



West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme Flood Risk and Mental Wellbeing Project

Background

Mental health plays a key role in flood resilience and the overall impact of flooding. Research shows people whose homes have been flooded are six times more likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. Residents who have experienced flood water entering their homes have significant mental health impacts. These issues reduce the resilience of affected communities and their ability to respond to and recover from future flood events.

West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme (WYFLIP) successfully bid for £36,000 from the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to help improve the mental well-being of communities at risk of flooding.

The money is being used to develop a Flood Risk and Mental Wellbeing Project, led by Kirklees Council, to reduce the impact of flood incidents by helping people become more resilient and recover more quickly from flood incidents.

Activities

Kirklees Council is investing £20,000 in psychological first aid training for frontline staff who work directly within communities at high risk of flooding. The Psychological First Aid Training is being delivered by specialist trainers, Purple Dog, to a diverse range of front-line staff, including officers who work with community and voluntary organisations, flood risk managers, management teams, emergency planning officers, and gully wagon drivers. Psychological first aid is a technique designed to reduce the occurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder by improving their mental well-being.

This stage will focus on how the project can complement and build on other work in the flooding and mental health fields, define how learning can be shared widely to other locations and gather information needed to create a robust business case for its sustainable future.



The project will include campaigns to raise awareness of available mental health support, promotion of green social prescribing, practical wellbeing events, and provision of wellbeing packs. There will also be wider environmental and recreational benefits for residents, including improved physical wellbeing, connection to nature, community togetherness and resilience.

Initially teams working for Kirklees Council will receive the mental health training and then it will be rolled out to other local authorities in the region. It will help teams to provide information on flood resilience and signpost people to appropriate mental health services as needed.

During its initial developmental stage, the project will focus on how to complement and build on other work in both flooding and mental health fields. It will define how learning can be shared widely to other locations, and gather information needed to create a robust business case for future funding. A key goal during this phase of the project is to identify other sources of funding so that this valuable work is sustainable.

West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme (WYFLIP) is a partnership of the five local authorities in West Yorkshire, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and the Integrated Catchment Solutions Programme (iCASP) based at the University of Leeds. It also has support from local stakeholders, including the local resilience forum, emergency responders, environmental organisations, community groups, and local councillors. The WYFLIP board will support delivery of the project by organising annual stakeholder workshops, including mapping, sharing learning and exploring ways to build on existing projects.

To contact WYFLIP about the Mental Health and Flooding Project, email: wyflip@leeds.ac.uk

To find out more about the project, visit:

