Displacement: Critical insights from flood-affected children

Maggie Mort[a,*], Marion Walker[a], Alison Lloyd Williams[a], Amanda Bingley[b]

[a] *Dept of Sociology, Bowland North, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA14YT, UK*
[b] *Division of Health Research, Lancaster University, UK*

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Little is known about how children and young people are affected by evacuation following flooding. Participatory research using creative methods allowed us to elicit flood stories and recovery pathways over time. We found that children's relationships with space and place were severely challenged following evacuation from home. They suffered losses, including loss of agency, friendship networks and familiar space. They experienced distress, anxiety and disillusionment with societal responses. Sustained attention by flood risk and recovery agencies is required to address children's ongoing needs following evacuation. From policymakers recognition is overdue that young people are citizens who already contribute to community flood response and so need to be more explicitly consulted and included in the development of flood risk management.

1. Introduction

Within social studies of disaster, it has long been recognised that the recovery process sheds light on many pre-existing social vulnerabilities that gave rise to the disaster in the first place (Erikson, 1976; Blaikie et al., 1994; Smith, 2006; Mutter, 2008). What gets rebuilt, restored or discarded reveals what is valued by the community or wider society (Miller and Rivera, 2007; Klein, 2007; Dhakar Tribune, 2017). In the wake of destruction, questions are asked about the value of what has been lost and this rightly includes social as well as economic value; it includes memory and meaning, as well as property and possessions. Yet little is known about how children value the places and spaces they inhabit. A recent exception can be found in Ergler et al.' s collection (2017a, 2017b); in their Introduction they point out that children 'seek agency in their everyday lives'. They note however that such agency is constrained by environments 'designed to facilitate the lives of adults…'. Yet how they experience or possibly resist, their surroundings impacts on children's health and wellbeing (2017:1).

One of the consequences of the recent disaster at Grenfell Tower in West London has brought into the sharpest relief debates about the effects of displacement. Following the devastating tragic fire, struggles continue over maintaining certain continuities such as networks of trust, social relations, safe routes to school and familiar spaces. These struggles are being played out at different political scales and against a background of austerity policies. This disaster is forcing re-examination in the UK of housing policies, the social organisation of neighbourhoods and even what it means to relocate a school (Weale, 2017). Current initiatives include a creative project where young people are using

virtual reality technology to reimagine and help redesign the space left behind when the Tower itself is eventually demolished (O'Brien, 2018, personal communication)

In the case of flooding, the UK's highest rated civil emergency (Cabinet Office, 2017), recent research has illuminated how recovery is often very lengthy, in which the path is far from linear, with unpredictable and severe twists and turns (Medd et al., 2014) and involving considerable reorientation (Cox and Perry, 2011). We also know that the recovery phase can sometimes be more traumatic than the flood itself particularly if the societal response is uncomprehending or uncaring (Whittle et al., 2010; Tapsell and Tunstall, 2008). One study shows that for adults, it is evacuation and displacement following a flood that has the greatest negative impact on their health and wellbeing (Walker-Springett et al., 2017), yet the experience of flood displacement for children remains underexplored.

An earlier study revealed some of the complexities experienced by flood-affected children in the UK. These included the long-term effects of living in temporary accommodation, re-locating to a different school, family tensions at home exacerbated by flood-related financial worries and the fear of recurring disaster (Walker et al., 2010, 2012; Mort et al., 2016). Living with these changes and uncertainties was particularly problematic for groups of children following the 2007 floods in Hull, Northern England, who later told us they felt there was nowhere to turn for help. The disruption the floods caused to their homes, schools and friendship networks were seen to impact on children's physical and emotional health (Whittle et al., 2012).

Landmark studies conducted by Weber and Peek (2012) and Fothergill and Peek (2015) following the 2005 floods in New Orleans in

Fig. 1. Rachel's storyboard.

the wake of Hurricane Katrina, explored ways that forms of displacement shaped the lives of children over the medium and longer term in the wake of the US diaspora. Towards the end of their work children told them that participating in the study and having their flood stories made public opened up the possibility of helping others and had a positive effect on their recovery (2015: 267).

For this paper this we focus on material collected for our research with children following the severe floods of 2013/4 in England. This allows us to offer some insights into particular ways in which children's health and wellbeing are negatively affected by displacement and ways that policy might be improved to mitigate these effects. We have found that children's accounts highlight how material/spatial displacement is strongly intertwined with social dislocation.

