

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

[Western Isles residents invited to sign up for new Coastal Flood Warning Service](#)

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is today (10 November) launching a new coastal flood warning service, funded by the Scottish Government, to provide local flood warnings to communities and businesses across the Western Isles.

- New service to provide local flood warnings for communities and businesses across the Western Isles
- Developed in partnership with SEPA and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the scheme covers 1000 homes and businesses directly at risk from coastal flooding and could also benefit the residents of nearly 7000 properties who could be affected by flooding during their travel or other activity
- Scheme builds on SEPA's commitment to support Scottish communities to prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding
- Residents and road users encouraged to sign up from today to receive free notification of flood warnings direct to their phones

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is today (10 November) launching a new coastal flood warning service, funded by the Scottish Government, to provide local flood warnings to communities and businesses across the Western Isles.

The new service, developed in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is locally focused and designed specifically for the most at risk coastal areas across the islands, complementing the existing regional flood alert for the Western Isles. It includes 24 Flood Warning Areas, 16 of which also provide notice of coastal flooding and disruption to roads and causeways. The Flood Warning Areas will cover 1000 properties directly at risk from coastal flooding and the residents of nearly 7000 homes and businesses who could be affected by flooding during their travel or other activity.

Lewis, Harris, Berneray, Benbecula, North and South Uist, Eriskay, Barra and Watersay will benefit from the new service which aims to help safeguard communities most at risk from coastal flooding.

Islanders are being advised to sign up to SEPA's Floodline service to receive these new local warnings in addition to receiving existing regional flood alerts – early advice that flooding whether from the sea, or from heavy rain or rivers is possible across the Western Isles. The new coastal flood warning service, supported by a new and dedicated forecasting model, will provide more locally specific shorter-range warnings on expected coastal flood impacts. People can sign up to receive one or more Flood Warnings, for example where they live, or along causeways they regularly cross.

Paul Copestake, Flood Advisor at SEPA said:

“With climate change expected to cause wetter winters, more intense rainfall in summer and sea level rise in Scotland, we are working in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to strengthen our flood warning services across the islands and help Scotland to prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding.

“Eilean Siar as an island community is vulnerable to the impacts of coastal flooding, and our new coastal flood forecasting model gives us more information than ever before about the potential flood risk and impacts caused by high tides, tidal surges, and wave overtopping.

“By signing up to SEPA's Floodline, residents will receive advance notice of where and when flooding is expected, enabling them to take action to prepare and ensure their safety.”

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 flood warning scheme in Eilean Siar. Early alerts of any forecasted flooding will help people living

in the area better prepare for and recover from a flood event. In 2020-21, the Scottish Government has made over £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.”

Chair of Transportation and Infrastructure, Councillor Uisdean Robertson said:

“Climate Change will likely increase the threat of Coastal flooding in the Western Isles. With this in mind, it is vital that all those at potential risk of damage to homes and businesses can receive accessible and up to date flood alert information and advice. The safety of our communities and resilience of our economy must be protected against such environmental threats. The Comhairle would like to join SEPA in urging as many people as possible to sign up to SEPA’s Floodline service at the link below.”

As Scotland’s national flood forecasting, flood warning and strategic flood risk management authority, SEPA’s role is to support communities to avoid flood risk where they can, adapt where they cannot and act when warned of flooding. Scotland’s first National Flood Risk Strategy identified the Outer Hebrides as a priority area for the development of a new Coastal Flood Warning Scheme.

Since January, Floodline, SEPA’s public flood forecasting and warning service, has issued more than 500 regional Flood Alerts and 540 local Flood Warnings to more than 32,000 customers nationwide. As well as issuing Flood Alerts and 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. By signing up to the service, customers can receive flood messages to their phone, and will be given advance notice when their area of interest is at risk of flooding giving them valuable time to prepare for the impacts.

Visit SEPA’s Floodline Scotland at <https://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/eileansiar> or call on 0345 988 1188.

If you wish to sign up to more than one Flood Warning Area, please email flooding@sepa.org.uk and we will be happy to help you.

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- 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.

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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.

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[New flood warning service for](#)

Aberfoyle community

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (10 November 2020) launched an innovative new flood warning service – which will warn the residents and road users of a flood-prone street in Aberfoyle when flooding impacts are likely.

Residents and road users encouraged to sign up to receive flood warnings

- The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has launched a new local service, providing early warning of flooding at a known trouble spot in Aberfoyle
- Lochard Road (B829) regularly floods cutting off access to Trossachs National Park and communities west of Aberfoyle; during the most severe events, properties in Aberfoyle can also be directly impacted
- The new service will see warning messages sent when Lochard Road is expected to flood and, if conditions worsen, to warn of potential impacts on nearby properties in Aberfoyle
- The residents of an estimated 640 properties could be impacted by flooding at Lochard Road, including residents in the immediate vicinity and road users
- Register for free and choose to receive notifications via phone call or text.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (10 November 2020) launched an innovative new flood warning service – which will warn the residents and road users of a flood-prone street in Aberfoyle when flooding impacts are likely.

