

Environment Agency gets ready for winter

The Field Team – which helps maintain flood defences assets such as embankments and debris screens and reduce flood risk – took part in incident response training last week.

It took place at the Environment Agency's multi-million pound Mitford Dam, Morpeth, and included temporary flood barrier deployment, high volume pump testing, which helps pump flood water away from homes, a sandbag wall exercise to support flood defences, testing of pollution equipment and equipment and vehicle checks.

Temporary barrier deployment training taking place at Morpeth.

Ready to take action this winter

Jamie Fletcher, Operations Manager at the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

We are ready to take action this winter wherever it is needed. We train all year round to make sure we are equipped to respond to incidents, but at this time of year with an increase in flood risk it's vital we make sure we are prepared.

The team tested a variety of the high tech equipment we use to support incident response and ensured they could complete all exercises with coronavirus guidance in mind, as the health and safety of our staff and the public is imperative.

The climate emergency means we cannot always prevent or build our way out of incidents. We are working with communities to support them to be resilient to incidents, which includes expanding flood warnings by 2022 to all at risk properties and helping homeowners and businesses build back better and recover more quickly after flooding with property resilience measures.

Throughout this year the Environment Agency has continued to build and maintain flood defences across the North East, including starting projects in Ponteland and Acomb in Northumberland, as well as flood schemes in Stokesley, Marton West Beck and Lustrum Beck in Teesside and supporting and funding projects in Whitley Bay and Chester-le-Street.

Investment in flooding has significantly increased in the last year with the government announcing that it would double its investment in flooding and coastal erosion to £5.2 billion over the next 6 years. An additional £170m is

also being spent on accelerating the construction of flood defence projects in 2020 and 2021, including in Ponteland and Hexham in Northumberland, and Team Valley in Gateshead.

Over 5 million homes are at risk of flooding in England alone and there are practical steps people can take to reduce the impact, including [signing up to flood warnings](#) and downloading our [‘What to do in a Flood’ plan](#).