

# Cheshire Resilience Forum



Working together to prepare for emergencies

# Cheshire Community Risk Register



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# Introduction

**This Risk Register has been put together by organisations in Cheshire that help people, businesses, and organisations to prepare, respond, manage and recover from an emergency or disruption which may impact everyday life.**

Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) every part of the United Kingdom is required to establish a Local Resilience Forum – a multi-agency group covering a policing area which shares information and resources.

Cheshire Resilience Forum works together and is made up of organisations from the following sectors:

- **Blue light organisations** (e.g. police, fire, ambulance)
- **Utilities** (e.g. water companies, electricity distribution networks, gas suppliers),
- **Local authorities** (e.g. Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington)
- **Voluntary** (e.g. British Red Cross, the RSPCA, Cheshire Search and Rescue, local infrastructure organisations)
- **Health** (e.g. NHS, UK Health Security Agency)
- **Transport** (e.g. National Highways, National Rail)
- **Environmental** (e.g. Environment Agency, MET Office)
- **Security** (e.g. Ministry of Defence (MOD))

There are lots of organisations in the forum and the above just gives you an idea of some of them.

This diverse range of sectors come together to respond to emergencies and help communities. For example the community

sector can work alongside or with other sectors to deliver a range of fundamental services such as food support, welfare advice and mental health services. The forum also works together to plan, prepare and recover from emergencies.

As part of planning and preparing it works together to review the risks outlined in this document, this can help agencies to make decisions on emergency planning work and consider capabilities and capacities. Any gaps identified can be considered and addressed as necessary thereby developing the capabilities to effectively respond to an incident. The forum partners also work together to develop plans, train and exercise response, ensuring they remain focussed on the needs of people affected, vulnerable people and safety of responders.

## Purpose

This community risk register will tell you:

- About the emergencies or disruptions that the resilience forum think are more likely than others to happen in Cheshire
- If the risk occurs, what might happen
- Some of the guidance available to help prepare for an emergency
- Where to get additional information, guidance and advice

When looking at the information below, please remember that just because the risk is reviewed it doesn't mean it is going to happen, it just means organisations can prepare for it if it does.

Cheshire Resilience Forum uses its judgement, local experience and knowledge and guidance from the Cabinet Office to create this Community Risk Register. The Cabinet Office provide a set of

documents to local resilience forums to support completion of risk assessments at a local level. The [National Risk Register](#) is produced using historical and scientific data, and the professional judgement of experts to analyse the risks to the UK as a whole. The Government [Prepare](#) website gives information about how to: [prepare for emergencies, be informed about hazards](#) and [get involved in your community](#).

The National Risk Register, the Government Prepare website and this Community Risk Register can help you to prepare for emergencies and disruptions that might affect you or your family, your home, community and businesses. Some steps to do this are mentioned throughout this document.

## How we manage risks in Cheshire

Here in Cheshire we use the National Risk Register to help guide our plans and preparations and look at what we need to put in place to be prepared. We consider economic, geographic, demographic and infrastructure factors. Has the event happened before, if so how often and what is in place to control and reduce the impact it has.

### Analyse

Each entry in the Community Risk Register has a lead organisation responsible for co-ordinating the risk assessment. They will consider the likelihood and the impact of a risk occurring:

- Likelihood is the probability of an incident happening, related to the hazard, over the next 5 years

- Impact is a measure of the severity of the potential harm caused by the hazard, looking at health, economic, environmental and societal (Community) impacts

### Evaluate

After the lead organisation has completed the risk assessment it is agreed by managers and emergency planners from organisations that are part of the forum before being included in the register. Once the likelihood and impacts have been established, the resilience forum are able to compare and assess risks thereby ensuring they are prioritised accordingly.

### Risk treatment

A risk treatment plan is agreed by the resilience forum to identify ways of reducing risks, with the aim of reducing them to an acceptable level as far as possible.

The risks are then considered by representatives from organisations across the forum, (mentioned at the beginning of this document) until they reach a consensus and agreement that the information contained within the risk assessment is a reasonable reflection of the risk likelihood and impact in Cheshire based on the information available.

### Monitoring and review

This is an ongoing process and the work to date is provided here to illustrate the assessments completed so far. Risk assessment is a continuous process and is subject to regular review as local and national circumstances dictate.

## The Cheshire profile

Some risks in Cheshire will be different compared to other parts of the Country.

To understand why some risks are more significant in Cheshire we need to look at the profile of the area, including social, economic and geographical factors. These factors also influence how we can prepare for and manage emergencies in the County. Cheshire encompasses four unitary authority areas: Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington. Further information for each local authority can be found at their websites as follows:

Cheshire West and Chester Council: [Home | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Cheshire East Council: [Home | Cheshire East Council](#)

Halton Borough Council: [Halton Borough Council Website: HBC Services Online](#)

Warrington Borough Council: [Resident | warrington.gov.uk](#)

As a county, Cheshire covers an area of 2,343 square kilometres (905 square miles).



## Population

According to the 2021 census, the population of Cheshire is just over 1.095 million, with the average age across the 4 unitary authority areas being between 41 and 45 years. In the decade between the 2021 census and the 2011 census, the population in Cheshire has increased by approximately 6% from 1.028 million to 1.095 million.

The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over has risen by approximately 3% since the 2011 census, with approximately 228,773 over 65's living within the county, making up approximately 21% of residents, accounting for roughly 1 in 5 people.

In contrast, the population aged from 0-24 years old as a percentage fell by 1.5% in the past decade, from 296,289 to 291,788. However, those aged 24 years or under account for roughly 1 in 4 people, 26% of the population of Cheshire.

Within the 2021 census, 82,733 people in Cheshire identified themselves as having a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a lot.

Most of the population of Cheshire identify themselves as being White British (95%). However, there are other ethnic groups that make up the population of the area, notably:

17,710 (1.6%) identified with the mixed/multiple category and 25,091 (2.3%) with Asian/Asian British/Asian Welsh.

## Environment

Cheshire has a mixture of landscapes with several Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) wholly or partially within its boundaries. These are important areas within England that support unique wildlife, rare species and natural features. These include wetland areas of international importance such as the Goyt Valley and the South Pennine Moors. National Nature Reserves such as Rostherne Mere and Wybunbury Moss are owned and managed by Natural England. They contain important examples of natural and semi-natural ecosystems. Plenty of local wildlife sites also sit within Cheshire, managed by the local authorities and protected species such as Great Crested Newts, Bats and Water Voles have habitats within the county.

