

FLOODING ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AWARENESS AND ASSISTANCE SUB – COMMITTEE
FLOOD AWARENESS CAMPAIGN 2006/07 – 2008/09
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Introduction

1. Raising awareness of both Floodline and the need to prepare for flooding is an important aspect of SEPA's campaign work. The flood awareness campaign proposed in this document is designed to promote Floodline, raise awareness of the flood warning schemes in Scotland and tie in with the registration for the flood warning dissemination service when launched. This campaign strategy also provides a natural platform to raise awareness of the Scottish Executive's National Flooding Framework commitments - awareness, avoidance, alleviation and assistance.

The 2005/06 campaign

2. The flood awareness campaign during 2005/06 successfully targeted local communities at risk of flooding throughout Scotland, taking the Floodline and flood awareness messages to local communities. In terms of flood awareness activity for Scotland, the local focus approach of the campaign was a new step and our evaluation shows this to be an effective mechanism for communicating with the targeted communities. The basis of this approach was a roadshow which visited communities at risk of flooding.

3. The evaluation into the success of the roadshow/trailer approach (SEPA Floodline campaign evaluation 2005, carried out by Heist) showed that almost all visitors to the trailer rated it as fairly or very useful (36% and 59% respectively) and that after visiting the road show, almost all (96%) said they would be taking some action as a result of their visit. The trailer also proved a successful way of raising awareness of flooding issues, with almost half of all people who recalled seeing some advertising, naming the roadshow.

The 2006/07 – 2008/09 campaign

4. We are now proposing to build on the success of this approach and develop it further, carrying out targeted activities which will allow us to engage even more effectively with the local communities at risk. To support this approach, we are proposing that campaign activities take place throughout the year (instead of being concentrated in a two week period) and that we develop a three year programme of activity to provide a consistent approach. We intend to review this programme each year to ensure that we maintain a rolling programme of valid activities year on year. The three year programme will enable better planning of funding and resources.

5. The key focus for the three year campaign (2006/7 – 2008/9) will be the flood warning schemes. Given that these are the areas where we can provide specific information about the likelihood and severity of flooding and that these areas will be where we will focus on registering people to the flood warning dissemination service when launched, these are priority areas for us to focus on raising awareness of the Floodline service (the evaluation into the 2005/6 campaign activity showed there to be 61% overall awareness of Floodline,

with 39% saying they've heard of the name only, 18% knowing a little about it and 4% knowing a lot about it). We want to build upon these awareness levels, particularly to increase the number of people who know a little or a lot about Floodline in the at risk areas. The evaluation also showed awareness of our flood warning schemes to be low which is again something we want to improve.

6. During this time period we will also be launching the new flood warning schemes in the south west of Scotland. The main focus of the promotional activity around the launch will be to raise awareness of the schemes and the benefits they will bring to those at risk in the affected areas. Both the objectives and key messages for these and the wider campaign are very similar, so we are proposing that the publicity and budget for the new schemes be incorporated into this strategy. This will allow us to carry out additional promotional activities to publicise both the new schemes and the existing ones which would not otherwise have been possible, and to achieve more with the money available.

7. If any other new flood warning schemes for Scotland are ready to be launched during this three year campaign period, we propose that these (including the associated resources) are also incorporated into this strategy to achieve maximum publicity for the available budget.

Campaign objectives

- Raise awareness and encourage use of Floodline
- Raise awareness and understanding (in those areas covered by an existing or a new flood warning scheme) of the scheme and what this means for those living in the scheme area
- Raise awareness of the importance of action and what can be done to reduce the impact of a flood if one occurs
- Raise awareness of SEPA's flooding role (e.g. responsible for flood warning but not flood defence)
- Reinforce the message that SEPA is a proactive partner working to promote flood awareness and alleviate the effects of those at risk of flooding
- Launch the new flood warning schemes in the south west of Scotland
- Raise awareness of the flood warning dissemination project
- Raise awareness of the flood map for Scotland

Principal stakeholders

Internal (SEPA)

- Corporate Management Team
- All hydrology staff
- Communications staff
- IS staff
- SEPA Communications Centre (SCC) staff

External

- Scottish Executive
- Local authorities
- Members of the public living within one of the flood warning schemes
- Businesses within one of the flood warning schemes

- Community groups (e.g. housing associations, community councils) based within the current flood warning schemes
- Media (both local and national)
- MMT (the current service providers of Floodline)

