Environment Agency

Warning system

Frequently asked questions for Targeted flood warning service users

Contents

Project background

What is the Targeted flood warning service?

The Targeted flood warning service (TFWS) is an online service managed by the Environment Agency that delivers subscribers with more precise and user-friendly flood alerts across England. It allows users to monitor specific locations - referred to as "assets" - that may be at risk of flooding. These assets can include anything from homes and offices to infrastructure like substations, roads, or distribution centres, as long as they can be identified by a grid reference or GIS shapefile (point, line, or area).

Subscribers receive flood alerts and warnings via email and mobile alerts and can also view real-time visual displays via the online service. The system is designed to improve the efficiency and relevance of flood warnings by focusing on the exact locations that matter most to each user.

Why is the Targeted flood warning service being replaced?

Warning and informing members of the public is a critical part of the Environment Agency's incident response to flooding. Since 2012 the current Targeted flood warning service (TFWS) has been the platform used to warn against the risk of flooding from rivers and the coast. TFWS has reached the end of its operational life in its current format and can no longer be effectively adapted to meet the growing challenges posed by future flood risks.

This presents an opportunity to update the service and incorporate modern technology to better meet the needs of organisations and emergency responders. A new, user-centred and technologically advanced platform, known as the Get flood warnings service, will be launched on GOV.UK. This next generation system ensures improved accessibility, reliability and responsiveness during flood events and has been designed to future-proof this essential digital service.

What is changing?

At present, individual members of the public and small businesses can receive flood alerts and warnings by registering through the Sign up for flood warnings service on GOV.UK. This self-service platform allows users to quickly and easily subscribe to notifications for their chosen locations.

In contrast organisations, larger businesses and emergency responders register through the Targeted flood warning service (TFWS). This process is more time-consuming as it involves contacting the Environment Agency to request an account to be created. Once created, subscribers can register particular locations to receive tailored flood alerts and warnings.

The new Warning system will streamline and modernise the way all users register for flood alerts and warnings. It will bring together the current separate processes into a single, unified platform. Members of the public, businesses, organisations and emergency responders will all now be able to sign up through the new Get flood warnings website on GOV.UK.

Users signing up to the new service for the first time will be able to choose whether signing up as a citizen or business/organisation best suits their needs based on the number of locations that they have an interest in and the number of contacts who need to receive warnings for these locations. This simplified approach will make it easier and quicker for all users to access flood warning services, manage their locations, and stay informed about flood risk.

When will the Warning system be launched?

We are working towards launching the new Warning system in Autumn 2025, ahead of the winter storm season. However, we recognise the unpredictable nature of weather events and the potential impact this may have on our timeline.

To ensure a smooth and safe transition, the system will be launched at the most appropriate time once it is fully ready for implementation. This means the launch may be delayed if we are experiencing an incident or are forecast to enter a period of heightened flood activity. Following the initial launch of the core system, we will enter a phase of continuous development, with ongoing enhancements planned over the coming years.

Will there be the same functionality as the Targeted flood warning service when the Warning system is launched?

TFWS is a mature platform that has benefited from many years of continuous development. The new Warning system will launch with all the core functionality in place. However, some tools and features available in TFWS will not be available until future releases. For example, certain processes such as uploading and processing location data, may currently take slightly longer than users are accustomed to.

The Warning system capabilities will grow over time. Following launch, we will enter a phase of continuous improvement, during which new features and enhancements will be introduced to further develop and refine the service.

What functionality will be included initially?

At launch businesses, organisations and emergency responders will be able to access a range of core features through the new Get flood warnings service. These include the ability to:

- **sign up online** to receive flood alerts and warnings.

- **set up and manage** additional contacts, administrators, and locations within their organisation.
- **receive notifications** via SMS, email and telephone for their registered locations, including addresses, non-address locations and operational boundaries - e.g. County, Constituency, Local Flood Resilience boundaries.
- **configure notification preferences** for each location within their organisation.

The initial Warning system will provide a robust and reliable foundation for flood warning operations but will be subject to continuous improvement. We are fully committed to a programme of ongoing development and enhancement following launch, ensuring the service continues to evolve, improve, and respond to user needs over time.

What types of warnings will be issued?

The Warning system will continue to issue flood alerts, flood warnings and severe flood warnings. Changing or adding types of warning is not within the scope of this project. Therefore, there are no plans to issue warnings for other types of incidents, such as surface water flooding.

After launch how will the Warning system be improved?

Further iterations of the Get flood warnings website are planned, with improvements being prioritised based on a combination of user feedback, operational requirements and public service cost benefit. This approach ensures that the service continues to evolve in a way that is responsive, user-focused, and aligned with the Environment Agency's long-term goals.

Organisation Specific FAQs

How do I access the Warning system?