A distinguishing feature of this project was to bring children's experiences of flooding, their practices of resilience and their views about what might have helped them recover into dialogue with policy makers and practitioners. In this way, children's insights, learned through the research, could be made to 'travel' further, engaging with stakeholders such as flood risk managers, insurers, emergency planners, and be recognised in policy development. [Children's recommendations and the implications for policy have been published elsewhere, see Mort et al., 2016].

Below we first introduce some of the detail which emerges from child-centred approaches to flood research and explain the methods which underpinned our findings. We then present four stories from our research in which young people articulate how the floods affected their lives. Finally, we draw out some commonalities and implications for flood risk related policy and practice development.

2. Floods reveal complex cumulative social vulnerability in young people's lives

Finding ways to understand more about children's lives before, during and after disaster is crucial to understanding the meaning and effects of that disaster since, as Fothergill and Peek (2015: 23) argue, 'the disaster may be a stressor or crisis on top of other serious issues or constraints the child is already confronting'. Working closely with 650 children in the Katrina diaspora over seven years they found that young

people's accounts uncovered the daily contingencies of displaced lives, raising questions about vulnerability but also the factors that aid recovery and resilience. The authors critique the adultist ways that disaster-affected children are often viewed, which only serve to hinder children's recovery. First, there is the myth that children will 'bounce back' like rubber balls, without any outside assistance, because children are 'naturally resilient'; second, there is the helpless victims myth that views children as fragile and renders them incapable of acting in the face of a disaster; and third is the equal opportunity events myth, which assumes that all children are affected equally by disaster (Fothergill and Peek, 2015).

As Lindley et al. (2011) point out, people experiencing poverty are more likely to live on a flood plain or close to coastal regions prone to flooding. Families living in rented accommodation in flood risk zones are at risk from forced evacuation by their landlord into a rental market where properties are increasingly scarce and more costly (Whittle et al., 2010); tenants also have to face the prospect of 'never coming back' or of having their rents pushed up after the refurbishment (Walker et al., 2011). Where families are living in homes without building or house contents insurance great hardship can result during flood recovery, with children having to endure living in damp unhealthy conditions, often with no end in sight (Walker et al., 2010). Working with the notion of cumulative vulnerability helps to make such inequalities visible.

Such complex inequality was shown in our earlier research in Hull when we adopted a 'storyboard' approach to help children (aged 9–18 years) articulate their flood stories with drawings and creative writing, moving into short one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions. Here Rachel's[1] storyboard (Fig. 1) illustrates how the flood involved first moving upstairs, then moving out, only to return ten months later.

3. Developing methodology for working with flood affected children

We conducted our recent research in two contrasting (urban and rural) flood-affected communities, recruiting children and young

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Fig. 2. The hard work of recovery.

people aged between 6 and 15 years old in: i) Staines-upon-Thames[2] where in January/February 2014 seven severe flood warnings were issued and thousands of households were evacuated; and ii) South Ferriby, North Lincolnshire, where in December 2013 a third of the children at the local school had to leave their homes following a tidal surge that travelled 3 km inland, the highest surge ever recorded on the River Humber. Between these locations we worked with a total of 30 children and 11 adults (parents, teaching staff and community members): 15 children aged 6–12 and four adults in South Ferriby; and 15 young people aged 11–15 and seven adults in Staines.

This ethnographic project drew on participatory arts methods and was designed following an action research structure. We held an open introductory event in both schools where any child or young person who identified as affected by the floods could attend. Children then self-selected to take part in a series of workshop sessions where, using a range of media and group discussions, they could explore and share their flood experiences, develop ideas together about their recovery and how to build community resilience; and find ways to engage with and have a voice in local and national emergency flood planning.

