

# New volunteers needed for English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

- Call for talented individuals to help communities become more resilient to climate change
- Committee works to decide local priorities for flood risk management
- Work supports Environment Agency and local authorities in creating local partnerships to tackle flood risk

These voluntary roles make a real difference to people's lives, livelihoods and to the environment we live in. Being an RFCC member is an exciting opportunity to guide local flood risk investment. While not a paid role, reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be covered.

The ESW RFCC is one of 12 statutory committees across the country that make key decisions on local priorities for flood and coastal risk management. As we embark on the next 6-year period of investment to reduce the risk to 336,000 properties across England, it is an exciting time to be joining the committee.

We would love to welcome talented and enthusiastic individuals from all backgrounds to join this important committee, to represent the diversity of communities and interests from across the catchments we serve.

This committee helps to manage flood risk throughout the Severn and Wye catchments across 8 counties, as follows: Coventry, Dudley, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

The committee is fundamental in deciding local priorities for flood risk management, approving programmes of work, and to support the Environment Agency and local authorities in creating local partnerships to fund and deliver projects, while ensuring resilience and adaptation to the impacts of climate change are embedded throughout.

A key role will be ensuring the aims of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy are embodied within the committee's decisions and to ensure consistency between strategic and local plans.

Shirel Stedman, Chair of English Severn and Wye RFCC, said:

Flooding and the increasing extreme weather conditions are evidently linked to the climate change crisis.

We know that vulnerable communities, who are already the most susceptible to any threats of climate conditions and flooding are likely to be worst affected.

Joining the RFCC as an independent member will give you an exceptional opportunity to influence and support the local investment to combat those challenges

## **Vacancies**

We are recruiting for 2 members to join the committee in 2022. This recruitment is to fill further vacancies following a campaign earlier this year for 4 committee members.

Applications are welcome from individuals with an active interest in flood risk management and from a diverse range of backgrounds, with additional interest or experience in one or more of the following:

- Catchment-based approaches – ensuring a holistic approach to risk management and environmental protection, for our current and future communities
- Land use/blue-green-grey infrastructure
- Climate change and resilience
- Coastal flood risk

## **Volunteers' time commitment**

The committee meets 4 times a year, usually at locations within the Severn and Wye catchments. Any work you do around the main meetings can be flexible to your own commitments. You will be given at least 6 months' notice of quarterly meeting dates and times.

Interviews are planned for early July and the successful candidate will have the opportunity to join the 19 July 2022 RFCC meeting if they are available.

## **Role and how to apply**

Typically, members are expected to read papers, join sub-groups if interested, and engage with Environment Agency colleagues and other committee members. You do not need formal qualifications for this post, but your enthusiasm and commitment to your local community will be important. These are unpaid roles but reasonable expenses, including travel, can be claimed. For further information please contact the Environment Agency at [ESWRFCC@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:ESWRFCC@environment-agency.gov.uk) or 0203 0251656.

**Further information can be found on:**

[www.gov.uk/government/groups/english-severn-and-wye-regional-flood-and-coastal-committee](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/english-severn-and-wye-regional-flood-and-coastal-committee)

The closing date for applications is midnight on Monday 20 June 2022.

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# Belgium's largest ever trade delegation travels to the UK

The 3 day event, from 9 to 12 May, was attended by the British Embassy Brussels and Belgium's Economic Mission to the United Kingdom, led by Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid.

Belgium's Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the economic mission to the UK as "one of the most important ever organised". The UK is Belgium's largest non-EU trading partner and among the top 5 investors in Belgium. In 2021 Belgium was the seventh largest buyer of UK goods, and the sixth largest supplier of goods to the UK.

Over 400 participants and 214 companies and organisations (including sector federations, universities and chambers of commerce) were on the trade delegation. These included:

- Federal Energy Minister: Tinne Van der Straeten
- Walloon Minister for the Economy and Foreign Trade: Willy Borsus
- Flemish Minister-President: Jan Jambon
- Flemish Minister for the Economy: Hilde Crevits
- Brussels Secretary of State for Foreign Trade: Pascal Smet

Minister for Europe and North America James Cleverly received the delegation. Bilateral meetings were held between the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Kwasi Kwarteng and Federal Energy Minister Tinne Van der Straeten, and Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change Greg Hands and the Minister-President of Flanders Jan Jambon.