A flat expanse of lowland known as “The Cheshire Plain” stretches from the Mersey Valley to the Shropshire Hills across the county. This stretch of land has primarily been used for dairy farming and farms ranging from market gardens to fully equipped dairy farms account for approximately 7 thousand acres of land within Cheshire.



## Infrastructure

Cheshire has a significant transport network comprising motorway, mainline railway and the shipping canal, all flown over by the approach of three airports. There are several marinas within Cheshire, and waterways, including canal networks in Chester, Nantwich, Middlewich and other areas. Although Cheshire does not have any main airports within its boundary, one of Manchester Airports runways extends into the East of the county and Liverpool Airport borders Cheshire, with both having flight paths over Cheshire.

The West Coast Mainline, a critical railway route travels through Cheshire, connecting Glasgow to London with both passenger and freight traffic transported frequently. Significant rail stations on the West Coast Mainline within Cheshire include both Crewe and Macclesfield as well as other lines linking the area to North Wales, Manchester, Derby and Shrewsbury.

Warrington lies at the Centre of Cheshire’s Road network, with the M56, M6 and M62 motorways all intersecting here. The M56 motorway spans 34 miles, running from Greater Manchester to Cheshire, providing

essential connections across North West England serving businesses and commuter traffic. At junction 9 the M56 meets the M6, an arterial national route passing through Cheshire to connect the West Midlands to Northwest England and Scotland. The M62 has 7 of its 107 miles within Cheshire, providing important connections to the M60 motorway around Manchester and a link from Cheshire to Liverpool and further afield.

The Manchester Ship Canal is a 36-mile-long inland waterway, linking Manchester to the Irish Sea. Twenty-five miles of the Ship Canal travels through Cheshire starting at Ellesmere Port, through with Widnes and Runcorn on either side, up through Warrington towards Manchester. Vessel movements occur along the canal, including cargo and container ships as well as smaller craft. The River Mersey also crosses the Canal at Warrington.

## Industry

Cheshire hosts some major chemical, oil and nuclear industry. Some of which are regulated by Control of Major Accident Hazard (CoMAH) regulations. These are mainly based around Ellesmere Port, Widnes and Runcorn, although there are several sites in other areas of the county.

Salt mining and chemical businesses have been a historic part of Cheshire and continue to be with the oldest UK salt mine still operational in Winsford and providing rock salt for gritting purposes. The Silver Jubilee bridge and the Mersey Gateway link two large towns, Widnes and Runcorn. Widnes is regarded as the birth place of chemical industry with its development in Runcorn also occurring in the 19th century.



Luxury car manufacturers have historic roots within Cheshire, Crewe is home to the iconic car company Bentley with 75% of its hand-built production occurring at the site.

To the East of the county lies a large science and technology cluster, with a culture of innovation and research, varying from advances in health development and financial technology such as the Barclays Radbroke campus. Warrington also hosts professional, scientific and technical industry. Its strong manufacturing base and service sector supports its status as a key location in the region.

## Economy

Cheshire's economy is diverse, much like its industry. Agriculture, particularly dairy farming is an active part of the Cheshire economy, with the county hosting farming for cattle and the production of both milk and cheese.

The Chemical industry as noted above has a long history within Cheshire with companies such as Ineos and the ESSAR oil refinery hosting business within the county.

Cheshire is also home to some transport and manufacturing businesses, with companies with international reach such as



AirBus and BAE Systems located within the county. Historically the railway industry has strong roots in Cheshire as well as companies such as Jaguar, Bentley and Vauxhall motors.

Financial and ICT (information and communication technology) infrastructure is thriving with several institutions within the county.

Tourism supports economic success in Cheshire, Chester City Centre, Chester Zoo, Cheshire Oaks, Jodrell Bank and Tatton Park are all attractions within the county, with thousands of visitors each year. Jodrell Bank Observatory is a UNESCO world heritage site boasting the iconic Lovell Telescope. Chester has a large heritage value from the Rows, the amphitheatre and City Walls. Tatton Park has a rich history and beautiful surroundings making it a popular heritage attraction. Chester zoo welcomes over a million visitors each year and is home to over 21 thousand animals and 500 species making it a popular choice for families, schools and wildlife lovers. Other areas of the county also draw interest due to the large number of historical buildings and picturesque areas that the county has to offer. The Canal Network

throughout the County is also popular with tourists visiting on barges and large student populations at Universities and Further Education colleges are situated around the county, with specific student populous in Crewe and Chester.

The above shows how diverse Cheshire is as a county, in all factors:

- A blend of rural and urban areas
- A rich industrial background which continues today
- important transport links on rail, road and water and air traffic passing frequently across its air space
- A growing population with a mixed demographic of age groups and health status
- Different business areas
- Natural areas of international significance, historic architecture and UNESCO status

When looking at the risks, these factors and how they interact with one another is important to consider. As part of the multi-agency risk assessment process, the “make-up” of Cheshire supports decisions regarding the impact the risk might have both locally, regionally, nationally and further if needed.



# How can I prepare, respond and recover?



Below are a few simple and effective steps that you could consider taking to prepare for emergencies and the disruption they cause. Many of these activities can be helpful across a range of different types of emergency.

## At home

- Sign up for flood alerts or weather updates
- Check online to see areas at immediate risk of flooding or likely to flood in the future
- Sign up for first aid training – courses can provide useful, lifesaving skills that can be helpful in a variety of emergency situations
- Store important documents and important items in an easily accessible location in case of emergency or an evacuation at short notice
- Keep basic supplies at home such as a wind-up torch, wind-up radio, batteries and supplies of tinned food and drinking water
- Know how to turn off your gas, water and electricity

- Check the right insurance is in place for your home or business
- Read advice about how to stay safe online
- Sign up to your utility providers vulnerable services scheme and priority services (if eligible)

## In your community

- Join a community group, social club or look for local volunteering opportunities and think about how you could actively prepare (as a group or organisation) for emergencies
- Be aware of the UK Government's Emergency Alerts service and prepare to inform others who may not have received or seen an emergency alert
- Look out for calls for support from local authorities, or charities and look out for your neighbours
- Find out about evacuation procedures in the workplace
- Read the latest updates to the UK's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and Security Service's terrorism threat levels
- Read official advice about what to do in a marauding terrorist attack or how to report suspicious packages or behaviour





## Parents of young people

- Speak to your child's school to find out their procedures in the event of different emergency scenarios.
- Teach children about how and when to call the emergency services.