Approval was obtained from the Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee and the research team members had DBS certification as part of the safeguarding requirements. Consent was obtained from parent(s) and children. Particular attention was paid to the management of visual data; the recording of video and photographic images that included children required additional consent from parents and children. The other important ethical concern was to avoid re-traumatisation. Working with children in the post-flood phase requires care and sensitivity to avoid re-traumatisation – this can be mitigated by ensuring that the pace of engagement is child-led, supported by the researchers who help to create a safe space within a clear structure for the day.[3] This is particularly important as some children find it difficult to share their flood and post-flood experiences. Thus, the workshop

design and each day's timetable included, as far as possible, choosing a quiet, self contained venue with each member of the research team allocated well defined roles in conducting the research; and in good communication with supporting staff (and in the younger children's cohort, two parents)

Our aim was to provide opportunities for children to share and reflect on their experience through the different stages of recovery, as first described by Tyhurst (1951), and elaborated since by Alexander (2005). Following sensory-based (Bingley and Milligan, 2007) and theatre-based (Lloyd Williams, 2015) participatory arts approaches, we designed a creative and interactive workshop programme for working with flood-affected children. The programme aimed to capture the children's memories of the flood, what they did and what they would like to happen in the future. The workshops began with the children's individual stories, then moved towards the group/ community story, from which ways of recovering and building resilience could then be developed. This represents the impact of an event that first affects the individual, but then necessarily calls on a whole community response. Working carefully around curricular activities, three all-day workshops held over the course of the school year in a familiar space, near but outside of the school environment, were key to enabling this process. A fourth, performative event brought the work to the public (parents and families, local and national government agencies, emergency services and flood risk managers).

Drama games focusing on sensory perception helped the children to start engaging with observation in time for our walk around the local landscape when we asked them to 'show us your story and talk to us as you go' (Lloyd Williams et al., 2017). This helped the children re-connect with their flooded landscape and their on-going flood stories (see McEwen et al., 2014). In the group reflection at the end of our first workshop, Christina, aged 8 from the South Ferriby group asked, 'why did we go on the walk?' Ruby, aged 8 replied: 'it helped us to remember what it is like down by the river and it helped us to get in touch with our memories and feelings'. The walks were followed by 3D model making individually and in groups, which also helped elicit aspects of the local story (see Fig. 2).

In Staines (11 – 15 year olds), the teacher appointed to accompany the project commented that the 3D models and performances developed in the workshops were reflecting the young people's experiences. She told us she could now see there was no 'quick fix' to the disruption caused by the flood and that the unfolding methodology tied in with the students' experiences of the flood and their slowly evolving recovery. This illustrates how the workshops acted as a safe space in which to share what had happened over time. The three workshops and associated walks were actively created in order to function as familiar places connected to, but away from school. These shared spaces showed how isolated flood affected young people can become in a large school; belonging to different school classes, many of them had never met each other before. Children in both project locations told us how important it was to be able to talk and share with others who had also been affected.

Everyone in here like understands what you went through, so you can talk to them and you know that they're okay with listening, whereas outside they haven't been through it. Because you sometimes feel like, if you're talking it, you're droning a bit and it's boring them… whereas in here we kind of connect a bit more.

(Daniel, aged 14, Staines)

This is echoed in the primary aged children's call for 'get happier' groups for flood-affected children. John told us that the best thing about taking part in the project was:

…. that we were able to talk to other people about what happened and that's helped us to feel better.

(John, aged 10, South Ferriby)

While we draw on data from both locations as background, for this

2 Hereafter 'Staines'.
3 Approval was gained from the Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee on 16.09.14 no 51,389 Ethical scrutiny was also ongoing, with advice sought from the committee as the project developed.

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Fig. 3. Gutting the house.

paper we focus on individual case studies taken from the urban young people's narratives where the detail shows the range of effects and the complexity of displacement most fully. We have pieced together four stories from our data in which young people aged 12–14 years detail their experience of the flood. These illustrate how complexities around sense of place and displacement are closely tied not just to the young people's social vulnerability, but to their capacities and recovery pathways.

4. Case Studies illuminating displacement

On the evening of 9th February 2014, after days of persistent rain, seven severe flood warnings (the highest category) were put in place for the River Thames in north Surrey. Residents were evacuated and roads and schools were closed (Fig. 3). The Staines area experienced clusters of events involving tidal, river, rainfall and groundwater flooding (Thorne, 2014). In the November of the same year we began a series of workshops with young people from The Magna Carta School[4] in which stories emerged over the following year.

Ben aged 12, lives in a house with his parents, older brother and dog. Although it had been raining steadily for days Ben said, 'because we were so far away from the river we didn't think we would get flooded'. But then the flood waters started rising, 'so it rose about eight inches in two hours or something… It went up really fast'. At this point Ben's grandad (who had previous personal experience of flooding) telephoned to tell the family, 'it's not coming through the river, it's coming up the ground, and that's when we had to call my Dad in from work'.

