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DEFRA Flood Resilience and Resistance Grant

By the CII New Generation Claims Group 2019-2020



The facts

With the UK set to see about a 10% rise in annual average rainfall by 2100 compared to 1986-2005 according to the latest IPCC report, and a rise in sea levels due to global warming, we need to adapt in the way that we build and protect our homes, businesses and infrastructure. Early awareness of both resistance and resilience measures could help better prepare a property for future floods.

Flooding causes major issues for both home and business owners alike, as well as insurers.

Aside from the huge costs associated with flood losses, the disruption to people's lives and businesses is monumental:

- 2012 - More than 8,000 properties flooded causing over £400m worth of damage.

- 2015 - Storms Eva, Desmond and Frank cause damage to the cost of £1.3bn.
- 2019 - The bill to clean up following Storms Ciara and Dennis, is set to cost more than £360m.

Following flooding in 2013 and 2014, 60% of claims were fully settled within 6 months. 75% of claims were settled in 9 months and most people returned home after 12 months.

Since December 2019, the average household flood claim cost has increased from £32,000 to £50,000 which is a 56% increase from 2018 alone.

Average household flood claim cost



2018 Vs 2019



Flood Resistance and Resilience

Flood Resistance

Flood resistance measures are put in place to help prevent water from entering the building. However, this will only be effective to a certain flood level. Therefore, it is essential that the risks are understood, and a flood survey is completed ahead of implementation of any measures.

Flood Resilience

Flood resilience measures are put in place to limit the damage caused by water in the event of a flood. By implementing resilience measures it makes it easier to clean up and dry out the building and its contents following a flood, reducing the time it takes to reinstate a property to its pre-flood condition.

Property Level Flood Resilience Grant

To improve the flood resilience of homes and businesses the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) launched the Property Level Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme in England, which has been activated several times since its inception after major flooding events.

The grant will contribute towards the cost of a survey and subsequent improvements to the property designed to prevent water from entering a building, or at least reduce the impact of damage when water does.

Typically, a maximum of £5,000 (including VAT) is made available in the one-off grant, but you should check with your Local Authority in England for exact details of the scheme.





Grant application



Background

Mr and Mrs Smith have lived in their house in Cumbria for 20 years and have experienced several floods in their home over the years. Each time they experience significant disruption to their lives and see destruction to their property.

Floods hit Cumbria

In 2015 floods hit Cumbria and Mr and Mrs Smith's home is badly damaged once more.

Mr and Mrs Smith contact their household insurer who organises alternative accommodation and arranges for a loss adjuster to attend to evaluate the damage to their property.

Loss Adjuster Attends

Mr and Mrs Smith meet the loss adjuster at their property. There is extensive damage to the ground floor. The local river has overtopped its banks and flooded the property to a depth of 1 metre.

Flood Defence

In addition to the remedial works covered under the insurance, Mr and Mrs Smith arrange for an independent flood surveyor to attend to recommend improvements to improve the flood resilience of their home.

Mr and Mrs Smith are aware of the DEFRA grant for permanent flood resilient changes. This grant needs to be made through the Local Authority up to £5,000.00.

Mr and Mrs Smith make an application to Cumbria County Council with costings for the flood defence measures recommended by the surveyor.

Assessment by Council

Cumbria County Council assess the application submitted by Mr and Mrs Smith and approve the work.

Work completed

Mr and Mrs Smith arrange the flood resilience improvements on their home in line with the insured flood reinstatement work.

Grant Offered

Cumbria County Council make payment to Mr and Mrs Smith for the completed work following an inspection.

Timescales

- Survey/estimate approved within 24 hours of receipt of estimate by Local Authority
- Drying and reinstatement can take months
- Reimbursement made upon completion of works by Local Authority.

The cost of hiring an independent flood surveyor will be taken from the £5,000 grant and most local authorities will have a pre-approved list of surveyors.

