

[Press release: Helping north east communities be flood resilient](#)

The Environment Agency has appointed a new team of engagement officers to help communities be more resilient to flooding in the North East.

The £280,000 a year project includes four new engagement officers spread across four areas – Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Darlington, and Cleveland.

Funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) for the next four years, the officers are working alongside partner organisations to help support communities.

It includes helping businesses and residents to understand their risk of flooding and ensuring those in flood risk areas are signed up to receive free flood warnings.

They're also helping communities prepare themselves for flooding, such as supporting them to develop community flood plans and recruit volunteer Flood Wardens in at risk communities.

The Community Engagement Officers are working on behalf of the Environment Agency and local authority partners.

As well as supporting residents and businesses, working alongside schools will play a key role in helping future generations understand their risk.

Direct support for communities

Phil Taylor, from the Environment Agency's Flood Resilience Team in the North East, said:

We've seen over the last few years alone just how devastating flooding can be for communities, so it's positive news that Northumbria RFCC has agreed to fund these dedicated officers to provide direct support to communities.

In areas where the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning Service is available the officers will be working to increase sign up to the service.

They'll also be helping develop community flood plans that will detail the action each community or business can take to reduce the impact of flooding, and help them return to normal life as soon as possible should a flood happen.

And working with schools and youth groups means children can be educated about what it means to be flood resilient and ensure the

messages delivered through the project have long-term impact in flood risk areas for years to come.

To find out more about your local flood risk and sign up to the Flood Warning Service Visit [the gov.uk web pages](#)

Durham & Darlington

Anna Caygill is the new Durham & Darlington Community Engagement Officer. Anna is working on behalf of the Environment Agency and the Durham & Darlington Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to increase flood resilience in areas at risk of flooding.

There are over 4,000 properties at risk from fluvial flooding across Durham & Darlington's constituencies, however fewer than 54% of properties are signed up to receive alerts and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available.

There are also approximately 10,000 properties at risk from surface water flooding which can occur rapidly without warning. Anna said:

I'd like to hear about all of the local flooding issues in Durham & Darlington and work with the local community to see if they can put actions in place to make themselves more resilient.

Previous work has already led to Community Flood Plans being established in areas like Lanchester, Chester-le-Street, Hurworth, and Neasham and I'm hoping to help other communities put similar measures in place while continuing to support the existing volunteers.

You can contact Anna at anna.caygill@environment-agency.gov.uk or 07867 372639.

Cleveland

Sarah Pearce is the new Community Engagement Officer for Cleveland. Sarah is working on behalf of the Environment Agency and the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU) to increase flood resilience in areas at risk of flooding. Due to its location, areas of Cleveland are affected by flooding from a number of sources including coastal, river (fluvial) and surface water.

In Hartlepool 900 properties are considered to be at risk of surface water flooding, and in Middlesbrough 2,300 are considered to be at risk.

Across the four Cleveland local authority areas, there are over 6,000 properties at risk from fluvial flooding, however sign up to receive alerts

and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available is low, for example 11% in Redcar, 13% in Stockton, and just 3% on Hartlepool Headland. One of Sarah's aims is to increase take up of the Flood Warning service. Sarah said:

Previous work across Cleveland has led to Community Flood Warden groups being set up in communities such as Skinningrove, where a flood plan has been developed to support the community in responding to flood events.

I want to help other areas set up new groups and community plans in response to flooding, as well as supporting existing groups. I'd also like to look at the potential to appoint Flood Champions in at risk communities.

You can contact Sarah at sarah.pearce@environment-agency.gov.uk or 07867 441 697.

Northumberland

Emma Craig is the new Community Engagement Officer in Northumberland. Emma is working on behalf of the Environment Agency and Northumberland County Council to increase flood resilience in areas at risk of flooding.

Over 300 properties were flooded in Storm Desmond in 2015 but there are over 3,000 properties at risk of fluvial flooding in the county. Sign up to receive alerts and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available is around 60%.

There are also around 17,000 properties at risk from surface water flooding. Emma said:

Many communities in Northumberland have created plans and taken action to make themselves more resilient after experiencing significant flooding during Storm Desmond.

I'll be continuing to work in the communities which were affected as well as other areas in Northumberland that remain at risk of flooding.

You can contact Emma at emma.craig@environment-agency.gov.uk or 0208 474 9845.

Tyne & Wear

Taryn Al-mashgari is the new Community Engagement Officer in Tyne & Wear. Taryn is working on behalf of the Environment Agency, Newcastle City Council,

Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council, North Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council in communities at risk of flooding from all sources. Taryn will help communities, businesses, and schools to develop plans which will reduce the impact of a flood.