Ben helped his mum to move furniture upstairs, putting the sofa on stilts and helping a disabled neighbour: 'a few doors on from us there's a man … he's got a disabled mum who lives downstairs and me and my mum had to go in and help him move her upstairs'. Ben's father came home from work and they carried on moving furniture and attempting to block up the house airbricks with plastic bags and silicone. At about 2 a.m. the floodwaters stopped rising and the family went to bed. The next morning the water had receded and they believed they had escaped the flooding.

But about a week later, 'we realised that all our plaster was coming off and all our floorboards had moved. They were all twisting'. Ben's dad looked under the floorboards and saw the water was just below them. The insurance company came out and started drilling into the walls to assess the damage. The house was damp and noisy, and Ben's mum said the family couldn't live with the amount of damp and upheaval and would have to move. Ben remembered that the insurance company:

…asked us if we could go to any relatives or friends or anything. We said 'no they're all flooded' because one lives in Wraysbury and they're flooded, one lives in Northern Ireland, and all our friends were flooded.

The family went into rented accommodation further away from school than Ben had ever been before and so instead of walking to school he started cycling. But he didn't talk to his school friends about how the flood had resulted in his having to move away from home. Ben told us: 'I couldn't go to the park. My friends kept asking me but my mum wouldn't let me cycle in the dark'. He just stopped meeting his mates and this impacted on his friendship network. Added to this Ben said he didn't tell the staff at school that his change of address was the result of having been evacuated and he said he never spoke to anyone other than his friend Callum (who was also flooded out of his home) about how the flooding had impacted on his life.

Ben's family were away from their home for more than a year. The time in the rented accommodation turned out to be much longer than they had anticipated. The 'drying certificate' was issued but then there was a long wait for the builders to carry out the repairs: 'six months the house had the dry certificate but no one was doing anything'. The lease on the rented accommodation ran out and the family had to find an alternative and move again: 'Yeah, because that one had run out, the owners were coming back'. Talking about his flood experiences Ben told us that the worst thing 'was moving…because you had to pack it all up, then it would take hours to unpack it and then you have to do it again and then again'.

Ben's story of his displacement shows how floods create new dependencies and fragilities for those trying to recover. Here we can see how groundwater flooding takes the family by surprise but also how children can have an active role in flood response. It shows how multiple moves into rented accommodation cause particular forms of stress and that necessary delays in building repairs lengthens the displacement from home.

Ben's experience demonstrates that children's ability to plan relies on adults' sense of preparedness. Families' futures can get put on hold when they are at the mercy of the recovery industry system and timetables and this can undermine their sense of agency. And yet life has to go on – people have to go to work, children have somehow to go to school. It also demonstrates how in spite of anxiety about the floodwater, the trigger for taking action rested upon receiving a message from a significant person i.e. his grandad - in this case one with direct experience - seeing the rain and the floodwater alone appeared not to be enough. The story also gives an example of community solidarity in that families and their children show awareness of the needs of others and ability to take action. Ben's experience illustrates that children's friendships are in some ways fragile – his story shows that friendships rely on regular contact within time and space. Friendships can deteriorate if regular contact is not maintained and this affects children's wellbeing.

Andrew, aged 15 lives in a house with his mum, dad and older brother. Evacuated from their home by the military, Andrew was most concerned about his pet lizard – trying to keep her warm. He spent the first night at his 'nan's'. Then he moved with the rest of his family to his aunt's for three days, but she had a newborn baby and it wasn't convenient for the family to stay there any longer, so they then moved into a hotel.

Living in the hotel was difficult – Andrew had to share a small room with his older brother which he said was 'not much fun'. He discovered that hotel living disrupts your day-to-day life and there's a feeling of lost independence: 'It was just weird because you don't make your own cereal or anything; they just give it to you. It's like, you want to do those everyday things'. The conditions in the hotel affected him and he empathised with other people who had been evacuated and were trying to get on with their lives whilst negotiating with their insurers:

Anybody who had an insurance company is probably still in a lot of like

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[4] The school is an above-average sized state secondary academy with 1199 male and female pupils aged 11–16.

trouble because the insurance company would have small print saying 'not water damage' and a lot of people were really affected by that… There's people on my road who are still not in their houses…Yeah, that's not good at all - still living in hotels - and they've got like whole families going to work and going to school and you can't cope with it.

