



## WELCOME

Welcome to the winter edition of the Getting Weather Ready newsletter which has lots of tips and advice on simple steps we can all take to get ourselves #WeatherReady for the months ahead.

## Newry Mourne and Down District council hold Flood to Flourish workshops

Twelve months ago, in October and November 2023, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC), along with areas in neighbouring councils, experienced heavy rainfall and devastating flooding which left a lasting impact on those affected communities.

Within NMDDC area, and as part of the ongoing recovery work, our Health Improvement Team identified the need to provide an emotional health and wellbeing response, we partnered with the Public Health Agency on this initiative.

An evidence-based approach was taken to ensure delivery to the most affected householders which included a review of residential properties that received the Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance (SEFA) payment.

Three community workshops were organised throughout the district and these took place in March 2024

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Maureen Snell, Red Cross Emergency Response Officer with residents.



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Winter 2024

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with a focus on disaster preparedness and mental health resilience.

Various partner agencies attended to provide additional information and support to residents including Red Cross, DfI Rivers Directorate, NIFRS, PIPs Hope & Support, Mourne Matters, Consumer Line, Start 360, Make the Call, NMDDC Environmental Health, MYMY and Health Trusts.

Residents were welcomed by the Council Chairperson or Vice Chairperson and provided with an informative talk from Red Cross, who have vast knowledge in the field of

emergency response, the often long road to recovery and the emotional impacts.

Following a 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' demonstration, attendees were able to obtain relevant information and additional support from the various partners present at the event.

Wellness packs were disseminated to residents that were unable to attend the events. The packs included information and equipment to support individual flooding resilience and mental health and wellbeing resources.



Residents with Sinead Murtagh, NMDDC EHO, and Ciaran Fearon, DfI Rivers.



NMDDC Health Improvement Team can report, the event was a great success.

- ✓ 100% of attendees reported their wellbeing being affected following the flooding.
- ✓ 100% of attendees will practice the Take 5 following the events.
- ✓ 100% of attendees were satisfied with the events.
- ✓ 100% of attendees reported feeling supported following the events.

To enhance future events, NMDDC will explore ways to include more residents in areas affected by flooding and enhancing accessibility by ensuring events are accessible to all residents in the district.

NMDDC would like to thank all partners who assisted in the delivery of this event.

For further details about this event please contact the Council's Health Improvement team on 0330 137 4265.

(l-r) Paul Kane, Employment Officer DfC, Deborah Boden, Manager with Mind Your Mate and Yourself; Alannah Brennan, Health Improvement Team NMDDC; NMDDC Council Chairperson, Cllr Valerie Harte; Sinead Murtagh, NMDDC EHO, and Ciaran Fearon, DfI Rivers.

# BluePrint Project helps communities affected by flooding.

In October 2024, The Playhouse in Derry/Londonderry hosted an event to celebrate the achievements of the BluePrint project, bringing together community representatives and partners, including MaREI at University College Cork, Derry City and Strabane District Council and Mayo County Council.



Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Cllr Lilian Seenoi Barr speaking at the event



Some of the participants enjoying the event.

Over an eight-month period participants from Eglinton and Newtownstewart, both areas affected by flooding in 2017 and 2022, engaged in creative practices like soundwalks and workshops to express their experiences with flooding. The event included live performances and the premiere of “In at Midnight and Away by Morning: The Uninvited Guest,” a sound and light installation created with artist Sara Walmsley. This piece combines storytelling and rainfall data to reflect the impact of climate change.

St. Eugene’s Choir, Newtownstewart, and the Eglinton Community Resilience Group also contributed spoken word and polyphonic performances. The evening celebrated community

resilience across the island of Ireland including an exchange with the flood-affected community in Crossmolina, Mayo, with representatives of this



community and from Mayo County Council in attendance to establish and strengthen collaboration. Overall, this event highlighted the creativity and resilience of communities whilst also providing an opportunity for ongoing cross-island learning exchanges between flood-affected communities.

Funded by the Creative Climate Action fund, from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the BluePrint project centres on co-creation with flood-affected communities, offering a sound installation and toolkit to help others address climate risks and resilience.

Speaking at the event, the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council said, “This powerful initiative highlights the devastating impacts of climate change right on our doorstep. Hearing the stories of residents from Newtownstewart and Eglinton, who have seen their homes and lives affected by flooding, was deeply humbling. Their sound and light installation captures their experiences in a lasting and positive way. Congratulations to all involved.”

