

Calder Valley flood warning sirens put to the test

The sirens will be sounded at 1pm on Thursday 30 September in Walsden, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Mytholmroyd.

Each siren test will last for two minutes. Residents and businesses do not need to take any action when hearing the sirens at these times. Loud hailer vehicles will be used to alert people to the tests, ahead of the sirens being sounded.

Graham Lindsey, flood resilience team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

The testing of the sirens is part of our work with partners to ensure that we are fully prepared to take action this winter wherever it is needed.

It is important that we test the audibility of sirens to check that they can be heard as widely as possible. The sirens provide a useful way of quickly alerting the communities at risk in the upper valley, an area where we know that flooding can occur extremely quickly.

Although no action needs to be taken during the test, if you hear the sirens at any other time, please be aware that this means that flooding is expected from the local rivers.

With an audibility level similar to that used by emergency vehicles, the Environment Agency uses the sirens to warn people of possible imminent flooding from the River Calder that runs through the valley.

There are a total of eight flood warning sirens across the Upper Calder Valley. There are four sirens in Todmorden which are sited at the fire station, the high school, Morrisons and Weir Minerals. There is also a siren at Walsden, two in Hebden Bridge, one in Mytholmroyd and a community siren in Sowerby Bridge.

While a lot of work continues to be done to address flooding in the Calder Valley, with the completion of defences at Mytholmroyd and the start of construction of defences in Hebden Bridge, these schemes will reduce rather than eliminate the likelihood of flooding, so it is important that people are prepared.

All residents and businesses in the Calder Valley are encouraged to sign up to the Environment Agency's flood warning service, which gives advanced notification of flooding via phone, text and email. It is the principal way that flood warnings are issued, and those who sign up can manage their registrations online so that they can receive warnings wherever they are.

To register for the Environment Agency's flood warning service visit <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> or contact Floodline on tel: 0345 988 1188.

For the latest information on current flood warnings and the local weather forecast, Calderdale residents can visit the 'Eye on Calderdale' website – www.eyeoncalderdale.com or following @EnvAgencyYNE and @Calderdale on Twitter.

[Media Freedom Coalition Diplomatic Network in Cameroon](#)

World news story

The Media Freedom Coalition Diplomatic Network is a platform for the coordination of joint diplomatic action to shine a global spotlight on media freedom.



UK Government

The UK and Canada co-hosted the first meeting of the Media Freedom Coalition Diplomatic Network (MFCDN) in Cameroon. The Media Freedom Coalition was

formed in July 2019 at the [Global Conference for Media Freedom](#) and is a partnership of countries working together to advocate for media freedom and safety of journalists and hold to account those who harm journalists for doing their job.

The coalition currently has 47 members, including, from Africa:

- Botswana
- Ghana
- Seychelles
- Sudan

The maiden meeting held in Yaounde on Tuesday, 28 September 2021 was an opportunity for coalition members in Cameroon to identify priorities and agree on possible joint actions to promote media freedom.

The British High Commissioner to Cameroon, Dr Christian Dennys-McClure said:

The ability of journalists to report freely on matters of public interest is a crucial indicator of democracy. When media freedom is restricted, these vital functions break down, impacting on decision-making for leaders and citizens alike.

On World Day for Universal Access to Information, the Media Freedom Coalition in Cameroon is highlighting the importance of expanding access to information laws, and their implementation to build back strong institutions for sustainable development.

The Canadian High Commissioner to Cameroon, Richard Bale said:

It is critical in all countries to support the freedom and independence of journalists – whether they be working in print, audio-visual or increasingly through social media – to inform, enquire, report accurately and hold to account decision-makers in both the public and private sectors.

This is an essential strand in the complex fibre of democracy, and the 47 member countries of the Media Freedom Coalition – including those from Africa – have committed to work to these ends.

Further information

The Media Freedom Coalition was formed in July 2019 at the Global Conference for Media Freedom and is a partnership of countries working together to advocate for media freedom and safety of journalists and hold to account those who harm journalists for doing their job. The Coalition's raison d'être is to defend media freedom where it is under threat.

For more information, contact:

[UK and Japan begin talks on deeper Defence relationship](#)

News story

The UK and Japan have agreed to commence formal negotiations on a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) to deepen the defence relationship between the two countries.



Japan is a vital and like-minded partner for the UK in the Indo Pacific region. This Agreement, when concluded, will help enable the two countries and their militaries to work together to address global security challenges and counter shared threats.

