

# case studies

## Case Study 14



**Between the months of May and July 2007, many areas in England experienced unprecedented, devastating floods, resulting in damage to approximately 9,000 businesses and 48,000 homes.<sup>1</sup>**



**Mike Rimell, an IFA at Ratcliffe Financial Services in Cheltenham, experienced the effects of the flood on his business first hand – forced out of his offices for 6 months whilst the premises were repaired. Landmark caught up with Mike in April 2009 to get his views on the impact of flooding.**

Mike commented:

*“On the day of the second flood it had been raining all day and there had been no problems at all. The drainage systems in the road were coping. And then, all of a sudden, at about 3.30pm, the road opposite us simply turned into a river and you just knew that things were really going to start changing quickly. It was frightening.”*

Gloucestershire was one of the hardest hit areas, with the flooding not only devastating properties but also resulting in the loss of electricity, drinking water, sanitation and the dislocation of both the road and rail networks. Approximately 500 businesses in Gloucestershire were flooded in July, causing untold damage with many having to temporarily move out of their offices.

*“The offices themselves were totally destroyed. All the filing cabinets were completely flooded, desks were overturned, all the computers destroyed - everything was just completely ruined.”*

*“The total cost of the damage would be in excess of around £100,000. We were probably 20% down on the business we would have been expecting during the six month period we were out of the office. That situation is actually still going on.”*

Not only did the flooding severely damage the office, but it also had a big impact on the business. Ratcliffe Financial Services were able to do given their damaged records, limited data and temporary relocation. Mike was unaware that the area was at such a substantial risk of flooding, nor did he know that there was a report available to tell him so.

***“ I would say it’s extremely important to obtain a flood report, and I think anybody in this particular area now, whether it is commercial or residential, is going to be looking for any information they can get. ”***

*“When the lease expires, we will think very carefully about whether or not to leave these premises altogether, because it’s a worry. Having gone through it once, you really wouldn’t want to go through it again.”*

In fact the majority of flood victims Landmark visited were unaware of the information available on flood and instead relied on local knowledge to make a decision on any associated risk. Many solicitors are also not aware of the flood risk information available to businesses and on commercial premises – **make sure you have considered the due-diligence implications of flood risk information.**

## Protect you and your clients

With approximately 185,000 commercial properties at risk in England and Wales<sup>2</sup> and 9,000<sup>3</sup> of those affected by the Summer 2007 floods, an accurate and comprehensive flood risk assessment for commercial properties is essential to ensure that you and your clients are protected from the potentially devastating impact of flooding.

The need for a **Sitecheck Flood Report** during the conveyancing process has never been more compelling. Climate change, coupled with developments appearing on flood plains resulting in limited options for water run off, means flood risk is set to increase.

Furthermore, relying on insurance is not sufficient protection. Whilst it is vital to have building and contents insurance, it **will not** protect your clients against the loss of business like Ratcliffe Financial Services experienced and it will not prevent the exponential rise in insurance premiums.

The **Sitecheck Flood Report** is the most comprehensive commercial flood report in the market. In addition to the **official Environment Agency data**, the report includes an independent professional opinion of risk from a dedicated team of expert consultants at RPS, one of the largest providers of bespoke flood risk assessments in the UK. Exclusive RMS data which highlights the risk of **surface water flooding** is also included – the main cause of the Summer 2007 floods where over 9,000 businesses were affected.

**Sitecheck Flood** from Landmark Information Group is the unique **conveyancing-ready** report which assesses the potential risk to a commercial site. The report includes:

- **Surface Water (pluvial) and 75 year return period data:**

Exclusive, ground-breaking data on surface water run-off (pluvial) flooding. According to the Pitt Review, 50% of the 2007 floods occurred away from Environment Agency (EA) floodplains, with 60-70% due to pluvial flooding.

- **Independent professional opinion:**

Sitecheck Flood is the first commercial flood report available that includes an independent professional opinion of risk from a dedicated team of expert consultants at RPS, one of the largest providers of bespoke Flood Risk Assessments in the UK.



- **Norwich Union Flood Risk and Insurability:**

Indicates the likelihood that one of Britain's leading insurers would insure the property. The data also gives a site-specific assessment of river and coastal flood risk.

- **Unique Insurance Claims Data:**

Claims numbers are a strong indicator of flood risk. Our report indicates the volume of verified flood insurance claims made in the postcode sector of the property.

- **British Geological Survey (BGS) Susceptibility to Groundwater Flooding:**

A commercial site does not need to be near a river or the sea to be flooded. This valuable data identifies where groundwater flooding could potentially occur.

- **Official Environment Agency Data:**

The report also includes key flood data from the government sanctioned source.

Although a standard commercial environmental report does provide some flood information, only the **Sitecheck Flood Report** features clear guidance, detailed flood risk information and a professional opinion specific to flooding. **Add to your environmental due-diligence and ensure you are your clients are protected.**

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