For more information, visit: <https://www.marei.ie/project/blueprint/>

BluePrint Project Choir

# Resilience Champion Award

**Congratulations to Owen McGivern from the Department for Infrastructure, Rivers Directorate who has been awarded an ICE (Institution of Civil Engineers) Resilience Champion Award for his work on The Connswater Project.**

Ten Champions were selected for their work on The Connswater Community Greenway, this transformative social infrastructure project has regenerated an area of East Belfast. The Department's role, led by Owen, was the flood alleviation elements of the project which has brought enhanced flood protection to 1700 homes and businesses in the area.

[Watch this video to hear Owen's thoughts on his experience of working on the scheme.](#)



Owen with the other Resilience Champions

# Newry Phase One Tributaries Scheme



**The Department for Infrastructure, Rivers Directorate, has recently completed the Newry Phase One Tributaries Scheme, with a total investment of £2.9 million in new drainage infrastructure and flood alleviation measures.**

The purpose of this first phase scheme is to act as an enabler for later planned phases of construction, with the completed works to form the first of three potential phases of the Newry Flood Alleviation project. The intention is to deliver a more reliable construction sequence which minimises disruption within the city of Newry.

This first phase addressed issues on the outskirts of the city, in both urban and rural environments. The scheme involved the construction of approximately 990 metres of a new 1350millimeter diameter pre-cast

concrete culvert, 2000 metres of new flood wall and embankment works, as well as two new grille inlet structures. Works were completed at various locations including the Armagh Road, Downshire Road, Craigmore Way and Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry.

Construction commenced in August 2021 with local company AG Wilson Civil Engineering the contractor tasked with delivery of the scheme. DfI's

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partner consultant, Amey, completed the detailed design and operated in the Project Managers role to supervise works on-site. Like many civil engineering projects there were numerous challenges including the issue of working with large plant and machinery in an urban environment. However, the dedication of both the contractor and the site supervisory staff kept delays to a minimum and the works were successfully completed in March 2023.

This Phase One Tributaries Scheme will contribute to the provision of a 100 year, plus climate change, level of flood protection to approximately 1000 residential and commercial properties identified in the overall Newry Flood Alleviation project. Phases two and three are larger scale projects which are currently at design stage which will develop potential options to help further alleviate flooding in Newry.



# Getting #WeatherReady for winter

As Storms Ashley, Bert and Darragh reminded us recently, severe weather can cause widespread disruption to our lives, with many across the UK affected by cancelled trains and planes, and thousands left without power.

At this time of year, it's worth everyone being #WeatherReady so that when disruptive weather happens, we know what we can do to avoid the worst impacts of it and stay safe.

Heavy rainfall can quickly lead to flooding, posing a danger to individuals

and their homes, so it is vital to understand your flood risk and what you can do to keep people and property safe.

So, if you find yourself in a named storm area or if severe weather is forecast, what should you think about doing? Anticipating difficult weather conditions and taking simple actions can help to

minimise some of the effects of winter weather.

[The Met Office's WeatherReady website](#) provides a range of useful advice and tips in relation to being "WeatherReady." This includes how to prepare flood plans to protect your property; signing up to receive weather warnings; guidance on what to do in a flood, during a power cut and when travelling in storms, as well as many other articles on flood preparedness.

Visit our website to find out more about what you can do to get yourself ready for any type of weather or join the conversation on social media using #WeatherReady.

Are you **WeatherReady?**

Home and garden

### Weatherproof your home and garden

- Secure outdoor furniture and store outdoor games
- Fasten windows and doors tightly
- Check fences and roof tiles are secure
- Clear guttering of leaves and other debris

## Are you **WeatherReady?**

Helping you prepare for severe weather

[www.metoffice.gov.uk/WeatherReady](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/WeatherReady)

# Winter Safety and Support

As winter approaches, it's crucial to stay safe and prepared. Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS), NI Water, Food Standards Agency and NIE Networks have provided essential tips and support services to help you through the colder months.

## Fire Safety Tips from NIFRS

Winter brings additional fire hazards, especially during Christmas. To keep your home safe, follow these tips:

- **Install Smoke Alarms:** Fit alarms on every floor and in bedrooms of those with impaired mobility. Test them weekly.
- **Cooking Safety:** Never leave cooking unattended and avoid cooking when tired or under the influence of alcohol or medication.
- **Electrical Safety:** Do not overload sockets, use the correct fuse, and avoid using damaged leads. Turn off lights and decorations when not in use.