Users can register for and access their accounts through the Get flood warnings platform on GOV.UK. To do this, they type Get flood warnings into the search bar on [GOV.UK](#).

How will my organisation's account move from one system to another?

As part of the transition to the new Warning system, all data from the existing Targeted flood warning service (TFWS) is being reviewed, analysed, and prepared for migration to the new platform. On launch day, we will complete a full move to the new service. At that point, users will be instructed to stop using the existing TFWS and begin using the new Warning system. This approach ensures a smooth transition with no disruption to service and ensures that all users are operating on the most up-to-date and supported platform from day one.

If you have a separate account on our current Sign up for flood warnings service, this will also be moved to the new Warning system. In some cases, we may be able to combine your accounts so that you can see your information in one place. We will provide tailored information where we think this would be a good option for your organisation.

We recognise that for some organisations and professional partners, transitioning to the Warning system and the transfer of their data may be more complex due to their current account structure. To support these organisations effectively, we will provide tailored guidance and communication on a case-by-case basis to address their specific needs.

What will be the impact on my account when the Warning system goes live?

Existing user accounts will be automatically migrated to the new system, ensuring continued delivery of flood warnings and alerts for the areas they are subscribed to.

On the day the new Warning system goes live, the majority of TFWS users will notice a small number of changes to the sign-in process and their account experience.

From launch day, organisational users will begin accessing the service through the Get flood warnings platform on GOV.UK. This new system will allow users to manage their accounts online more easily. Flood Resilience and Forecasting and

Warning teams will continue to assist with customer account management and ensure a smooth transition.

We recognise that for some organisations and professional partners, transitioning to the Warning system and the transfer of their data may have a larger impact on their account than others due to complexity of their current account structure. To support these organisations effectively, we will provide tailored guidance and communication on a case-by-case basis to address their specific needs.

How do organisations register for the Warning system?

Current TFWS users will not need to register for the Get flood warnings service as their data will automatically be migrated to the new system. Unregistered users signing up to the Get flood warnings service for the first time will be given the option to register for one of two account types: 'Standard' or 'Professional'. This choice will depend upon how many locations and contacts they wish to monitor and the level of service they require.

The Standard Service is ideal for citizens (individuals), households, or small businesses that need to monitor a limited number of locations. This account type allows users to register a maximum of 15 locations of interest, and add up to 5 email addresses, 5 mobile numbers for text alerts, and 5 phone numbers for voice call warnings. Account creation is immediate. The account can only be managed by a single administrator (the account holder).

The Professional Service is designed for larger organisations/businesses, and Category 1 or 2 responders who require more advanced features. These accounts support unlimited locations, unlimited contacts, and multiple administrators. Additional features include live monitoring with maps, access to historical flood data, and the ability to generate custom reports. Applications for Professional accounts are reviewed and approved by the Digital services forecasting and warning team within 3 to 5 working days.

How is the account management process in the Warning system different to the current Targeted flood warning service?

There will be minimal differences in the account management process between the two systems. Organisations and professional partners will be assigned a Professional Services account. This type of account allows for multiple administrators to be added. This means that several users can share the responsibility of managing the account, enabling greater flexibility and efficiency. This is particularly useful for organisations or teams that need to coordinate flood warning coverage across multiple areas or departments.

How are the features of the Warning system different to the current Targeted flood warning service?

When users first log into their **Get flood warnings** account, they will notice several new features that were not available in TFWS. These enhancements include:

- **multi-channel messaging:** Voice calls are now available as well as the existing email and text message notifications.
- **automatic flood risk data:** Flood risk information is automatically added to locations upon upload.
- **criticality ratings:** Users can assign a rating to each location to identify how critical the location is to them, to help plan their response.
- **bulk location uploads:** Locations can be uploaded in bulk using postcodes.
- **manual location entry:** Locations can be added manually using a map pin or postcode.
- **bulk deletion:** Both locations and users can be deleted in batches.
- **add keywords:** Keywords can be added to locations, users and contacts to allow them to be grouped by theme.
- **action plan:** Option to add an action plan to each of your locations at upload or afterwards.

As part of the launch of the new Warning system, users will experience several changes in functionality, tools, and features. These include:

- **report format**: Reports can be saved in PDF format.
- **message content:** Location name and location ID are currently not be included in messages.
- **teams hierarchy**: This feature is currently unavailable. Keywords can be used to group locations and users.
- **map view**: Only locations affected by alerts or warnings will be displayed.
- **point data uploads**: Must be completed using a downloaded CSV template.
- **shapefile uploads**: Locations must be uploaded individually in separate shapefiles. Multiple locations in a single shapefile are not supported.
- **system performance**: Users may experience slower upload speeds and reduced performance for some actions.
- **training mode**: This feature is no longer available.
- **user preferences**: Can be modified by an approved administrator within the organisation.
- **flood warning buffer**: Instead of an optional buffer of up to 1000m around locations, warning area can be added to locations manually.