Over five years ago many communities in the Tyne & Wear region experienced serious flooding during 'Thunder Thursday'. Surface water flooding such as this can happen with very little warning so Taryn will be aiming to get communities to take action and prepare for flooding now.

As an example, there are more than 2,800 properties at risk from surface water flooding in Sunderland and 4,100 In South Tyneside, and 1,800 in Gateshead, as well as 1,500 in Newcastle.

There are around 600 properties at risk of fluvial flooding in Tyne & Wear.

Sign up to receive alerts and warnings in areas where the free Flood Warning Service is available in Tyne & Wear is around 14%. Taryn said:

Previous work in Tyne and Wear has developed some good practice. For example a network of flood volunteers in North Tyneside provide local information to the council during periods of bad weather which helps the council direct their emergency response resources. In Gateshead a Community Flood Plan has been developed for an area prone to flooding.

I'll be hoping to replicate this sort of community activity across other areas while continuing to support existing volunteers.

You can contact Taryn at taryn.al-mashgari@environment-agency.gov.uk or 0208 474 9842.

[News story: Highways England chairman reappointed](#)

Highways England is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving more than 4,300 miles of motorways and main trunk roads throughout England and is currently delivering the Government's £15bn Road Investment Strategy.

Colin said:

Over the past three years, Highways England has concentrated on safety, customer service and delivering the Government's first five-year Road Investment Strategy. We have made good progress, and

much remains to be done in the second half of the period. We are already preparing for the second five-year investment period, fully aligned with the Government's aims for our roads to be safer, smoother, and more sustainable by 2040 for the 4 million drivers who use them each day.

Colin was first appointed chairman of Highways England in December 2014, having previously served as chairman of the company's predecessor, the Highways Agency since July 2014. Prior to that he was chief executive officer of Heathrow Airport Holdings, formerly BAA. His career also saw him serve as Chief Executive of Severn Trent Water PLC and of Hays PLC; Managing Director of Transco Ltd and Engineering Director of British Airways PLC.

He holds a MA in engineering, an MBA and is a Chartered Engineer. He is also Non-Executive Chairman at Renewi PLC with effect from 1 April 2016 and Non-Executive Director at Johnson Matthey PLC.

Colin, who has been reappointed for three years, will continue to be paid £130,000 for a minimum of 78 days' work per annum. The remuneration for Colin's role, and that of other non-executive and senior executive posts, are published within the Highways England's annual report each year.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: World's longest coastal footpath one step closer](#)

Tourists from around the globe will soon be able to step foot on the longest coastal walking route in the world as work is officially underway along every stretch of the [England Coast Path](#).

Natural England is now working on 100 per cent of this 2,700 mile walking route, which when completed will allow people to explore new and improved routes along the entire length of the English coastline – taking in iconic sights like the White Cliffs of Dover, the beaches of Norfolk and the picturesque North Yorkshire coast.

England's spectacular coastline already attracts 300 million visits a year, with people spending up to three times more than at any other holiday destination.

And with the South West stretch already worth £400 million to the economy, by offering new and improved access to some of the country's best tourist hot spots, the England Coast Path will bring a huge boost to tourism – an industry already worth £106 billion.

Rural Affairs Minister Lord Gardiner said:

We have some of the most spectacular coastland in the world, with iconic sites such as the White Cliffs at Dover and the picturesque beaches at Whitby attracting millions of tourists and walkers every year.

The England Coast Path is a hugely significant project – helping people across the country to access our stunning coastline and providing a significant boost to the economy of our coastal communities.

By working closely with landowners, farmers and local communities, we are well on track to creating the world's longest coastal path by 2020.

Natural England's Chairman Andrew Sells added:

We are now working on all sections of our beautiful and varied coastline so the ability to walk the longest, continuous coastal walking route in the world is on the horizon.

I'm extremely proud of the strides we have taken to reach this point. We will continue to work closely with landowners, communities and local authorities to create the best possible route, to bring more people closer to nature, and benefit local economies.

So far Natural England has opened just over 300 miles of coastline, helping thousands of people access some of England's most spectacular coastal scenery.

The new routes link up the best existing coastal paths, create new ones where there were none before, and in some cases move paths nearer the sea so walkers have a better opportunity to properly enjoy the country's coastal views and beaches.

Most recently, routes have opened in [North Yorkshire](#) and [Norfolk](#), with further stretches set to open in Kent, the north east and Cumbria over the coming months.