## If travelling

- Check the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's travel advice before travelling overseas
- Check you have the right travel insurance if planning a trip
- Familiarise yourself with the local area you are travelling to



## If you own or are responsible for a business or organisation

- Plan in advance of an emergency
- Consider the impacts from external emergencies:
  - Reduction in staff
  - Loss of electricity, telecommunications, computer systems, access to site or area
  - Disruption to gas supplies, mains water or sewerage, transport, availability of oil or fuel, key suppliers or partners
- Have a user-friendly, clear, business continuity plan in place. Consider:
  - Which parts of the business are critical? What priority for restoration would you give them?
  - What are the internal and external risks? Can you reduce the likelihood or impact of them?
  - The resources needed for each of your business functions
  - Alternative or back-ups for critical functions
  - Training and testing your business and staff regularly regarding the plan

Further signposting information is included in the following sections, for advice and guidance related to specific risk areas.

## Across the UK

The information in this document links to the National Risk Register, available at: [2025 NATIONAL RISK REGISTER NRR.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/2025-national-risk-register-nrr-pdf)

The National Risk Register explains the methodology that is used both nationally and here in Cheshire to assess risk. It includes preparedness advice for individuals and communities as well as detailing summaries of the risks that are considered at a national level. These risks fall into several categories:

- terrorism
- cyber
- state threats
- geographic and diplomatic
- accidents and system failures
- natural and environmental hazards
- human, animal & plant health
- societal
- conflict and instability

The likelihood and impact are put together on a national risk matrix that gives a summary position of where the risk sits when compared with other risks.



The risks that are considered nationally are not always relevant to review at a local level. Therefore, some of the risks published nationally are also reviewed locally and some are not.

The National Risk Register helps to guide planning and preparations within Cheshire as well as response, recovery and capability building.

For further information for how you can prepare for emergencies, be more informed about hazards, and get involved in activities to support yourself and your community before, during and after an emergency please visit the [National Prepare website](#).

# Top risks to the county of Cheshire



**Pandemic**



**Flooding**



**Severe weather**



**Loss of critical national infrastructure**



**Animal diseases**



**Environmental incidents**



**Industrial incidents**



**Transport incidents**



**Malicious attacks**



**Cyber risks**



# Pandemic



The World Health Organisation (WHO) declares a pandemic when the following happens:

- **Identification of a New Pathogen:** a new infectious agent, or a novel strain of an existing pathogen, is identified and can cause significant illness
- **Sustained Human-to-Human Transmission:** the disease shows sustained human-to-human transmission, meaning it can spread continuously among people
- **Widespread Geographical Spread:** the disease spreads across multiple countries and continents, indicating that it is no longer confined to a specific region
- **Severity of Disease:** the disease causes serious illness or death, indicating a high potential for widespread health impact
- **Impact on Society and Health Systems:** the disease has a substantial impact on society, health systems, economies, and daily life, often overwhelming healthcare resources

## History

Based on what has happened during previous pandemics, it is likely to occur in one or more waves, possibly weeks or months apart. In the UK up to half the population could be directly affected. The last serious outbreak was the COVID-19 pandemic declared in 2020. Each pandemic is different and, until the virus starts circulating, it is impossible to predict its full effects.

## What could happen to me and my community?

- All age groups could be affected but perhaps in different ways
- There might be a risk to life
- The elderly and vulnerable could experience harder impacts on their health
- Responding organisations could be under significant strain
- Normal life is likely to face widespread disruption, including education and businesses
- Significant changes to everyday life, movement of people, working and schooling
- Lower levels of care
- Long and frequent disruption to essential services
- Reduced levels of emergency services cover
- Disruptions to businesses and organisations through staff shortages and supply chain interruptions
- Impacts on the national and local economy

## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

We keep up to date with the latest health information, provided by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). Each organisation within the forum works to make sure their plans are robust to help protect the public.

Locally and nationally, we run through what a response to a pandemic would look like, lots of agencies are included when we do this. This helps us to test our readiness should a pandemic occur. In addition, individual organisations have their own business continuity plans in place which supports them in knowing what they will do if a pandemic happens.

### What can you do?

To help you and your family be better prepared for a pandemic:

**Keep healthy** – a healthy lifestyle can be a great defence against infectious diseases. Other healthy tips are:

- **Hand washing:** wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



- **Respiratory hygiene:** cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing
- **Avoid touching face:** minimize touching your face, especially eyes, nose, and mouth
- **Social distancing:** maintain a safe distance from others, avoid large gatherings, and minimize close contact
- **Identify a friend or family member:** who could collect your medication, food and other supplies should you have to isolate from the public
- **Create an emergency medicine supply:** ensure you have an adequate supply of prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, and first aid supplies
- **Emergency contacts:** have a list of emergency contacts, including family, friends, healthcare providers, and local emergency services
- **Communication plan:** establish a way to communicate with family and friends if regular communication channels are disrupted

- **Work and school:** plan for remote work and virtual learning options if necessary
- **Keep a supply:** of soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, and personal protective equipment such as face coverings and gloves
- **Get vaccinated:** annual vaccines can help reduce the risk of known infectious diseases such as flu and COVID-19
- **Look out for advice and guidance:** from the NHS and UK Health Security Agency
- **Identify neighbours:** who might need help or might be able to help you if needed
- **Carry tissues with you:** using them to catch your coughs and sneezes, binning the tissue and washing your hands
- **Local resources:** be aware of local resources and support services
- **Regularly disinfect** frequently touched surfaces as bacteria and viruses can live on some surfaces for hours

### Mental and emotional well-being

- **Routine:** maintain a daily routine to provide structure
- **Stay connected:** use phone, video calls, and social media to stay in touch with loved ones
- **Activities:** engage in hobbies, exercise, and relaxation techniques to manage stress and anxiety. For up to date information regarding emerging news or guidance in relation to a pandemic, please visit national partner agencies such as the [UK Health Security Agency](#) or [NHS England](#).





# Flooding



As the numerous events suffered over the last several years have shown, flooding can take different forms, and at its most serious can affect many different aspects of our daily lives.

Over the coming years, rising temperatures and sea levels, and an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events are likely to raise the risk of flooding in the UK. Cheshire is at risk from tidal/coastal, river and surface water flooding. The River Dane and the River Bollin are rapid response catchments, these areas are expected to flood rapidly in response to extreme rainfall and there may be little or no warning due to the sudden onset of flooding.

## History

Flooding affects somewhere in the UK every year. In Cheshire flooding in September 2019 and January 2021 at various locations led to damage to road surfaces, several properties being internally flooded and many more gardens suffering damage.

