SWIMS User Guidance

This User Guidance has been created to assist and guide SWIMS users, starting with event creation and ending with the outputs that are produced.

If you would like further support from the Adaptation Team or would like to suggest improvements to the tool or supporting paperwork, please contact us at SWIMS01@Kent.gov.uk.

Hyperlinked contents

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

What is the re-developed SWIMS?

SWIMS has been re-developed internally by the KCC Adaptation Team to improve the reporting experience for Kent partners during Met Office severe weather warnings. These warnings include rain, thunderstorms, wind, snow, lightning, ice, fog, and extreme heat.

Instead of using the previous SWIMS portal, impacts, responses, and associated costs will now be captured through Microsoft Forms and outputs created and disseminated by KCC. This streamlined approach simplifies data collection, creating a user-friendly system that requires less time and training to use.

The SWIMS data will be collated and standardised to support adaptation planning across the county, helping to reduce Kent's vulnerability to severe weather. Strong data collection will enable analysis against benchmarks, providing insights into seasonal and long-term trends and informing future adaptation measures.

What is the criteria for logging an impact?

Log anything that appears to be a direct and immediate consequence of severe weather.

If you are unsure, log it for validation.

What not to log:

1. **Sensitive or identifying details (try to omit identifying information. We will review all submissions to remove sensitive information)**
    - i.e. Persons actual identifying information.
2. **Indirect or speculative impacts**
    - i.e. Reduced attendance not tied to a severe weather impact.
3. **Human error or unrelated accidents**
    - i.e. Car crash not caused by flood water on road.
4. **Pre-existing conditions (unless made significantly worse by severe weather)**
    - i.e. Boiler issues that existed before the severe weather event (unless the single event caused significant degradation).
5. **Items out of your primary responsibility**
    - i.e. Impacts on home welfare of pupils that are not the primary responsibility of the school.

General best practise for using SWIMS within your organisation

We understand that varying extents of responsibility mean that some users cannot provide extensive detail. We still ask that you log any impacts (subject to the criteria covered in question 2.). Any and all information will be interpreted as part of the report building process with our team processing the information into useful reports. If you have difficulty inputting into this form, please reach out to our team so we can find the best possible approach.

Where multiple users work for one organisation, we suggest arranging a data input process to prevent. In addition, not all questions require answers to submit a response, meaning some input details can be split between team.

Event creation

The Met Office is the UK's official weather service, responsible for issuing weather warnings. These weather warnings alert of potential weather severity based upon a RAG rating system of the severity and likelihood of weather events and can be classified under the following:

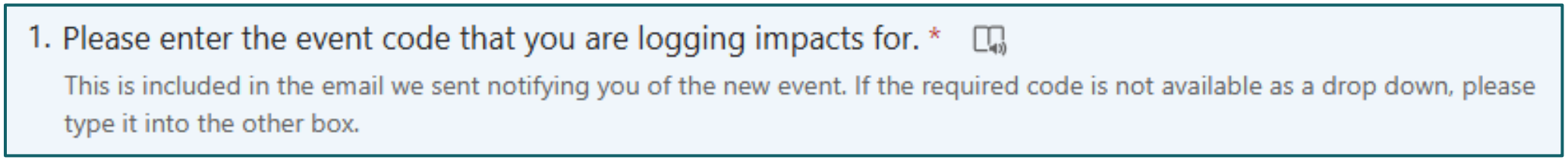
- **Yellow -** weather may cause minor disruptions for some.
- **Amber -** severe weather is likely to impact plans and safety.
- **Red -** dangerous weather is expected with high risk to life and major disruption.

Once alerted, an event will be created on SWIMS in alignment with the Met Office weather warnings, and will be circulated by email a week after the event to notify you. This email will summarise:

- **Details of the weather event.**
- **A unique event code:** This will identify each event during data processing.
- **A link to Microsoft Forms:** This form is where you log impacts.

Logging an impact

Data on how your school has been affected by severe weather events will be collected through Microsoft Forms. This involves a brief questionnaire, streamlining the impact logging process by gathering only the key information in an easy-to-follow structure. Step-by-step instructions on how to answer each question has been provided below:



A unique event code will be included in the email that we circulate to notify you of a new event. Recent codes will be available under a drop down. You have the option to copy and paste this code into Question 1 of Microsoft Forms if it has not been included within the drop down. Each event will have its own code – this is to distinguish which data belongs to each event, so please ensure you use the correct code for the weather event you are logging.