These meetings and the signing of a partnership agreement between Agoria, Belgium's technology federation, and the UK's Energy Industry Council underline the importance of energy as a key driver for UK-Belgium cooperation and follow on from the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Energy in February 2022.

Secretary of State for International Trade Penny Mordaunt met the Belgian business community at a lunch organised by the Federation of Belgian Businesses (FEB-VBO) and the Confederation of British Industry.

Nine other Memoranda of Understanding were signed and 2 major Belgian investments in the UK inaugurated – an integrated waste-to-energy site for the Indaver company in Rivenhall, and the construction of a brand-new research and development facility for the Belgian pharmaceutical company UCB in Windlesham.

In addition to strong and vibrant economic and business relations, the UK and Belgium share common values and close historical ties. Princess Anne and Princess Astrid laid a wreath at the Edith Cavell Monument in London in tribute to the British nurse who pioneered the development of healthcare in

Belgium.

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## [Call for project bids to support psychological and traumatic medical work in Ukraine in 2022 to 2023](#)

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the UK is seeking to provide support to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine (U-MOD) to help those who have served and are suffering from conflict-related trauma (psychological and physical).

The invasion of Ukraine's sovereign territory by the Russian Federation led to a substantial increase in the number of those serving their country in combat and combat-support roles. This has led to greater pressure on the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) specifically to support an increased number of troops, including those with limited military connections, backgrounds, and experience. The Special Defence Advisory Team is looking for a partner who can lead on the delivery of the following four objectives to:

1. assist with the development of U-MOD's internal policies to ensure it delivers best-practice support for psycho-social trauma and trauma risk management; including recognising the specific needs of vulnerable groups (women and minorities)
2. assist with the development of psycho-social trauma monitoring, lessons-learning, and support reach-back
3. undertake a gaps analysis of psycho-social trauma within the AFU. Engage with UK military trauma support specialist to assist with the development of a package to improve the process in place and fill any gaps in support (through advice, facilitation, or direct delivery of needs, as required)
4. undertake, in consultation with the AFU, a needs analysis of the provision on Ukrainian conflict-related trauma surgery. If required, work with the UK's Royal Centre for Defence Medicine in the adaptation and delivery of their remote trauma surgery training package

## Bidding guidance

- projects will be funded initially for 9 months from July 22 to April 2023
- successful implementers must receive project funding in GBP and open a GBP bank account for the project
- project bids should demonstrate 85% spend by 31 December 2022 and 100% spend by 31 March 2023
- potential implementers are allowed to combine efforts and submit their project proposals in a consortium of several organisations (implementers). Those could be both international and local non-commercial organisations or multilateral organisations, working in the Ukrainian context. If this option is chosen, one entity should be the main Partner, which will coordinate the efforts of the joint initiative and will be primarily responsible for the project implementation. Governmental institutions may act as project co-funders or beneficiaries only
- minimum budget limit: £75,000 (seventy five thousand pounds sterling)
- maximum budget limit: £125,000 (one hundred and twenty five thousand pounds sterling)
- bids where possible should not exceed 30 pages
- bids must be in English

Recommendations and requirements to project budgets are listed on tab 1 of CSSF [Activity Based Budget template and guidance](#) (ODS, 18.1 KB).

We are unable to fund academic courses or research, English language tuition; the purchase of land, property, IT or other equipment (clarification is provided below) and finance construction works under this Fund.

