

Press release: Helping communities be flood resilient

A team of flood engagement officers have worked with more than 60 schools and 700 businesses during their first year in post to help communities be more resilient to flooding in the North East.

The Environment Agency appointed the new team to increase awareness of flood risk and help people be prepared for flooding.

The £280,000 a year project, which started last summer, includes four new engagement officers spread across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Darlington, and Cleveland.

Funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) for four years, the officers are working alongside partner organisations to help support communities.

In their first year they have worked closely with communities at risk of flooding to help them recruit Flood Wardens and develop Community Flood Plans, and have focused on ensuring businesses are resilient to protect the impact of floods on the economy.

Area updates

In Northumberland Colin Hall has been working with many Northumberland communities. In Ponteland in particular he has been working hard to increase their flood resilience including completing a Flood Week in Ponteland Primary School, campaigning for new Flood Wardens, progressing a community flood plan and establishing a Flood Warden Group.

In Tyne & Wear Taryn Al-mashgari has been working in schools in Sunderland, South Tyneside and Newcastle delivering Flood Weeks and careers events. She's also focused on businesses in Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Her plans for the coming year include working with key communities such as Wingrove to raise awareness of surface water flooding.

In Cleveland, Sarah Duffy has been working with communities from across the area, working with schools in Middlesbrough, Stockton, and Redcar and Cleveland to complete a series of Flood Weeks. She's also been working with businesses in Yarm to increase resilience, including meeting businesses on the High Street, and running a Business Breakfast morning to bring businesses together. Sarah has formed strong links with Skinningrove Flood Warden Group and hopes to expand the Flood Warden network in Cleveland next year.

In Durham and Darlington Anna Caygill has been focusing on schools and communities such as Stanhope and Chester-le-Street, including promoting the Flood Warning Service and recruiting Flood Wardens. Anna has also been working closely with Durham Housing Group to identify where their properties

at risk of flooding are and to come up with a strategy to warn and inform tenants to be more prepared for a flood event. In Darlington she has been working with groups in Cockerton and Haughton-le-Skerne to increase the area's resilience.

The Community Engagement Officers are working on behalf of the Environment Agency and local authority partners.

As well as supporting residents and businesses, working alongside schools has played a key role in helping future generations understand their risk.

The team hosted a region-wide Flood Warden logo competition which led to a new blue jacket uniform for flood wardens across the North East so they were recognisable to emergency services and the community during an incident.

Really successful first year

Phil Taylor, Environment Agency Flood Resilience Team Leader in the North East, said:

It's been a really successful first year for the Flood Engagement Officers and they are now well known within their communities. This is a foundation they will build on going forward.

A key part of their activity has been working with schools as future generations have a key role to play in ensuring our communities are flood resilient – the team has worked with around 5,500 school pupils this past year alone.

We all know just how devastating flooding can be for communities and there are actions people can take now will make all the difference to reducing the impact a flood can have.

We're still working hard to help communities understand their flood risk and sign up to receive free flood warnings, as well as helping residents develop community flood plans that detail the action each community or business can take to reduce the impact of flooding, and help them return to normal life as soon as possible should a flood happen.

To find out more about your local flood risk and sign up to the Flood Warning Service [online](#)

[Press release: Helping communities be](#)

flood resilient

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[News story: Reducing pine weevil damage in forests: apply for contracts](#)

[Forest Enterprise Scotland](#) has up to £150,000 for projects that look at ways

of reducing death among young forest trees due to pine weevil damage.

The best projects could then go on to receive a further £200,000 each to field test their ideas.

Address a significant pest to newly-planted trees

Large pine weevils predominately breed in the stumps and roots of felled conifers. The species is the most serious pest of young trees that are newly planted on sites where conifers previously provided the majority of tree cover.

Adult weevils lay their eggs on stumps, with the young emerging to feed on seedlings. They can damage and kill Scots pine, all conifers and many native broadleaved species. The financial impact to land managers is estimated to cost around £40 million a year.

There is also a growing challenge in controlling pine weevils due to the warming climate and changes in insecticide regulations.

This competition is supported by the [CAN DO Innovation Challenge Fund](#) and is funded under the SBRI programme (Small Business Research Initiative).

Help for young forests to establish

We are looking for innovative and cost-effective ways to establish young trees in Scotland by reducing death caused by pine weevil damage.