Target audiences

For the campaign the audiences we will specifically target are:

- The general public living in one of the current flood warning schemes areas (looking at those people who are directly at risk)
- Those living in the areas covered by the new south west Scotland flood warning schemes (looking specifically at those people who are directly at risk)
- Elderly people (living in above areas)
- Ethnic minorities (living in above areas)
- Those with disabilities (living in the above areas)
- Businesses (based in the above areas)
- Schools (based in the above areas)
- Rural land users including farming communities
- On top of the campaign activity based around these locations we will also look to raise general awareness in locations where there is a risk but where we do not operate a formal flood warning scheme – activity here will be more generalised

Challenges

- Making the Floodline message relevant to those at risk (perceptions from the 2005 evaluation show that many people living in at risk areas do not believe they are at risk or that flooding is relevant to them)

Key messages

Existing schemes

- A flood could affect *you*
- In [location] SEPA operates a flood warning scheme
- You can access SEPA's flood warning information 24/7 using Floodline
- Floodline can provide you with information about how to prepare for flooding as well as guidance to help you protect your property
- Early warning of a flood can allow you to take action to help protect you and your property from the effects of flooding
- Taking action can make a difference
- SEPA is the flood warning authority in Scotland

New schemes

- A flood could affect *you*
- SEPA is launching a new flood warning scheme for your area which means you can now access improved flood alerts for [location]
- Floodline is a 24/7 service which now offers flood warnings for [rivers] in your area
- Floodline can provide you with information about how to prepare for flooding as well as guidance to help you protect your property

- Early warning of a flood can allow you to take action to help protect you and your property from the effects of flooding
- Taking action can make a difference
- SEPA is the flood warning authority in Scotland

Approach and primary tactics

8. To build upon the success of the localised approach of the 2005/06 campaign, we are proposing to deliver a year round campaign of activity with particular emphasis on the winter months when flooding is typically more of a problem. This will mean that we will launch our campaign during October, and that the targeted activity will take place over the next five or six months with further, more generalised, activity continuing through the summer. Whilst the activity will take place over a longer period of time than the previous flood awareness campaign, this approach will have less of an impact on individual members of area hydrology staff, who will only be required to take part in a maximum of two days activity during the year.

9. As mentioned in the introduction, to complement this approach we are proposing a three year plan of activity. This will enable us to take a longer term approach to raising flood awareness and develop the campaign further each year, allowing us to learn and build upon our experience. We are also providing an indication of the financial commitment that will be required for the second and third year.

10. A key aspect of our approach is to bring together all of the different flood related work currently taking place in SEPA. As mentioned in the introduction, we are proposing that the publicity for the new schemes in the south west be incorporated into the campaign (therefore all the tactics listed below will also be carried out in the new scheme areas as well as the existing schemes being targeted during year one of the strategy). Once published, the flood map will be central to the campaign, enabling us to target our campaign work more precisely. Promoting the map to communities will be an effective way of raising awareness of those areas at risk. As the flood warning dissemination project develops it too will become an integral part of the campaign. Initially we will look to raise awareness of the service and encourage people to sign up for further information and then when we are in a position to register people to the service this will form the key part of the campaign.

11. Awareness raising will be focused around our flood warning schemes. We anticipate that, between October 06 and April 07, we will be able to focus on approximately fifteen schemes across Scotland. For each scheme, the activity will take place over the course of a week.

All proposed activity is detailed on the following pages, divided into:

1. Key tactics
2. Supporting materials
3. Publicity and media relations
4. Supporting tactics

1. Key tactics

Working with community groups

12. To ensure that we are getting the Floodline and flooding messages to the heart of the flood risk areas, we are looking to work closely with community groups such as the WI, community councils, local Age Concern groups, religious groups and other groups (e.g. social services departments to understand the needs/requirements for those with disabilities and ethnic minority groups to understand the needs/requirements of those whose first language is not English). We will provide these groups with relevant information, leaflets, posters and displays and offer to give a talk at one of their local meetings (using a translator if necessary for the ethnic minority groups). We will also look to include information in their local newsletters with a competition to win a flood kit (containing useful things to help in the event of a flood including a wind-up radio torch, a first aid kit and a blanket). This provides an excellent opportunity to explain the importance of flood preparation and promote Floodline directly to those who will benefit the most from it.