## Assessment

Bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- alignment with the above mentioned thematic priorities and outcomes
- realistic outcomes which are achievable within the funding period 01 July 2022 to 31 March 2023
- evidence they have the capability to adapt and flex to the unfolding situation in Ukraine and the needs of the AFU
- project design includes clear monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as risk and financial accountability procedures
- evidence of demonstrable outcomes and progress assurance
- evidence of sustainability – demonstrating that project benefits accrued continue after the funding ends
- alignment of the project budget with requirements and recommendations listed in CSSF activity-based budget template and the project proposal
- alignment with the Paris Agreement, demonstrating that a climate and environmental risk and impact evaluation was done and no environmental harm will be done
- the organisations have robust safeguarding policies and implementation plans in place to ensure the protection of beneficiaries and to

safeguard against sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH). Evidence that the organisations will effectively tackle discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics in line with UK equalities legislation, including [International Development \(Gender Equality Act\)](#) and [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

- the project budget demonstrates a sufficient level of details and overall value for money
- we aim to ensure that the total amount of project management team costs, project operation support costs and office support costs would ideally not exceed the 10% ceiling of the overall project costs. In case your organisation has a central agreement with the FCDO to include head office overhead costs into the CSSF project budgets (e.g. international multilateral agencies), those can be added to the project budget in line with the central agreement and are not counted into the 10% ceiling mentioned above

## **Essential skills and competencies of the implementer**

The implementer will have:

- strong operational experience of working in Ukraine or in similar environments in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECAD) region
- strong working knowledge of military medical context, including the provision of psychological support within civil and military systems
- strong working knowledge of the operative framework of the AFU medical support services
- must have access and influence within the relevant government bodies
- the ability to source appropriate expertise to support the mapping, capacity building and advocacy components, both in-country and if necessary, from outside
- project and budget management skills, experience, capabilities and capacity
- experience of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning processes

## **Funding exceptions**

Funding cannot be used to finance the following:

- procurement of medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), vaccines, diagnostic tests/materials and COVID-19 related medicines
- procurement of land or property
- construction works
- purchase or maintenance of IT and capital equipment (if the equipment is essential for achieving the project outputs and impact, please complete a separate [Equipment Purchase Supporting Letter](#) (ODT, 7.09 KB) and submit it with the project proposal and budget)
- fundraising efforts of the organisation

The digital spend – digital development costs in excess of £10,000 for “any

external-facing service provided through the internet to citizens, businesses, civil society or non-government organisations” – has to be depicted separately in the [Digital Spend Proposal form](#) (ODT, 19.7 KB) and be approved by the FCDO.

## Process

The deadline to submit project proposals is 11:55pm (GMT) on Wednesday 08 June 2022. Late proposals will not be considered.

When submitting, include “Ukrainian MOD Psycho-Social and Traumatic Medical Support” and the name of the bidder in the subject line of your email.

Proposals must be submitted using the CSSF attached forms only (see below under Additional information and documentation).

Bidders must submit documents in standard Microsoft Office formats (Word, Excel).

Proposals must be submitted to [CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk)

Project proposals selected for further consideration will be notified by 17 June 2022. Due to the high number of bids the British Embassy Kyiv will not provide feedback on each bid – only the successful bidder/s will be contacted.

The selected bidder/s will be asked to complete a Due Diligence Assessment (form will be sent to them).

The British Embassy seeks to finalise grant agreements with successful project implementers by 01 July 2022.

CSSF Programme Team – [CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:CSSF.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk)

## Additional information and documentation

All implementers will be expected to sign a standard FCDO grant agreement with the Embassy. The terms of the contract or agreement are not negotiable.

As all projects are expected to have achieved 85% spend by 31 December 2022, Activity Based Budgets must reflect this requirement.

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## [PM statement to the House of Commons: 25 May 2022](#)

Thank you Mr. Speaker With permission, I will make a statement.

I am grateful to Sue Gray for her report today  
and I want to thank her for the work she has done,  
and also to thank the Metropolitan Police for completing their investigation.  
I want to begin by renewing my apology to the House and to the whole country,  
for the short lunchtime gathering on 19th June 2020 in the Cabinet Room  
during which I stood at my place at the Cabinet table,  
and for which I received a Fixed Penalty Notice,  
and I also want to say, Mr Speaker, above all, that I take full  
responsibility for everything that took place on my watch.