Living in the hotel was expensive – the weekly allowance from the insurers was not enough to feed the family of four and they ended up going back to eat at his aunt's. Andrew also told us that the disruption affected his studies because he couldn't access crucial GCSE[5] documents online:

So it really affected like people had to go online and get their like… their work off of there. But I couldn't because I'm in a hotel, I've got no Wi-Fi. The hotel's Wi-Fi was absolutely terrible, you couldn't do anything, and this was when we were choosing options.[6] I couldn't even fill out the form because it was online. I couldn't print it out.

After the evacuation the family returned to their home to check on the damage:

We saw the water in the house… It wasn't a lot, it was just about maybe three, four inches, but it can still do a lot of damage. You still have to do one metre up from that, so it creates a lot of damage. Yeah, not good.

Andrew refers here to the subsequent work the builders undertook to remove the plaster from the damaged walls to a height of one metre: this is messy, noisy and dusty work.

Andrew told us that placing sandbags around the house (a classic intervention) would not have stopped the groundwater from coming up through the floorboards: 'sandbags won't stop that'. After the council had distributed the sandbags he told us that he felt that his local community was 'splintering apart', which was 'disappointing to see':

We had to fight for them. There was a lot of people who wanted them, just taking more than they needed and they weren't sharing it out. I think everybody was for themselves.… When I moved out, you know, it was just us, it's just, you've got your family and that's it. Nobody helps you.

Andrew ended up living in the hotel until the end of March (about 6 weeks). The family then went to live in a rented house until the repairs were completed on their home. They returned home in November 2015, after 21 months away.

Experiencing a flood brings new knowledge about the different levels and forms of what it means 'to be flooded'. Andrew's insight about sandbags shows an understanding of groundwater flooding and the specificity of different types of flood, insight brought about by direct experience. Andrew also understands the delicate ongoing negotiations that have to take place with insurers and that this involves risks: for example, the insurer might dispute your claim. His experience shows that community solidarity is also fragile; he observed directly examples of selfishness and lack of altruism. In this it can be seen how his relationship with the place called 'home' has altered.

Andrew's story shows how displacement impacts on day-to-day life, education, people's sense of independence and understanding of what it means to be flooded. Interestingly it challenges the common claim that disaster brings people together. We see that tensions within the community can be heightened by creating a feeling of injustice if groups within the community are perceived to be treated differently (see Walker-Springett, 2017 p.67). Here it becomes evident how living in a hotel results in loss of independence and on a day-to-day basis this is costly. It shows how being flooded affects your education, yet how flood experience leads to important new knowledge.

Sally, aged 11, lives in a house with her parents; her dad is a wheelchair user. Sally saw the weather forecasts on television and was aware that severe flooding was forecast for her local area, so (unlike her parents) she packed a suitcase 'just in case' she had to leave home. However, Sally's impression of being evacuated was also bound up with images of people being relocated to hotels as if they were going away on holiday, so she packed 'some special dresses' that she thought would be good to wear at the hotel. Unfortunately, Sally's family was evacuated to a small hotel with cramped rooms unsuitable for disabled guests, which Sally said was 'really hard' for her dad. Not only had she forgotten to pack her school uniform but she didn't get to wear her special dresses because the family found it 'too expensive' to eat at the hotel restaurant.

Sally told us that when her family was moved into temporary accommodation, the family experienced additional distress. In the first hotel, they were placed in a room with a tiny en-suite bathroom not accessible for wheelchair users. In the cramped conditions, her dad injured himself whilst trying to wash. The family was then moved into a more suitable hotel but was forced to move a third time because availability was limited due to prior bookings. Coming on top of the shock of the flooding, this had the effect of making the family feel isolated and misunderstood.

Sally was the youngest member of the 'Flood Project' secondary school group, but she wanted to make it known that floods can cause additional injustice. Her story reveals how there can be multiple problems associated with evacuation, which are sometimes invisible to friends, teachers, insurers, loss adjusters and emergency planners. Sally's experience demonstrates the need for better education for householders on what action to take in case of flooding and for policymakers and practitioners to be more inclusive of the needs of children and disabled people. Her story reveals a child's perception of evacuation and demonstrates ways in which displacement can result in poor health and wellbeing, with inappropriate placement in temporary accommodation resulting in, among other issues, injury sustained by a wheelchair user. This case study illustrates vividly family experiences of multiple displacements and the challenges involved in creating a flood resilient accessible family home. Sadly, it also shows something about a lack of care in society when others 'don't get it'.

