

Environment Agency launches Flood Action Campaign 2020

Half of adults (49%) in England place more sentimental value on their homes this year compared to last year, but many people do not know that they may need to take action to protect their household memories from a flood.

According to new research commissioned for the Environment Agency's Flood Action Campaign, homes have taken on a multitude of new purposes over the past year – from workplaces (35%) and classrooms (13%) to hair salons (29%) and gyms (39%). They have also become the setting for important memories for many people, including milestone birthdays (19%), starting a new job (13%), marriage proposals (9%) and learning a new skill (15%).

The research, released to coincide with Flood Action Week (9th – 15th November), highlights how flood damage could have an even more devastating impact on victims than usual this winter.

The findings showed that one in eight (12%) people have no idea whether they live in a flood risk area, meaning millions could be at risk of being caught out by a flood. This makes it more important than ever for everyone to check their flood risk online, and for those in flood risk areas to follow the Environment Agency's 'Prepare. Act. Survive.' plan to safeguard their treasured homes and possessions.

Caroline Douglass, Director of Incident Management & Resilience at the Environment Agency said:

“Our new research shows that our homes are more important to us than ever before, meaning that the impact of a flood this winter could be even more devastating.

“While the Environment Agency is doing everything we can to prepare for the winter, the climate emergency means that we are experiencing more extreme wet weather than ever before.

“Just as they will be aware of Covid 19 restrictions, we're urging everyone to check whether they live in an area at risk from flooding and know the simple steps to remain prepared – such as moving possessions upstairs and preparing a grab bag with medicines and important documents. This will help reduce the damage and keep yourself and your family safe.”

As well as demonstrating how much people value the space they live in, the research also highlighted items which have the most sentimental value in their homes and could be lost forever in the event of a flood. Over a third (39%) have kept treasured items that had been given to them by a loved one no longer alive, with the most valued items including photos of loved ones (62%), sentimental jewellery (30%), keepsakes from children (29%) and sentimental ornaments (27%). To bring to life the impact a flood could have,

the Environment Agency has created [‘The Waterlogue’](#) – a new creative film showing flood damaged items and telling the impactful and sentimental story behind possessions that are lost forever.

The Environment Agency has adopted Covid-safe ways of working in helping to protect people from flooding and are calling for people to be prepared this winter. Simple steps should be taken, such as checking if you live on an area at high risk of flooding, preparing a bag with medication and important documents and moving valuable and sentimental items upstairs or to a safe place. A combination of these actions can reduce the damage caused by a flood by around 40%.