Sue Gray's report has emphasised that it is up to the political leadership in  
No10 to take the ultimate responsibility, and of course I do.

But since these investigations have now come to an end, this is my first  
opportunity to set out some of the context

and to explain both my understanding of what happened and also to explain  
what I have previously said to the House.

It is important to set out that over a period of about 600 days,

gatherings on a total of eight dates have been found to be in breach of the  
regulations,

in a building that is 5,300 metres square across five floors, excluding the  
flats,

Mr Speaker, I do think it is important, because this is the first time I've  
been able to set out the context

in which hundreds of staff are entitled to work,

and in the Cabinet Office, which has thousands of officials and is now the  
biggest it has been at any point in its 100-year history,

and that in itself is one of the reasons why the government is now looking  
for change and reform.

Mr Speaker, those staff working in Downing Street were permitted to continue  
attending their office for the purpose of work

and the exemption under the regulations applied to their work

because of the nature of their jobs reporting directly to the Prime Minister.

These people were working extremely long hours,



doing their very best to give this country the ability to fight the pandemic,  
Mr Speaker, I appreciate this is no mitigation but it is important to set out  
the context.

[Intervention from the Speaker]

Mr Speaker I'm trying to set out the context, not to mitigate or absolve  
myself in any way.

And the exemption under which they were present in Downing Street includes  
those circumstances where officials and advisers were leaving the government,  
and it was appropriate to recognise them and thank them for the work they  
have done.

I briefly attended such gatherings to thank them for their service,  
which I believe is one of the essential duties of leadership

and particularly important when people need to feel that their contributions  
have been appreciated

and to keep morale as high as possible.

...I'm trying to explain the reasons I was there, Mr Speaker

It is clear from what Sue Gray has had to say that several of these  
gatherings then went on far longer than was necessary,

They were clearly in breach of the rules and they clearly fell foul of the  
rules.

I have to tell the house because the house will need to know this, and again  
this is not to mitigate or extenuate

But I had no knowledge of subsequent proceedings because I simply wasn't  
there,

and I have been as surprised and disappointed as anyone else in this House as  
the revelations unfolded.

And frankly, Mr Speaker, I have been appalled by some of the behaviour,  
particularly in the treatment of the security and the cleaning staff.

And I would like to apologise to those members of staff

and I expect anyone who behaved in that way to apologise to them as well.

And I am happy to set on the record now,

that when I said – I came to this house and said in all sincerity – the rules  
and guidance had been followed at all times

it was what I believed to be true.

It was certainly the case when I was present at gatherings to wish staff farewell,

and the House will note that my attendance at these moments – brief as it was – has not been found to be outside the rules.

But clearly this was not the case for some of those gatherings after I had left,

and at other gatherings when I was not even in the building.

So I would like to correct the record, to take this opportunity,

not in any sense to absolve myself of responsibility.

which I take and have always taken,

but simply to explain why I spoke as I did in this House.

Mr Speaker, in response to her interim report Sue Gray acknowledges that very significant changes have already been enacted.

She writes – and I quote –

“I am pleased that progress is being made in addressing the issues I raised.”

And she adds –

“Since my update there have been changes to the organisation and management of Downing Street and the Cabinet Office with the aim of creating clearer lines of leadership and accountability and now these need the chance and time to bed in.”

Number 10 now has its own permanent secretary charged with applying the highest standards of governance.

There are now easier ways for staff to voice any worries

and Sue Gray welcomes that – and I quote

“steps have since been taken to introduce more easily accessible means by which to raise concerns electronically, in person or online, including directly with the Permanent Secretary.”

The entire senior management has changed.

There is a new Chief of Staff

an elected Member of this House who also commands the status of a Cabinet Minister.

There is a new director of Communications, a new Principal Private Secretary

and a number of other key appointments in my office.

And I am confident that with the changes and new structures that are now in place,

That we are humbled by the experience,

and we have learned our lesson.