Callum, aged 12, lives with his parents in a council flat. He told us: 'We live on the ground floor….we lost everything' in the flood. On the day of the flood, the family watched the floodwaters rising and then went to bed; the next morning his dad:

…opened the door to see what was happening and there was all this water sort of coming down … then we stayed for a little bit, then it went up more, and then it went to the top step and Dad said 'we need to go now. When I say now, I mean now'.

The family evacuated to his grandparents' house which Callum thought was a better option than the one offered to children who had no relatives living locally and who were forced to move into distant rented accommodation.[7] But living with relatives turned out to be problematic for Callum in various ways. He had difficulty sleeping at his grandparents' home in a tiny room amongst all of the packing cases and plastic bags that were stacked up to the ceiling full of his family's belongings:

I could barely move in my room. I couldn't sort of get to sleep… I was so scared like [of it] falling down on me… all my stuff, Mum's stuff, everything in the kitchen, all the stuff [from] all the rooms.

Added to this Callum was not used to going to school on the bus. Living locally, he had always walked. The new bus journey was totally strange to him: 'I got sort of upset in school sometimes, because like I

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just couldn't stand going on the bus'. He found the journey very stressful and claustrophobic: 'I was like, I can't do this…, this is so sweaty'; tensions caused him to sweat into his clothes, which made him very uncomfortable and self-conscious. Callum needed £ 1.25 for each bus journey, i.e. £ 2.50 per day. The family didn't receive a bus pass to help with the immediate costs of this and so Callum was responsible for paying the fare and keeping the money safe for the return journey. This was new and stressful for him. He told us he didn't know if the family ever received a refund for these extra costs from the insurers.

Callum returned home eight months after the flood to a road that he described as a 'ghost town'; they were one of the first families to return. The road was full of potholes and needed repairing. Callum got very angry when he saw the workmen, who he described as 'ard', 'chucking stuff' down the drains: 'they were just like laying around' giving the impression 'oh I can't be bothered'. Callum's concerns about the state of the drains became apparent in the first workshop; he took a number of photos of drains on the walk around his flooded community and then shared his anger (and fear) with the group in discussion.

Callum's experience shows a lack of flood awareness both in schools and local authorities. He would have benefitted from knowing that local authorities can help by making it an offence to empty rubbish into drains. What he also needed was a member of staff at school to find out how he was coping with the unfamiliar school journey and then link him with a fellow student who could help familiarise the journey with him. His parents would have been helped if they knew insurers were aware of the extra travel costs and provided the funds up front or negotiated a bus pass (the less stressful and stigmatising option).

Callum's story about his displacement shows how the floods reveal multiple and intersecting consequences which affect children every day. First, we see how hurried evacuation results in severe stress exacerbated by the extra risks and limitations resulting from living on the ground floor. This story is an example of how living in cramped conditions for eight months undermines health and wellbeing. Callum's new journey to school was costly and created hardship and the strangeness of the new journey to school created uncertainty and feelings of panic. Anxiety about drains getting blocked, preventing floodwater from flowing away is borne out of direct experience and illustrates a concern about adults' lack of care for local infrastructure.

5. Concluding remarks

Ben, Andrew, Sally and Callum all experienced evacuation from home for between 21 months and one year, an experience not uncommon after severe flooding. Their stories articulate detachment, rather than attachment to place. They tell of a range of losses, social and material, and highlight an uncomfortable education into the ways in which society responds to families under these kinds of pressures. The four stories illustrate the entanglement of physical and social displacement. However, they also uncover ways in which they have an active role, acting on their awareness of neighbours' needs or packing in advance and also in noticing signs of community solidarity (or lack of it).