- **Candle Safety:** Never leave candles unattended and use suitable holders.
- **General Safety:** Do not dry clothes on heaters, have a bedtime routine to turn off electrical items, and plan an escape route free of obstructions.

NIFRS also offers an online home fire safety check to help identify potential fire risks and provide personalised safety advice. Find out more at [Online Home Fire Safety Check](#).



## Winter Preparedness from NI Water

To prevent frozen and burst pipes in the cold weather, NI Water advises:

- **Insulate Pipes:** Wrap pipes and water tanks with lagging.
- **Fix Dripping Taps:** Even small drips can freeze and cause pipes to burst.



- **Know Your Stop Tap:** Ensure you can turn it off in an emergency.
- **Heating Control:** Manage your heating if you're away during winter.
- **Boiler Service:** Have your boiler serviced annually.
- **Plumber Contact:** Keep a plumber's contact handy for emergencies.

NI Water also encourages vulnerable customers to join their Customer Care register for additional support. Stephanie McCullagh, NI Water's Director of Customer Operations, said:

"We want to encourage those customers who need that extra bit of help because of a vulnerability or medical condition to join NI Water's Customer Care register. This includes

a text service, doorstep service and a password scheme. Signing up is simply done online <https://www.niwater.com/customer-care-register/>."

## Support for Vulnerable Customers from NIE Networks

NIE Networks offers enhanced support for vulnerable customers, including:

- **Specialist Team:** Trained staff to assist those with dementia, learning difficulties, and other needs.

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- **Medical Customer Care Register:** For those relying on electricity for healthcare, providing updates and support during outages. To sign up, [visit NIE Networks Website Medical Customer Care Register](#) or call 03457 643 643.

- **Accessibility Services:** Including Sign Live Services and website tools.

The gas industry in Northern Ireland also supports vulnerable customers. Contact your gas supplier or network operator for assistance. If you are



unsure who your gas supplier is, please contact your network operator, which might be Phoenix Energy, Firmus Energy or Evolve.

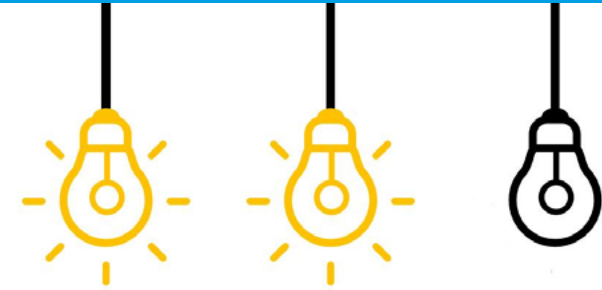


Be sure to also look out for this year's joint utilities winter campaign - it brings NI Water, NIE Networks, Openreach and Phoenix Energy together to help keep customers connected during any winter seasonal disruptions to customer's water, broadband, gas or electricity services.

### Food Safety During a Power Cut

If a power cut affects your home, follow these tips to store and prepare food safely:

- **Keep Fridge and Freezer Doors Closed:** Your fridge should stay cold for up to 4 hours, and food in a full freezer should stay frozen for up to 48 hours (24 hours if half full).
- **Use a Fridge Thermometer:** Normally, keep fridges at 5°C or below. During power cuts, food can be stored at temperatures under 8°C. If the temperature rises to 8°C or above, eat food that requires refrigeration within 4 hours.
- **Store Food Outside (if cold):** If the weather is below 8°C, store food outside in clean, dry conditions, out of direct sunlight, and protected from animals. Use a sealed box to prevent contamination.
- **Avoid Cross-Contamination:** Wash hands before touching food, clean work surfaces and utensils, and keep raw and cooked foods separate.



# POWER CUT?

In the event of a power cut, it's crucial to ensure that your food remains safe to eat.



- **Eat Chilled Foods First:** Chilled foods need to be kept below 8°C. If the fridge temperature reaches 8°C or above, discard these foods after 4 hours if power is not restored.

For more information visit [the Food Standards Agency](#).

**By following these tips and utilizing available support services, you can ensure a safer and more prepared winter season. Stay safe and warm!**

# Age Concern Causeway Launch Dementia Safeguarding Scheme

The Dementia Safeguarding Scheme came about through local community planning, led by Age Concern Causeway, and was supported by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Community Safety Partnership and Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.

Mandy Corr, from Age Concern Causeway, said: "We saw a real need for these bands, as many clients have wandered. The wristband has a QR code that can be scanned using your smartphone, which will provide the link to the person's contact information. The information will state my name is [name], if I'm confused or need help you can contact my next of kin and a name of their next of kin with a contact number is provided."

