

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS370)

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Written Statement made by: **Minister for Water and Flooding (Emma Hardy)** on 13 Oct 2026.

Flood Action Week 2026

As we enter Flood Action Week 2026 (12-18 October 2026), I am updating the House on the steps this Government is taking to strengthen resilience to flooding and drought, improve public preparedness, and protect communities across England from the impacts of a changing climate.

This year an especially strong El Niño weather pattern is expected, bringing with it an increased likelihood of wetter and stormier conditions across the UK. Flood Action Week is an important moment to assess our resilience and ensure our communities, and those who work to support them, are prepared for the winter.

Today I want to set out how we continue to strengthen that preparedness, improve public awareness, and increase resilience across the country.

Flood and Drought Resilience Taskforce

Flooding and drought are interconnected challenges that require a more integrated approach to water management. The winter of 2025-26 was the eighth wettest in England since records began in 1836. However, by August 2026, 71% of England had entered drought status. Currently, Wimbleball reservoir and Ardingly reservoir are still key areas of concern. This rapid transition between extremes underlines the need to strengthen resilience to both flood and drought risks.

To support this, I am announcing that the existing Flood Resilience Taskforce will be expanded and renamed the **Flood and Drought Resilience Taskforce**. Building on the success of the current Taskforce in improving flood preparedness, the new body will bring together national, regional and local government, the Environment Agency, water companies, Ofwat, representatives of the farming sector and community groups to support a more integrated approach to managing the lifecycle of water in the environment.

A key priority of the new Taskforce will be to champion the voice of communities by ensuring that the experiences of those affected by flooding and water shortages inform policy development and resilience planning through better engagement and communication.

The first meeting of the Flood and Drought Resilience Taskforce will take place tomorrow -14 October 2026. The agenda will focus on assessing the nation's preparedness for potential flooding this winter. Through the work of the Taskforce, the nation is better prepared compared to last year, and its members have already improved their response. The first meeting of the new Taskforce will discuss emerging learnings from the ongoing drought, and if improvements could be made to aid the nation's resilience to both flooding and drought.

Flood Information Website

We have heard that people often struggle to know where to find clear, practical and trusted advice to inform them of the potential risk of flooding to their homes and businesses.

As a response to this, during Flood Action Week, the Environment Agency is launching a new 'Flood Action Online' website. This will play a vital role in giving power to communities by helping people understand their flood risk.

'Flood Action Online' will serve as a 'one stop shop'. The website will connect people to existing services and flood information on gov.uk and other trusted government services and advice. It will help them to navigate information in a more accessible, user-friendly way.

The website will promote practical actions that increase preparedness and resilience for people to protect their homes and businesses. Equally, it will encourage measures that can reduce the impacts of flooding on people, places, and communities. I strongly encourage members of this House to promote this new resource to their constituents.

Flood Re and Flood Performance Certificates

To be resilient, individuals and businesses must understand and reduce their own flood risks.

We are working with Flood Re and insurers on the development of voluntary Flood Performance Certificates. One of the recommendations of the FloodReady Review we continue to implement. These certificates will give people the option of better understanding their flood risk and the steps they can take to make their properties more resilient.

Flood Re is launching the BeFloodReady platform, the Property Flood Resilience Hub, which will become the UK's authoritative hub for property flood resilience information, guidance, and support. Designed to serve householders, businesses, academics, and policymakers. Recognising that flood risk is a long-term issue, this site will drive innovation and share best practice far into the future.

Three-year flood and coastal erosion investment targets

Earlier this year, I announced the Government's new ten-year flood and coastal erosion investment programme, backed by record levels of funding. I can now set out the three-year targets for what this investment will achieve. Between April 2026 and March 2029, the Government will invest **£4.2 billion** in flood resilience, maintaining existing assets while delivering new flood schemes across every region of England.

Through this investment, we expect to:

- better protect **200,000 properties**;
- increase the proportion of flood risk management assets at or above their required condition to **93.5%**;
- generate more than **£27 billion of avoided economic damage**, delivering almost £7 of benefit for every £1 invested;
- create or enhance **2,500 hectares of habitat** and improve **850 kilometres of river**.

Flooding remains one of the most significant climate risks facing the country. Through record investment, stronger coordination, and a more joined-up approach to water resilience, the Government is taking practical action to protect people, property and infrastructure across England. Equally, through better, more accessible public information, we are empowering communities to mitigate their flood risk and protect their homes and businesses.