

[Press release: Event brings North East Flood Wardens together](#)

Teams of volunteer flood wardens across the North East are playing a vital role in helping protect their communities

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From Cleveland to Northumberland, there are groups of flood wardens in communities in the North East.

On Tuesday November 6, the Environment Agency hosted an event to say thank you, to bring groups together in one place and show how by working together they can be more resilient to flooding.

Flood wardens – from areas including Corbridge, Morpeth, North Tyneside and Croft-on-Tees – were also given a tour of the new state-of-the-art North East Area Incident Room, which opened a year ago, where it was explained to them the steps the Environment Agency takes during an incident.

Phil Taylor, the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience Team leader for the North East, hosted the event along with the four Flood Community Engagement Officers who work across the region to support communities in preparing for flooding. He said:

The event was really successful and was our chance to say thank you to them for taking the time out of their busy lives to support their communities in preparing for and during and after a flood.

By bringing the different flood warden groups together, they were able to share ideas about their community flood plan, and learn from each other's experiences. And it was an opportunity to talk about the work we are doing to recruit more wardens and set up new groups in communities at risk.

The local knowledge flood wardens can provide on the ground is invaluable. They complement our work by implementing their community action plans and offer a key point of contact for us to

be able to warn and inform.

Northumbrian Water also attended the event with some of their volunteer Water Rangers as the two organisations work together to understand how both sets of volunteers can join forces.

The Environment Agency's four Flood Community Engagement Officers – Taryn Al-mashgari for Tyne and Wear, Sarah Duffy for Cleveland, Anna Caygill for Durham and Darlington and Colin Hall for Northumberland – work together with local authorities to help communities understand the different types of flooding, whether they are at risk, and how to prepare in the event of a flood.

The Environment Agency is encouraging people to learn how to Prepare Act Survive in a flood to reduce the impacts of damage.

[Press release: New Northumberland flood scheme complete](#)

The Environment Agency and Port of Blyth have worked together to build a £600,000 flood wall to protect homes and businesses in Blyth.

[Press release: Body worn cameras to help fight fisheries and waste crimes](#)

East Midlands officers are now wearing body worn video cameras to aid prosecutions and as a deterrent to violence

[Press release: Body worn cameras to help fight fisheries and waste crimes](#)

Environment Agency enforcement teams in the East Midlands have adopted wearing body worn video cameras in their fight against crime following a

successful six-month trial of the practice in the North-East.

The trial in the North-East found that wearing the cameras helped to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, assaults and threats against Environment Agency staff.

Following a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections to waste sites, enforcement officers will be equipped with body worn video cameras on their visits. The cameras will also be used by fisheries enforcement officers during their routine activities.

Footage captured on a bodycam in the North-East was recently used by the Environment Agency for the first time to convict an offender. The defendant pleaded 'guilty' of wilfully obstructing the officers in the execution of their duty and using abusive behaviour towards two officers when he knew they had video evidence.

Pete Haslock, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency in the East Midlands, said:

The safety of our staff is paramount. They are well trained in dealing with hostile situations and we take any threat against them very seriously. Our preference is to prevent hostility in the first place and wearing the cameras can prevent threatening situations from escalating.

We want to get on with our jobs without the threat of violence and the cameras will help to protect staff and bring obstructive individuals to justice. Officers will switch on the cameras if and when they enter a hostile situation or where hostility may be anticipated. That could be a site where they have experienced aggressive behaviour in the past or an unknown quantity, such as on a remote river bank.

Studies also show that people are less likely to contest the evidence when they know their offence is captured on camera, which could help speed up justice and reduce legal costs.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities or to report illegal waste activity, should contact the Environment Agency's 24/7 Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.