Chief Inspector Vince Redmond said: "Although this scheme is being piloted only in Causeway Coast & Glens, a

person living with dementia could be on a bus or train to another area in minutes. As such, we want to make sure that our community partners throughout the country are aware of the benefits of the scheme. I have no doubt that the wristbands will assist our

officers in returning vulnerable people to the safety of their family or care setting. As we move forward, we will continue to work with our community partners and support Age Concern Causeway in spreading the scheme to all parts of Northern Ireland."

**DEMENTIA SAFEGUARDING SCHEME**

age concern causeway

**MAIN BENEFITS**

- Gives peace of mind for loved ones
- Helps those living with dementia remain active members of their community
- Raises Awareness of Dementia
- Reduces the risk for those living with Dementia when out and about

The Dementia Safeguarding Scheme encourages carers, family and friends to provide useful information which can be used in the event of a person living with dementia going missing or who is in need of assistance.

**HOW TO REGISTER**

You can register for the Dementia Safeguarding Scheme via the Age Concern Causeways website. Simply scan the QR code below or search 'Age Concern Causeway' in your web browser.

When you register, you can request a wearable wristband which stores electronic information about the wearer, such as their name and next of kin. The device can be scanned by emergency services, or a person assisting them, if the individual is found lost or in distress.

age concern causeway

Dementia Safeguarding Scheme

I have dementia scan the QR code with your phone if I need help.

**REGISTER FOR THE SCHEME NOW** and request a free wristband which help safeguard people with dementia

Follow 'Age Concern Causeway' on Facebook

NHS Northern Health and Social Care Trust  
Causeway Partnership  
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

## DAERA funds support for Voluntary and Community Organisations

The Rural Community Development Support Service (RCDSS) continues to support building capacity in rural voluntary and community organisations.

In doing so, it empowers organisations to practically address poverty, isolation, health and wellbeing and social exclusion issues in their localities. Given the significant issues rural communities continue to face, this type of support for rural community organisations remains a priority for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

DAERA provides funding support to six Rural Support Networks (RSNs) covering all ten rural Council areas. Approximately 3,000 voluntary and community organisations linked to these RSNs are available for advice, support, and assistance across a range of matters. The RCDSS currently supports actions by these RSNs on outputs against four themes:

- **Support for Community Planning:** RSNs facilitate close working relationships between Councils and local community organisations in the development and implementation of Community Plans. A community development approach ensures that the needs of rural communities are addressed.
- **Support for isolated rural people:** The RSN is regarded as essential in reaching isolated and minority community groups in their locality and engaging them in community development actions, including governance, statutory duties, volunteering, and succession planning.
- **Support for sustainability of rural Villages:** RSNs facilitate community development support to assist community organisations to create a vision for their village through the development of a Village Plan.

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- **Marginalised Minority Communities (MMC):** In some areas, particularly rural border areas where there are pockets of minority communities, their capacity is considered weak. RSNs seek to address this deficit by providing tailored support to build capacity in these areas and help these groups play a full and active role in helping their communities grow and flourish.

The RSN structure can accommodate both funding support (sourcing and management of monies) and information/advice in key areas such as governance in addition to signposting to specialist support services where appropriate. The Network's ability to facilitate and

foster cooperation between local organisations to maximise impact and avoid duplication of effort is another valuable outcome, demonstrating the importance of a strategic approach to rural community development.

Rural voluntary and community organisations are encouraged to contact their local RSN to assist them to increase their capacity and resilience as they serve the needs of their local communities.

Further information is available at <http://localruralsupportnetworks.org/your-local-rsn/>

**Barry Boyle, Manager of Fermanagh Rural Community Network (FRCN) addressing the audience at FRCN's AGM and Community Awards event held on 21st October 2024.**



