

U.K. flood polices need a comprehensive overhaul

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Flood polices need a comprehensive overhaul instead of small-scale tinkering, according to academics from The University of Manchester and the University of Waikato in New Zealand.

Published in *Town and Country Planning*, the paper is critical of Government flood policy and the responses to the recent floods in the North West, Yorkshire and Scotland which the researchers say was identical to the response to the Somerset floods last winter.

The academics are urging the Government to rethink its flooding policy in order to find a longer-term disaster-response strategy instead of just incremental rises in flood defence funding.

"It is clear that lessons haven't been learnt," says Graham Haughton who is a Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning at The University of Manchester and the paper's co-author.

"Despite repeated calls from scientists and the public in recent years for a fundamental rethink of flood policy, it remains essentially the same - the radio wakes us all up with the same awful news and Groundhog Day begins anew.

"It's time to both acknowledge the recurring nature of the disaster-response cycle and the need to design steps that have the potential to change it. It is clear that it is not just the floods that reoccur, but the public conversations too."

The academics outlined a multi-scalar approach for developing an integrated approach to flood policy which outlines what policymakers must do locally, regionally, nationally and globally, including a new proposal for creating 'blue belts' to better protect flood plains.

Iain White, Professor of Environmental Planning at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, said: "As a matter of urgency, we need to find ways of integrating policy at all scales. An easy win would be addressing the drying out of peat bogs, reducing carbon emissions, whilst improving both carbon retention and water retention.

"But in isolation these measures do not break out of the silo approach to flood policy and its governance. The repeated events lend weight to the argument that we are in need of serious, integrated reform."

More information: The paper is available here:
[www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Jou ... arch_2016_sample.pdf](http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Jou...arch_2016_sample.pdf)

Provided by University of Manchester

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