Recent storms brought some exceptionally wet weather resulting in widespread flooding across Cheshire. Record river levels were recorded which affected the Northwich area and the Weaver Catchment, Dallam/Sankey in Warrington and Farndon in Chester. Across Cheshire many properties were internally affected by flooding and many more externally affected.

## How could flooding affect you and your property?

The predicted impacts could include:

- Risk to life (people and animals)
- Disruption to utilities
- Damage to property, business, agricultural land, roads, structures and infrastructure
- Widespread structural damage
- Pollution and contamination of local environments
- Short, medium and long-term damage to tourism, businesses and agriculture
- Evacuation of residents
- Loss of accommodation
- Provision of accommodation for those whose homes are flooded
- Unrecoverable damage to businesses
- Long-term psychological and health impacts
- Long term restoration and recovery issues for homes and businesses

## What are Cheshire Resilience Forum partners doing?



Organisations within CRF identify where the floodwater could go and who is at risk. They continue to invest in maintaining and improving river defences in high-risk areas. Production of multi-agency plans enable organisations to work together to minimise the impact of flooding and strategic area planning occurs to protect the areas at risk.

CRF partners also provide guidance for the public about protecting properties from flooding, develop ways and means of alerting the public as early as possible when there is a significant flood risk and work directly with communities at risk to prepare for flooding.



## What can you do?

Follow these practical steps so you and your family can be better prepared for flooding:

- **Be aware of weather updates**
- You can [check for flooding in your area](#) and [sign up for flood warnings](#)
- **Register with Floodline:** online or call 0345 9881188 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The free Floodline service provides flood warnings by telephone, text or email
- **Protect your property:** Water can enter through air bricks and drains as well as through windows and doors. Prepare your flood defences and follow any advice given in flood warnings. Sandbags and other products are available on the market to help protect your property from flooding.
- **Plan where you will go** if you have to evacuate, **how you will get there** and **what you will need to take with you**, for example, medication and insurance documents
- **Identify neighbours** who may need assistance or may be able to provide assistance to you, in case of evacuation
- **Have supplies in your home** (such as tinned food, long life products and non-cook food) that will enable you to cope for up to 3 days should you be unable to evacuate
- Where possible, **move valuable/irreplaceable items to upper floors** during times of flood risk
- **Further information is available via this link:** [what to do before, during and after flooding.](#)

## If flooding occurs:

- **Flooding presents a number of risks to health.** [UKHSA guidance](#) helps you address those risks and clean up safely
- **And you are advised to evacuate:** decide where you will go and how you will get there, ensure you have enough fuel/charge in your vehicle for your journey or if travelling by public transport, the availability of the services you intend to use. Remember to take your medication and any important documentation with you.
- Where possible **take your pets with you and let your neighbours know what you are doing**
- **And if you are staying put:** have enough supplies for up to three days, take your valuable items upstairs or place them up high to protect them, avoid walking through flood water as there can be hidden dangers

- **Driving:** do not drive through floodwater. A few inches of water is enough to float your car and damage your vehicle. Most deaths caused by flooding happen when people are trapped in cars. A lot of properties are damaged unnecessarily when people drive through floodwater, causing large bow waves.





## Severe weather



The United Kingdom, despite its relatively temperate climate, nevertheless experiences severe weather capable of causing disruption to normal life and, on rare occasions, presenting danger to life itself.

Most severe weather events occur within the colder half of the year (October to March), when Atlantic storm systems are at their most frequent and strongest, capable of delivering disruptive rain and wind, depending upon their track. Disruption of the prevailing Atlantic weather patterns during winter can sometimes be the cue for cold air outbreaks from the north or east resulting in extreme cold weather. Occasionally in severe winter these interludes can prove very persistent.

The warmer half of the year sees the threat from severe weather shift more towards that from surface water flooding resulting from intense thunderstorms. High temperatures and heatwaves can also cause significant disruption to health and transport.

As climate change proceeds, so we are likely to see an increasing threat from extreme weather events, be it disruptive rainfall/wind/snow/ice during the winter, or an extended period of hot weather and/or increased frequency of intense rainfall events in the summer.

### History

The position of Cheshire, downwind from the Welsh mountains, provides it with a measure of shelter from excessive winter rainfall. However, it is as much at risk as anywhere within the Northwest of England to surface water flooding, particularly of the summer storm variety.

Despite its relatively low altitude, its exposure to winds from between west and northwest means that it can on occasion receive the full force of severe winter gales such as those which affected much of central and northern England on 18th January 2007. When combined with high astronomical tides this can result in significant coastal flooding. The high ground of the south Pennines in the eastern end of the county is often affected by disruptive snowfall during colder spells in winter.

In July 2022 the highest ever temperature was recorded in the UK, at 40.3 degrees Celsius. In Nantwich, Cheshire the highest regional record for maximum temperature was reached at 38.4 degrees Celsius (34.6 previously).

## How could severe weather affect you and your property?

The predicted impacts could include:

### Storms and gales:

- Widespread travel disruption (road, rail, air, sea)
- Numerous trees brought down with associated risk to vehicles/ pedestrians
- Power outages resulting from damage to infrastructure
- Structural damage to buildings and property
- Danger to life from windborne objects

### Low temperatures and heavy snow:

- Widespread travel disruption (road, rail and air) with higher level routes particularly affected
- Potentially stranded passengers on transport routes
- Dangerous driving conditions
- Communities cut off due to flooded access routes/heavy snow
- Strain on emergency responder organisations
- Risk to life
- Casualties/injury (slips and falls)
- Risk of remote/high lying rural communities being cut off for days
- Power outages
- Increase in hospital admissions due to slips/falls on frozen surfaces.
- Closure of schools

- Difficulty maintaining essential services
- Health impacts on the elderly and vulnerable with extreme temperatures
- Disruption to utilities (such as water supplies)
- Damage to property, businesses and agricultural land
- Flooding of properties
- Risk to life of livestock
- Changes to working practices and daily routines to adapt to the conditions

### Heatwaves:

- Risk to life
- Health impacts on the elderly and vulnerable with extreme temperatures
- Disruption to utilities (such as water supplies)
- Damage to property, businesses and agricultural land due to wildfires
- Risk to life of livestock
- Risk of water safety incidents with people visiting rivers/lakes
- Changes to working practices and daily routines to adapt to the conditions
- Increase in hospital admissions for heat related causes including exhaustion, dehydration, sunstroke,
- Disruption to transport because of high temperatures on rails, tarmac

## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

- We have pre-prepared plans for dealing with all forms of severe weather. Some are site-specific such as the strong wind plan developed with Highways England for the Thelwall Viaduct stretch of the M6.
- All emergency responders across the county receive severe weather warnings and extreme temperature alerts from the Met Office, along with the very latest expert weather guidance from the Met Office's advisor based in the Northwest.
- We will call multi-agency teleconferences, chaired by the Police, to plan our joint response to particularly severe weather events.
- Highways departments receive detailed forecasts of snow, ice and frost throughout the winter season to help coordinate its gritting program and help keep the county's traffic moving.