Timing: Years one, two and three

Trailer / bus

13. Following the success of the trailer approach for the 2005/06 campaign at getting our messages into the community, it is our intention to use a similar technique again. Results from the 2005/06 campaign show that 95% of those who visited the trailer found it useful or very useful and that 96% would be taking some action as a result of their visit. This tactic has many benefits – firstly it enables us to make our presence known in a local community as the trailer/bus is highly visible and attracts attention. Secondly, it provides an excellent opportunity to engage in conversation with our customers (allowing our hydrologists to learn from those who've been affected by flooding whilst getting our key messages across). Thirdly, it offers an opportunity to reinforce with at risk communities why flooding is relevant to them and finally it offers media opportunities in both national and local media (including Ministerial involvement for the launch of the 'flood season' and the trailer/bus).

14. For 2006/07 we will be looking at a more versatile option that will potentially allow us to visit two communities or places of work in one day in one flood warning scheme area. We will also be able to use this option as part of the sign up activity for the flood warning dissemination campaign.

Timing: Years one, two and three

Theatre in education

15. A key aspect of this campaign is to take flood awareness messages to school children. In 2006/07 we will begin this process by commissioning a 'theatre in education' play which will tour around the primary schools in the flood warning schemes we are visiting. This will be linked into the curriculum and provide children (potentially years four to six) with our key messages in a fun and exciting way (similar to the plays which have been developed for road safety and waste messages). We will develop a pack to give each child at the end of the play containing Floodline merchandise for them and some information for their parents about how to prepare for flooding – therefore targeting both the children and their parents.

Timing: Years one, two and three

2. Supporting materials

Banner stands / display stands

16. A key aspect of the campaign is to raise awareness of Floodline in the at risk communities. To help achieve this, we will produce a set of banner or display stands and make them available in as many places as possible when we are visiting a particular flood warning scheme area. We will offer these stands to libraries, community buildings, community groups (including ethnic minority groups, elderly and disabled groups) places of worship, local authority buildings, leisure centres etc. These will raise general awareness and will be supported by leaflets containing further information and posters advertising our visits to the community. We will produce specific displays for the target audience and tailor the message to ensure that they have maximum impact and effect.

Timing: To be produced in year one and used on an ongoing basis

Leaflet

17. The display stands mentioned above will be complimented by the existing Floodline leaflet and, where appropriate, the “Preparing for Flooding” booklet. We will look to produce specific versions of these documents for the different target audiences (e.g. ethnic minorities, the elderly and people with disabilities), using specific photos and tailored messages to ensure that these are as relevant as possible.

Timing: Current leaflet already available. Targeted versions to be produced during years two and three

Poster

18. To advertise our visit to each flood warning scheme area, we will produce a specific poster and supply it to as many places as possible (e.g. local shops, community centres, cafes, council buildings etc). We will also look to produce general posters (tailored for the target audiences) to be put up in key locations around the community to enable our flood awareness messages to remain in the community after our visit.

Timing: Years one, two and three

Fold-out information cards

19. To support the leaflets, posters and display stands, we will also produce fold- out information cards for people to keep. These will be a handy reference and provide the Floodline number and website and give information about how to prepare for flooding. These will fold down to credit card size and fold out to approximately A5. The cards will be magnetic to allow them to be stuck to a fridge and credit card sized to fit into wallets. These will be included in the information pack and made available in as many places as possible to allow as many people as possible to pick one up.

Timing: Years one, two and three

Information packs

20. Using the current booklets, leaflets, posters, fold-out cards and merchandising we will put together information packs. These can then be handed out on the trailer/bus and left in key locations (e.g. libraries, coffee shops etc) for people to collect (as done in the 2005/06 campaign).

Timing: Years one, two and three (although the majority of these will be produced in year one)

Business pack

21. We will look to develop a pack of information aimed specifically at the business community. This will be along the same lines as the information in our current general information pack (e.g. flood warning codes, information about how to prepare for flooding and information on flood plans etc), but tailored to the needs of small/medium businesses.

Timing: To be developed and produced in year two

Community council information packs

22. We will look to develop a pack of information specifically aimed at community councils. This will follow the same format as our current general information pack, but be tailored specifically towards local community councils and include helpful factsheets, posters and information which can be shared amongst the at risk community.

Timing: To be developed and produced in year one

3. Publicity / media relationsAdvertising/publicity

23. To support all of the above activity, we will look to carry out advertising in the local media to raise awareness of our visit to the local community. Whilst this will be an important aspect for encouraging people to visit our trailer/bus, there will be less emphasis on advertising than in previous years as our research into the 2005/06 campaign showed that this is not the most effective way of communicating flood awareness messages.

