

Flood Forecasting Centre: helping the nation prepare

News story

The Flood Forecasting Centre (FFC) issues guidance which enables authorities to prepare for flooding by using temporary flood barriers.



During February 2014, prolonged rainfall led to severe flooding across the country. The Environment Agency and regional authorities in Berkshire used portable temporary flood barriers to protect communities.

The barriers proved their worth. This led to the Environment Agency acquiring more of them for use in future flooding emergencies.

Rapid Deployment

The Environment Agency now has a national stock of one-metre-high barriers. They can be put in place extremely quickly, with a team of eight able to erect up to 100 metres in one hour.

The barriers are held in depots across the country, within easy reach of communities prone to flooding.

Daily Flood Guidance Statements from the FFC allow barriers and human resources to be deployed in the right places around the country.

Vulnerable sites have an activation plan, which includes information on:

- the equipment, vehicles and number of people needed
- instructions on how to erect the barriers
- triggers for responses – for example, an amber warning in the Flood Guidance Statement
- the stages of deployment – such as moving the barriers nearby, delivering to the site and then erecting them

Engaging with communities

As the barriers can cause disruption, the Environment Agency works hard to establish local links and engage communities.

Despite the challenges to deployment and the chance of false alarms, the barriers play a vital role in reducing flood risk.

Without them, flood responders would have fewer options to protect communities.

Published 3 May 2022