## What can you do?

### In all weathers:

**Check that you have the necessary equipment:** stock up on anything you may need and before going out be sure to include it in your bags/boot. (suncream, de-icer, blanket, sunhat).

- **Check the forecast** to understand the likelihood of any impactful weather in your area. Access the [Met Office weather warning guidance](#) and [Met Office National Severe Weather Warning System \(NSWWS\)](#) alternatively download the [Met Office App](#)
- **Apply for registration on the Priority Services Register** [here](#) if you need that extra bit of support. The register is free to join, It helps utility companies, including , electricity, gas and water networks to look after customers who have extra communication, access or safety needs in the unlikely event of a power cut, gas or water supply interruption.
- **Plan around the forecast:** e.g avoid the hottest part of the day, travel when winds are lighter or in cold weather that snow is not expected to be disruptive to travel
- **Check your vehicle is ready for the summer and winter.** [The Met Office vehicle check](#) can help with this

## In cold weather:

- **Look out for public health guidance related to cold weather events** via: [UKHSA cold weather and health guidance](#)
- **Look after your home:** check daytime room temperature and maintain it at 18 degrees Celsius. Insulate pipes to stop them from freezing. Know how to switch off your water supply if pipes should burst.
- **Plan ahead before going away:** If you are going to be away from home for a few days, it's best to turn off your water at the stop tap so that if a pipe does freeze or burst while you're away, any damage will be limited
- **Make sure your heating comes on at regular intervals,** even if you're out, to maintain some warmth around your property. If you are going away during winter and leaving your house or flat unoccupied then leave the heating on 'low' to stop freezing pipes, ask a friend or neighbour to check in occasionally for any issues such as a burst pipe, especially in bad weather.

## In hot weather:

- **Look out for public health guidance related to hot weather events** via: [UKHSA hot weather and health guidance](#)
- **Try to reduce and reuse water where possible** both at home and at work
- **In hot weather if you are thinking of having a barbeque, ensure you have a bucket of water or hosepipe nearby.** Sparks from the barbeque may fall or be blown onto wood or dry grass and cause a fire extremely quickly.





# Loss of critical national infrastructure



Critical Infrastructure is the name given to all the different essential services which we rely on as part of a modern society and economy. The UK's critical infrastructure is made up of electricity, water, gas, oil/fuel, transport, telecoms, food, health and financial services.

Many parts of the infrastructure network are dependent on one another e.g. electricity is required at water pumping stations, telecoms and electricity are required to allow cash machines and cash registers to function correctly.

Those services which could directly or indirectly impact upon other elements of the infrastructure network are detailed below:

## Wide-scale loss of electricity or gas

This would have a direct or indirect impact on all other infrastructure sectors. In the event of a major gas or electricity supply emergency, both industry and government will have significant roles to play in managing the incident and its consequences.

The gas and electricity companies are responsible for the practical and operational management of the incident.

These companies have well established plans and procedures in place to respond to incidents, which can range from management of a local incident to a national level disruption.

In the event of a significant loss of power, national and local BBC radio stations should be able to offer you some information. Therefore it is important to have a wind-up radio available at home.

For small scale disruptions, your phone and/or internet connection may still work. If this is the case you can report a power cut by calling **105**, it's a free number and connects you to your local network operator.

To report a gas or carbon monoxide emergency, or if a pipeline is struck (even if no gas leak has occurred) call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on **0800 111 999** or via textphone (minicom) on **0800 371 787**.

## Wide-scale telecoms disruption

This would have a direct or indirect impact on all other infrastructure sectors. Individuals and businesses are increasingly dependent on the telecoms network either for mobile and fixed line telephony or provision on the internet.

If you are able to, contact your telecoms provider directly for further information if you experience a disruption.

In the event of a significant loss of telecommunication services, national and local BBC radio stations should be able to offer you some information. It is therefore important to have a wind-up radio available at home.

## Water disruptions

This includes burst water mains, supply disruption and minor or major contamination. Dependent on the severity of the incident a multi-agency emergency may be declared to ensure that people's basic water needs are met.

There could be a significant impact on health and food provision, as well as an impact on the capabilities of the Fire and Rescue Service.

If a large area of Cheshire's agricultural land or livestock, was affected by an incident, it would affect the economy of the county as well as having the potential to impact national food prices.

To find and contact your water supplier please visit [Water UK](#).

### In Summary:

Because of our increasing reliance on utilities such as electricity, water and gas for so many aspects of our lives, even localised losses can have a significant impact on those affected.

Rural areas are often the last to be reconnected when there is a disruption to utilities such as gas, water and electricity. During a wide scale incident people who live in more rural areas of Cheshire may be affected for longer than those in town/city locations.

The lead agency in Cheshire for infrastructure failures will vary depending on the nature of the emergency and its impacts.

## What could happen to me and my community?

The predicted impacts include:

- People exposed to poor sanitation and lack of drinking water
- Homes without heating and limited ability to heat food and water
- Limited ability to keep food cold or frozen
- No ability to get fuel from filling stations
- People unable to get cash from cash machines or make card purchases
- Limited telecommunications (including mobile phones)
- Disruption to essential services and activities
- Endangerment to vulnerable people
- Financial impact on businesses
- Civil unrest
- Increased demand on emergency services
- Travel disruption
- Disruption to businesses and normal home life



## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

CRF works with the utility companies to manage supply interruptions, it reviews multi-agency plans to manage long term utility outages and works to identify vulnerable people who will need special treatment in the event of a utilities outage.



## What can you do?

- **Know where the isolation points are for your utilities.** In the case of gas and water emergencies. It may be necessary to shut off the supply in a premise in the affected area.
- **Keep an emergency kit at home** containing items such as a wind-up torch, wind-up radio, batteries and supplies of tinned food and drinking water
- If water is an essential part of your business **consider a business continuity plan for loss of supply**
- Matches and candles in the home are useful if you lose electricity, but **a torch and batteries or a wind up torch** are much **safer when handling objects in the dark**
- Outages may come with forewarning. If this is the case **consider how you can prepare,** e.g., don't use your washing machine or dishwasher.
- **Be on alert for bogus callers** posing as utility company workers
- During a disruption, **keep up to date** by visiting your utility provider website for further information



## Animal diseases



Animal diseases which present the most concern are those which are highly contagious, cause high fatality rates amongst livestock or have the possibility of infecting humans.