In our approach to analysing these stories we found the work of critical geographer Doreen Massey most useful. For Massey, place and sense of place are conceptualised as fluid, multiple, processual and full of stories: entanglements of, for example, memory and spatial affordance, safety and insecurity. In the context of disaster recovery, place is simultaneously social and geographic; both come to matter and to shape recovery possibilities. In her chapter 'A Place Called Home', while domestic space can embody comfort, safety and identity, it can also signify danger and uncertainty, which can be present or latent (Massey, 1994 :157). We found this more unsettling version of 'home' resonating with young people's accounts of evacuation. For all these young people the meaning of 'home' changed in different ways: hotel, family home, rented accommodation and 'back home' all have unsettling, shifted resonances. What is identified from the data is not primarily about

children's place attachment, (although glimpses of this can be seen in the stories above). What we identified are losses. Spaces are described mainly negatively as eroding, and these accounts of eroded spaces give a sense of place which is insecure, threatened and vulnerable to future events. There is less a sense of place attachment, rather there is a feeling of detachment, and how physical/material and social displacement are intertwined.

Ergler et al. (2017a, 2017b) explore the concept of children's 'well-being affordances' and show how children's health and the health of their environments are entangled at different scales. Drawing on their 'go-along' interviews with children in urban settings, they argue that children need actively to explore their local environments to become 'socio-spatially aware'. Arguably, the young people in our study had this exploration forced upon them by the flood. What they found was a set of (altered) affordances in both their new (displaced) environments and later upon return to their homes.

The multiple ways in which children and young people experience displacement and how the consequent disruptions and disorientations affect their health and wellbeing need far greater attention. The stories of the four young people in these case studies help to identify important aspects of evacuation and experiences of lengthy displacement, including changed feelings about what it means to be 'at home' either in displacement or upon return. Ben, Andrew, Sally and Callum's stories illustrate the centrality of relationships with (unfamiliar) spaces following a flood, as they struggle to manage new routines and risks.

These young people's flood stories reveal social vulnerabilities such as financial hardship and disability. These vulnerabilities are both pre-existing and also brought about by displacement from the family home and show how they can be accentuated as they and their families try to go about their day-to-day lives. Cumulative vulnerabilities are exposed, referring here to children's social situation before, during and after the flood. In these stories we can see the insecurity and loss of agency created by evacuation and a sense of frustration and disillusionment with society's ability to understand.

Sims et al. (2009) showed that the impacts of a flood have a much wider reach than the physical spread of the flood waters, with serious effects on the relatives and carers of flooded residents. Cox and Perry (2011) have argued that the organisational response to disaster displacement needs to attend more fully to the importance of place as the ground upon which social capital and community disaster resilience are built. For us this highlights how government and local agencies overemphasise material displacement; in contrast, we observe social displacement to be one of the most problematic aspects of recovery. As the four stories above illustrate, both are intimately entangled.

By making the detail of the space, place and wellbeing relationship visible in these stories, we argue it is possible to have a closer understanding of how flood-affected children and their families experience flooding. What is then required post disaster is sustained attention by agencies from the insurance and home recovery sector to education, emergency planning and flood risk management organisations to children's on-going needs in the context of their spaces and places. Based on our conversations with children we have recommended a range of practice and policy changes (Mort et al., 2016). Some evidence of greater awareness of children's needs and capacities around flood risk is emerging (e.g. Humber Emergency Planning Service, 2017; Surrey Prepared, 2018) but genuinely participatory work with children and young people is still rare (Rodriguez-Giralt et al., 2016). We know from studies post Hurricane Katrina (Fothergill and Peek, 2015) and our own work (Mort et al., 2016) that where children are able to participate in what gets called 'flood risk management', or have the part they already play recognised, this helps their recovery.

Collins and Kearns (2013) showed how the political awareness of residents was activated by a development threat to public space; in our case here, such sensibility is awakened by the removal of familiar space: home. The four stories above here were used among others in the last project workshop and led to the development of their Young People's

Flood Manifesto (2015) - a call for action to flood risk management to address their concerns. The Manifesto demonstrates young people's capacity to become involved in emergency management. Drawing on their personal experience, young people from this group have proceeded to take part in community events aimed at flood awareness raising. In the context of Article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (OHCHR, 1990) in which it is established that children have the right to be consulted about matters which affect them, recognition by flood risk management agencies that children and young people are citizens with complex needs and capacities is long overdue. Researchers and policy makers need to conduct work which attends more closely to children-as-citizens for whom displacement necessitates a series of visceral adjustments and reorientations in their relationships with place and social space. How society responds during this recovery phase strongly shapes possibilities for young people's social and material resilience building.

Funding

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