

Press release: Flood scheme boost with £36m of funding

From Hull to Bath and Wolverhampton to the Wirral, communities up and down England are set to benefit from a government cash boost that will protect thousands of homes from flooding, enhance the environment and bolster economic growth and tourism.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has today (Tuesday, 27 March) announced that 25 new schemes will receive a share of £36 million announced in the Autumn Statement to improve flood protection.

One of the biggest beneficiaries is Hull, where £12 million will improve the defences along the River Hull to protect homes, businesses, infrastructure and areas of cultural importance within the city. The funding will support the second phase of the project which started in 2016 and has so far seen 39 sections of defence improved over a 7.5km stretch of river.

The main pier at Seahouses, Berwick-upon-Tweed, protecting 140 properties and the town's picturesque harbour, will be regenerated thanks to an extra £2.9 million.

Rivers will be restored and habitat improved in Gloucester, where £1.2 million will go to projects to protect 370 properties along the Sud Brook and River Twyer.

In Derby, more than £300,000 will help create new wetlands and flood reservoirs to not only protect 110 homes from flooding but also enhance biodiversity in residential areas.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This funding will benefit projects across the country from Hull to Gloucester, from Wolverhampton to the Wirral, that need an extra boost for flood defences to help our communities continue to prosper and grow in the future.

Not only will this investment make places more resilient against flooding, but it will help the local economy, enhance the natural environment and protect important areas of culture – whether it is the homes, businesses and cultural sites in Hull to the pier in Seahouses or the natural environment in Gloucester.

The government has worked with the Environment Agency to prioritise the areas that would get the most benefit – the schemes will not only protect an additional 3,000 properties from flooding but will contribute to wider

benefits for the community.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

In the face of challenges like a changing climate, rising sea levels and more severe weather, the Environment Agency is working hard to protect people, homes and businesses from flooding.

As with every project we undertake, we're also striving to improve our environment and this additional funding will not only help us build flood defences, but restore vital habitat and bring nature back to some of our urban communities.

The additional £36 million funding was initially set aside for new projects in the Autumn Budget. The £33.8 million funding allocated today will go towards 25 flood schemes over the next three years, in addition to the £2.2 million given to 13 projects in Cumbria and Devon at the end of last year.

In the Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced £76 million to be spent on flood and coastal defences – £36 million for new schemes and £40 million to boost local regeneration in deprived communities at high flood risk.

This brings the total investment in flood defence to £2.6 billion by 2021, when more than 1,500 flood defences will have been built to protect 300,000 homes up and down the country.

Over the past two years, the Environment Agency has completed more than 350 new flood schemes to protect 100,000 homes. In addition to building hard defences, it has improved its response by investing in new technology and equipment like temporary flood barriers, pumps and 6,500 trained staff across the country.

The Environment Agency's free flood warning system also reaches more than 1.2 million people to give them vital warning when flooding is expected. You can check your risk and sign up to receive warnings on [GOV.UK here](https://gov.uk) or by calling 0345 988 1188.

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 27) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Male
Age	33
Affected area involved	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Pending

“Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV),” a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP’s surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP’s [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization’s [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP’s [health advice on MERS](#).

[Layla Moran calls for Marriage Equality in Northern Ireland](#)

The Oxford West and Abingdon MP will sponsor Labour MP Conor McGinn’s Marriage (Same Sex Couples) (Northern Ireland) Bill in the House of Commons on Wednesday (28th March), along with Conservative MP Nick Herbert and the Green Party’s Caroline Lucas.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card

I am aware that the cost of travel for jobseekers who need to attend interviews, training or meetings at the Jobcentre can be worrying and I was pleased to learn from the Rail Delivery Group about the The Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card.

It is available to eligible people in England, Wales and Scotland who have been out of work for 12 weeks or longer and offers jobseekers a 50% discount on train fares as they travel to interviews, to the Jobcentre or to and from training, for up to three months at a time.

The card provides discounts of 50% on Anytime Day tickets, Off Peak Day tickets, and Season tickets up to three months in duration. The card is valid on all British train operator services and can be used to purchase tickets online, including National Rail Enquiries, at ticket machines and ticket offices.