And I want to conclude by saying that I am humbled, and I have learned a lesson Mr Speaker.

I want to say whatever the failings of No10 and the Cabinet Office throughout this very difficult period and my own,

and for which I take full responsibility

I continue to believe that the civil servants and advisers in question, hundreds of them, thousands of them – some of whom, Mr Speaker are the very people who have received fines – are good hard-working people,

motivated by the highest calling to do the very best for our country.

And I will always be proud of what they achieved,

including procuring essential life-saving PPE,

creating the biggest testing programme in Europe,

and helping to enable the development and distribution of the vaccine,

which got this country through the worst pandemic of a century.

And now Mr Speaker, we must get our country through the aftershocks of Covid, with every ounce of ingenuity and compassion and hard work.

So I hope that, today, as well as learning the lessons from Sue Gray's report to which I am glad I commissioned and I again, I repeat that I'm grateful to her

I hope very much that now she has reported, we will be able to move on and focus on the priorities of the British people,

standing firm against Russian aggression,

easing the hardship caused by the rising costs that people are facing,

and fulfilling our pledge to generate the high wage, high skilled, high employment that will unite and level up our whole United Kingdom.

That is my mission, that is our mission, that is the mission of the whole of the government

and we will work day and night to deliver it.

And I commend this Statement to the House.

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## Next steps towards a stronger school system with all schools in strong trusts

Detailed plans for moving all schools into strong academy trusts have been [published today](#) (Wednesday 25 May), kickstarting work towards the goal set out in the Schools White Paper for every school to be in, or in the process of joining, a trust by 2030.

The focus on strong trusts is intended to help every child fulfil their potential, by making sure teachers and schools have the trust's support in everything from teacher training to the curriculum.

The implementation plan for the coming academic year commits to working with local partners within each of the Department's 55 Education Investment Areas (EIAs), and publishing priorities for each by the autumn.

The Department will lead strategic planning to address local challenges in EIAs, such as how to best:

- strengthen existing local trusts;
- attract strong trusts to operate locally;
- support small, rural schools; and
- manage the transition of all schools in an area to a fully trust led system.

The Department has also today [published details](#) of how local authorities can apply to establish a multi-academy trust.

This 'test and learn' activity will take place with a view to applying identified best practice nationwide following the conclusion of the planned academy trust regulatory review and once the Schools Bill has become law.

More details of the regulatory review are to be published in the coming weeks, to make sure that as all schools become part of an academy trust, the right framework is in place to hold trusts to account to high standards in their support of their schools, pupils, and local communities.

The Schools Bill will bring the new regulatory standards developed through the review on to a statutory footing, provide a range of new powers to drive up standards, including the possibility for the Secretary of State to

intervene in the very rare case of a failing academy trust, and support the 2030 goal, including allowing local authorities to request their schools move into strong trusts.

Schools Minister Baroness Barran said:

There has been a real energy and interest from across the school sector in our plans to transition all schools into strong academy trusts to help secure the best outcomes for children.

Asking all schools to join strong trusts is not only borne out of our ambition for young people – but also because strong trusts provide wider opportunities for teachers and support for schools, helping deliver on our White Paper missions to drive up outcomes in maths and English for children leaving primary school and completing their GCSEs.

I am determined that we capitalise on the shared enthusiasm I am seeing from across the sector to do the best for every child, by using the next year to develop a partnership approach to innovating, learning, and using data and evidence as we build the 2030 school system.

The 22/23 implementation plan outlines how schools, trusts, local authorities and, where applicable, dioceses or other faith bodies, can take the next steps in the journey towards a stronger and fairer system.

It also encourages organisations to pose themselves a series of challenging questions – about the growth rate they could sustain as a trust, or capacity of the school or local authority to establish a new trust – to support them in engaging constructively with the Department over the coming year.

The Department will, over the course of the year, build out its best practice approach to strategic planning with local areas – known as area-based commissioning – with the intention of expanding the approach nationwide from 23/24.