A warning message will be issued when flooding is forecast to impact on Lochard Road, and then again to warn users if impacts on Aberfoyle Main Street and surrounding properties are likely. This new service, which is funded by the Scottish Government, is locally focused and designed specifically for the Aberfoyle area, complementing the existing wider geographical flood alert which already provides early notification of flooding in the Stirlingshire area.

The scheme builds on SEPA's commitment to support Scottish communities to prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding.

Lochard Road is a known problem spot, having endured flooding several times a year, including five severe flooding incidents affecting the main street and properties since 2015. Flooding from the Duchray Water and road surface water can make Lochard Road impassable to vehicles and block access to and from the local primary school. In some circumstances, properties can be flooded, the main route from Aberfoyle to Kinlochard can be obstructed, and Main Street can suffer impacts. 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.

The innovative technology deployed by SEPA to provide this new service includes a network of rain gauges and water level monitoring stations transmitting real time data to SEPA's central servers using satellite communication. The real time observed data are combined with forecast rainfall from the Met Office into a state-of-the-art forecasting system which can predict flooding a few hours in advance.

Residents and road users can register to this free service and can choose to receive a notification via phone call or text when flooding is forecast. The message will contain a link which people can follow to determine if the warning is for Lochard Road or extends to properties.

Gail Donald, Flood Adviser at SEPA, said: "We would encourage all of those in the affected area of Aberfoyle, and who travel to the area regularly, to sign up for our warnings for their safety and convenience.

"These warnings are there to help people prepare for flooding incidents and this new service will allow people to consider their travel plans and take appropriate action.

"Extreme weather and rising river levels will only become more common as a result of climate change, so it's vital that communities like Aberfoyle are supported to prepare more effectively for the impacts of flooding."

The scheme has been developed in partnership with Stirling Council, and has had the support of a number of partner organisations.

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 flood warning scheme in Aberfoyle. Early alerts of any forecasted flooding will help people living in the area 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."

Cllr Jim Thomson, Environment and Housing Convener at Stirling Council, added: "The delivery of this service is the product of a long-term close working partnership and has been made possible through a combination of advancing technology and information gathered over a long period by the

Council and community, and will bring much needed warning and preparation time for the communities.”

The Scottish Fire and Rescue service has allowed SEPA to install backup communications equipment in Aberfoyle Fire Station to help ensure the real time monitoring system is resilient, which is vital for the service.

SEPA has also worked with Trust for Conservation Volunteers to engage Aberfoyle Primary School children on a science project monitoring rainfall. While the school is currently closed for renovation, in future the flood warnings will enable the school and Local Authority to receive warnings and take any appropriate steps.

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 operate Floodline in Scotland to warn the public and emergency responders when flooding is likely.

The latest Flood Warning Service will extend SEPA’s current Floodline service which annually issues on average 300 regional Flood Alerts and 400 local Flood Warnings to more than 31,500 customers nationwide.

In addition to issuing regional Flood Alerts and local Flood Warnings, SEPA’s 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. Members of the public can sign up to Floodline to receive free Flood Warning messages direct to their phone, and can register more than one address: property, work or regular travel routes.

People can find out more and sign up at floodlinescotland.org.uk/aberfoyle

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Regulation of fish farms streamlined as authorisation for wellboat discharges transfers to SEPA

Regulation of marine fish farming wellboats has transferred to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) as part of a package to strengthen and streamline the regulation of the industry.

- SEPA takes on new powers to regulate chemical treatment residues from wellboats, to add to existing regulation of in-pen treatments.
- Transfer of powers streamlines regulation and makes it easier to ensure

combined discharges from fish farms and wellboats meet environmental standards.

- A high quality environment and abundant freshwater resources are vital to all of Scotland's communities and business – including the aquaculture sector.
- SEPA's role in the regulation of aquaculture is to protect the marine environment by ensuring that the aquaculture industry meets environmental standards.
- Fishfarm operators will be able to apply to SEPA from Monday 9 November for new authorisations – existing licenses will transfer on Monday 30 November.
- Change follows recommendations from the Independent Review of Aquaculture Consenting

Regulation of marine fish farming wellboats has transferred to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) as part of a package to strengthen and streamline the regulation of the industry.

New applications will be accepted by SEPA from Monday 9 November. Existing Marine Scotland licenses will transfer to SEPA on Monday 30 November.