[News story: Midland Metro extension gets £59.8 million green light from government](#)

A key metro extension linking Birmingham city centre with Edgbaston and the city's growing Westside area has been given the go-ahead thanks to a multi-million pound funding pledge from the Department for Transport.

Five new stops will be served by up to 10 trams an hour at peak when the 2 kilometre extension of the Midland Metro, from Grand Central, outside Birmingham New Street station, to Edgbaston opens in March 2021.

The £59.8 million boost from the Department for Transport completes the total £149 million funding for the project, with another £84 million having already been raised locally through the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Birmingham City Council, Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership and others.

On a visit to see the route of the new extension yesterday (Thursday 31 August 2017), Transport Minister Paul Maynard also met with Cllr Bob Sleigh OBE, Deputy West Midlands Mayor and Laura Shoaf, Managing Director of Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM), part of the WMCA.

Mr Maynard said:

Midland Metro is already a success story, with passenger journeys up nearly a third this year compared to last year. This new extension will be a further boost to Birmingham businesses, and make travelling to work easier for commuters.

But just as importantly, it will help ease the pressure on the roads as it will provide an alternative for getting in and out of the city centre. This is a vital project and one which we are delighted to be able to support.

Cllr Sleigh said:

We are delighted that government funding is now in place to help get the Midland Metro extension to Edgbaston built. The metro is a real success story for this region and that will continue as new routes are rolled out over the next few years across Birmingham and the Black Country.

It is not just these areas that will benefit though as the Metro is key to the WMCA's vision for strategic growth and regeneration across the West Midlands, bringing huge benefits to everyone who

lives and works here.

The extension will see new stops at the Town Hall, Centenary Square, Brindley Place, and at 2 further stations either side of the Five Ways roundabout in Edgbaston. The new route will also offer a direct metro link to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, the International Convention Centre and Symphony Hall.

Preliminary groundworks started in the summer but now final funding for the scheme has been secured from central government, major project works could be set to get underway within weeks.

To limit the impact on Birmingham's historic city centre and iconic buildings, parts of the route will be built without overhead lines. When this happens, hi-tech batteries fitted to the trams will mean they can run on their own power.

Press release: International Trade Secretary showcases the best of British business in Japan

Accompanying a diverse business delegation showcasing the strength of British business and sectors including financial services, life sciences, defence and cyber, Dr Liam Fox hailed the visit as a vital opportunity for British businesses to further engage with Japanese buyers and investors and encourage inward investment back into the UK.

The International Trade Secretary also met with the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Hiroshige Seko to discuss the potential for future growth as we leave the EU through a new trade and investment working group, and the agreement that the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) will form the basis of our future bilateral trade relationship.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

As an international economic department, it's important that we're building upon our already strong trade relationships with global partners like Japan as we leave the EU, and it is our intention that we will lay the ground for an ambitious trade deal based on the EU-Japan agreement.

The UK is world-renowned for our innovation and expertise across a range of sectors including financial services and life sciences,

and we must seize the many commercial opportunities and partnerships ahead of us.

Leading the UK business delegation to engage with Japanese buyers and investors is a key part of showcasing what the UK offers the world now and as we leave the EU, and every penny of investment secured boosts local economies and creates new jobs back in the UK.

Following the UK-Japan Business Forum attended by over 200 CEOs of British and Japanese companies, DIT and JETRO (Japan External Trade Organisation) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) outlining practical ways of support to help UK and Japanese businesses. This includes running joint events and promotion in sectors where the UK is looking to attract Japanese investment, such as renewable energy and pharmaceuticals, and where the UK is looking to trade with Japan, such as defence and security and fintech.

A MoC was also signed with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation to support energy infrastructure investment from Japan into the UK.

As part of the visit, the International Trade Secretary also welcomed over £519 million worth of commercial deals secured by UK companies, creating 186 new jobs in the UK.

This includes a £500 million export and investment package by Aston Martin comprising of:

- exports from its UK Gaydon and St Athan plants to Japan
- investments in a new headquarters in Tokyo
- further growth of its dealer network across Japan

British life sciences company Heptares and Japanese corporation Sosei also announced today a pioneering industry-academia collaboration with the prestigious Juntendo University in Tokyo to design new therapies for hard-to-heal wounds (such as diabetic foot and pressure ulcers).

After reaching \$1 billion of transactions, London based fintech cryptocurrency firm WIREX, announced the opening of a new Asian headquarters this week in Tokyo. The move, which will also create 30 new jobs back in the UK, showcases the strength of the UK fintech sector, creating demand through exporting expertise around the world.

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