Within the multi-agency planning work the following diseases are considered: Avian Influenza, Foot and Mouth Disease, African horse sickness and African swine flu.

Any animal disease within Cheshire would have a huge impact on the agricultural economy as well as the overall economy of the county.

The Cheshire area has a vibrant agricultural economy with large numbers of dairy, beef and poultry farms making significant contributions to both the local and national economy.

### History

There have been several significant animal disease outbreaks in the United Kingdom. Avian Influenza (Bird Flu), Bluetongue and Foot and Mouth Disease are the most notable recent examples. Outbreaks of Avian Influenza have been seen recently within Cheshire and avian influenza has

been occurring across the globe. Other animal diseases have been reported elsewhere in the world.

The Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2000 was one of the key factors, which led to the introduction of the Civil Contingencies Act in 2004, due to its huge impact on the UK economy.

### What could happen to me and my community?

The predicted impacts could include:

- Damage to local agricultural economy
- Mass cull/ disposal of animal carcasses
- Loss of livelihood for farmers and farm workers
- Health risks to farm workers
- Long-term psychological health impacts experienced by farmers
- Increased food costs to consumers
- Knock-on effect on tourism and other service industries (e.g. catering)
- Unrecoverable damage to businesses



## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

CRF updates and tests multi-agency plans for managing animal disease outbreaks and it continues to raise awareness amongst responder agency staff about animal diseases and how to respond to an outbreak.

### What can you do?

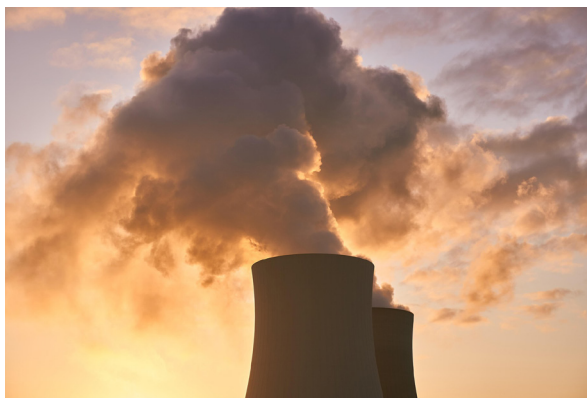
- **If you keep livestock**, you must: register your land details with the [Rural Payments Agency](#). Register your livestock with the [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#).
- **If you keep birds**, check if you need to register as a keeper at [Poultry Registration](#)
- **Keep farm records accurate and up to date**
- If you're unsure about stringent hygiene, use [Defra-approved disinfectants](#)

- **Sign up to receive the latest news of exotic notifiable animal disease outbreaks** in Britain via the [APHA animal disease alert subscription service](#)
- **Plan ahead:** This will help you, your family and community, avoid a disease outbreak and possible animal problems
- **If an outbreak is declared then follow any guidance from the government** to protect your livestock and limit the spread
- **Vaccinate your livestock** where possible





## Environmental incidents



Environmental Incidents may impact on air, land and water:

**Water:** Pollution incidents can impact surface waters (inland and coastal waters) and groundwater. They can be caused by chemical spillage including fuel oils or release of a large quantity of untreated sewage.

**Land:** Former industrial or derelict land can pose serious risks to people using or visiting the sites and/or the environment. The public should avoid using former industrial or derelict land for recreational use. Dangers from these sites can be seen and unseen meaning unaware members of the public could be putting themselves in danger.

Unmaintained sites can degrade to a point where uncontrolled emissions to the environment begin occurring and if left unchecked can cause serious harm to ecosystems, biodiversity and different water resources (rivers, groundwaters, lake and meres).

**Air:** Air pollution includes fires, explosions and chemical/fuel releases. Smells may also be caused by waste spreading, accidental or deliberate burning of manure or materials such as asbestos or tyres.

### Cheshire Context:

Cheshire is a county with a high density of chemical sites many situated alongside significant water courses. The Rivers Mersey and Dee and their many tributaries flow through the county as does the Manchester Ship Canal, Trent and Mersey Canal, Bridgewater and Shropshire Union Canal. The River Dee near Chester and the Shropshire Union /Llangollen Canal at Hurlston are both used to supply drinking water after purification.

Cheshire has one of the largest motorway networks in the country and we regularly deal with minor spillages of fuel and chemicals because of collisions. Occasionally there are larger spills. The emergency services, Environment Agency, Highways England and landowners all work together to minimise the impact of such incidents.

Cheshire has several upper and lower tier control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites, one of the highest in the country. COMAH regulations apply to businesses that have the potential to cause major accidents because they manufacture, store or use large quantities of dangerous substances such as oil products, natural gas, chemicals or explosives. Although COMAH off site plans are regularly exercised, activation for real is extremely rare. If you live nearby, you will receive advice directly from the site operator.

Cheshire is also one of the biggest dairy farming counties in the country and has the potential for silage and slurry related incidents.

## What could happen to me and my community?

The predicted impacts could include:

- Pollution of sea water or water courses
- Environmental pollution
- Damage to Sites of specific scientific interest (SSSI)
- Damage to wildlife and the environment
- Health risk to residents and visitors
- Cancellation of sport and leisure events
- Economic impact on tourism and local community
- Closure of drinking water abstraction point(s) to protect public supply
- Amenity issues including odour, noise and pests
- Economic and reputational damage to local businesses

## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

Environmental permits are in place to ensure business and domestic potential sources of pollution are controlled and the risk of accidents minimised. Cheshire's industrial history means some sites and their owners require engagement around remediation work or other action. In some cases, enforcement activities are undertaken against organisations and individuals who breach permit conditions or operate illegally.

Plans are in place for high-risk sites and all responders regularly train and exercise together and as individual organisations.

COMAH Regulations aim to ensure that businesses take all necessary measures to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and limit the consequences of any major accidents which do occur.

Environmental monitoring is also undertaken which assists in the early identification of any problems, for example contamination of the River Dee. Site visits are undertaken on a risk basis.

## What can you do?

- **You can report an Environmental incident** via the Environment Agencies 24 hour service on **0800 80 70 60**. A list of the incidents that can be reported via the hotline is available [here](#).
- **Follow advice given by the Emergency Services and the Environment Agency** during an Incident





## Industrial incidents



Industrial activities involving dangerous substances have the potential to cause accidents which can have huge consequences. Some of these accidents may have serious impacts on individuals who work at the site or live within the area. These accidents can also have a serious impact on the Environment.