Timing: Years one, two and three

Media

1. As with any previous flood awareness campaign, we will look to use the media to get our messages across to the target audiences. Both the trailer/bus visits to the local community and the theatre in education approach will provide excellent media opportunities.

24. As previously mentioned, the launch of the flood warning schemes in the south west will take place during the 'flood awareness season' for 2006/07. This, along with the launch of the campaign, will provide an excellent media opportunity for both SEPA and the Scottish

Executive and will provide an opportunity to achieve national and trade media coverage along with local media interest.

Timing: Years one, two and three

4. Supporting tactics

Utilising available communication methods

25. Council newsletters, libraries, community group newsletters and community websites all present excellent opportunities for us to get our flood awareness messages across to our target audiences, and have the extra benefit of being free. During the course of this three year strategy, we will actively seek out as many of these opportunities as possible in the flood warning schemes we are targeting to raise awareness of the need to prepare for flooding and promote Floodline. Where possible, we will support this by providing additional information to the relevant organisation to pass on to their members or make available in locations where there is a high footfall (e.g. posters, leaflets and display stands).

Timing: Years one, two and three

Direct mail

26. To raise further awareness of the launch of the new flood warning schemes in the south west of Scotland, we will look to send information directly to all homes / businesses at risk to raise awareness of the new service in that area.

Timing: To coincide with the launch of the new schemes

Raising general awareness

27. The activity mentioned so far will be focused on those areas of Scotland covered by the flood warning schemes we are targeting between October and March/April each year. However, it is important that we also look to raise general flood awareness in the other flood warning scheme areas and in those areas where we don't currently have a flood warning scheme but where there is a flood risk.

28. In these areas we will look to include banner stand displays, a supply of the general flood awareness leaflet promoting Floodline and the fold-out information cards in locations where there is a high footfall. We will also look to include information in council and community publications.

29. We will also seek to exploit any possible media opportunities which will allow us to get the flood awareness messages across to those at risk.

Timing: Years one, two and three

Events

30. As well as taking a trailer/bus to local communities, we will also look to attend events (such as agricultural shows) where appropriate to promote Floodline and the flooding messages.

Timing: To be carried out during years one, two and three, as and when appropriate

The overall campaign

31. Using all the tactics detailed above, the campaign for a specific flood warning scheme will look something like this:

32. A staffed trailer/bus visiting the main urban centres covered by the scheme (which would be advertised extensively beforehand using press releases and advertising in the local media, posters put up in the area using community contacts and articles in community newsletters). We would also visit some of the main businesses in the area. Alongside this, information will be sent to the relevant community groups (including ethnic minorities, elderly, those with disabilities etc) and talks offered by hydrologists to the meetings of these groups (if necessary a specific public meeting could also be arranged). To target the local schools, the educational play would visit local primary schools. To raise general awareness in the community, information would be sent out to as many places as possible (including local shops, cafes, doctors, dentists etc) and placed in local publications to both raise awareness of our visits to the community and to highlight our key messages.

33. Both the trailer/bus activity and visits to the local community groups would be co-ordinated (as far as possible) with the local council, to provide a joined up approach to the public.

34. It is anticipated that this activity would be spread across about a week for each flood warning scheme.

35. The proposed target schemes for year one are:

- The new River Irvine scheme
- The new River Clyde scheme
- The new River Kelvin scheme
- The Firth of Clyde scheme, including the Argyll coastline
- The Strathglass and Beaully area
- The Spey area
- The Shin and Kyle of Sutherland area
- The Lossie area
- The Ness area
- The Brothock Water area
- The Tyne area
- The Earn area
- The Tummel and Tay area
- The Gala Water area

Partnership working

2. To enable us to present a consistent and joined up approach to the public, we will work closely with partner organisations to make a full range of information about all aspects of flooding available during this campaign. Through the Flooding Issues Advisory

Committee's (FIAC) Awareness and Assistance Sub-Committee, we will look to have staff and/or information on our trailer/bus from Scottish Water, the insurance industry and the Met Office. We will also look to work closely with the local authorities in each area we visit to provide at risk communities with information on both flood warning and flood defence.

Delivering the programme

36. The flooding education and campaigns team will have the main responsibility for delivering the programme, but with support from the flood warning unit. Input will also be required from the area hydrology teams when we visit each flood warning scheme.