Projects could look at:

- predicting the severity of weevil damage in advance
- protecting young planted trees
- rapidly reducing the damage being caused by high populations of weevil
- suppressing the population of weevil in the longer term and wider landscape

These must comply with the [UK Forestry Standard](#).

The first phase of the competition is to demonstrate the technical feasibility of an idea and its potential to improve the establishment of forests through pine weevil reduction. The second phase will allow successful projects to prototype and field test their ideas.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 10 September 2018, and the deadline for registration is at midday on 31 October 2018
- any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea can apply
- we expect phase 1 contracts to be worth up to £30,000 and to last up to 5 months, and phase 2 contracts to be worth up to £200,000 and last up to 22 months

- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
 - you can register for a [briefing event](#) on 15 October 2018 to find out more about the competition and how to make a quality application
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[News story: National Apprenticeship Week 2019 date announced](#)

This annual week-long celebration of apprenticeships will bring the whole apprenticeship community together to celebrate the impact of apprenticeships on individuals, employers and the economy.

Following the most successful National Apprenticeship Week ever that took place earlier this year, National Apprenticeship Week 2019 – which also coincides with National Careers Week – will look to involve more individuals, employers, partners and providers in activities that highlight the benefits apprenticeships bring to employers and the opportunities apprenticeships present to individuals.

National Apprenticeship Week 2018 was record-breaking: with 780 events taking place across England. The ambition of delivering a 10,000 talks movement – #10kTalks – to inspire the next generation of apprentices in schools across the country was exceeded, reaching over 33,500 people. Over 300 schools joined the 10,000 talks movement and a further 130 schools also hosted teacher-to-teacher talks – reaching an additional 2,300 individuals. The Big Assembly reached 20,000 people with a live video stream – showcasing apprentices and employers sharing their apprenticeships stories. Events also took place to celebrate International Women's Day, apprenticeships diversity and a launch event with the BBC and Sutton Trust included the announcement of a new ground-breaking apprenticeship programme.

Keith Smith, Apprenticeships Director, Education and Skills Funding Agency said:

National Apprenticeship Week is an important date in the academic calendar and I am delighted to announce the date for National Apprenticeship Week 2019.

The success of previous National Apprenticeship Weeks', especially during 2018, tells us that one week dedicated to celebrating, promoting and realising the importance of apprenticeships and their impact enables an apprenticeship movement across our sector. This movement sees employers, providers, partners and apprentices themselves grasp the opportunity and get involved in our celebration, creating fascinating events and opportunities to share

the many benefits apprenticeship bring.

More detail, including the theme, will be confirmed over coming months. I am hopeful that by sharing the date 6 months in advance of the week partners will start to plan some new and exciting activity that they will run during National Apprenticeship Week 2019.

More information on National Apprenticeship Week 2019 will be announced on GOV.UK and on social media channels. Follow @Apprenticeships on Twitter and National Apprenticeship Service on LinkedIn to keep up to date.

[News story: New logistics contract to help centralise delivery services for NHS trusts](#)

The contract with logistics provider Unipart Logistics cost £730 million and is for 5 years.

The Department of Health and Social Care anticipates the new supply chain will generate savings of £2.4 billion over a 5-year period.

Until recently, NHS trusts in England could negotiate their own contracts for products such as bandages, gloves and surgical equipment. This has meant that neighbouring hospitals have often paid different prices for products from the same supplier.

An example of this price variation includes the lowest priced 12-pack of rubber gloves costing 35p, while the highest priced cost £16.47.

The logistics contract for Unipart is the biggest of 13 new national contracts forming the new NHS Supply Chain and will start in early 2019.

Unipart's responsibilities will include:

- delivering medical devices and hospital consumables – other than medicine – to NHS trusts
- warehousing
- inventory management
- order processing and delivery

A home delivery service will make up around 10% of the contract, which will allow some patients to receive supplies and be cared for in their own home.

Health minister Steve Barclay said:

Our long-term plan will see billions of pounds invested into the NHS, but we have to make sure that every penny of this is spent as wisely and effectively as possible.

A modern health service shouldn't involve 234 separate trusts spending time and money negotiating different contracts and prices for the same thing. That's why our work to centralise how the NHS buys goods and services is crucial.

By streamlining the process and freeing trusts up from having to do this, we will save staff valuable time, save huge amounts of money and be able to reinvest the savings into patient care and frontline services.