# The Major Incident Public Portal MIPP

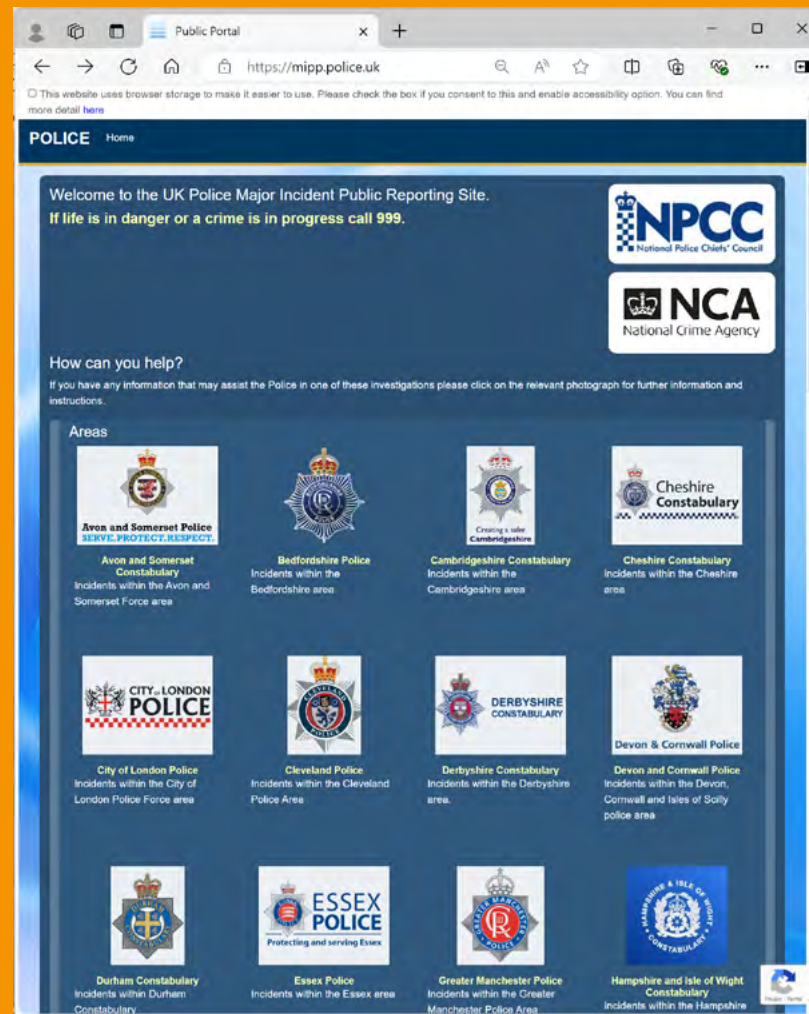
**The Major Incident Public Portal (MIPP) is a website that allows the public to share information, images, reports, and video footage with the relevant police authority during a major incident such as a terror attack, major disaster or a high-profile incident such as murder.**

It allows people to send information, reports, images, and video footage directly to Casualty Bureau and Major Incident Teams.

It was developed in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings, which had shown the importance of gathering public information, video footage and images as quickly as possible.

The Portal is a quick and easy way for the public to submit information that may be vital in a major incident. It can also be used if there's an incident that involves mass casualties and the public want to report a person missing who they believe was there.

The PSNI first used MIPP in 2019 and have used it for multiple high-profile incidents over the years.





## The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) Newsletter – Keeping members weather ready

### The Regional Community Resilience Group Newsletter aims to keep its members up to date on getting weather ready.

The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) was formed in 2013 to help local communities prepare for and respond to weather related emergencies.

The group brings together Multi-Agency Partner Organisations from government, utilities and the voluntary sector to work for and with Communities at Risk of Severe Weather.

The RCRG aims to provide a forum to facilitate co-ordination, communication, partnership working and capacity building on community resilience issues. The group is

currently working with over 40 communities across Northern Ireland ready to inform and resource them and improve preparedness and community resilience measures.

Unfortunately, severe weather events will continue to occur but through good communication, accessible, reliable information and established practical measures, communities can and have applied self-help measures to reduce impacts and protect property.

This newsletter will be used to highlight important developments to enhance community resilience, provide an opportunity for communities to share experiences to the benefit of others and highlight key responder contacts to help readers to **Get Weather Ready!**

### Partner Organisations:



Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service



British Red Cross



Ministry  
of Defence



HM Coastguard

## Emergency Numbers

No matter how prepared we are for inclement weather, there's always the chance of an emergency at home. Here's a list of phone numbers you might find useful should the unforeseen happen:

**Emergency Services:**  
999 or 112

**Housing Executive:**  
03448 920 901

**Northern Ireland Electricity Networks:**  
03457 643643

**NI Gas Emergency Service:**  
0800 002 001

**NI Water Waterline:**  
03457 440088

**Flooding Incident Line:**  
0300 2000 100

**For advice and information on dealing with emergencies visit:**

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/be-ready-for-emergencies](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/be-ready-for-emergencies)

**Problems with Roads & Streets:**

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets)