

**FLOODING ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**AWARENESS AND ASSISTANCE SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**SEPA FLOOD AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS 2001-2005**

**Purpose**

1. This paper outlines the SEPA flood awareness campaigns 2001-2005 for the Awareness and Assistance Sub-Committee of the Flooding Issues Advisory Committee (FIAC).

**Background**

2. FIAC is set up to advise the Executive at a strategic level on implementing the National Flooding Framework and to continue the work of the National Technical Advisory Group on Flooding Issues (NTAG). The work of FIAC will help the Executive take forward the four “As” on which the National Flooding Framework is based - Awareness, Alleviation, Avoidance and Assistance.

3. In support of the work of the main Committee, three sub-committees have been established: Awareness and Assistance; Avoidance; and Alleviation.

**Conclusions**

4. Members are invited to note the awareness campaigns to date and to consider opportunities for partnership working and raising awareness year round.

**FIAC Secretariat**  
**November 2005**

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**Purpose**

1. This paper outlines the SEPA flood awareness campaigns 2001-2005.

**Background**

2. The strong message that comes through from all studies of the benefits of flood warning is that reductions in damage are highly dependent on a number of factors including the warning lead time, **the state of readiness of those at risk, the vulnerability of the community** and the timing and nature of flooding.

3. Raising awareness of flood risk is central to reducing the impact of floods on life and property. Once aware of their flood risk communities and individuals need to understand what assistance is available to them and how they can turn this into effective action.

4. Awareness can be defined as:

*“The knowledge and understanding of flood risk\* that allows responsible authorities and the public take appropriate measures to prepare for and respond to flooding.”*

*(\* ‘flood risk’ is the product of the probability and impact of flooding. A frequent but low impact flood may have the same risk as a rare but high impact flood)*

5. Successful awareness-raising depends on effective engagement with responsible authorities, communities and individuals. It comprises activities as wide ranging as direct engagement with those at risk, media campaigns, flood maps and flood warning dissemination. Each one designed to inform a specific audience of the risks of flooding such that they can take appropriate actions to minimise the social, economic and environmental impacts of flooding.

6. Awareness ensures that responsible authorities are ready to provide effective assistance and prepares the public to gain maximum benefit from this.

**FIAC Workplan**

7. The FIAC Awareness and Assistance Sub-Committee Workplan - FIAC2005(6) outlines the importance of effective awareness raising.

8. The Sub-Committee have been tasked with assessing how future campaigning can fit into an awareness strategy and specifically with advising on what can be done to assist SEPA in its Annual Flood Awareness campaign; in particular raising the profile amongst homeowners of their duty to protect their own properties.

9. The Sub-Committee will advise on an overall strategy for raising awareness that reflects factors such as the different causes of flooding, the make-up of communities, typical responses to flood risk and flooding and information available from public surveys.

10. There has been an annual flood awareness campaign in Scotland since 2001 initially focussed on the launch of Floodline and latterly focussed on the need to prepare for flooding. This paper outlines the highlights of the campaigns to date.

### **Raising Awareness**

11. The National Flooding Framework committed flooding partners to work together to improve awareness of risk of flooding through provision of better flood risk information and additional flood warning schemes. SEPA is working with partners to achieve this. In particular SEPA has appointed a full time communications officer to work with the SEPA Flood Warning Unit to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of flood risk
- Ensure expectations of flood warnings are realistic
- Improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities of organisations
- Provide information on how to prepare for flooding
- Provide information on what actions should be taken upon receipt of a warning
- Provide information on how to access assistance during a flood

### **Flood Awareness Campaigns**

#### **12. *Floodline Launch 2001***

- Launched by Ross Finnie in Perth on 1st November 2001
- National and Local Media coverage
- Development of Floodline information pack and fact sheets.
- Website established
- Focussed on the delivery of the Floodline system

#### **13. *2002 Awareness Campaign***

***(Flooding – you can't prevent it but you can prepare for it!)***

- One week campaign (budget £57K)
- 2nd October - Keynote event with Allan Wilson at Tall ship, Glenlee, Glasgow
- 5th October – Borders Flood Fair in Galashiels
- Press releases issued to national and local media.
- A poster and leaflet campaign was conducted through Scottish Library Network.
- Floodline radio advertising during flood awareness week

And...

- Bus advertising in Edinburgh & Borders at end of October 2002 and Moray & Perth in January-February 2003.
- Press releases issued to local and national media

#### **14. *2003 Awareness Campaign (Preparing for Floods)***

- Two week campaign (budget £57k plus additional £40k)
- 'Preparing for Floods' conference held at Victoria Quay, where the Minister gave the keynote speech.

- Flood fairs held in Haddington (100+ visitors), Glasgow (50+ visitors) and Elgin (300+ visitors)
- Ad trailers towed through flood warning areas
- Floodline TV advertising
- Posters and leaflets were distributed locally through Community Centres and the National Libraries Network
- Campaign evaluation survey
- Press releases year round coinciding with flood events
- Exercise “Knee Deep”

15. **2004 Awareness Campaign (*‘When will you prepare for flooding?’*)**

- Two week campaign (budget £57k plus additional £75k)
- 2 day ‘Preparing for Floods’ Conference held at Victoria Quay,
- Shopping centre road show (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth, Stirling, Dundee, Inverness, Aberdeen and Elgin)
- 2 week billboard & bus advertising campaign promoting
- Radio and newspaper advertising was also conducted
- Campaign evaluation survey
- Press releases year round coinciding with flood events
- Exercise “Waist Deep”

16. **2005 Awareness Campaign (*‘Floodline – only a call or a click away’*)**

- Two week campaign ( budget £57k bid for additional £100k)
- Community focussed
- Mobile exhibition trailer for Flood Awareness Fortnight - 11 Venues
- Ministerial launch by Rhona Brankin at Renfrew
- Radio advertising targeted at flood risk areas
- Print & broadcast features in partners’ publications; lifestyle and general media
- Revise Floodline publications
- Waterproof Flood Kit Pouches for distribution in key promotional areas
- Post campaign awareness evaluation
- Floodline DVD/CD Rom – how SEPA deliver flood warning
- Advertorials in community newspapers
- Direct Mail targeted at communities at risk
- Press releases year round coinciding with flood events
- Campaign evaluation survey

**Conclusions**

17. Each time a campaign is run and we complete our campaign evaluation we learn how better to target our awareness raising activities.

18. Through our experience of running the flood awareness campaigns and from the output of our evaluation surveys we have concluded the following:

- Active awareness raising is effective in mitigating flood damage
- Community targeted events more successful
- Raising stakeholder awareness important
- Year round awareness raising required
- Awareness raising is expensive
- Campaign evaluation surveys are required

- Exercises could be utilised to raise stakeholder awareness

19. Each year we have grown the campaign to include more elements and have improved our ability to raise awareness of flooding issues in those areas where flooding is a real issue. The campaign has doubled in duration in 2003 and we believe that in 2005 we reached the maximum activity achievable in a two week campaign given the staff resources available.

20. Our proposal for future successful awareness raising is to continue with a targeted campaign in the autumn and augment this with year-round activity that distributes the workload for the SEPA team and keeps awareness high throughout the year. We see this being achieved by gaining increased funding for year-round activity and looking for opportunities to raise awareness such as flood events, product launches (e.g. flood maps and new flood warning schemes) and by maximising the opportunities presented by flooding partners activities.

**David Faichney**  
**November 2005**