Further iterations of the Get flood warnings website are planned post launch which will address some of the differences highlighted above. These improvements will be prioritised based on a combination of user feedback, operational requirements, and public service cost benefit.

Will I be able to add additional contacts and administrators to our account?

Within the professional service it is possible to have multiple administrators under a single account, with the ability to add contacts to the account. This setup allows different individuals to manage and receive flood warnings for various locations within the organisation. This makes it especially useful for larger organisations and businesses with multiple departments or operational areas.

There is no limit to the number of contacts that can be added to an professional account. Each contact can be linked to one or more registered locations and can include up to two email addresses, two phone numbers, and two text (SMS) numbers. This ensures that all relevant individuals receive timely and accurate flood warnings through their preferred communication channels.

Will I be able to select the type of warnings that I and other contacts want to receive?

Professional account holders will have the flexibility to customise the types of flood warnings their contacts receive depending on the needs of each location. You can choose whether contacts are notified of severe flood warnings, flood warnings, flood alerts or any combination of these. For those who prefer to monitor alerts and warnings online, there is the option to opt out of receiving all warning types. This allows organisations to stay informed through digital channels without receiving direct notifications, offering greater control over how they access flood information.

Will contacts be notified when flood alerts are no longer in force?

In a change from the current service, if a registered contact receives a flood alert or flood warning, they will now automatically receive a message when that alert or warning is no longer in force.

Will the flood warnings/alerts come from the same email address?

The email address and text number used to send alerts and warnings will change as part of the system transition:

- The new email address will be floodline@notifications.service.gov.uk.
- Text messages will come from 'FLOODLINE'.

Please be aware that emails from the Warning system will no longer be marked as high priority. If this is something you would like more information on, please get in touch.

Will I still receive additional operational messages?

Some businesses, organisations and emergency responders receive additional bespoke messages from our Duty Officers via the current Flood Warning system. These messages are distinct from standard flood alerts and flood warnings. For example, they may relate to the operation of a specific flood defence. If you currently receive these bespoke messages, in most cases you will continue to do so. However, please note that the distribution lists for these messages will be managed separately by Flood Resilience Teams, and they will not appear in your Get flood warnings account.

Will I be able to add locations that are not within flood warning areas?

The Warning system allows organisations to add multiple locations within a single account. If any of those locations are not within a flood warning area they can be manually linked to other warning areas.

There is no limit to the number of locations you can upload to your account.

How can non-digital users sign up for flood warnings?

Non-digital users will be supported through their local Flood resilience teams or the Digital services forecasting and warning team. These teams can help users register for flood warnings, update their details or unsubscribe from the service if needed. This ensures that users who are unable to access the online platform independently can still receive vital flood warning information.

What accessibility provisions have been made?

We are committed to making the new Warning system accessible to as many people as possible to ensure that everyone can access vital flood warning information when they need it most. The Get flood warnings website complies with website and mobile accessibility regulations, following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. The design approach ensures the service can be used by people with a wide range of needs, including those with impaired vision, motor difficulties, cognitive impairments or learning disabilities, and deafness or impaired hearing.

Will the warnings be issued in different languages?

The warnings and sign-up forms will initially be available in English only, in line with the Government Digital Service Standard. The capability to issue warnings in other languages is considered for the future. This will be reviewed and prioritised once the

core service is live, as part of the ongoing development and improvement of the Warning system.

What guidance will be provided on how to use the Warning system?

A range of support materials and resources help users navigate the platform effectively. This includes comprehensive user guides and documentation that offer step-by-step instructions for key tasks such as uploading locations, managing alerts, and updating preferences. Short video tutorials will be available to visually demonstrate how to use specific features, making it easier for users to follow along.

The Get flood warnings platform will also include built-in help tools including tooltips and guided walkthroughs to provide contextual assistance as users interact with the platform. These guidance documents will address common questions and troubleshooting tips. For more complex or account-specific issues, users will be able to contact the Digital services forecasting and warning team.

Who can I contact for more information relating to the Warning system?

Digital Services Forecasting and Warning

Email: getfloodwarnings@environment-agency.gov.uk

Monitored Monday to Friday (not including public holidays) 9am to 5pm.

How will my personal information be used?

We collect personal data when you, or someone in your organisation, adds it to your organisation's account. We collect your name, contact details and locations you need flood warnings for.

If you remove your data or delete the account, we'll store your personal data for 7 years. This is so we have a log of any flood messages we sent you, in case we need to refer to this.

Further information is available below

Privacy notice for citizens

Privacy notice for organisations