
Brief: Climate Change & Flooding

About Climate Change

The climate is always changing – it's time to get ready. The weather is changing. Temperatures and sea levels are rising. Summers are getting hotter, winters wetter. What does this mean to the North West? What will it be like to live here? Should you care? What can we – the Environment Agency – and you do about it?

Climate change is the biggest threat to our future. Already in the first years of this century, floods, storms and droughts have shown how vulnerable we are to the weather and the devastation that recent weather events have caused.

In the past our climate has altered as a result of natural causes. It is now clear that climate change has been triggered by increases in greenhouse gases. The 'greenhouse effect' is very important when we talk about climate change as it relates to the gases which keep the Earth warm. It is the extra greenhouse gases which humans have released which are thought to pose the strongest threat.

Statistics show that:

- ▶ The North West region has warmed by nearly 0.5oC in the last century. By 2080 the average annual temperature across in the North West may rise by between 1 and 2.8oC.
- ▶ Heavy winter rainfall events that occur every two years are expected to increase in intensity by 5 and 20 per cent.
- ▶ Summer rainfall has decreased by up to 20 per cent in the North West over the last century and may decrease by a further 7 per cent by the 2080's.
- ▶ Sea levels have risen - for example by 1 cm per decade at Liverpool in the last century. Sea-levels around the North West could rise by as much as 69 cm by 2080 and extreme high seas levels will occur more frequently.

A major impact of climate change is that it is likely to increase the risk of flooding by enhancing the combination of high tides, tidal surges and wave height. Major floods have been experienced in the North West over the last century, most recently in 1983, 1987, 1990 and 2005. Flooding can cause damage to buildings and infrastructure costing millions of pounds, whilst protection against flooding and erosion involves the construction of expensive defences and flood risk management schemes. Much of the North West has a low-lying coastline which is already at risk from flooding and is vulnerable to both coastal and river flooding and there are an estimated 213,000 properties in the North West at risk. However flood risk is often overlooked with only 43 per cent of people who are eligible for FLOODLINE WARNINGS DIRECT signed up for the service - the only service of its kind. Insurance companies are faced with increasing bills and therefore either have to put up their premiums enormously, cut the level of cover they offer, or in some cases refuse to insure homes in high risk areas. This doesn't help the home owner and many people are now struggling to insure their homes for flood damage. One insurance company operating in the North West has estimated that it has an exposure of £192 million to flooding in areas which can be defined as being at 'high risk'. The total exposure of all insurance companies operating in the North West is likely to be many times greater. The effects of floods are devastating, just 15 cm of fast flowing water will knock an adult off their feet, 60 cm will float a car and 90 cm in an average house can cause upto £30,000 of damage. It's time to prepare.

The Brief



You too can play an important role in the education of flooding by raising awareness of flood risk and encouraging people to make preparations in advance of flooding.

Your short film needs to deliver the following messages:

- ▶ We cannot prevent floods but we can prepare for them.
- ▶ Visit the Environment Agency's website www.environment-agency.gov.uk or call Floodline on 0845 988 1188 to check if your home / business is in a flood risk area and get information on the steps you can take to protect yourself and your property from flooding.
- ▶ If you are at risk sign up to the Environment Agency's FREE 24 hour FLOODLINE WARNINGS DIRECT service by calling Floodline on 0825 988 1188.
- ▶ FLOODLINE WARNINGS DIRECT will send warnings to your home phone, mobile, fax, pager or email giving you more time to prepare if flooding is expected.
- ▶ If flooding is expected, prepare for floods by:
 - ▶ Keep listening to local radio for updates or call Floodline 0845 988 1188.
 - ▶ Gathering essential items together either upstairs or in a high place.
 - ▶ Filling jugs and saucepans with clean water.
 - ▶ Moving family and pets upstairs, or to a high place with a means of escape.
 - ▶ Turning off gas, electricity and water supplies when flood water is about to enter homes if safe to do so.
 - ▶ Flood water can rise quickly, staying calm and reassuring those around you. Call 999 if you are in danger.

Prepare a short film (movie/storyboard/script) about what we can do to manage floods, which means reducing the likelihood of them occurring in the first place, and minimising impact.

For more information visit:

http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/northwest/346910/346928/?version=1&lang=_e
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/TheWiderEnvironment/Climatechange/index.htm>
http://www.ukcip.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=188&Itemid=312
