

New warning schemes support Scotland's preparedness for flooding

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (10 November 2020) launched two new flood warning schemes for rural Scottish communities threatened by coastal and river flooding.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) launches new services for residents in two flood prone areas

- As Scotland's national flood forecasting and flood warning authority, SEPA is launching two new flood warning schemes
- Schemes will warn of forecast coastal flooding in Eilean Siar and river flooding in Aberfoyle, building on SEPA's network of regional flood alert and local flood warning areas across Scotland
- They're rolled out as Scotland marks one year until COP26 and aim to help at risk communities prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding
- Residents and road users are encouraged to sign up to SEPA's Floodline to receive free Flood Alerts and Warnings to their phones in these areas and across Scotland

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (10 November 2020) launched two new flood warning schemes for rural Scottish communities threatened by coastal and river flooding.

The schemes, covering Eilean Siar and the village of Aberfoyle near Stirling, expand SEPA's network of more than 60 targeted local warning schemes and build on its commitment to support Scottish communities to prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding.

With climate change projected to cause wetter, stormier winters, more intense rainfall in summer and sea level rise in Scotland, SEPA's Floodline delivers regional Flood Alerts across 19 geographical areas spanning the whole of Scotland, advising up to two days in advance if flooding is possible.

Warning schemes, like those in Eilean Siar and Aberfoyle, are developed using dedicated monitoring and flood forecasting systems to provide more localised, shorter-range warnings with additional information relevant to local communities on projected flood impacts.

Funded by the Scottish Government and developed in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Stirling Council, the new schemes will cover 1,275 at risk properties, but also benefit those traveling through these areas.

The coastal scheme in Eilean Siar will span 1,000 homes and businesses

directly at risk from coastal flooding and will also benefit the residents of nearly 7,000 properties who could be affected by coastal flooding during their travel or other activity across the Western Isles, including Lewis and Harris, Berneray, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist, Barra and Vatersay. It will also provide notice of coastal flooding and disruption to roads and causeways across the Island communities.

In contrast, the Aberfoyle scheme will cover a specific flood-prone street, where flood waters from a nearby river can directly threaten an estimated 275 properties but also block access to and from the local primary school and the main route from the village to neighbouring Kinlochard. As such, the residents of more than 650 properties will benefit from the scheme. Now, flood warning messages will be issued when flooding is forecast to impact the road, and then again to warn if impacts worsen affecting homes and businesses in Aberfoyle. The new service will provide advance warning when flooding is forecasted and, in flash flood situations, offer a small window during which to take action.

Vincent Fitzsimons said: "Through the Floodline service, we spread awareness and understanding of immediate flood risk to give people, businesses and partners a window to act and reduce the impact of flooding when it occurs.

"Next year, Floodline will celebrate its 20th anniversary and, with a regional alert network spanning the whole of Scotland and more than 60 local warning schemes, it's clear to see the progress that has been made in helping Scotland prepare for flooding over these last two decades. And we will continue to build on that, as our river monitoring network and new flood forecasting models give us more information than ever before about the potential flood risk and impacts.

"In the face of a climate emergency and with flooding set to increase across Scotland, schemes like these in Eilean Siar and Aberfoyle are more important now than ever, and we encourage those living, working and visiting these areas to sign up to Floodline."

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said: "We know the devastating impact that flooding can have on communities and livelihoods – and we know climate change can make this worse. Being prepared for any flood event is critical if we are to manage the risks and promote long term flood resilience.

"That is why I'm pleased to see the launch of SEPA's two new flood warning schemes in Eilean Siar and Aberfoyle. Early alerts of any forecasted flooding will help people living in these areas better prepare for and recover from a flood event. In 2020-21, the Scottish Government has made more than £1.6 million available to SEPA to deliver and improve its flood warning schemes.

"Flooding remains of the highest priority to the Scottish Government. This year's Programme for Government committed to invest an extra £150 million for flood risk management in addition to the £42 million provided each year to local authorities through the Local Government Capital Grant. We are also providing £193,000 in 2020-21 to the Scottish Flood Forum who work directly

with communities and individuals at risk of flooding.”

SEPA is Scotland’s national flood forecasting, flood warning authority and strategic flood risk management authority. It works in partnership with the Met Office to forecast for flooding and operates the Floodline service to warn the public and emergency responders when it is likely.

SEPA’s current Floodline service annually issues an average of 300 regional Flood Alerts and 400 local Flood Warnings to more than 31,500 customers nationwide.

Communities and businesses can register to this free service and can choose to receive a notification via phone call or text when flooding is forecast, and can register more than one address: property, work or regular travel routes.

In addition to issuing regional Flood Alerts and local Flood Warnings, Floodline provides live flooding information and advice on how to prepare for or cope with the impacts of flooding 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Find out more and sign up today at floodlinescotland.org.uk.

ENDS

Notes to editor

SEPA responsibilities

SEPA is Scotland’s national flood forecasting, flood warning authority and strategic flood risk management authority.

- We work in partnership with the Met Office to forecast for flooding and operate Floodline in Scotland to warn the public and emergency responders when flooding is likely;
- We produce Scotland’s Flood Risk Management Strategies;
- We work closely with other organisations responsible for managing flood risk to ensure that a nationally consistent approach to flood risk management is adopted;
- We provide flood risk advice to land use planning in Scotland when requested;
- We raise awareness of flooding at a national level through education initiatives, community engagement and campaigns.

We operate a 24-hour, 365 days a year flood warning service to inform first responders, local authorities and emergency services of emerging flood events and the potential impact on local communities and critical infrastructure.

- All SEPA’s Alerts and Warnings are available on our website at floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates/

- Floodline is always the most up-to-date information – with any new flood updates available as soon as they are issued.
- You can also sign up to receive these messages to your phone, for free. You can register online at floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodingsignup/

Local Authority responsibilities

Local authorities are responsible for producing Scotland's first Local Flood Risk Management Plans and work in partnership with SEPA, Scottish Water and other responsible authorities to develop these.

It is the responsibility of the local authority to implement and maintain flood protection actions. Local authorities also inspect, clear and repair watercourses to reduce flood risk and routinely maintain road gullies on public roads and highways.

During severe flooding, local authorities will work with the emergency services and co-ordinate shelter for people evacuated from their homes.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Newsdesk : I 07557 497 947 (24 Hrs)

media.sepa.org.uk I media@sepa.org.uk I @ScottishEPA