To obtain the Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card and further information on eligibility you will need to apply at your nearest Jobcentre Plus branch.

Press release: More families helped to change their lives for the better

Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak has welcomed the progress made by the Troubled Families Programme over the past year to help families with multiple and complex problems improve their lives, to reform local services and to reduce pressure on the public purse.

The [second Troubled Families annual report](#) published today (27 March 2018) details how the programme is working with families as a whole to provide the stability and practical support they need to overcome complicated issues including 'worklessness', uncontrolled debt and truancy.

This programme of whole family working has achieved significant progress with:

- more than 90,000 families meeting the improvement goals agreed with

local services against each of the problems they need to overcome – up more than 48,000 on the previous year

- almost 14,000 of families where progress has been achieved, 1 or more adult has succeeded in moving into continuous employment – an increase of over 4,800 since last year
- reduced demand on children's social care services; the programme's focus on preventative services is starting to show positive results with families getting the type of help they most need, including reducing the number of cases that need to be escalated to children's social care

Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak said:

This report details the hard work that's been happening across the country over the past year to help families with a variety of challenging problems improve their lives, reduce their dependency on local services, and in doing so deliver better value for taxpayers.

Adults who were once far from the job market are now moving into work. Children are getting the right support they need and local leaders are encouraging and challenging all services working with children and their families to act early and offer whole family support, to stop their problems becoming worse.

Rather than responding to each problem, or single family member separately, assigned Troubled Families key workers champion working with the whole family. This means they receive support from coordinated services working together to identify and solve their problems as early as possible, rather than merely reacting to crises.

Since the current programme began in 2015, local authorities and their partners have worked with 289,809 eligible families. This compares with only 2,000 families who had received whole family support in England between January 2006 and March 2010.

In addition to working successfully with families struggling with a variety of chaotic issues in their lives, the report outlines how the programme is also driving real long-term change across local services including police, housing, social care and Jobcentres. Services and professionals are now better connected and working in partnership.

Rather than circling around families with multiple and separate assessments and appointments, local authorities are using the programme to work across organisational and cultural boundaries to achieve better lives for the families in need and produce savings for the public purse.

Following a review of the programme's funding model, the annual report also sets out how a new payment structure will be piloted in 11 selected local authorities, with upfront payments made to help support families and accelerate change across local services. This new 'Earned Autonomy' model builds on the existing Payments by Results system in which local authorities

are paid for each family who either achieves 'significant and sustained progress' or moves into continuous employment.

Case study

Staffordshire's local Troubled Families Programme has driven service reform and reduced demand on children's social care services. Since 2015, of the 891 families that have achieved continuous employment or significant and sustained progress through the Troubled Families Programme (up to 31 January 2018), 15 families – less than 2% – required further early help intervention and just 12 families – required any future children's social care intervention

Further information

This is the second annual report of the current Troubled Families Programme and meets the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's statutory duty to report annually on performance. See [Supporting disadvantaged families: annual report of the Troubled Families Programme 2017 to 2018](#).

The current Troubled Families Programme was rolled out in England in April 2015 and replaced the first programme which had been in place since 2012. The programme will continue support for disadvantaged families with complex problems and will work with up to 400,000 families by 2020.

The annual report confirms that the programme continues to reach families with complex and multiple problems. In the year before starting the programme, troubled families had the following characteristics compared to the general population:

- children were nearly 8 times more likely to be classified as a Child in Need
- adults were 7 times more likely to have a caution or conviction
- adults were 5 times more likely to be claiming benefits
- children were nearly 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school

In addition:

- over two fifths of troubled families had a family member with a mental health issue
- just under a quarter of troubled families had a family member affected by an incident of domestic abuse or violence

The 11 areas that will pilot the new Earned Autonomy funding model are: Barking and Dagenham, Brighton and Hove, Bristol, Camden, Cheshire West and Chester, Durham, Islington, Kent, Leeds, Liverpool and Staffordshire.

Office address and general enquiries

2 Marsham Street

London
SW1P 4DF

Contact form

<http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public
030 3444 0000

Media enquiries

Email

newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please use this number if you're a journalist wishing to speak to Press
Office
0303 444 1209

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