

There is no single body responsible for managing flood risk in the UK because of the role of the devolved administrations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Government

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Welsh Government develop FCERM policy and are the leads for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England and Wales. New or revised policies are prepared with other parts of government such as the Treasury, the Cabinet Office (for emergency response planning) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (for land-use and planning policy). These national policies then form the basis of the Environment Agency's and lead local flood authorities' work.

Environment Agency

With its national role, the Environment Agency has a strategic overview of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion (as defined in the Flood and Water Management Act). It is also responsible for flood and coastal erosion risk management activities on main rivers and the coast, regulating reservoir safety, and working in partnership with the Met Office to provide flood forecasts and warnings. It must also look for opportunities to maintain and improve the environment for people and wildlife while carrying out all of its duties.

The Environment Agency's work includes:

- Developing long-term approaches to FCERM. This includes working with others to prepare and carry out sustainable Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) and Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs). CFMPs address flood risk in each river catchment. SMPs assess the risks of coastal flooding and erosion and propose ways to manage them. The Environment Agency also collates and reviews assessments, maps and plans for local flood risk management (normally undertaken by lead local flood authorities (LLFAs)).
- Providing evidence and advice to support others. This includes national flood and coastal erosion risk information, data and tools to help other risk management authorities and inform Government policy, and advice on planning and development issues.
- Working with others to share knowledge and the best ways of working. This includes work to develop FCERM skills and resources
- Monitoring and reporting on flood and coastal erosion risk management. This includes reporting on how the national FCERM strategy is having an impact across the country.

Lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) - North Yorkshire County Council

LLFAs are county councils and unitary authorities. Under the FWMA, LLFAs are required to:

- prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas, coordinating views and activity with other local bodies and communities through public consultation and scrutiny, and delivery planning.

- maintain a register of assets – these are physical features that have a significant effect on flooding in their area
- investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish the results of such investigations
- establish approval bodies for design, building and operation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- issue consents for altering, removing or replacing certain structures or features on ordinary watercourses
- play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event.

LLFAs and the Environment Agency will need to work closely together and ensure that the plans they are making both locally and nationally link up. An essential part of managing local flood risk will be taking account of new development in any plans or strategies.

By working in partnership with communities, LLFAs can raise awareness of flood and coastal erosion risks. Local flood action groups (and other organisations that represent those living and working in areas at risk of flooding) will be useful and trusted channels for sharing up-to-date information, guidance and support direct with the community.

LLFAs should encourage local communities to participate in local flood risk management. Depending on local circumstances, this could include developing and sharing good practice in risk management, training community volunteers so that they can raise awareness of flood risk in their community, and helping the community to prepare flood action plans. LLFAs must also consult local communities about its local flood risk management strategy.

District Councils

District Councils have no statutory obligation to provide flood defences to protect homes.

Ryedale's approach to providing emergency assistance during times of flooding is as follows:

- the Council has provided emergency assistance and co-ordination with lead agencies during emergency flooding dependent upon its local knowledge and experience of the situation.
- the Council will provide sandbags and deploy the pumps it has as it feels appropriate and if available, to assist with the defence from flooding to persons or property within the area.
- the Council keeps a stock of filled sandbags during times of potential flooding to aid the speed of response and provides catches of sandbags to be retained in 'flashy' flood areas.. The Council will deliver the sandbags or other equipment where the owner/occupier is unable to collect them from Council's depot. It will be the responsibility of the property owner/occupier to dispose of the sandbags once they are satisfied the risk of flooding has subsided.
- The council will support communities by helping displaced people to find emergency accommodation.

Water and sewerage companies - Yorkshire Water

Water companies play a major role in managing flood and coastal erosion risks, too. They manage the risk of flooding to water supply and sewerage facilities and the risk to others from the failure of their infrastructure.

The main roles of water and sewerage companies in managing flood and coastal erosion risks are to:

- make sure their systems have the appropriate level of resilience to flooding, and maintain essential services during emergencies
- maintain and manage their water supply and sewerage systems to manage the impact and reduce the risk of flooding and pollution to the environment
- provide advice to LLFAs on how water and sewerage company assets impact on local flood risk
- work with developers, landowners and LLFAs to understand and manage risks – for example, by working to manage the amount of rainfall that enters sewerage systems
- work with the Environment Agency LLFAs and district councils to coordinate the management of water supply and sewerage systems with other flood risk management work. They also need to have regard to FCERM plans in their own plans and work.

Where there is frequent and severe sewer flooding, (sites included on the DG5 Register) sewerage undertakers are required to address this through their capital investment plans, which are regulated by Ofwat.

[Regulating the industry](#) – on the Ofwat website

Water UK represents all UK water and wastewater service suppliers at national and European level. It provides a framework for the water industry to engage with government, regulators, stakeholder organisations and the public.

[Water UK website](#)

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs)

IDBs have an important role to play in flood risk management, and in creating and managing natural habitats. Each IDB operates within a defined area, known as a drainage district. They are made up of elected members who represent land occupiers, and others nominated by local authorities who represent the public and other interest groups.

IDBs are independent public bodies responsible for managing water levels in low-lying areas. They are the land drainage authority within their districts and their functions include supervising land drainage and flood defence works on ordinary watercourses. This is primarily funded by drainage rates and levies from land occupiers and local authorities. By doing this, they closely manage water levels, both in watercourses and underground (groundwater), by improving and maintaining ordinary watercourses, drainage channels and pumping stations to reduce the risk of flooding.

They are able to involve local people, encourage volunteering and raise funds from those who benefit from their work

[More about IDBs](#) – on the website of the Association of Drainage Authorities

Highways authorities - North Yorkshire County Council and Highways Agency

Highways authorities (the Highways Agency and unitary/county councils) have the lead responsibility for providing and managing highway drainage and roadside ditches under the

Highways Act 1980. The owners of land adjoining a highway also have a common-law duty to maintain ditches to prevent them causing a nuisance to road users.

To manage these risks as set out in the national strategy, highways authorities will need to work effectively with the Environment Agency, LLFAs and district councils to ensure their flood management activities are well coordinated.

Property owners and residents

As a householder or business, it is your responsibility to look after your property, including protecting it from flooding. Whilst in some circumstances other organisations or property owners may be liable, there will be many occasions when flooding occurs despite all parties meeting their responsibilities. Consequently, it is important that householders and businesses, whose properties are at risk of flooding, take steps to ensure that their home is protected.

Owners of land or property by watercourses

If you own land or a property that has a watercourse running through it or you live adjacent to a watercourse you are a 'riparian owner'. As a riparian owner you have certain legal rights and responsibilities to maintain the watercourse. Where a watercourse marks the boundary between adjoining properties or land, it is normally presumed that the riparian owner owns the land up to the centre line of the watercourse.

['Living on the Edge' - Guidance for riparian owners \(Environment Agency Website\)](#)