COMAH is regulated in Cheshire by the COMAH Competent Authority, which is a partnership between HSE and the Environment Agency. They aim to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and to limit the consequences to people and the environment of any incidents that do occur and is applicable to any organisation or site which stores, handles or processes large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature.

Cheshire has a number of Upper Tier COMAH Sites. The county has the second largest group of COMAH sites in the UK. Cheshire also has 1 nuclear site. The county also has several Major Accident Hazard Pipelines (MAHP) which run through the area, which are owned by MAHP Operators.

### History

Due to stringent regulation, significant reported industrial incidents have a very low likelihood of occurring (as outlined in the National Risk Register) and as such have not occurred within Cheshire.

The first and largest UK industrial explosion occurred at the Buncefield site, Sunday, 11th December 2005. Further explosions followed at the site, which eventually overwhelmed 20 large storage tanks. The vapour cloud explosion was heard up to 125 miles (200 km) away. The explosion measured '2.4 on the Richter Scale.' Many people felt the shockwave after the initial explosion. It was reported that people were woken in South London and as far west as Wokingham, which is approximately 28 miles from the site. There were reports the explosion was heard in Belgium, France and the Netherlands.

More than 150 firefighters tackled the blaze for a number of days. Following the explosion and fires at the site, a 'smoke cloud' drifted towards Reading and Swindon, which was also seen in the South East of England. Evacuations and school closures were put in place. There was also transportation and business disruptions, within the community. To this day, the community is still in recovery.

## What could happen to me and my community?

The predicted impacts could include:

- Risk to life
- Damage to property and the local area
- Pollution to the local environment and water causes
- Damage to the local economy

## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

As part of industrial planning, Cheshire has an established Industrial Issues Group, which has an agreed term of reference. This group aims to ensure resilience is in place against these industrial risks. This 'Resilience' ensures:

- All sites/operators have an emergency plan in place
- All emergency plans are exercised and tested in line with the regulations they are governed by
- We can use the law to ensure actions are taken to make sites safer
- The HSE and the Environment Agency will only grant permission for the most hazardous sites to operate if they can demonstrate that they meet a range of safety criteria

## What can you do?



General advice on what local people and businesses can do in the event of an industrial incident, can be found within numerous resources:

- **Public Information Zone Safety Letter/Card**
- Via the [Health & Safety Executive \(HSE\) Portal](#)
- **Local Authority websites** – [Cheshire West and Chester](#), [Cheshire East](#), [Halton](#), [Warrington](#)
- **Follow advice given out during an incident**
- **Go In:** seek shelter immediately.
- **Stay in:** close doors and windows, switch off air conditioning
- **Tune in:** to local media for further advice

More information regarding the regulations which govern these risks, can be found via:

[The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Radiation \(Emergency Preparedness and Public Information\) Regulations 2019 \(REPPIR\)](#)

[The Pipeline Safety Regulations](#)



## Transport incidents



Just like our dependencies on basic utilities, almost all of us will rely on a form of transport either to get to and from work, or to receive essential services. The disruptive consequences of a transport emergency are far-reaching and can further endanger life. Transport emergencies can be the result of accidents but also disruption caused by severe weather such as snow and floods. The situation can be further complicated by extremes of temperature if people are trapped in their vehicles for long periods of time.

Aviation is considered the safest form of transport, and the UK is a world leader in aviation safety, but incidents still occur and can have severe consequences.

The county of Cheshire has a wide scale rail network ranging from the West Coast Mainline between London and Scotland to other lines serving Liverpool, Manchester and North Wales. There are major rail hubs at Chester, Crewe, Warrington and Wilmslow with numerous Passenger Train Operating Companies and Freight Operating Companies operating within the County.

Due to England's motorways being heavily trafficked with various fast-moving vehicles,

road traffic collisions have the potential to occur at any time.

The most common risk is the occurrence of a road traffic collision. In most instances road traffic collisions are minor injury or damage only and can be routinely dealt with by Highways England or Cheshire Police resulting in minimal disruptions to road users. Occasionally more serious traffic collisions occur resulting in potential long delays to motorists.

Cheshire has some of the most diverse sections of motorway in the country from the high structures of Thelwall Viaduct and Weaver Viaduct to the complex junctions of Croft and Lymm interchanges. The M6 provides one of the main arterial routes for travelling north and south through England, dissecting the Cheshire countryside. Other significant roads include the M56, M62, M53, A55 and A556.

The North west region continues to see rapid growth, Smart Motorway schemes are fully operational within parts of Cheshire, on the M6 from junction 16 to 19 (Crewe to Knutsford), M56 junction 6 to 8 and the M62 junction 10 to 12. Work is continuing to progress on the M6 junction 21a to 26 and National Highways plans to complete this shortly. These motorway upgrades are designed to support capacity, keep drivers safe, reduce congestion and improve journey reliability.

Cheshire does not have a significant coastline as it is located either side of the Wirral peninsula between the Merseyside and Flintshire coasts, (bounded by the River Mersey Estuary and River Dee Estuary).

Within Cheshire, there are two main areas for passenger cruise tour vessels - Manchester Ship Canal and River Dee in Chester although, in addition, there are canal cruise tours on sections of the inland waterways in Cheshire.

## History

**Air:** There haven't been passenger aircraft accidents in Cheshire in recent years, a pilot died in 2015 at the Oulton Park Car Fest when a plane crashed during a display. In August 2012 two died when a light aircraft crashed on farmland shortly after take-off from Hawarden.

Manchester Airport is the UK's third largest airport after London Heathrow and Gatwick with 29.4 million annual passengers (2019, Manchester Airport), Liverpool John Lennon Airport surpassed 5 million passengers arriving and departing in 2024. With such significant airport infrastructure nearby, hundreds of flights pass over Cheshire every day (800+) . Airbus oversees Hawarden Airport in Flintshire, with the Beluga XL aircraft often seen over the city of Chester and surrounding area.

**Rail:** In the last thirty years we have experienced two major rail incidents. The first, on the West Coast Mainline at Winsford on 23rd June 1999, involving an express passenger train running into the rear of a local empty passenger train resulted in 31 injuries. The second, at North Rode on 18th December 2008, involving a 4x4 vehicle being struck by two passenger trains resulting in the driver of one of the trains being injured.



**Road:** There have been a number of Road Traffic Collisions on the motorways in Cheshire over the last few years, most notably in February 2021, a tanker struck a bridge spilling hazardous material onto the M6.