Sarah Junik	Flooding education and campaigns officer
Michelle Stone	Assistant flooding education and campaigns officer
David Faichney	Flood warning unit manager
Mike Cranston	Senior flood warning hydrologist
Claire Taylor	Flood warning hydrologist
Paul Ryles	Flood warning hydrologist
Roy McIntosh	Flood warning technical administrator

Evaluation

37. The evaluation carried out for the 2005/06 campaign has played an important role in the development of this campaign strategy for 2006/07 – 2008/09, enabling us to shape the campaign using the findings from last year.

38. Evaluation will again play an important part of this strategy. To ensure that the campaign activity is getting us maximum value from our money, we are planning to carry out more extensive evaluation than in previous years. The results from this will be used to shape year two of this campaign strategy. For 2006/07 we propose to build upon the evaluation work carried out in 2005 to:

- Pre test the campaign messages and creative aspects of the campaign to establish that they meet the campaign objectives and that they communicate the intended messages
- Use a larger sample size for both the pre and post surveys to give a more accurate measure

Summary

39. We are proposing a three year strategy to raise flood awareness across Scotland. This will allow us to develop a consistent approach to raising flood awareness and to better plan the activities and budget across the period. The programme will be evaluated at the end of each year to ensure it is effective and that we are getting value for money. We will carry out awareness raising activity over a five month period (instead of a two week period) during the winter months when flooding is more typically a problem. The programme will focus on raising awareness in our flood warning scheme areas – we will visit approximately 15 schemes during the five month period and we will spend a week raising awareness in each scheme area.

40. The new schemes for the south west of Scotland are going to be ready to be launched during the first year of the campaign period. The key messages for the launch of these and the overall campaign are very similar – promoting Floodline, explaining how to prepare for flooding and promoting the scheme and what that means for those living in at risk areas. We are therefore proposing to combine the resources for the new schemes launch with the wider campaign to allow us to carry out more extensive publicity than would have been possible (and meaning that we can get more for our money).

41. We are proposing to use a combination of the following tactics to get our key messages to our target audiences:

1. Key tactics

- Working closely with community groups (e.g. Age Concern, religious groups, ethnic minority groups etc) to get our messages into the heart of the at risk communities
- Trailer/bus taken to main urban areas in each scheme area to raise awareness of Floodline and the need to prepare for flooding
- Take a specially designed play to primary schools in the at risk areas to raise awareness with children (children can be a particularly effective way of getting messages to parents)

2. Supporting materials

- Banner stands to be provided to as many places as possible whilst we are visiting that area with the trailer/bus
- Targeted versions of the 'Preparing for Flooding' leaflet to be produced for different target audiences (e.g. ethnic minorities and the elderly)
- Posters to be produced to raise awareness of flooding messages and our visit to each location
- Fold-out information cards with Floodline number and information on how to prepare for flooding to be made available
- Information packs to be developed to be handed out to the public
- Information packs to be developed tailored to small/medium business
- Information packs to be developed tailored to community councils

3. Publicity/media relations

- Advertising in the local media to raise awareness of our trailer/bus visit to the local community
- Use the media to get our messages across - the launch of the 'flood season' and the new schemes in the south west will provide excellent opportunities for both national and local media coverage for both SEPA and the Scottish Executive. The trailer/bus and the primary school play will provide excellent ongoing media opportunities

4. Supporting tactics

- We will use as many free communication methods available to us as possible to get our messages into the local communities including council newsletters, libraries, community group newsletters and community websites
- To support the launch of the new schemes in the south west, we will look to send information directly to all homes / businesses at risk to raise awareness of the new service in that area
- On top of all the tactics mentioned above, we will also look to raise general awareness in those scheme areas we are not covering in each year and also in those areas where there is a flood risk but there is currently no flood warning scheme
- We will also look to attend any event (as appropriate) to promote Floodline and our flooding messages

42. Our proposed target schemes for year one are the new schemes for the rivers Irvine, Clyde and Kelvin along with the following existing schemes; The Firth of Clyde, Strathglass and Beaully, the Spey, the Shin and Kyle of Sutherland, the Lossie, the Ness, Brothock Water, the Tyne, the Earn, the Tummel, the Tay and Gala Water.

43. Evaluation will form a key part of the strategy and we are proposing to carry out further, more extensive evaluation (using a larger sample size and testing our creative concepts) than in previous years to enable us to ensure value for money and develop the campaign over the three period of the strategy.

Sarah Junik
Michelle Stone
June 2006