Recommendations that were suggested to Mr and Mrs Smith:

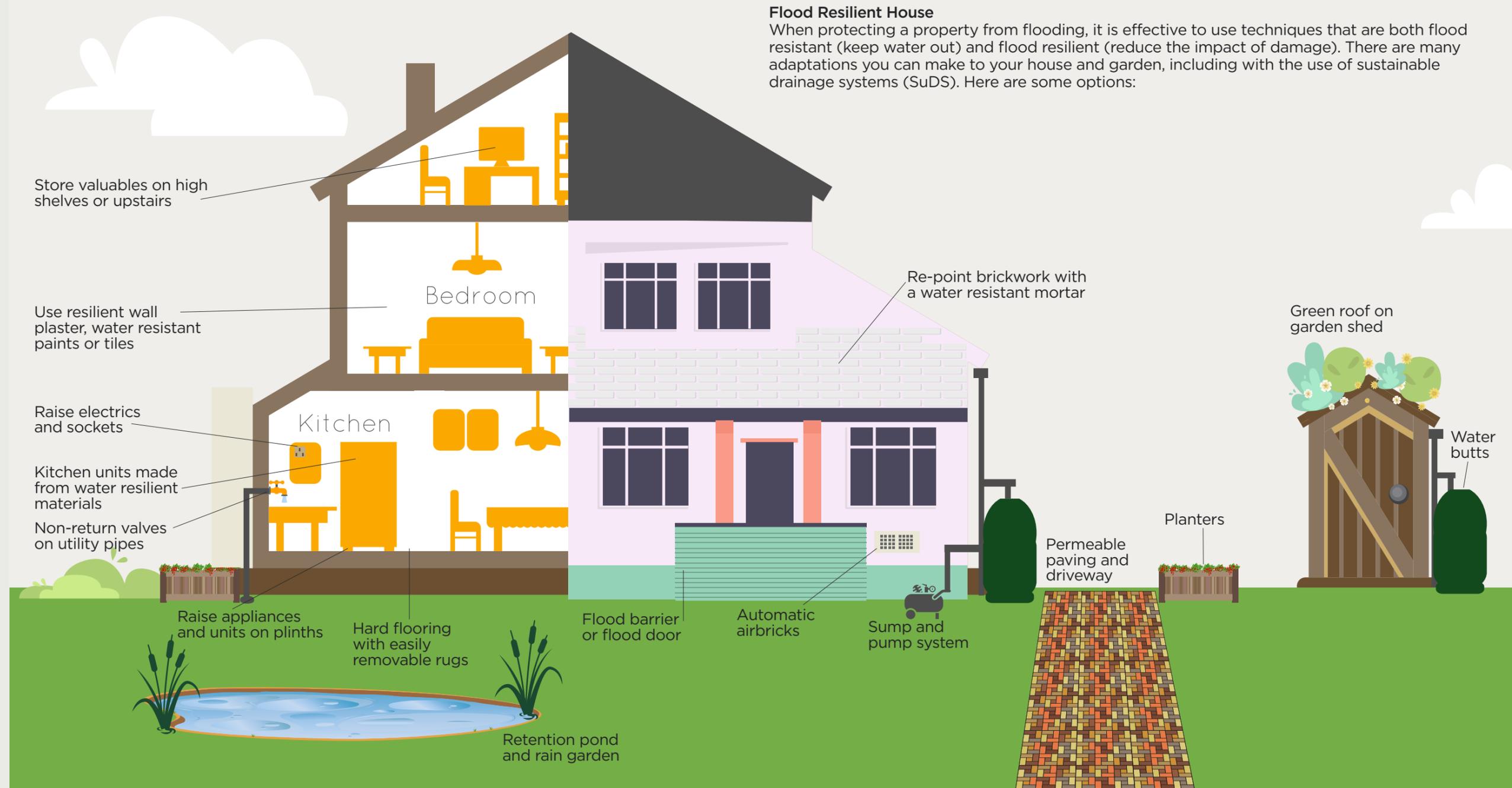
- Flood barriers
- Solid floors/tiling
- Raising electrical sockets
- Water resistant plaster.

This is the "model" process however you should refer to your Local Authority for guidance as to how the grant application process works in your area.

Flood resilience measures

Some examples of permanent property flood resilience are as follows:

- Moving electrics
- Solid floors/tiling
- Non-return valves fitted on drains and pipes
- Automatic air brick covers
- Lime plaster or water-resistant materials
- Surface water drainage and sump pump systems
- Flood boards, barriers or landscape ideas within front/rear gardens to divert water away
- Water resistant kitchen units
- Preparation of floor/wall joints (tanking) to the front and rear elevations





Flood resilience grant FAQs

What is a property level flood resilience grant?

The grant is to ensure that individual high-risk homes and businesses are better prepared for severe weather and flooding in the future. This grant provides financial support to help pay for flood resistance and resilience measures, such as air brick covers and self-closing air bricks, water resistant plaster and replacement of suspended timber floors with solid concrete.

Am I eligible for the scheme?

After significant flooding events, DEFRA will release the funding to Local Authorities if over 25 properties have been severely affected.

The Local Authority will specify the properties that are eligible for the scheme.

The grant is for up to £5000, per eligible property.

Both residential and business owners are eligible; Business and charitable organisations where internal areas, which are critical to the day to day operations (i.e. not storage areas/warehouses etc) have been flooded.

Flood water must have entered the habitable part of your property. If the water has entered a basement, garage or outhouse only, then you will not be eligible.

If you share your home with others, then there will usually be only one grant available, unless the property is split for council tax, in which case, each payer will be eligible for the grant.

Caravans and uninsured homes are still eligible as long as these are primary accommodation.

Properties that have previously had "resistance measures" installed (e.g. through a Flood Defence Grant in Aid ("GiA") scheme) and which have since experienced internal flooding, are eligible for this scheme. However, a PFR 2020 grant should only be used for new recoverable adaptations (such as the additional cost of replacing drywall with resilient alternatives) that were not eligible for the GiA scheme. It cannot be used to replace any

damaged measures installed through the GiA scheme.

If you are unsure if you are eligible, it is best to contact your Local Authority directly.

The following properties are not eligible:

- Garages, outhouses and storage areas
- Empty properties
- Basements or cellars not used as part of the habitable or business area of a property.

Can I apply for the grant at any time?

No, there has to be a significant flood event for a Local Authority to open the scheme.

What are the criteria for my Local Authority activating the grant scheme?

There must be severe impact to numerous properties in the borough; usually at least 25 properties have to be affected.



Flood resilience grant FAQs - continued

Why are these improvements not covered by my insurance?

Most home insurance policies cover reinstating your home to how it was before and they don't cover any improvements or preventative measures. There may be some improvements that are cost neutral (e.g. raising the height of electrical sockets, provided those electrical sockets are being replaced anyway) that you may be able to discuss with your insurer and have incorporated in the insurance related reinstatement works.

Will my insurers be aware of the grant?

Yes, they will be aware of the grant and working with them will be a key part of the process. Please make your insurance company aware of your intention to apply for the grant as soon as possible.

How much is a flood property resilience grant?

The grant will provide eligible properties with up to £5,000 inclusive of VAT to install flood resilience measures. Grants will be payable to the property owner.

How do I apply?

The grant process for each Local Authority is different and you should refer to them for further guidance. However, it usually requires the following documents to support your application:

- Letter/email from your insurance company or loss adjuster; or
- A copy of a surveyor's report who has identified the need for certain flood resilient/resistant measures. Some Local Authorities will accept photographs identifying the need for certain flood resilient/resistant measures as evidence.

In both cases, this should be accompanied by a quote from a suitably experienced contractor for the measures identified.

What measures qualify for the grant?

Grants are only intended to fund measures which improve the property's resilience or resistance to flooding. Repairs that reinstate the flood damage suffered would normally be covered by insurance.

It is strongly recommended that you obtain independent advice from a suitably qualified flood risk assessor however you can obtain a tailored report on the type of flood resilience measures that might be appropriate for your property from the Property Protection Adviser section of the National Flood Forum website - nationalfloodforum.org.uk/about-flooding/reducing-your-risk/property-protection-advisor

What measures qualify for the grant?

The grant is intended to assist with the flood resilience/resistance of the property; it is not intended to cover standard repairs to the property. Measures may include raising the height of electrical sockets, automatic air brick covers and non-return valves.





Flood resilience grant FAQs - continued

What is the difference between flood resilience and flood resistance?

Resilience measures allow for a less disruptive recovery when water does enter a property. Use of flood resilient materials in properties at risk of flooding will hopefully reduce the time people are out of their property. Where resilience or adaptation of a property is recommended, this will involve minor adaptations to the building and use of alternative materials to those used on a like for like basis.

Resistance or property protection measures will reduce risk of flooding up to a maximum depth. The nature of the residual risk should be clearly understood by the householder. These measures are often less time critical to implement as they are less reliant upon aligning with ongoing reinstatement repairs.

When should I apply for the grant?

You should apply for the grant as early in the claims process as possible, ideally before any reinstatement works commence as the improvements works are most effectively done when they are timed to coincident with the general reinstatement works rather than as a retro-fit.

When can I start to purchase and install the measures and the equipment?

Wherever possible you should not start the work prior to your application being approved and you have received formal notification of the grant approval. Should you incur costs before your application is considered, you do so at your own risk that your application may not be approved and therefore you may not be able to recover your expenditure.

Will it spoil the look of my house? I just want to get back to normal as soon as possible!

Most resilient repairs will not be visible (e.g. water-resistant plaster, doors and window frames), although electrical sockets can be replaced in a higher position. This can still be done discreetly. If you do repair your home using resilient materials, you will also get back to normal much more quickly if you are flooded again. It is recommended that you commence the works as soon as possible after your grant application is approved. You should especially note that the whole of the works must be completed before a date specified by the council. Failure to do so will result in your approval being cancelled.

Applications must be accompanied by:

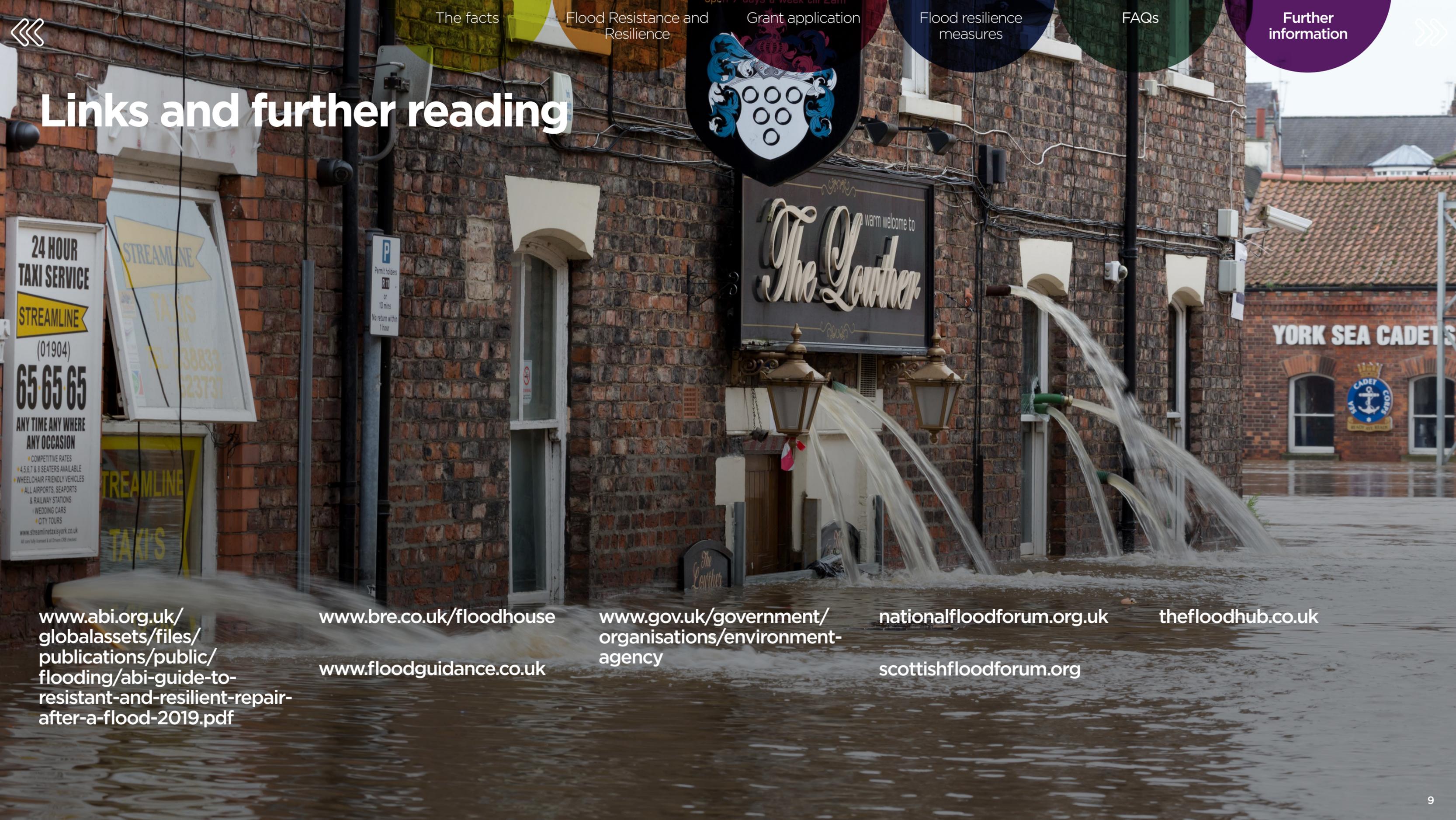
- a) A supporting letter or email from your Insurance Company or Loss Adjuster if you are applying for flood resilience measures.
- b) A copy of flood risk surveyor's report which has identified the appropriate flood resistance and resilience measures for your property.
- c) In respect of resilience measures, some Local Authorities will accept ideas put forward by individuals and will then decide what is and is not appropriate. And in ALL cases;
- d) A quote from a suitably experienced and competent contractor for the flood resilience/resistant measures identified. Please note, that a survey obtained before approval of the grant is done so at your own risk, because the Council cannot guarantee that the grant application will be approved.

How much will this work cost?

You should obtain advice from an appropriate flood surveyor or competent contractor, however as a general indicative guide you might expect costs to be as follows:

- Professional survey - up to £500 incl. VAT
- Air brick cover - £20-£40
- Non-return valve on soil/waste/overflow pipes - £70-£650
- Sump pump - £400-£600
- Automatic flood doors - £1,000-£2,000
- Garage/driveway barrier - £2,000-£3,000





Links and further reading

www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/publications/public/flooding/abi-guide-to-resistant-and-resilient-repair-after-a-flood-2019.pdf

www.bre.co.uk/floodhouse
www.floodguidance.co.uk

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

nationalfloodforum.org.uk
scottishfloodforum.org

thefloodhub.co.uk

Society of Claims Professionals
tel: +44 (0)20 8530 0998

info@socp.org.uk
socp.org.uk

 [@claimssociety](https://twitter.com/claimssociety)

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