## What could happen to me and my community?

The predicted impacts could include:

- Disruption to normal travel capabilities
- Death or injury to people
- People stranded in vehicles potentially in extreme weather conditions
- Environmental impacts if goods are spilled into local environment
- Possible damage to buildings or infrastructure
- Impact on local businesses through delayed or failed deliveries
- Delays in emergency services reaching people

## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

CRF Continues to work with national transport companies to plan for dealing with accidents. Cheshire Police, Highways England and North West Motorways Policing Group work together to keep major routes accessible and reduce congestion where possible. CRF also completes regular exercising involving relevant responding agencies. Organisations linked to travel such as British Transport Police, Network Rail, train/freight operating companies are continually reviewing their plans for major incidents on the rail infrastructure alongside Police, Fire, Ambulance and Local Authorities.



## What can you do?

- **Have an emergency kit in your car** or basic items when you travel
- You may not be directly involved in an accident but be aware that the **transport disruption could last for hours**
- [National Highways](#) **road safety advice will help to keep you safe whilst travelling**
- **Check your local authority website** for further information **regarding local planned road closures. For emergency road closures, keep up to date via your local authorities social media pages**
- **Keep up to date with weather conditions and travel advice** as issued by the [Met Office](#)
- If travelling by air or rail, **check the status of your journey with your provider before you set off**



# Malicious attacks



Everyone needs to be vigilant to any malicious attacks or terrorism and report suspicious behaviours. An outline of malicious threats to the UK is available via the [National Risk Register Chapter 4](#).

The UK faces a real threat from terrorism and crowded places remain an attractive target. There are a number of iconic targets within the county which could hold significance to a terrorist.

Islamist terrorism and Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism are the primary threats in the UK. Individuals or small groups acting outside of organised terrorist networks are assessed as the most likely terrorist threat in the UK today. This makes terrorists less predictable and harder to identify, investigate and disrupt. The public and communities play a vital role in keeping themselves and others safe.

## Terrorism Threat Levels

Terrorism threat levels indicate the likelihood of an attack in the UK There are 5 levels of threat:

1. Low
2. Moderate
3. Substantial
4. Severe
5. Critical

Further information linked to these threat levels and the current threat level can be found [here](#).

The level is set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and the Security Service (MI5). Threat levels don't have an expiry date. They can change at any time as different information becomes available to security agents.

## What could happen to me and my community?

The predicted impacts could include:

- Endangerment to life
- Damage to property and the local area
- Community cohesion
- Increased community tensions
- Heightened sense of fear
- Financial impact

## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

Agencies in Cheshire are working individually and in multi-agency groups to support central government's Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST). "CONTEST" aims to reduce the risk from terrorism to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence. CONTEST deals with all forms of terrorism and continues to be based around four strands:

- **Prevent:** Work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Also supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism.
- **Pursue:** Stop terrorist attacks happening in this country or against UK interests overseas.
- **Protect:** Strengthen our protection against a terrorism attack.
- **Prepare:** working to minimise the impact of an attack and reduce the likelihood of further attacks.



## What can you do?

- **If you've seen or heard something that could potentially be related to terrorism, trust your instincts and report it.** Further information on some of the types of activity you should report is available [here](#). It only takes a moment to [make a report online](#) or contact the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321. In the event of an immediate threat, always dial 999.
- If you are concerned about a family member or someone close to you becoming radicalised, ACT early. The sooner you reach out the quicker the person can be protected from being groomed or exploited. You won't be wasting time and you won't ruin lives, but you might save them. Further information can be found at [ACT Early](#).

**In the unlikely event of a terrorist attack,** remember to follow RUN, HIDE, TELL guidance

- **RUN:** to a place of safety. This is a far better option than to surrender or negotiate. If there's nowhere to go then:
- **HIDE:** Its better to hide than to confront. Remember to turn your phone to silent and turn off vibrate. Barricade yourself in if you can. Then finally and only when it is safe to do so:
- **TELL:** the police by calling 999



# Cyber risks



Cyber attacks are an attempt to damage, disrupt or gain unauthorised access to computer systems, networks or devices. They can come in many shapes and sizes and can affect individuals, businesses and organisations (both private and public sector).

## History

Businesses and organisations in the UK reported hundreds of cyber incidents to the National Cyber Security Centre between 1st September 2021 and 31st August 2022. Sixty-three of these were significant enough to require a national level response. Incidents include a range of malicious cyber activity including ransomware, reconnaissance, malware, network intrusions, data exfiltration and disruption of services and systems. Education is one of the top UK sectors targeted by ransomware actors but attacks targeting businesses, charities, the legal profession and public services in the Local Government and Health sectors have also been seen.

Ransomware involves a software that can damage computer systems, network or devices (malware) being used to prevent access to a device and the data stored on it usually by converting the information held in files into unrecognisable code (encryption). A criminal group will then demand a ransom in exchange for the information being decrypted.

## What could happen to me and my community?

The predicted impacts could include:

- Loss of personal or sensitive information
- Loss of income or finances
- Disruption of computer networks or digital life
- Disruption to your business and/or reputational damage

## What is Cheshire Resilience Forum doing?

- Testing and exercising Cyber-attacks to help improve individual agencies resilience against them and understand the impact a cyber-attack could have on organisations that interact with the attacked agency
- Multi-agency Cyber Group in place to discuss and improve, prevention, preparation, response and recovery from cyber related risks
- Cyber response plan in place

## What can you do?

The [National Cyber Security Centre](#) provides the following advice and guidance:

- **Use a strong and separate password for your email**
- **Install the latest software and app updates:** Applying security updates promptly will help protect your devices and accounts from cyber criminals
- **Turn on 2-step verification (2SV):** This is one of the most effective ways to protect your online accounts from cyber criminals
- **Get a password manager:** use browsers and apps to safely store your passwords
- **Backing up your data:** Make sure you can recover your important photos, documents and other personal data stored on your IT equipment
- **Three random words:** Combine three random words to create a password that's long enough and strong enough

## As a business:

**A government-backed, industry supported scheme to help organisations protect themselves against common cyber attacks is available.** To learn more visit the Cyber Essentials website [here](#).



## Further information

This document was produced on behalf of agencies that work in partnership together, collectively known as Cheshire Resilience Forum.

If you require further information regarding information referenced to particular agencies throughout this document, please contact them via their respective websites.

Any guidance referenced is correct at the time of publication.

Further information regarding Cheshire Resilience Forum can be found by clicking [here](#).

# Cheshire Resilience Forum



Working together to prepare for emergencies

September 2025

