A 4x4 landrover was also present for the nurses to be taken to a safe location and the patient was relocated to a local hotel.
Various NHS staff including CPFT Community teams, GPs and Dental staff at the Cleator Moor Health Centre have pulled together to raise more than £100 to buy urgently needed items required by those affected by the floods.

The Trust set up a number of donation points where staff donated items to the flood appeal.

If you would still like to donate to the appeal please visit: [www.cumbriafoundation.org](http://www.cumbriafoundation.org) to find out how you can help.

You can also visit: [Cumbria Flood Volunteers Facebook page](http://www.cumbriafloodvolunteers.org)

Staff, suppliers and partners have raised over £2500 for the Cumbria Community Foundation. Lots of fundraising has been done for the flood victims in Cumbria. There are lots of great charitable organisations you can donate to; far too many to mention. To help people and make it easier for staff to donate to those who have been affected by the floods, the Trust has set up a JUST GIVING PAGE. Staff can donate [here](http://www.cumbriafoundation.org) and the money donated will go to Cumbria Community Foundation.

**Our Rio providers**

Servelec held a cake sale and raised £155 (then donated an extra £500) for the floods - See more at: [www.cumbriapartner.nhs.uk](http://www.cumbriapartner.nhs.uk)

**ONE OF THE TRUST SUPPLIERS: THE DEB GROUP** came to the call of our lead infection prevention nurse and sent supplies of pocket gels and table top hand sanitisers to the collection centres in Penrith, Carlisle and Cockermouth. The centres were all very grateful to receive these for the individuals, family, friends and volunteers involved in the clear up.

A member of our district nursing team who was on annual leave gave up her time to help families in Penrith and Keswick.
Teams working together

Our Specialist Teams also supported our District Nurses and the Continence Teams went round and delivered emergency supplies of continence pads and products. In Carlisle and Kendal the teams delivered spare incontinence products to patients who could no longer access their own homes or their stocks were destroyed.

We have super skilled Nurses

A Heart Failure Nurse in Carlisle supported the Carlisle Professional Point of Access during the floods. This nurse used her initiative and transferable skills to work differently and re-prioritised her duties.

Grants available for community nurses and members of the RCN affected by flooding

Community nursing charity The Queen’s Nursing Institute has announced that it will make emergency funds available for any community nurse whose home or car has been affected by the recent flooding in Cumbria and other affected areas. The charity will make a discretionary payment of £500 to any affected nurse who works in the community, including General Practice Nurses, District Nurses, School Nurses, Health Visitors.

More information, including how to apply, here

Members of the RCN may also be able to access some financial assistance by applying for hardship funding from the RCN Foundations.

Flimby Emergency Centre

Linda Radcliffe, Public Governor Allerdale and Mayor of Maryport was part of the volunteering force at an emergency centre set up in Flimby.

“82 homes were affected by flooding in Flimby. The Foodbank and local large stores provided us with food, cleaning materials, clothing, bedding etc., that came from local individuals and various organisations including school donations and some good people who travelled from as far away as Leicester, Bury and Preston to bring aid. The centre stayed open for 4 days and referred people on to other emergency aid thereafter.”

#ourpartnerships

... click here to see how students at the University of Cumbria helped during the floods.
**Tweet Talk**

**What people are saying**

**The Memory & Later Life Team** raised £58.50 at their 'Christmas Attire' Clinical Governance themed meeting last week. The Barrow Memory service also held a collection which contributed to this. The teams have decided to donate the money towards the Cumbrian Flood Appeal.

The Infection Prevention team dedicated their team meeting to those families who have been affected by the flooding across the county. They made some delicious Christmas cakes to spread lots of Christmas cheer!

**Canoeing to work**

The Trust has been told of an incredibly selfless member of the Mental Health team who canoed to work after her house was flooded. Support for nurses affected by the flooding. Queens nursing institute has offered it support to all nurses in the Trust who have been personally affected by the flooding. - See more at: www.cumbriapartnership.nhs.uk

Christmas party change of venue!
Neurology physiotherapy team in Carlisle have given up their Christmas party and going to volunteer at the Hebron Church handing out hot drinks & foods to vulnerable people. - See more at: www.cumbriapartnership.nhs.uk

**RADIO CUMBRIA:** There have been numerous phone calls into Radio Cumbria thanking NHS staff for their tireless support especially as some of them have been affected themselves. In particular the Community Nurses

#cumbrianspirit
#outramazingpeople