Importantly, it matches the UK's strategic shift in effort and resource to the Indo Pacific, as set out in the Integrated Review in March. These talks will bring that commitment into reality and send a clear signal about the UK and Japan's determination to deepen bilateral defence cooperation and support for the rules-based international order.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

"Japan is Britain's close security partner in Asia, with shared values and common strategic interests. This sends a clear signal about our determination to deepen bilateral defence cooperation, and the UK's commitment to the Indo Pacific region."

The aim is to create the conditions for a deeper, more regular and complex defence engagement programme, setting out the terms and conditions for UK and Japanese personnel undertaking activity in one another's countries which makes bi-lateral activities like training and joint exercises easier and quicker to facilitate – consequently feeding into a more regular programme of

events.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

“Deepening defence ties with Japan is an important part of our commitment to ensuring an open and secure Indo-Pacific and a clear demonstration of Global Britain in action.

“Our two island democracies believe in the same fundamental freedoms and a strong economic and security partnership with Japan is crucial to Britain’s long-term interests.”

The commencement of talks comes soon after the UK’s Carrier Strike Group visited Japan, in a sign of our firm commitment to supporting shared security challenges in the region.

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[Ambassador to witness preparations of the historic local elections](#)

The British Ambassador to Somalia, Kate Foster, today (Tuesday, 28 September 2021) visited Garowe ahead of the planned local elections in October, to underline the importance of the elections to the wider democratisation process in Puntland.

In her first visit to Puntland since her appointment, Ambassador Foster met with President Said Abdullahi Deni, where they discussed progress towards the One Person One Vote (OPOV) election as well as wider UK support to the region. Ms Foster also met with officials of the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC), congratulating them on the progress of the planned local elections.

On Federal elections, Ambassador Foster called for Somali leaders to work together and move forward to deliver on their commitments to hold credible national elections on time and in accordance with the 27 May Agreement. Puntland State will hold its first OPOV local elections in October 2021.

The pilot elections in the three districts of Qardho, Eyl and Ufayn will be an opportunity to test the viability of the electoral model ahead of state-wide local governance elections expected to take place in early 2022.

Speaking during the visit, British Ambassador to Somalia, Kate Foster, said:

I’m delighted to be here in Puntland State, my first visit as

British Ambassador. It's a pleasure to discuss our support here, the strong progress towards elections in Puntland, and to meet the Transitional Puntland Election Commission (TPEC) and civil society.

The upcoming local elections in Puntland are of historic significance. If completed successfully, they will demonstrate that One Person One Vote elections are possible in Somalia. The pace of voter registration indicates that people want to have a more direct say in selection of individuals and associations that represent them

I want to congratulate the Puntland State Government, and the Transitional Puntland Election Commission on the strong progress that's been made, with UK and international community support.

As we head into the Lower House elections, stakeholders have a responsibility and an opportunity to ensure there is a conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections. Strong civil society engagement in the process is crucial.

During the visit, Ms Foster also welcome President Deni's continued commitment to supporting the timely implementation of the federal electoral process and his willingness to work with actors across the political spectrum in seeking a resolution of the current dispute between President Farmajo and Prime Minister Roble.

She also discussed wider support to Puntland. The UK is supporting 18 communities to build their capacity to conflict and climate-related shocks and stresses through the Building Resilient Communities in Somalia programme.

The UK is also supporting 45 health facilities in Puntland, providing emergency humanitarian assistance, particularly during COVID-19.

In addition to meeting with President Deni, Ms Foster also held meetings with representatives of the civil society and political parties, reiterating the continued importance of strong civil society engagement in the political process, both in terms of election observation and civic engagement.

[PM meeting with representatives of](#)

Bereaved Families 4 Justice: 28 September 2021

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with representatives of Bereaved Families 4 Justice.



The Prime Minister met with Jo Goodman, Hannah Brady, Fran Hall, Charlie Williams and Lobby Akinnola from Bereaved Families 4 Justice. He thanked them for their powerful and painful accounts of how they lost their loved ones to COVID.

The Prime Minister said he would ensure that the public inquiry would get to the bottom of many of the questions that they, and thousands of others like them, have about the pandemic. He said it was critical to learn lessons and understand what happened in detail.

The Prime Minister gave a commitment that the chair of the inquiry would be appointed by Christmas. He set out that for now it is right that public servants continue to focus their efforts on tackling the pandemic before moving on to the inquiry in the spring of next year.

He welcomed the opportunity to hear from Bereaved Families 4 Justice on the areas they would like the inquiry to cover and the importance of choosing the right Chair and panel members, and reiterated that he takes full responsibility for the government's handling of the pandemic.

The Prime Minister welcomed the suggestion that the inquiry should hold hearings in different parts of the country.

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