Logging an impact

2. Please type the school name *

3. Please type the school postcode *

Questions 2 and 3 require you to write the name and postcode of your school. Please use the full official name of your school e.g. ... C of E Primary or …. School and Sixth Form centre.

Logging an impact

4. Describe the impacts of the severe weather event on your school and operations (e.g., damage, disruptions etc).

Please describe each impact caused by the severe weather event to your school and operations, clearly linking the cause and effect (e.g., high winds → roof damage). Ensure specificity by including numerical details (such as quantities affected), item detail or locations where relevant for clarity.

Broad examples of impacts include:

- High winds dislodged roof tiles requiring repairs.
- A classroom had water ingress from flooding, damaging equipment and paperwork on the ground floor, and rendering the building unsafe for staff and residents.
- Extreme heat caused a pupil with underlying health conditions to faint in a classroom with no air conditioning when indoor temperatures reached 35 degrees.

Logging an impact

5. Please provide a short description on how your school has responded to the impacts recorded.

In response to your answer for the previous question, please describe the measures you took to resolve each impacts listed. As above, please ensure specificity and provide any numerical information and names or titles where necessary.

Broad examples of responses include:

- Five contractors were hired to fix the roof tiles.
- The classroom was closed for one week, and structural repairs were undertaken to damaged property. A dehumidifier was purchased to absorb excess humidity.
- Schools along the coast were advised to close for the day.

Logging an impact

6. Please describe the items for which costs were incurred due to weather impacts.

7. Please provide the estimate for overall total cost to the school budget (£).

8. Please provide the estimate for overall total cost claimed through insurance (£).

This response should provide a description of items at the time of recording that have financial implications as part of the weather impacts on your school. Examples include but are not limited to insurance costs, capital costs, repair and remediation costs. Please leave blank if no costs are claimed in your area of responsibility or if costs are speculative. Best practise is to list the items, there costs and budget area.

Provide costs that you are responsible for, i.e. out of your budget. Ignore if there is no cost or it is unknown.

Logging an impact

9. To what extent has this weather event impacted your schools operational capability? *

Green – None / Negligible Impact

- School is operating normally. Any disruption is minor and absorbed within routine processes.

Amber – Impacted but Managing Internally

- Weather is affecting activity and creating pressure, but we still have the resources to manage internally.

Red – Team Capabilities Breached

- Weather impact is seriously disrupting the school and operations. The school has had to make significant changes to the usual routine to continue operating.

Black – Service Failing or Halted

- Weather impact prevents school from opening. Only opening for vulnerable students at most.

These questions are based upon your schools' subjective experience in delivering services under extreme weather events and the degree of impact you feel you have experienced from the specific weather event compared to your baseline prior. This questions aims to ascertain the scale of impact based upon the operational capability of schools under different severe weather events compared to business as usual.

Logging an impact

10. How long do you estimate it will take for your school to return to normal operating capability (green) ? *

If you answered anything other than green in the previous question (question 8), you will be required to give an indication of the potential time it took or will take for your service to return to baseline operation. This gives us an indication of the lasting impacts of a severe weather event and ability for an organisation to manage the aftermath of a severe weather event on their area of responsibility.

You will be required to select one of the following from a drop down menu: hours, one day, days, weeks, months, over a year.

11. Please enter your school email address. *

This is to help with identification of the user for response verification.

Outputs

Data logged through the SWIMS input form is automatically transferred to our internal database, which is managed and accessible only by the KCC Adaptation Team and IT Administration. During data transformation, sensitive information will be removed to ensure secure storage.

Reports will be generated and hosted for SWIMS stakeholders, with certain data available upon request. These outputs will highlight yearly and seasonal trends, as well as the severity of recorded events.

All outputs will be analysed alongside other information-gathering exercises to improve understanding of current and future vulnerabilities to severe weather across Kent. This analysis will support efforts to protect Kent's residents, economy, and environment.

Iterative procedure and continual improvement

This tool is a modified version of the original SWIMS tool to continue data collection whilst improving upon the limitations in the original version. That being said, we are always looking to improve the data collection effectiveness and ease of user experience. What that means is the tool is subject to change. All changes will be communicated to SWIMS users and guidance updated.

Equally, we are always looking at better ways to collect adaptation related data through SWIMS and other tools. If you have ideas on how we can do this, we are always open to collaboration.