Until now an operator would require a marine licence with Marine Scotland for discharges from wellboats, with a separate licence from SEPA for the same chemicals being used directly in fish farm cages. This dual regulation was considered unnecessarily complex and the 2016 Independent Review of Aquaculture Consenting recommended that the two be consolidated – this change marking the completion of this work.

Following two Scottish Parliamentary inquiries and SEPA's biggest ever public consultation, in 2019 the regulator introduced its Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan and a Revised Regulatory Regime. Both were clear in their aspirations for a sector which recognises that protecting the environment is fundamental to its success and foremost in all its plans and operations.

A high quality environment and abundant freshwater resources are vital to all of Scotland's communities and business – including the aquaculture sector. SEPA's role in the regulation of aquaculture is to protect the marine environment by ensuring that the aquaculture industry meets environmental standards.

By regulating discharges from both wellboats and in cage treatments, SEPA will be able to more simply and easily ensure that any combined discharge meets environmental standards, even when operators wish to treat parts of their stock using different methods on the same day.

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of SEPA, said:

“Bringing control of all medicine discharges under SEPA's regulatory role is a positive step that will simplify the operation of discharge controls by enabling us to provide farms with a single, outcome-focused permit for all their discharges.

“This change makes regulatory responsibilities clearer and the transfer from Marine Scotland to ourselves will allow us to respond directly to any concerns raised about the operation of wellboats at finfish farms.

“We have also discussed the proposed transfer with representatives of the sector who have indicated that they would like to work with us to explore opportunities for strengthened approaches to demonstrating and checking compliance for any such discharges – and for innovation, such as investment in medicine residue capture and treatment.”

SEPA regulates discharges from finfish farms by issuing permits that limit the levels of pollutants that they discharge to the water environment. During 2021, SEPA plans to transfer all existing marine finfish farms on to the new Marine Pen Regulatory Framework. This will involve replace existing current permits with a new finfish farm permit.

Farms with an existing permission to discharge bath treatment medicine residues will have a permit that provides the option to make the discharge directly from the pens or via a wellboat at the farm. The current limits on the quantity of medicine residues that can be discharged, including via a combination of discharges from wellboat and pen, will not change. Once the new permit is in place, a separate wellboat permit will no longer be required and will be revoked.

Where an existing CAR licence does not currently authorise discharge of chemical residues, an application to vary the permit would be required.

In addition to strengthening SEPA’s own regulatory regime the organisation continues to work closely with Marine Scotland’s licencing team.

ENDS

Notes to editors

[Radioactivity in the environment report shows impact of radioactive discharges to be well within dose limits](#)

The latest Radioactivity in Food and the Environment Report (RIFE 25) has been published today (5 November) and shows that levels and concentrations of man-made radioactivity measured in the environment during 2019 were low and impact to those most exposed is well within international dose limits.

- Radioactivity in Food and the Environment Report published for 25 years
- Total radiation dose to members of the public in Scotland significantly below annual dose limits
- Radioactive discharges account for 0.01% of average annual dose
- Exposure to man-made radioactivity in 2019 similar than 2018

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for radiological monitoring that is carried out in Scotland and has a duty to ensure that no member of the public receives a dose in excess of the statutory dose limit of one millisievert (1 mSv) per year from permitted discharges.

Monitoring shows that the highest dose for a member of the public in Scotland reported in RIFE was approximately 3% of the legal limit at 0.031 mSv. This compares to a UK average radiation exposure from all sources of 2.3mSv which is predominately due to natural background sources.

Radioactivity occurs naturally in the earth's crust and it can be found in the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. Exposure to man-made radioactivity includes medical procedures and treatments, and discharges from nuclear and non-nuclear establishments.

The RIFE programme monitors the environment and the diet of people who live or work near nuclear sites. The annual RIFE report is a joint publication between all six agencies across the UK responsible for ensuring that doses from authorised releases of radioactivity remain within strict international limits. It brings together all results from SEPA, the Environment Agency, Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Dr Paul Dale, Radioactive Substances Unit Manager at SEPA, said:

“Radioactivity in Food and the Environment has been an extremely important publication since its inception in 1995, giving the public oversight of monitoring and the impact of radioactive discharges on the public and the environment. The 25th RIFE Report again demonstrates that Scotland's public is adequately protected against man-made sources of radioactivity that could impact on our food and the wider natural environment.

“The results demonstrate SEPA has a robust regulatory oversight and that the impact of discharges from industry remain low. The well-structured monitoring and assessment programme that RIFE illustrates is a strong backstop to a robust process of regulation across the UK, and SEPA plays a vital role in that as Scotland's environment regulator.”

SEPA is currently working with researchers on this year's radiological habit surveys, ensuring that our monitoring programme targets the relevant locations and foodstuffs at the right frequency.

[RIFE 25](#) is available on SEPA's website.

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